

Niskayuna Town News



Spring 2005

Supervisor Says:

It is clear that identity theft is a major problem in our society today. This has always been a problem, but now with so many of our personal and financial transactions being conducted on the Internet, the problem has become an epidemic.

Recently, members of our Town's Police Department attended a program on Identity Crime Investigations and Response. What follows is information that could help you protect yourself from identity theft and what you should do if you believe you have been victimized.

***Never give out any of the following personal information to unknown sources:**

- Date/Place of Birth
- Social Security Number
- Mother's Maiden Name
- Credit Card Number(s)
- Address
- Phone Number
- Never have any personal information printed on bank checks.
- Leave your social security card, passport, birth certificate and other confidential documents in a secure location.
- Review your credit report at least once a year.
- Shred any paper that contains personal information (i.e., credit card applications, prescription labels, canceled checks, ATM receipts).
- Ensure secure online transactions by locating the closed lock icon at the bottom right hand side of your Web Browser before disclosing any personal information.
- Sign up for (888) 5-OPTOUT to limit the amount of marketing mail you receive.
- For more information regarding preventive measures, log onto www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

***Responsive Measures:**

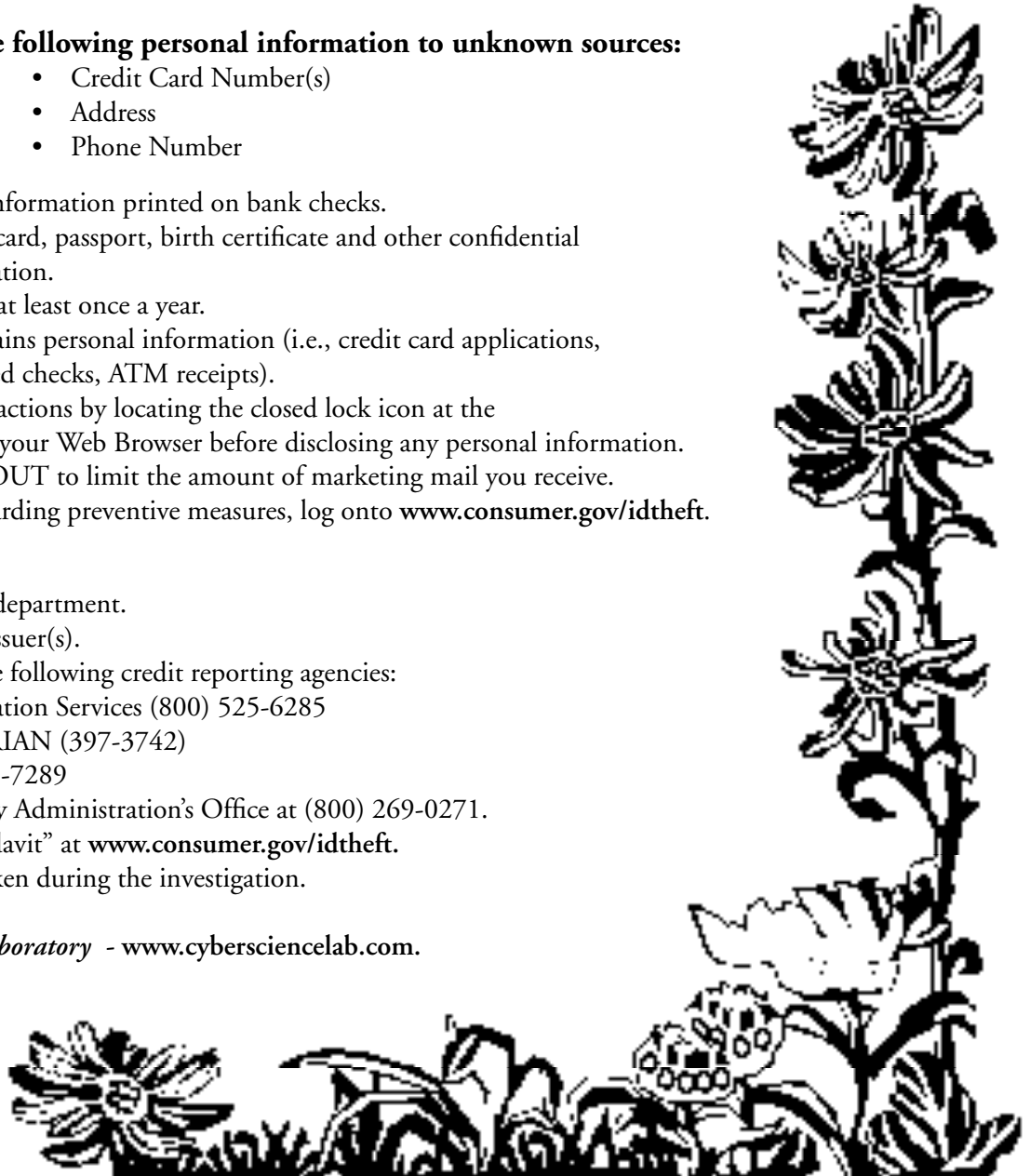
- Contact your local police department.
- Contact your credit card issuer(s).
- Place a fraud alert with the following credit reporting agencies:
 - Equifax Credit Information Services (800) 525-6285
 - Experian (888) EXPERIAN (397-3742)
 - Trans Union (800) 680-7289
- Contact the Social Security Administration's Office at (800) 269-0271.
- Fill out an "ID Theft Affidavit" at www.consumer.gov/idtheft.
- Document all the steps taken during the investigation.

