

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- **BOE Voting to take place at the Town Hall**
- **Virgil Making Modern History**
- **School Closing and a longtime Virgil Teacher Retires**
- **A Message from our Legislator**
- **A Prison Camp In Virgil?**
- **VBS Starts In July**

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# Town of Virgil News

VOLUME V ISSUE IV

SPRING 2019

## Separating Recyclable Food Glass Containers



Many of you know that Cortland County is a no sort recycling county, which means you can throw all your recyclables in one container. However, the county is trying to cut costs and because glass is so heavy, they have now begun to sort out glass. At this point this is voluntary, however

the good folks at the Virgil Transfer Station have begun to sort glass into its own container. It would be most helpful to all of us and the environment, if we would sort out our glass. Basic glass recycling rules: Clear and colored glass that are food and beverage containers are

recyclable. Discard lids and caps. Don't worry about removing labels, but remember glass and all other containers should be thoroughly rinsed out. This is critical to the county's efforts to run an efficient program. Thank you for your efforts.

## Fresh, Friendly, and Close to Home: Virgil Farmers Market

We're sowing seeds for the Virgil Farmer's Market's 12th season! Once again, we'll be at Hollenbeck's Cider Mill bringing super fresh produce, eggs, plants, lovely homemade personal care products and crafts to our friends and neighbors. Hollenbeck's will be open with their famous pies, pretzels, breads, refrigerated items and other goodies.

The Farmer's Market will be open from June 1st. until October's frosty weather from 9am until 1pm. The Cider Mill will have Friday, Saturday, and Sunday hours – stay tuned!

As always, we welcome new vendors. There's no fee and no commitment. If you're interested please contact Chris Applegate at 835-6205.



## Virgil School Usage Committee Notes: Sandy Price

These notes were taken by Sandy Price, other committee members may have additional notes. The committee has met three times on November 20, January 15 and February 5 for a school building tour. From my observation the building is in excellent condition. Committee member attendance at each meeting has been good, indicating that there is interest in pursuing opportunities for future use of the building. Members contacted a wide variety of individuals, organizations and agencies. Interest was shown from many, however with the uncertainty of the availability of the building, no firm commitments were made. Some of the ideas that were suggested, explored or investigated were: Family Health Network, a boys and girls club, a community private school, a sports academy, town of Virgil community center, a charter school, a nursing home, a daycare, a town hall, negotiate to keep it as Virgil school, charter school satellite with Truxton, Cortland County, CAPCO, a library, senior citizen

housing, gym for exercise and a sport practice facility, house a before and after school program, a storage facility, apartments, new secure court room and separate rooms for victims and lawyers, rent out rooms for hand crafters, artists, kitchen, a senior center, an emergency shelter with generator, a historical room and displays, a health club, town park, music and voice lessons, tutoring, back up 911 center, satellite sheriff and or state police offices, rent offices, sell the present town hall and move all services there, have a town park with the walking path and expand community activities. Possibly rent out rooms for offices, hand crafters and many of the things listed above to enhance the quality of life in our town.

Two other possibilities that were discussed was doing a feasibility usage study with Cornell University students and pursue a private entity that was interested in converting the building into housing with community activities. It was mentioned that at least one, possibly two, developers are interested.

Although there was no formal vote, the consensus of the committee, was that they wanted the proposal to go for a public vote referendum. They would like the pros and cons clearly stated and publicized ahead of the vote. Additionally, they wanted compilation of the expenses available to the public and they would like them to be made available at both the town hall and the school building. Additionally, Senator Jim Seward had pledged to see if there was any state money available to help offset the costs. My personal recommendation is for the town to take ownership and further explore the feasibility of a town hall/ community center. If that doesn't pan out the town will be able to have control of how the building is used. The date of the public referendum is to be determined. Please give thoughtful consideration to the vision some of us have and vote yes. Thank you, Sandy Price

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## Board of Education Election/Budget Vote May 21st

The 2019 School Budget and Board of Education Votes will all be held on May 21st, 2019. With in the Town of Virgil there are residents living in four different school districts.

Residents of Virgil living in the Cortland Enlarged City School District will be voting at the Virgil Town Hall from noon to 9:00 PM.

If you reside in the Dryden Central School District voting will take place at the Middle School-High School auditorium from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM.

Folks residing in the Marathon School district vote at the Marathon High School room 107 from noon to 9:00 PM.

Finally if you reside in the McGraw

District voting will be held in the High School Auditorium from noon to 8:00 PM.

