



BELLE PLAINE

NEWS & EVENTS

Winter 2013

Town officers unopposed on ballot

No one challenged the Town of Belle Plaine officials at the Jan. 15 caucus, so the incumbents will run unopposed for new terms on the April 2 ballot.

Chairman **Alvin Bartz** is running for his 20th two-year term. He is a dairy farmer who operates Friendship Acres.

Supervisor **Harold Polzin** has been on the board for eight years after serving as town clerk for 32 years. He operates Harold Polzin Electrical & Heating Services.

Supervisor **Dennis Thornton** is seeking his third term. He is a retired newspaper and magazine editor, president of the Cloverleaf Lakes Protective Association and editor of this newsletter.

Constable **Dennis Hoffmann** is a Belle Plaine farmer who is running for his 12th term.

A referendum on the November 2012 ballot changed the town clerk and treasurer positions from elective to appointive. The vote to change the clerk to appointive was 548 yes to 389 no. The vote to change the treasurer to appointive was 530 yes to 388 no. The Town Board had put the referendum on the ballot, recognizing that a solid background and experience is necessary to fulfill the expanding duties of those positions.

The Town Board has voted unanimously to hire the current officials, Clerk **Kristine Vomastic** and Treasurer **Heather Krueger**, when their terms of office are up in April.

Also on the April 2 ballot will be **Bob Holzbach**, who is running unopposed for re-election to the Cloverleaf Lakes Sanitary District (see page 5 for a story on the district).



Belle Plaine town officials include, from left, front row: Supervisor Harold Polzin, Treasurer Heather Krueger and Clerk Kristine Vomastic. Back row: Chairman Alvin Bartz, Supervisor Dennis Thornton and Constable Dennis Hoffmann.



Feb. 19 — Primary for Supreme Court
April 2 — Spring election for town board, sanitary district, Supreme Court, school boards

Polls open at 7 a.m., close at 8 p.m.

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Fishing Derby set for Feb. 2

The Clover Bares Snowmobile Club is sponsoring its annual Fishing Derby Saturday, Feb. 2, on Cloverleaf Lakes.

The all-day ice fishing event is headquartered in a tent in front of Mickster's and the town boat landing. Food and beverages are available and numerous prizes are awarded.

Raffle tickets are available for \$1 per ticket or six for \$5 at area establishments and at the event.

Prizes are \$500, \$250, \$100, \$50 and \$25.

Fishing prizes will be awarded in the adult and children categories. Weigh-in for fish will be from noon to 4 p.m.

Tom Weniger of the Clover Bares said conditions on the ice are expected to improve as colder weather moves in.

The Clover Bares maintain a network of snowmobile trails in Belle Plaine and adjoining towns.

Paving and reconstructing roads are major expense

By Alvin Bartz

This is the time of year I start planning our highway construction projects for 2013. We have 66 miles of roads plus intersections in the town. Usually, we spend about \$350,000 for these projects and maintenance.

Last year, blacktop cost about \$100,000 per mile. With some reconstruction, a road project costs about \$150,000 per mile. If you do the math, that means it will be more than 30 years between resurfacings for a road.

Depending on the weather, a good chunk of our available road funds could go to snow removal. The recent weekend snow removal cost about \$10,000 including overtime.

We have been having road sign vandalism. Some road name signs have been stolen up to three times at a cost of up to \$100 to replace each one. If you notice this vandalism, call or report it to the police.

Belle Plaine chairman's message

If there is a section of road or a bad culvert or other problem in your area, give me a call as we are not always aware of a problem.

In 2012, we had 21 building permits, which included three new homes and a lot of little projects like garages or decks. Usually we have about 40 or more permits. New growth helps keep the town tax rate even as cost of services increases.

Recyclables that were taken to the dropoff site cost us \$194 per ton, that's 10 cents a pound, to haul and process in September. Had these been placed curbside for house-to-house pickup, there would have been no additional cost as this is part of the monthly charge. If you are on a road that has garbage pickup, it would help us keep recycling at no charge if you would use that service, and would save taxpayers money.