**Courtesy of CyberScience Laboratory - www.cybersciencelab.com.*

Sincerely:
Luke J. Smith

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Luke J. Smith".

Supervisor



YOUR TOWN COMMITTEES AT WORK

Finance Committee:

Luke Smith, Chair

- New Sales Tax Distribution Agreement Established. The Town Supervisors recommended the present agreement be extended. That idea was accepted by the County and City.
- The Town is working with the County and City on audit of Worker's Comp. Administration with a view towards an inter-municipal shared contract agreement.
- Modification of employee health care, increasing the co-pay by employees, resulted in savings of \$50K on premiums. This was achieved even while holding employees harmless.
- Contracted with Troy & Banks to conduct financial audit of our Time Warner franchise fees.



Technology Committee:

Diane O'Donnell, Chair

- Purchased new software accounting package for Comptroller's Office and expanded personnel services
- Automated certain functions in Assessor and Tax offices allowing Town to save approximately \$10K on contractual services
- Purchased a scanner/plotter/printer/pointer to create electronic files of all town maps and subdivision plans, and electronically format our infrastructure for easy retrieval. In the past, all our mapping, plans, and locating of infrastructure were contracted out.
- Continued improvement to the Town Hall web site (visit www.niskayuna.org).

Recreation Committee:

Liz Orzel Kasper, Chair

- Survey of dog owners regarding Dog Park completed. Decision on development of park pending.
- Girl's softball fields redeveloped with new fencing.
- Second section of Bike Path from Lock 7 Rd. to Blatnick Park is scheduled for reconstruction.
- Senior Citizens Art Exhibit at Town Hall was held in March.
- Looking at a plan to ensure all dogs are licensed.
- Senior Citizen February Snow Ball was a big success with over 100 attendees. Thanks to Alterra Wynwood and Union College students for their help and support.

Police and Public Safety Committee:

Luke Smith, Chair

- Chief Sollohub retired after 33 years with the Town – 14 years as our Chief.
- Lt. Lewis Moskowitz was named provisional Chief. Civil Service exam for Chief of Police was administered in March. Results are pending.
- Police continue to monitor neighborhood speeding.
- Police and Planning Department reviewing traffic patterns in Mohawk Commons.

Highway Committee:

Richard Holt, Chair

- New garage for parks and highway equipment has been completed.
- New street sweeper will be purchased to replace aging sweeper.
- Major street paving and drainage work in Stanford/Fillmore area scheduled
- Purchase of our fourth ten-wheel dump and plow truck is being completed.

Planning Committee:

William Chapman, Chair

- Several residential subdivisions under review
- Revised design standards for State St. Commercial District completed
- Planning Dept. to update Town's Zoning Ordinance
- Planned Unit Development (PUD), a mixed-use, residential development, located off Consaul Road by St. David's Lane is under review by Planning Board.