Hope this information is helpful. It can be very confusing having four different school districts with voting held at different times. For more information call the school district in which you reside.

## Virgil Teacher Eileen Fitzgerald-Spiehs will Retire

Virgil Teacher Mrs. Eileen Fitzgerald-Spiehs will be retiring from teaching after 30 years. Ms. “Fitz” as her students endearing called her, taught 4th grade at Virgil Elementary school. She has often been named the most favorite teacher for many Virgil students.

Virgil Alumnus Quinn Doubet, class of 2008, quoted, “ Ms. Fitz has always been a inspiration for me. She brought so much energy to her teaching and that inspired me in my learning. She was an amazing teacher and I am very fortunate to have learned from her.”

There will be an ice cream social to celebrate Ms. Fitz career held at the Virgil Elementary School, Friday June 7th. They are hoping to get former students and staff to attend this special event. Further details will follow as plans evolve.

## Trout Season Opened April 1: Licenses on Sale with the VTC

Although the opener is traditionally met with snow, high flows and cold temperatures, April 1 is nonetheless the opening day for trout and salmon fishing throughout the State of New York and an indication that spring is just around the corner. Look for best fishing in more temperate areas of New York including Long Island, the lower Hudson Valley and southwestern New York. DEC has a number of new publications that will prove helpful to those new to trout fishing. The I FISH NY Guide to Trout Fishing with Synthetic Bait describes a very effective technique to catch early season trout in ponds. The I FISH NY Guide to Trout Fishing in Streams (PDF) provides good information for those who prefer trout fishing in moving waters. Each year, DEC stocks over 1,200 waters with trout and salmon. Visit DEC’s website for the planned listing of 2019 stockings by county.



## Guiding Eyes for the Blind: Making History in Virgil



(Shannon & Westley)

Did you know that History was made this past week? Thomas Panek, President and CEO of Guiding Eyes for the blind ran in the New York City Marathon from Brooklyn’s Prospect Park to Manhattan’s FDR Drive and Central Park.

Panek, who is blind ran with the assistance of three guide dogs. Black lab Westley was the first to start the race. Westly, was raised by Shannon Doubet and family, who are life long Virgil residents.

For the first months of life puppies are placed in homes. Puppies, like humans, are more accepting of a variety of stimuli if they are exposed at an early age. From birth to 16 weeks, the pups undergo a period of rapid brain development. Because guide dogs must greet myriad situations with equanimity and control, the best preparation is to be exposed to a large variety of experiences at the earliest age possible. Taking advantage of this period of brain development accustoms puppies to the sights, sounds, social interactions, and early training maximizes the genetic potential to be a guide dog. The Doubet’s took on the task of raising Westley and the heartache of giving him up as they grew to dearly love him.

One of the amazing parts of this story is, the Doubets who are avid runners, ran with Westly almost daily.



Westly spent his puppy months learning to love running. Thomas Panek, who also enjoys running recruited Westly along with his sister to run in the marathon. Panek’s guide dog Gus was the third dog to make up this amazing trio. Gus who is getting older is going to be retiring as a guide dog and ran his last race. Panek has now chosen a new guide dog companion, can you guess who? It’s Westley!

If you see the Doubets around town thank them for the amazing selfless work they are doing. They now have another puppy in training for the Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Her name is Ursa. If you would like more information about this program go to [www.guidingeyes.org](http://www.guidingeyes.org)



(Thomas & Westley)

# Cortland County Legislator, Sandy Price's Report for April 2019

Eleven of the seventeen County Legislators (myself included) have stated publicly that they do not support a \$58 million jail in South Cortland. Two different studies have either come in and are coming in shortly that have input on the needs concerning the jail. With all that said, it's time to start making plans to have the jail at 54 Greenbush Street meet those needs. I support doing whatever is necessary and financially feasible. I'll keep you

informed on the progress, necessity and the financial feasibility of the project. Key positions are in stages of being filled: County Administrator, Recycling Coordinator, Finance Director, Auditor, Safety Officer. More information later. Otherwise the committees and the Legislature are busy monitoring budgets, planning for future endeavors and setting policy. Is there anything I should be aware of or doing?

**THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:**

"April dressed in all its trim, hath put a spirit of youth in everything." William Shakespeare, Sonnet 98. Wishing all a happy spring. Enjoy the wonder and beauty of the green grass, budding leaves, singing birds, fragrant flowers and most of the rejuvenation of all parts of our lives. In other words, enjoy!  
Sandy Price, County Legislator District #14, Towns



## Virgil Stories: A Historical Book

The first volume of a personal history collection of stories from Virgil residents will be available soon at the Town Hall in Virgil, New York. This volume contains over fifty fascinating stories, enhanced by dozens of beautiful photographs, all contributed by current and former Virgil residents. The narratives cover more than a century of life in Virgil. The book costs \$20.00. Those who contributed stories may purchase the book at the discounted rate of \$15.00. If a copy needs to be mailed, please include a postage fee of \$4.00 per mailed copy of book. Proceeds from sales go to supporting the preservation of the history of Virgil. Those who purchase a copy of the Virgil Story book will also receive a free copy of the 1979 Virgil Historical Society's publication titled "As We Were." You may reserve your copy by pre-paying NOW! For more information call Alane, Virgil Town Clerk at (607) 835-6174 ext. 2

## Agriculture in the classroom

The second, third and fourth grades at the Virgil Elementary School had visitors last week. County Legislator Sandy Price and Chris Applegate the Virgil Farmers Market Manager visited the classrooms for Ag in the Classroom week. This yearly event was a joint venture between the Cornell

Cooperative Extension and the Cortland County Farm Bureau. Volunteers and schools throughout the county took part in this event. A book titled, "To the Farm' To the Market," was read by Sandy. The book covered the growing practices of a number of different types of plants and

How they are prepared to sell at local farmers markets. Chris spoke about the workings of the Virgil farmers market. Activity packets were prepared with "related activities for each grade and the book was graciously donated to the Virgil school library.

## Senior by Sylvia: Senior fitness Classes Starting this Spring

Senior fitness classes will be taught by Sylvia Cook, PTA starting on April 10th, 2019 at the Virgil United Methodist Church 1194 Church Street, Virgil NY. The classes will be held on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:30AM to 11:15 AM.

If you are retired, over 60, noticing more aches and pains, this class may be for you. Is it getting more difficult to climb stairs or do you struggle with carrying grocery bags? Is your posture getting worse or are you feeling

unsteady walking? Then you may want to try this class. If you are starting to feel less and less independent or if you have fallen, then again this class might be just what you are looking for.

Come out and try a little exercise with some of your senior friends. They will be using small dumbbells and elastic bands which will be provided. Exercises will be performed in both the standing and seated positions. You will be working on

strengthening and stretching exercises. You will also be working on your balance.

There is currently no fee at this time, but you will be required to sign a waiver. For more information contact Sandy Price or Sylvia Cook at 607-835-6711.



## In the Wild: Vacation Bible School

By: Gayle Kryger

VIRGIL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
July 8-12 9 a.m. – Noon Daily  
Registration forms are available at the Virgil Country Store.

Heading into its 19th year in Virgil, students will be reminded that they were made on purpose for a purpose and that they matter; each and every one of them. With an action-packed opening and closing, games, snacks, crafts, and much more, they will have an opportunity to build relationships that will last a lifetime. Knowing that they have a special purpose will give them a solid foundation to

head into any and all new situations with confidence. Since so many of our graduating 6th graders want to come back, a class for 7th and 8th graders has been added for the first time this year. All friends, family and neighbors are welcome to the concert and open house at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, July 11th.

Students will focus in on amazing, real-life encounters with Jesus. Each encounter is like a snapshot – a specific moment in time captured on the pages of Scripture. Through VBS, students will discover that each snapshot of Jesus is an opportunity to respond to the gospel.

And when put together, these isolated encounters clearly reveal the most amazing truth of all – Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing, we can have life in His name. Watch for the red and white sandwich board sign at the four corners for registration, as we get closer to the date. If you would like to volunteer, book your week off from work and contact Gayle Kryger 607.543.0833.

Are you ready for an up close and personal encounter with Jesus? The adventure of a lifetime awaits!