Belle Plaine town notebook

* Treasurer **Heather Krueger** will collect property taxes at the Community Center on Jan. 24 from 5 to 7 p.m. and Jan. 31 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tax payments also can be mailed to Treasurer, W9660 River Bank Road, Clintonville, WI 54929. Or money can be left at either Shawano or Embarrass Associated Bank locations. The first installment is due Jan. 31 to Krueger. Second installment is due July 31 to the County Treasurer **Debra Wallace**, Courthouse, 311 N. Main St., Shawano, WI 54166.

* All dogs in the town must be licensed and have proof of vaccination. Licenses will be issued by Constable **Dennis Hoffmann** by mail at N4301 Pine Ridge Road, Shawano, or at the Community Center on the same dates as the tax collection above. Hoffmann said the deadline for all dogs to be licensed is April 1. Fees are \$5 for neutered male or spayed female or \$10 for unneu-

tered male or unsplayed female.

* Reservations are being taken for the town's picnic shelter overlooking Round Lake. The facility can be rented for \$30 for residents or \$40 for non-residents. The Community Center is also available for rental. See the town clerk for details.

* Regular hours for the Collection and Recycling Center on Cloverleaf Lake Road are Wednesdays from noon to 4 p.m.; and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Jim and Corey Retzlaff** are the Recycling Center caretakers.

* The Belle Plaine Card Club meets weekly on Thursdays at the Community Center from 9:30 a.m. until noon. All are welcome to join in the fun.

* Town Clerk **Kristine Vomastic** reminds residents that she has office hours Mondays from 5 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:30 to 11 a.m. at the Community Center. Treasurer **Heather Krueger** has office hours from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Mondays.

Belle Plaine officials

Alvin Bartz, chairman

Harold Polzin, supervisor

Dennis Thornton, supervisor

Kristine Vomastic, clerk

Heather Krueger, treasurer

Dennis Hoffmann, constable

Newsletter editor: Dennis Thornton



Belle Plaine Community Center

N3002 St. Hwy. 22

Clintonville, WI 54929

(715) 524-2690

Town clerk's hours:

5 to 7 p.m. Monday; 8:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday or by appointment

Regular Town Board meetings:

Second Monday of each month, 7:30 p.m.

Committees:

Planning, Zoning, Gibson Island Stewardship

Population estimate: 1,855

Lake association volunteers are multi-taskers

By Dennis Thornton

About 40 avid Cloverleaf Lakes volunteers were honored by the CLPA board of directors at a luncheon last fall and a few others couldn't attend. They have accomplished amazing things.

I compiled a partial list of what the CLPA, with cooperation of the Town Board, has done in the past year. Most will be ongoing actions into 2013. We can always use your help.

The biggest accomplishment was applying for and administering a five-year DNR grant to chemically treat Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly-leaf Pondweed. Besides meeting with the DNR and writing the grant application, this involved taking multiple water samples and water temperature readings (and getting wet and cold on spring days).

The Shoreland Restoration Team spent a couple of long 90-degree days preparing seedbeds and planting a rain garden near the town's fishing pier on Round Lake.

On one July day, we welcomed nearly 200 youngsters to participate in the Kiddie Parade, held an Art Fair attended by hundreds and devoted a Pontoon Parade to honor veterans.

We had printed and distributed thousands of placemats and coasters educating residents about aquatic invasive species.

We raised money for the CLPA and enjoyed the 15th annual Golf Outing later in July.