Special Districts:

Luke Smith, Chair

- Work being completed on Providence Ave. sewer line repair
- Stanford/Fillmore sewer project is under construction. Grant was approved to assist some homeowners with hookup to new sewers.
- Project development continues to address inflow and infiltration problems with sewer lines, and capital repairs are scheduled for several sections of our water main system.
- Working on our water well redevelopment and exploration for new well sites, in order to diminish our dependency on the City of Schenectady, and reduce cost of water.

Assessor's Office

#386-4550

Tentative Assessment Roll

The 2005 tentative assessment roll will be filed in the Assessor's Office no later than May 1, 2005. The new assessment roll will be open for inspection at that time. For those who do not already know, the assessment rolls are available for inspection all year round. A legal notice will be published in the Daily Gazette with the dates and time to review the roll and speak with the Assessor. Anyone wishing to speak with the Assessor can make an appointment by calling 386-4550 Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.

STAR Exemptions

There are still some taxpayers who have not yet applied for their STAR exemptions. You can save between \$400.00 and \$900.00 per year.

Criteria for Basic STAR Qualification:

- 1-, 2-, 3-, or 4-family homeowners
- There is no age restriction.
- There is no income limitation.

Criteria for Senior Enhanced STAR Qualification:

- 1-, 2-, 3-, or 4-family homeowners
- One of the homeowners must be at least 65 years of age (husband, wife or siblings).
- Total 2004 adjusted gross income limit is approximately \$66,550.
- Annual filing may be required. Please call the Assessor's Office if you have questions.

Veterans

Did you serve during a period of war? Call the Assessor's Office for information about your tax exemption.

New Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Workers:

Are you a volunteer firefighter or ambulance worker? Please call 386-4550 or send e-mail to ahoulihan@niskayuna.org for details.

Comptroller's Office

386-4506

The comptroller's Office is currently implementing a new Payroll/Personnel software package authorized by the Town Board in 2004 to replace the previous package purchased in 1991. The move to a Windows-based solution enables the Town to utilize less expensive hardware, simplify its network configuration, and allow for easier access to data. The new payroll software meets the mandatory State and Federal magnetic media reporting requirements, while streamlining the payroll process. With the addition of a personnel module, the posting of leave accruals and contractual salary increases will be automated for the 150

employees in three labor unions along with the non-represented employees. Also, the system will track all future training and certification requirements as well as maintain a detailed work history to better evaluate employee performance. This system was purchased under New York State Contract and is utilized by many municipalities in the local region including Albany and Schenectady County.

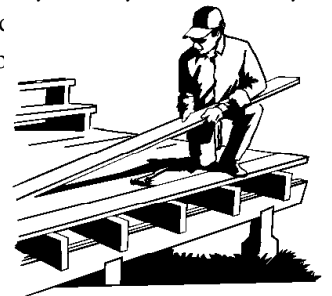
Building Dept.

#386-4522

Why get a Building Permit?

By reading this article you've already taken the first step toward protecting the outcome and investment value of your construction project and help to guard against a lawsuit or injury. The following information describes simple steps you can take to obtain a building permit and how permits can work for you. You'll be surprised at how easy the whole process is.

Building permits are very beneficial to you and your community. By working with expert code official benefit from their knowledge of building codes to ensure your construction project is built right, will be safe, and will last. The following information describes simple steps you can take to obtain a building permit, and how permits can work for you.



What's a Building Permit?

A building permit gives you legal permission to start construction of a building project in accordance with approved drawings and specifications.

When Do I Need a Permit?

The best way to find out if you need a permit is to call your local building department. Discuss your plans with the code official before beginning any construction to determine whether you need a permit. Even if a permit is not needed, the code official will answer construction questions and may provide valuable advice.

Permits are usually required for the following:

- New buildings
- Additions (bedrooms, bathrooms, family rooms, etc.)
- Residential work (decks, garages, fences, fireplaces, pools, water heaters, etc.)
- Renovations (garage conversions, basement furnishings, kitchen expansions, re-roofing, etc.)
- Electrical systems
- Plumbing systems

Your home or business is an investment. If your construction

project does not comply with the codes adopted by your community, the value of your investment could be reduced. Property insurers may not cover work done without permits and inspections. If you decide to sell a home or building that has had modifications without a permit, you may be required to tear down the addition, leave it unoccupied, or make costly repairs.