## Town of Virgil

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We're here to serve you. Visit our website at:  
[www.Virgilny.org](http://www.Virgilny.org)



Virgil Town Supervisor: John Kaminski  
Deputy Supervisor: Jereme Stiles  
Town Council Members: Eric Snow, Gary Pelton, Matt Denniston  
**The Town Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month.**  
**Meetings start at 6:30 P.M.**

- Town Clerk/Collector: Alane Van Donsel
- Deputy Town Clerk: Makenzie Morgan
- Town's Bookkeeper: Gina Nourse
- Town Justice: R. Scott Elston
- Highway Superintendent: Britt Morse
- Deputy Highway Supervisor: Dan Courtney
- Animal Control Officer: Lindsay Kemp
- Town Assessor: Brian Fitts
- Town Attorney: Patrick M. Snyder, Esq.
- Code Enforcement: Kevin McMahon
- County Legislator: Sandy Price

## Fireworks Return to Virgil in July

Mark your calendars for the return of the Town of Virgil Fireworks at Hope Lake Park on Friday, July 5th. With support from our local businesses and residents, Virgil will be having a beautiful fireworks display at Hope Lake Park. We want to thank these business owners and organizations for their contributions: Beck Farms, D&M Mini Storage, Empire Welding, Gems-Multicultural Salon, Gordie's Appliance Repair, Greek Peak Mountain Resort, Haynes Backhoe Service, Hollenbeck's Cider Mill, Stile's Construction and the Virgil Youth Commission. Please give a big "thank you" to these folks for their support of our town. We have also received some donations from individuals to help defray the expenses. There will be a donation jar at the Town Hall if you would like to help us restore the tradition of an annual fireworks show in Virgil.

## Virgil Historical Meeting Scheduled

The Virgil Historical Society is scheduled to meet on May 16th, 2019 7:00 PM at the Virgil Town Hall. The speaker will be Virgil resident Mr. Walter Andrews. The title of the talk will be, "My Experiences in World War II." Mr. Andrews enlisted in the Army at the age of 13! Mr. Andrews is a member of VUMS, Veterans of Underage Military Service. The meeting is open to all, without charge. Attendees are requested to wear or bring their military uniform if they served.



## A Prison Camp in Virgil

By: Marsha Powell

In the late 1920s overcrowding was a serious problem in New York state prisons. To help relieve the situation, Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt recommended and the legislature approved the establishment of five prison camps. Camp Virgil was the first camp to be completed.

Construction began the first week of January 1930. The plan was to house approximately 100 convicts. The buildings were sectional and could be moved as needed. The camp was completed in seventeen days. Wire fencing was used to prevent prisoners from leaving and to prevent interference from outsiders. Trenches were dug to the well so water could be pumped. Electricity was completed by the end of 1930.

The location of the camp was described as being 'one of the choicest spots in Cortland County'. Spring and summer weather was pleasant, the views of rolling hills lovely. Only the cold winter winds detracted. It was situated at the top of the hill going from Virgil to Cortland, along the 'old' road to Cortland. One of the projects of the inmates was to construct a new road to eliminate the steep hill and dangerous hairpin turn. The result is Route 215. No machinery was available. The prisoners used picks and shovels.

Short-term convicts with good records were quartered there. Captain Daniel Sheehan set the prisoner routine, up at 6am, one-half hour to shower and tidy their cots, then off to breakfast. Work followed building the new road or in the winter helping to clear roads and shovel drifts 18-20 feet high.

It was not all work and no play at the camp. In the winter, convicts-built sleds and enjoyed sliding down hills. In the summer a baseball team was formed. They competed against many local town teams and won 14 out of 15 games. Special days were celebrated.

Thanksgiving dinner included thirty-five chickens weighing a total of 141 pounds, a bushel of white potatoes, a bushel of sweets, celery, cranberries and all the trimmings. Ice cream and cake topped off the dinner. St. Patrick's Day included boxing matches, entertainment and music. This was followed by refreshments including sandwiches, green ice cream, cake and coffee.

Other evenings were spent playing checkers, cards, reading and writing. Education was not neglected. Captain Sheehan regularly offered classes to improve the writing and reading skills of the prisoners.

Occasionally a prisoner escaped, but none remained free for long. On one occasion,

five wandered off, drank alcohol and were rounded up shortly after. The most widely publicized incident was of Joseph Donato. He escaped, met some men in the woods to drink alcohol and attacked a local housewife. One convict, Albert Latham, a convicted murderer, escaped and made it to the town of Taylor before being recaptured. Any convict attempting escape was returned to Auburn Prison. The Virgil Camp was in operation for three years. In February 1933 it was announced the camp would be vacated and all prisoners would be moved to other camps. The road work was nearly complete in Virgil and the prisoners were needed for projects at Newark and in Wayne County. The camp was closed by April. The new road in Virgil was completed by the state and the road opened to traffic in 1934.

**Annual Cemetery Spring Clean Day**

**Date: May 18th, 2019**

**Meet at the Cemetery at 9:30 AM**

**All Are Welcome**