Some of the ongoing activities include maintaining this

CLPA president's message

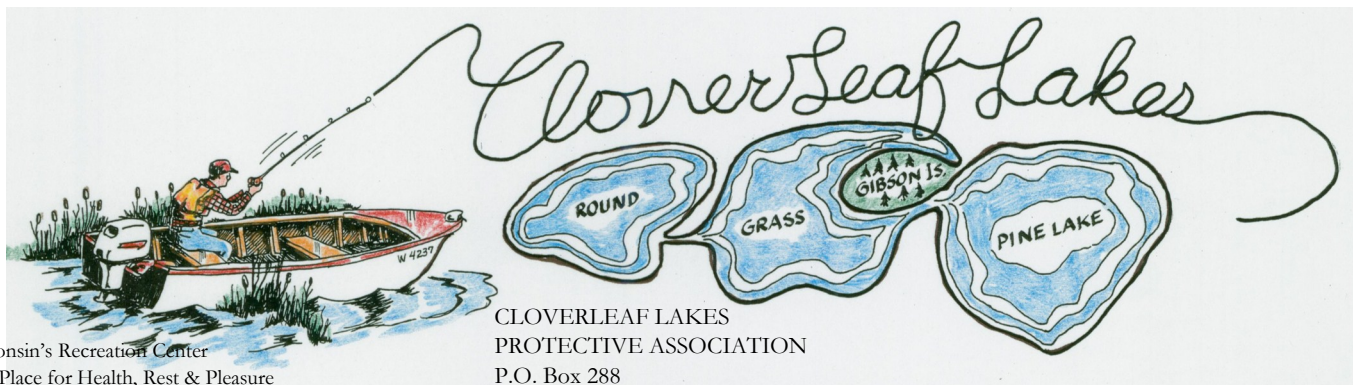
newsletter, a website, email notices and a Facebook page. We have a Welcoming Committee to give lake information to new residents. We take water samples, trap problem muskrats and rusty crayfish, help residents with shoreland restoration and have helped people test their well water.

The town has been enormously helpful in securing the DNR grant and employing a boat monitor to educate boaters about aquatic invasives. The town also has made improvements to Round Lake Park including a parking lot for boat trailers and a picnic shelter. Of course, the town also offers access to Gibson Island for hikers and nature lovers.

A big Thank You to all of you who have helped out.

* It's not too early to mark your calendar for summer events. The CLPA annual meeting will be at 10 a.m. **Saturday, May 25**, at the Rustic Resort.

The Independence Day celebration is scheduled for **Saturday, July 6**. The Kiddie Parade will begin at the boat landing at 10 a.m., the Pontoon Parade will start to circle the lakes at 6:30 p.m. and the fireworks will start kabooming at dusk. The fourth annual Art Fair is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the picnic shelter at Round Lake Park.



Wisconsin's Recreation Center
The Place for Health, Rest & Pleasure
CLPA incorporated in 1936

CLOVERLEAF LAKES
PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 288
Embarrass, WI 54933-0288

www.CloverleafLakes.com

"Preserving our lakes for future generations"

Board of Directors

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That's entertainment: Balke has 80 years in music

By Joan Sousek

Lifelong Belle Plaine resident **John Balke** has had nearly a lifelong love of music.

From his toddling days, when he received a harmonica from his brother, until about two years ago, the 94-year-old has played and entertained in neighbors' homes, clubs, dance halls, bars and, most recently, in nursing homes throughout the region.

While he started with harmonica and also played accordion and banjo, guitar was his favorite for about 80 years.

He discovered its sweet sound as a teenager on his way home from swimming with friends in the Embarrass River.

"We had parked our bicycles at the Yeager farm which was about a quarter mile from the river," John recalled. "On our way back, I could hear that marvelous musical sound coming from the Yeager home ... the Yeager girl Harriet was playing the guitar. That hooked me right there."

Harriet showed him how to play three chords and, begging to take the guitar home, he practiced one song all evening. His mother never wanted to hear the song again, he said.

John then acquired a tenor or four-string guitar, which was tuned like a four-string banjo, and soon was playing in bars.

"At that time there were no regulations against kids playing," he said.

His dad played fiddle a little bit, and John learned to read music in grade school, but basically, he was self-taught. He mostly played country western music, but he also played with the Wisconsin Blues Polka Band in the 1940s.

He started several groups, including Johnny's Rhythm Rangers in 1939 and the Melody Mountaineers in 1948. They played on WTCH Radio in its early broadcast days.

It was music that brought him to his greatest love, Bernice Rickl, his wife of 53 years, who died in 2003, and like hearing the guitar for the first time, he said, "It was love at first sight."

They met through friends while he was playing in Sherry, Wis. Bernice was 16 at the time and John was 11 years older. He drove 80 miles to her home in Blenker on his motorcycle and they rode to Wausau, but when he asked if he could date her, she said no because her mother did not approve.

"That broke my heart," he said.

About a year later, he was organizing the Mountaineers and remembered Bernice had said she had notebooks with song lyrics, so he wrote and requested words for "Home in San Antone." Soon, they arrived.