Your permit also allows the code official to protect the public by reducing the potential hazards of unsafe construction and ensuring health, safety and welfare. By following code guidelines, the completed project will meet minimum standards of safety and will be less likely to cause injury to you, your family, your friends, or future owners. A property owner who can show that code requirements were strictly and consistently met — as demonstrated by a code official's carefully maintained records — has a strong ally if something happens to trigger a lawsuit.

Talk to your Local Code Official

Your code official wants your project to be a success and will help you avoid potential problems that could cost you time and money. You will be asked some basic questions (What are you planning to do?), advised of any requirements, and, if necessary, referred to other departments for their approval. The code official will provide you with the resources and information needed for compliance with the applicable building codes. You will then receive an application for a building permit.

Submit Application

At this stage you will document the who, what, when, where and how of the job, along with any sketches or plans of the proposed work.

The Simple Permit Process:

Review Process

In a brief amount of time, the code official will review your plans and determine if your project is in compliance with local requirements.

Receive Permit

Now that you have been approved for a permit, you have legal permission to start construction. A fee, based on the size of the job, is collected to cover the cost of the application, the review, and the inspection process. Separate permits are typically required for electrical and plumbing work.

Job Site Visits

On-site inspections will be required to make certain the work conforms to the permit, local codes and plans. Again, you will have access to the expertise of the code official to help you with questions or concerns regarding the project and to minimize potentially costly mistakes. The code official will let you know

approximately how many inspections may be needed for your project. Usually, a one- or two-day notice is needed when requesting visits.

Final Approval

The code official will provide documentation when construction is complete and code compliance is determined.

Tree Planting Program

The Town of Niskayuna is currently accepting requests for street trees to be planted in the fall of 2005. Approximately eighty trees, including several varieties of Maple, Ash, and Oak, to name a few, will be planted. The locations for all plantings will be within your frontage of the Town's right-of-way adjacent to the street (typically 30 feet in from centerline). Trees will be delivered on a first come, first served basis. As a recipient, your only responsibility will be to saturate the ground with water once a week during the dry season. If you wish to participate, please call the Highway Department (785-9753) to have your name included on the list.

News from the Town Clerk

#386-4510

Planning to travel soon? Caution about travel documents:

Some original New York State Birth Certificates were issued as "Birth Registrations" rather than Birth Certificates. To be safe, and to avoid delay in your trip, call the Town or City Clerk where you were born for instructions on how to receive a certified copy of your birth certificate. Certificates issued by the hospital are NOT legal documents and may also be refused even though they may have been accepted in the past. They might not be accepted for applying for a passport, nor for use while traveling.

Birth Certificate Requests for Sports

Parents of children playing in sports leagues are often asked to provide birth certificates. This document is your child's main source of identification. If you are asked to produce a certified copy, ask for the original.

Dog License

It is the responsibility of dog owners to license their dogs, the cost of which is \$12.50 a year for spayed or neutered dogs and \$20.50 a year if unspayed or unneutered. The Town provides a discount for dog licenses for seniors 65 years or older. Licenses for spayed or neutered dogs are \$2.50 a year; unspayed or unneutered dogs are \$10.50 a year.

Highway Department

#785-9753

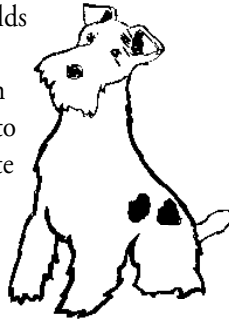
Did you know that the Highway & Parks Dept.

a) Maintains approximately 160 lane miles of road?

- b) Top paves or reconstructs 4-6 miles of road each year?
- c) Plows or sands 80 miles of road during each snow storm?
- d) Mows and maintains 500 acres of green space each week?
- e) Picks up yard waste weekly for approximately 8,200 homes?

Please pick up after your pets!

Over the years, the Highway Department has received many calls from its residents regarding the dog excrement that irresponsible pet owners leave in our parks, playing fields and along the Bike Path. As a courtesy to the people who use the parks, many of whom are children, all dog owners are required to carry a disposal bag to dispose of the waste properly.



