

## Focus on Phelps from Mayor James E. Cheney January, 2009

It seems to me that it's true what you've always heard: the older you get, the faster the time goes. I can't believe another year has come and gone. Wasn't it just yesterday that everyone was worried about the impact "2000" was going to have on the world's computers? Every year when I write this "Year in Review" edition, I make sure I thank the people who really make this Village work: our terrific group of Village employees, along with the various people who sit on committees, commissions and the Planning and Zoning Boards. I hear all over this area how lucky we are to have the group that we do ... people who care that much about their community. These folks make our job as the Village Board of Trustees much more effective. We often remind each other and the employees that we, as elected officials, are temps. We may set priorities, the agenda and provide leadership, but they're the ones who do the real heavy lifting and deserve the majority of the credit for the great community we live in. Be sure to thank them when you get a chance.

While 2008 will probably be remembered most for state and national issues, such as the economy and the presidential election, we continued to work on local issues and to plan for, maintain and improve our village.

### Reflections on Completed Projects in 2008

- Hired our own code enforcement officer and have begun a review of our entire local code book to make it more practical, more consistent and easier for residents to get through the process, all in an effort to better serve residents.
- Adopted a plan with the County, Town, Village of Clifton Springs and School District to handle a pandemic, should such an occasion arise.
- Worked with the County in replacement of the William Street Bridge and continued our sidewalk replacement project. Paved and reconfigured the parking lot on Exchange Street. Began construction of the new building at the Transfer Station.
- Transplanted or planted many trees, placing them in Redfield Park and on some of the side streets.
- The Youth, Parks & Recreation program held or assisted with summer recreation activities, concerts in the park, the Old Fashioned Picnic at Redfield Park, the Harvest Festival, the Halloween Parade and the Tree Lighting; plus, many other projects.
- We have been methodically filling rental space at the

Community Center, helping to offset the cost of operations. The Community Center also has a new roof over the main hallways on the upper floor thanks to PCC, Inc. and the Preston Foundation.

- Pioneer Cemetery has a new wall, courtesy of the Preston Foundation, also.
- Worked with the Chamber to complete the Redfield Park bathroom / kitchen facility and adopted regulations for its use.

These are the "out-of-the-ordinary" projects that got done on top of the normal day-to-day maintenance and operational issues that get taken care of. It's pretty humbling to realize how much gets done in what the Board considers a "slow" year.

### Looking towards 2009

Like everyone, our expectation is that 2009 is going to be an interesting year. For 2008, one of the greatest accomplishments not listed above, will be if we stay within our budget. If you read over the past few years newsletters, you will find that we saw the economic situation coming and planned for it (although I don't think any of us expected it to be quite this bad nationally). We adjusted our plans for and during the year and we should come out of it in great shape. For 2009, we will continue to work within reality. The board has already begun discussion on our next fiscal year budget (which begins in June) and are going to strive to keep the tax levy the same again (as we did last year). Until we complete that budget, I'm not going to list any projects for the year because we will need to balance necessary improvements and enhancement projects with the costs of these projects and the economic reality that residents can't absorb a whole lot more and the knowledge that the school district's finances impact all of us as well. In fact, we are meeting with the school district to see how we can alleviate some of the pain. Our biggest goal for 2009 may be to continue to provide leadership beyond our borders to areas and organizations that impact us.

On behalf of the Village Board, the Village Employees and everyone associated with the Village of Phelps, thank you for the opportunity to serve our community and best wishes for a prosperous 2009!

Thank you for continuing to share your thoughts, ideas and talents with our community. Please feel free to contact any Village Board member regarding issues you feel are important, including me at 548-8017 or [mayor@phelpsnyc.com](mailto:mayor@phelpsnyc.com).