"That kinda gave me hope," he said, and soon the letters were "flying back and forth" between the two.

Bernice's mother relented.

"It was music that attracted us, and even though her ma squelched the idea at first, music brought us back together," he said.

They wed in 1949 and farmed on 120 acres off Spruce Road where John grew up. The couple had 10 children, all of whom live out of the area.

John taught Bernice to play guitar and they performed together for 36 years, sometimes joined by daughter Bonnie on bass.

He said he could not recall all the musical groups he was in, but the best was the most personal. "It was better just playing with Bernice," he said.

Like Bernice, his siblings have passed. He could name many musicians that he played with from the area, but 95 percent of them are gone, too, he said.

Once he regularly tuned in Nashville's WSM Radio, the station that started Grand Ole Opry broadcasts in 1925.

"That was when country music was country music," he said. "As it's changed more and more, I listen less and less."

When asked about other town changes over the years, he said, "I didn't pay much attention to how the town changed. Music was my life. I focused on that and my family."

A couple years back, his voice became erratic.

"Not being able to sing and entertain people the way I wanted, I quit playing guitar, too," he said.

These days, visits from Meals on Wheels and Unity nurses, chatting on the phone, and looking over photos and clippings from bygone days occupy much of his time. His guitar is idle, but he keeps it close by.

"I missed it at first," he said. "And it's still available if I want to play."



John Balke strums his electric guitar. He played with several bands over an 80-year musical career.

Sanitary District protects Cloverleaf, Long Lakes

Probably the only time you think of the Cloverleaf Lakes Sanitary District is when you get its quarterly bill in the mail. But for 30 years, the district has played a major role in preventing water pollution from entering the bodies of water in the town of Belle Plaine.

The district's network of sewer pipes collect wastewater from toilets, sinks, tubs, showers and washing machines. That prevents possible leakage from hundreds of septic systems and holding tanks.

A federal grant paid for much of the sewage system in the early 1980s, according to **Tom Weniger**, who chairs the three-person commission and has served for 15 years. The Town Board set up the district in about 1980 and appointed the first commissioners. Long Lake residents opted out of the district then, but joined in 1996, and each residence was billed about \$10,000 over several years for their hookups.

Wayne Van der Linden and **Bob Holzbach** are the other commissioners, elected to six-year terms. Holzbach is on this April's ballot, running unopposed for re-election and has served eight years while Van der Linden has served for five years.

Van der Linden's late wife, **Glenna**, was the office manager of the district for many years, a job now held by **Bridgett Kohel**. She sends out the quarterly bills for \$45 each to more than 400 households, as well as other duties. That \$15 a month charge is "very reasonable," Holzbach said, and hasn't been raised in a long time.

Another member of the team, **Pete Kristof**, checks on each of the lift stations daily and records data. An average of 2 million gallons of wastewater, up to 2.6 million gallons in the summer months, is flushed down to the treatment plant in Embarrass, which bills the district by the gallon.

The district is in the middle of major upgrades, Weniger said. In 2012, the district brought in a consultant to run a television camera through sewer pipes under Rustic Drive. The machine revealed several large leaks of groundwater into the sewer laterals, which meant the district was paying for unnecessary treatment of clear water.

The leaks were sealed, without digging up the street, using a balloon to inflate and hold a gel in place until it hardened and sealed up the leak.

Weniger said he didn't have the bill yet, but the project cost several thousand dollars. The commission will televise the Cloverleaf Lake Road sewer this year to check for leaks.

In recent years, the district also replaced pumps, motors and controls in all the lift stations around Cloverleaf Lakes and updated the system around Long Lake.

The district's budget for 2013 is \$115,500, including payroll, supplies, capital improvements and treatment plant expenses.



Commissioners and staff of the Cloverleaf Lakes Sanitary District meet at the Community Center in December. From left are Pete Kristof, Wayne Van der Linden, Tom Weniger, Bob Holzbach and Bridgett Kohel.

Revenues are projected at \$144,000, mostly from user fees.

The district has about \$540,000 invested in bonds and \$219,000 in a money market to finance maintenance and improvements of the system. The district also counts thousands of dollars in deferred assessments to properties as an asset.