Highway & Parks Projects for 2005:

- Plans to reconstruct the 5 tennis courts at Blatnick Park
- Plans to resurface the pavement at River Road Park
- Plans to reconstruct 2 miles of Bike Path (Lock 7 Rd. to Blatnick Park)
- Plans to install drainage and pave around the Community Center
- Plans to do over \$100,000 worth of drainage work on 2 miles of road
- Plans to reconstruct 1.6 miles of road
- Plans to top pave and surface treat 3 miles of road

2005 Tentative Paving List (Depending on Weather):

Top paving Hampshire Seat (Downing to Westminster), St Marks Ln. (Avon Crest to the end), Oxford Way, Downing St. (Sussex to Buckingham), Mohegan Rd. (Rt. 7 to Stuyvesant Dr.), Stanley Lane, Whitmyer Lane, Hartland St., Edison Dr., Lamplighter Dr.

Total reconstruction – Stanford Ave., Cliff St., Fillmore Ave., Leroy/Ralph, Clifton Park Rd. (Rankin to Arkona end), Hoover Rd., Michelle Way, Rosemary Dr., Laurel Ln.

Summer Paving/Landscaping:

Residents planning to repave their driveway, landscape their property, or install sprinklers should first check with the Highway Department at 785-9753 to see if and when their road will be paved. Too many properties have been damaged because roadwork was done after the homeowner's landscaping.

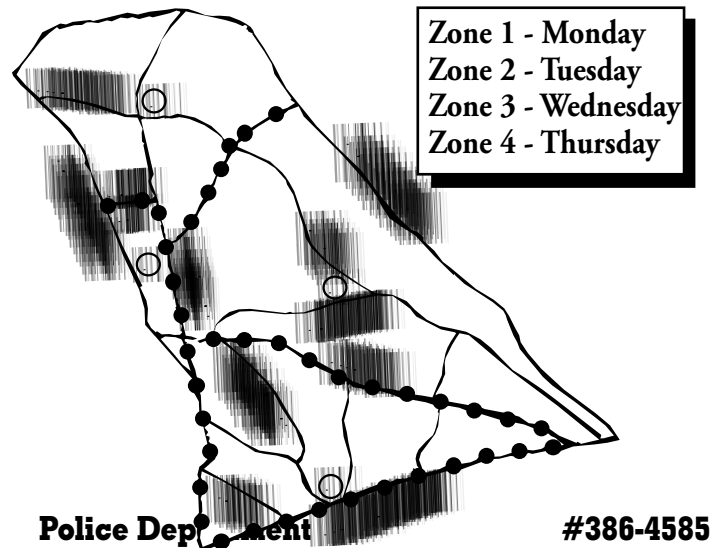
Weekly Yard Waste Pickup:

April 4th to May 13th (weather permitting), our highway trucks will start circulating the town to pick up yard waste. Please leave cans, bags or barrels at the curb (maximum capacity: cans and barrels 32 gallons, bags 40 lbs.), and the truck will pick them

up when in your area. Branches and brush not to exceed 3 feet in diameter and 3 feet in length **must be bundled and tied** with biodegradable twine (**no wire**). Please do not include garbage, rocks, sod, dirt or metal in your yard waste. Biodegradable yard waste bags are no longer sold at Town Hall, but may be purchased at any hardware or grocery store. **Please do not use plastic bags.** They will not be picked up. Also, please remove the empty containers from the curb after the waste has been taken away.

Scheduled Zone Pickup:

Scheduled zone pickup will begin on Monday, May 16. All barrels/containers (except bags) must be labeled with a "Yard Waste" sticker. Stickers are available at the Town Clerk's Office, Recreation Department, the Transfer Station or Highway Department.



Police Department #386-4585

Did you know that it is a violation of a Niskayuna Town Ordinance for someone to come to your house and solicit work from you? A local law enacted on May 12, 1986 states "It shall be unlawful for any person within the corporate limits of the Town of Niskayuna to act as a vendor, hawker, peddler or solicitor without first having obtained and paid for, and having in force and effect, a license therefor."