—Dennis Thornton

Belle Plaine-Waukechon District serves Wolf area

The Belle Plaine-Waukechon Utility District acts as a sanitary commission for the area south of the Wolf River.

Members of the Belle Plaine and Waukechon town boards act as commissioners for the utility district and the Shawano wastewater treatment plant does the day-to-day chores.

Belle Plaine Chairman **Alvin Bartz** said the district was set up in 1996, when the Highway 29 bypass was completed, to service the area that now includes the Shell gas station and convenience store, Arby's restaurant, car wash and the Country Inn and Suites hotel. It also services homes along the Wolf River, running east to Belle Plaine Avenue.

The City of Shawano likely would have annexed that area if sewer service wasn't available, Bartz said, depriving the town of a large amount of its tax base.

The utility district has paid off all its original cost and is debt-free, Bartz said, with about \$100,000 set aside for future maintenance and expansion.

Customers pay on a quarterly basis at the same rate as the Shawano district, he said.



Children try their hand at playing improvised musical instruments during the Fall Festival in October at Maple Lane Health and Rehab Center.

Beware of thin ice

Ice alert: Please be careful when venturing out on the ice. With the unseasonably warm winter, with recent rainfall, and widely varying temps, the ice on Cloverleaf and Long Lakes is not thick enough for any type of vehicle in many spots. The lakes are spring fed, so those areas are not as thick as the rest of the lakes. A snowmobile went through the ice on Pine Lake in late December.



Look for **Greg Anunson's** wonderful natural shoreline on your boat rides around Pine Lake later this year. Natural shorelines prevent runoff and erosion and provide habitat for wildlife. More and more Cloverleaf Lakes property owners are restoring their shorelines or nurturing natural growth. For more information on creating your own natural shoreline, contact Shoreline Restoration team leader **Kery Kafka** at (414) 559-4618. Her committee has selected several properties to be featured in this and upcoming newsletters.

CLPA's Jim Aumann dies

James A. Aumann, who served on the Cloverleaf Lakes Protective Association Board for 10 years, died Dec. 29. He was 79. Aumann founded and organized the CLPA Golf Outing for 15 years, raising thousands of dollars to combat aquatic invasive species. He also wrote the long-range plan for the CLPA.



Before retiring in 2004, he spent 49 years in the concrete pipe industry, rising to vice president of the American Concrete Pipe Company. Besides his CLPA activities, he was founder of a charity golf tournament that benefited youth activities for the YMCA in Green Bay. An activity center was named for him.

He is survived by his wife Janna of Pine Lake, a son, three stepsons and eight grandchildren.

Judgeship, school board on ballot

A primary election will be held in Belle Plaine on Tuesday, Feb. 19, for a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Voting is from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Community Center.

Contests will be held in local school districts during the April 2 spring election. For Shawano's School Board, six candidates will compete for three seats. Incumbents **Michael Eidahl** and **Diane Hoffman** are seeking another three year term. Challengers are **John Granchay**, **Donna Hora-Schwobe**, **Derek Johnson** and **Bruce Milavitz**.

In the Clintonville School District, three people will compete April 2 for two seats on the board. Incumbents **Tim Schultz** and **Dirk Weber** are challenged by **Judith Magee**, who is the current mayor of Clintonville.

Also on the April ballot will be a contest for state superintendent of public education.

Bald eagles' nesting season begins

The boardwalk to Gibson Island, located off Cloverleaf Lake Road, will be closed from Feb. 1 until the end of May during the nesting season for the bald eagles that have a nest nearby. The island will be available by ice or water during that time.

No motor vehicles, including snowmobiles, are allowed on the island at any time.

Snowmobilers are urged to avoid the large bed of reeds in Grass Lake, off the town's boat launch site. That is a "sensitive area" designated by the DNR. Also, snowmobiles and trailers can use the boat trailer parking lot on the Round Lake Park site across the road from Mickster's.

Town government holds line on budget, taxes

The Town Board has approved the 2013 budget that keeps tax rate the same for town purposes. The tax rate increased zero percent, with the tax levy increasing from \$402,858 in 2012 to \$405,642 in 2013.

The town's share of Belle Plaine residents' property tax bill is just over 10 percent. School districts get the largest share, followed by Shawano County and the technical school district. Clintonville school district taxes increased 4.3 percent, Shawano school district increased about 12 percent and Shawano County went up 3.8 percent.

The town has saved about \$25,000 a year by switching to house-to-house garbage pickup. With only two elections scheduled (there were six in 2012), the town will spend about \$5,000 less than last year. Also, the Round Lake Park shelter has been completed and plumbing installed.

Ambulance fees will increase from about \$15,000 to \$21,300. The highway budget is up about \$30,000 in 2013.

Here are some of the major items:

Expenditures:

Highways: \$383,000

Solid waste disposal: \$125,000

Dropoff site/recycling: \$10,000

Shawano Rural Fire Dept.: \$45,000

Ambulance/EMS: \$21,300

Maintenance: \$14,000

Total expenditures: \$790,803

Revenues (besides the tax levy):

State shared revenue: \$72,400

Transportation aid: \$140,000

ATC (transmission lines fund): \$88,900

Hotel tax: \$26,000

Mobile home tax: \$7,000

Boat launch fees: \$4,000

Total non-levy revenues: \$385,161

Check for lake/town news at
www.CloverleafLakes.com and
www.BellePlaineWI.com

2013 CLPA Annual Membership: Please Join Now

Please make your check for \$25 payable to Cloverleaf Lakes Protective Association, fill out and clip this form, and send it to CLPA, P.O. Box 288, Embarrass, WI 54933-0288. Or, print out the membership form at www.CloverleafLakes.com and send it in. The membership is for the calendar year 2013.

Name: _____

Lake Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Home Address (if different): _____

Dues \$ 25.00

I would like to make an additional donation of \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

If you need to report an address change for this newsletter delivery, contact Clerk Kris Vo-mastic, who keeps the mailing list updated, at belleplaineclerk@gmail.com.

Thank you! Note: Be sure to include your e-mail address so you can be added to the CLPA's e-mail list (managed by Ed Stuebe) to receive late-breaking information about the lakes.

Belle Plaine Community Center
N3002 St. Hwy. 22
Clintonville, WI 54929

FIRST CLASS MAIL

DNR reports highlight invasives battles

Two recent reports document progress made in 2011-2012 in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species to Wisconsin lakes, rivers, forests and wetlands, and outline needs to fill in the gaps.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Report to the Legislature on Invasive Species Programs highlights efforts by DNR programs to address invasive species, which can crowd out native plant and animal species, threaten agriculture, tourism, forestry and energy, and hamper recreation.

Report highlights include the department's systematic surveys of lakes to detect invaders when their populations can most cost-efficiently be addressed, expanding efforts to get out the "Don't Move Firewood" message, inspecting a record number of boats and contacting people with information about aquatic invasive species.

A second report, the 2010-2012 Wisconsin Aquatic Invasive Species Progress Report, highlights efforts to help stop the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species including

Eurasian water milfoil, zebra mussels, Asian carp and more.

Bob Wakeman, DNR's statewide AIS coordinator, says this network has allowed the DNR to help expand successful local programs to all areas of the state. In one example, the Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Project organizes hundreds of citizen cooperators to raise and release *Galerucella* beetles to control purple loosestrife in their local wetlands. Over the past two years, 4.6 billion beetles have been raised and released into 200 wetland sites throughout Wisconsin and are showing significant progress in knocking back the loosestrife populations.

Local prevention and control grants have allowed the DNR to provide almost \$4 million annually to help local groups address aquatic invasive species in their waterways. The grants help sustain ongoing efforts as well as get innovative projects off the ground, such as Aquatic Invasive Removal Stations in Dane County, which provide tools to help boaters pull off hard-to-reach vegetation.

Belle Plaine calendar

Feb. 2: Clover Bares fishing derby on Cloverleaf Lakes, all day.

Feb. 11: CLPA board, 9 a.m., Community Center.

Feb. 11: Town Board, 7:30 p.m., Community Center.

Feb. 19: Spring primary election, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

March 11: CLPA board, 9 a.m., Community Center.

March 11: Town Board, 7:30 p.m., Community Center.

April 2: Spring election, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

April 8: CLPA board, 9 a.m., Community Center.

April 8: Town Board, 7:30 p.m., Community Center.