Every year, at about this time, the police station receives reports of work being done at residences without the homeowner permission. Frequently, it is our elderly residents that are victims of this type of conduct. Upon completion, the victim is pressured into paying for the work that is, in many cases, not performed properly. Payment for the "work" is also much more than a reputable contractor would charge. We should all act as good neighbors and contact the police if suspicious activity is observed at the homes of a friend,

relative or neighbor. The Niskayuna Police Department's tips and programs on crime prevention can be found at the department's section of the Town's web site, www.niskayuna.org, or by calling 374-3159.

Engineering Department #386-4520 **UTILITY SYSTEM PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS**

Following are some tips to help you reduce operating costs and avoid bigger problems:

1 - Recognize common symptoms of utility system problems:

- In the past, the ground would dry out, but now it is always wet.
- The sump pump runs more frequently than it did at the same time last year.
- The basement seems wetter than it used to be.
- The foundation drain and/or sanitary sewer backs up occasionally.
- Streets or drainage ways seem to flood more than they used to.

2 - Properly diagnose the problems.

These are just a few possibilities:

- There could be a leak or break in a nearby public water main.
- Your water service or your neighbor's could be leaking.
- A public storm water or sanitary sewer line could be broken, clogged, or operating beyond its capacity.
- A private storm line, sanitary line, or even a roof gutter could be failing.
- Grading and pavement treatments that affect drainage patterns may have changed.
- A catch basin's grate could be plugged or covered, preventing it from taking water.

3 - Understand the significance

- Failure or delay in reporting a private break increases costs to all taxpayers.
- Failure or delay repairing or reporting a water break wastes everyone's money.
- A water break may cause property damage and public safety hazards.
- A broken pipe can cause flooding and associated problems.
- Broken pipes can create a host of problems. If the owner of the pipe fails to repair it, the cost of repairing flooding problems is often transferred to someone else.
- Inappropriate or illegal pipe connections also cause sanitary sewer collection systems failure, flooding, and occasionally, treatment violations. Sanitary sewers are only meant to collect domestic sewage.
- Any connection that allows ground water, surface water,

or sump pump discharges to enter the sanitary system contributes to problems elsewhere in the system, and raises overall operating costs.

4 - Taking appropriate action

- If you suspect any problems in the public utility systems (water, sanitary sewer or storm water), please notify the Town's Water & Sewer Department or Highway Department.
- If you suspect a private service connection problem, call the Town and we will help diagnose it.

If you know there is a problem with any of your service connections, and you have been postponing the repairs, consider the potential impact and costs you are transferring to others. The more conscious we are of problems in our utility systems, the better prepared we will be to take appropriate action and keep operating costs down.

NISKAYUNA SENIOR NEWS

Seniors meet each Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Niskayuna Community Center. Activities include line dancing, crafts, art projects, bridge, scrabble, bocce, bowling, shuffleboard, lunch, programs and trips. Most activities are free, and transportation is available for any Niskayuna resident 60 years and older.

Special Senior Events for Spring 2005:

April/May: Trip to Capital Rep Theatre and Lunch in Albany

April/May: Albany Aqua-Ducks Tour

May 3: BBQ at Niskayuna Town Highway Garage

May 16 & 18: 55 Alive Defensive Driving Course

May 10: 20th Anniversary Celebration of our Senior Center with special lunch and honored guests

July/August: Trip to SPAC for ballet and orchestra Shopping Trips to Area Malls: One Friday each month. Call Senior Center for dates.

August 27: 4th Annual Senior Barbecue at Niskayuna Community Center Park.

Please call the Recreation Department for information on all activities. 372-2519

Recreation Department #372-2519

Spring Activities:

Soccer
Babysitting Course
Jazz Dance
Fencing
Family Fun Run
Spring Parade & Meet the Bunny

Chess Instruction

Mini Golf
Roller Skating
Middle School Parties
Bowling
Field Hockey

Activities for Adults:

Tai Chi
Basketball
Golf Lessons
Defensive Driving Class (55 years and older)
Chess Club
Exercise
Table Tennis League

All programs detailed in our annual Spring Recreation Activity flyer available at the Recreation Office, Niskayuna Town Hall, and online at www.niskayuna.org. Call the Recreation Department at 372-2519 for information on all activities.

Driving Range: The Niskayuna Driving Range, called the "Best Kept Secret in Niskayuna" and voted "Best Driving Range in the Capital Region" by the Albany Times Union, will open for the season in mid-April. Located on River Road near the entrance to the Recycling Station, just east of Blatnick Park, the Driving Range offers golfers an inexpensive and delightful way to practice and improve their driving skills.

Niskayuna Skate Park: Located in Blatnick Park on River Road, the Niskayuna Skate park will open in early May, weather permitting. For use by skateboards and roller blades only - no bicycles. Users will be required to wear helmets, elbow and kneepads, and follow all posted rules. Skate Park rules will be strictly enforced. Children under 11 years of age must be accompanied by an adult when using this facility. Admission is free. Please note: Skate Park will be open only when conditions are safe. If in doubt, we suggest you check with the Recreation Department to verify that the park is open.

Town Pool Membership ID Cards: Membership registration cards are available in the spring program flyer and online at www.niskayuna.org. If your photo is already on file, simply complete the card, and return with check to the Niskayuna Recreation Department. Your passes will be waiting for you the first time you use the pool. For those who need a photo taken for the 2005 pool season, ID cards will be sold at the Niskayuna Community Center on April 13th and April 14th from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.; on May 19th from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.; on June 4th from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., and on June 5th from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.



Picnics: Don't forget, you can rent the pavilion at Blatnick Park, River Road Park, Avon Crest Park, and the Recreation Complex for parties, picnics, family gatherings and other events.

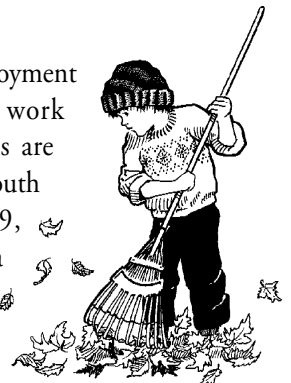
Summer Concerts: The Niskayuna Town Band will once again perform in the annual Niskayuna Gazebo Concert Series this summer. Practice begins in late March at the Niskayuna Community Center. Concerts are selected Tuesday and Friday evenings in July and August. The band welcomes new members. If interested, please call the Recreation Department.

Summer Activities: The Recreation Department summer activity booklet will be available the second week of May. Copies will be available at the Recreation Office, Town Hall information table, at all elementary and middle schools for students to bring home, and online. Information on the town pool, the driving range, playground program, sports camps, parks, summer concert series at the gazebo, and fall recreational soccer will be included in the booklet.

The Niskayuna Community Center: Located at 2682 Aqueduct Road, Niskayuna, this handicapped-accessible, two-level building is available for private party rentals by Niskayuna residents throughout the year.

Youth Employment:

Niskayuna youth interested in employment ranging from babysitting to yard work to part-time jobs in area businesses are encouraged to call the Niskayuna Youth Employment Service at 372-2519, or visit Betty Ferencik in the Media Center at Niskayuna High School. Similarly, if you have a job to be filled, call the Youth Employment Service for names of available workers. In addition, the Recreation Department needs youths and adults to work in a variety of part-time spring and summer jobs as referees, counselors, lifeguards, and specialists.



TOWN OF NISKAYUNA
One Niskayuna Circle
Niskayuna, New York 12309-4381

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Schenectady, NY
Permit No. 137

Luke J. Smith
Supervisor

Town Council

Liz Orzel Kasper
William R. Chapman
Diane P. O'Donnell
Richard A. Holt



A Message from Niskayuna Library Gardeners

The Niskayuna Library Gardeners will have an orientation and planning meeting on Wednesday, May 4, at 7:00 p.m. in the Niskayuna Library Community Room. Anyone interested in volunteering in the gardens during the upcoming season is encouraged to attend. We can use more helping hands! The meeting will provide an opportunity to get acquainted with some of the other volunteer gardeners and learn about plans for this season. Light refreshments will be served.

If you are interested, but unable to attend the meeting, please call Elaine at 377-4541 for more information, or join us at the library gardens any Thursday morning at 9:30 beginning May 5.