



# TOWNSHIP TATTLER

Volume 2, num 2

May 2012

## Sherman Township Board of Trustees:

Rob Middlemis-Brown, interim Supervisor

Addy Schmidt, Township Clerk

Marilyn Kastelic, Township Treasurer

Bob Strykowski, Trustee

Deneen Connell, Trustee

## Sherman Township Constable:

Frank Kastelic

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## Gay's million-dollar drinking water & sewer update?

By Rob Middlemis-Brown

Well, the story about the drinking-water supply in Gay has a deep history and high costs. Back in 1901, the residents of Gay needed a water supply and the mining operations needed a substantial supply of water to operate the steam plant. The resolution was to take water from Lake Superior, one of the purest and most abundant sources in the world. Pipes carried water to Gay, but this meant annual repairs from ice damage. In 1920, the company's miners hand-dug a 2,700-foot tunnel under the lake to access the water.

In the 1980s, a new \$80,000 water treatment system was built so that water coming from the lake tunnel passed through sand filters to remove particles, and it was treated with chlorine to kill harmful bacteria. However, after nearly 100 years, the tunnel began to collapse and the water entering it became dominated by ground water rather than lake water. Unfortunately, ground water brought along a uranium pollution problem that caused the water to

no longer meet federal and state drinking water-quality standards.

A new water supply was needed and in 2006 the system was completed, using

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**PROJECTS COST: \$1,091,885**  
FEDERAL GRANT PAYS 70%



## Straight from the Board: Township is selling the old water-treatment plant property!

The Township will sell the old water treatment plant property and building. The 0.46 acre parcel is located next to the Tobacco River and includes both river front and lake view property. It has a driveway and electrical service. Both the property and buildings are being sold "as is" by sealed bid, due July 31, 2012. The Board of Trustees will select the purchasing bid at the regular meeting, August 9. The Board reserves the right to refuse any and all bids.

An "open house" on Saturday, June 30, from 10 AM to 2 PM and on Sunday, July 1 from 12 noon to 4 PM will give interested parties an opportunity to inspect the buildings and property. Here are some highlights of the property:



NOTE: Please contact the Township Board at 906-296-1211 or [shermantwp@pasty.net](mailto:shermantwp@pasty.net) if you are interested in the property and want more information on the upcoming sale!

- Address is 1031 Gay Lac La Belle Road
- River frontage and lake view
- Parcel is 0.46 acres; 100 feet by 200'
- Zoned residential; property large enough for private well and septic system
- Electricity available on site
- Located across from Keweenaw County roadside park
- Close to snowmobile trail #133



**Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fire Management web-site —**

[http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-30301\\_30505\\_30816---.00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-30301_30505_30816---.00.html)

— has fire safety, open burning regulations, and related resources.

**Where there is smoke . . . What's hot in the VFD**

Another winter heating season without any fire runs! Thanks for your vigilance, keeping those heaters and wood stoves in good working order.

Throughout the winter, members of our fire department have been conducting regular monthly meetings and performing routine preventative maintenance to ensure serviceability of our equipment and apparatus.

This spring, we took our tanker / brush truck out of winter storage. As the summer months approach, everyone is busy cleaning up limbs and brush left by winter snows. We would like to remind everyone that you can obtain burning permits

on the [DNR's web site](#). You will also find information on fire safety, open burning regulations, and fire management.

Please use caution if you intend to burn debris. Since the snowmelt, we have had very dry conditions, which dramatically increases the possibility of serious wildland fires.

Our thanks go to the newest member of the VFD, Art Niebzidoski. Art successfully completed Firefighter I training over the winter. Art brings our total strength up to 11 members, 8 of which are now qualified to enter a fire scene to attack the fire and rescue anyone who may become trapped.

We continue to look for more applicants to join us in keeping the residents of Sherman Township safe. Anyone interested can contact the Sherman Township Board of Trustees for more information.

We also need volunteers to assist us with our fourth of July fundraiser. Our only means of raising operating funds for the VFD is through hot dog and refreshment sales during and after the parade. We welcome any ideas of ways to increase operating funds for our VFD. Anyone interested in helping us can contact the Sherman Township Board of Trustees. Thanks!



**Township Roadside Litter Cleanup**



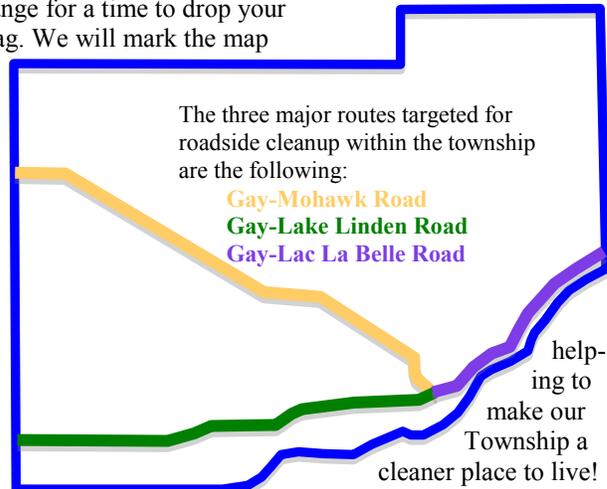
**For the Township Roadside Cleanup!**

The Township Board is sponsoring a roadside cleanup this spring to remove litter along the roadsides throughout the Township. The major travel routes of Gay-Lake Linden Road, Gay-Mohawk Road, and Gay-Lac La Belle Road will be the primary areas for picking up roadside litter.

Just choose a section of

road and let us know where you have picked up litter! The Township will pay to dispose of the litter collected if you bring the bag to the Township office; just contact a Board member to arrange for a time to drop your bag. We will mark the map

when sections are completed so if you need to know what areas still need cleanup, please come by the office and check the maps posted on the bulletin board by the front door. Thank you for



**Drinking water — we hardly notice it until it is no longer available!**

(Continued from page 1)  
wells to pump ground water that met drinking water standards, and included a new distribution system with flow pumps, a supply storage tank, and pressure tanks. With the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development grant of \$406,845 and a low interest rate on a loan, the Township kept the costs to a minimum for the residents of Gay. Enjoy the clean, fresh water and all the work that went



into completing a new, modern water supply system!

**Drinking-Water Supply System Fun or Not-so Fun Facts!**

- Provides water to 84 parcels within Gay
- Project cost totaled \$585,185
- US Government paid \$477,845, or 70%, of the cost
- Gay residents used a \$178,340 Federal loan to pay the remaining 30%
- Cost per parcel was \$6,966 but the cost to parcel owner was only \$2,123
- As of 2012, residents owed \$160,000 on the Federal 40-year loan



The original 1920's open-pipe sewer system basically routed raw sewage from households into a wetland just outside of Gay without any sort of treatment or filtration of solids. As you can imagine, there were times during heavy rain storms that sewage made it's way back to town with floating debris such as toilet paper and, well, you can guess what else.

Okay, you get the picture and the situation had to change. So a new sewer system was built in 2002 to treat the sewage as required by federal and state water-quality regulations. The cost was high — systems are not cheap to build. The new sewage system uses biological activity, or bacteria, in an underground tank to breakdown waste products, going through a three stage process, and the "treated" water is then released. The remaining solids need to be pumped out every few years.



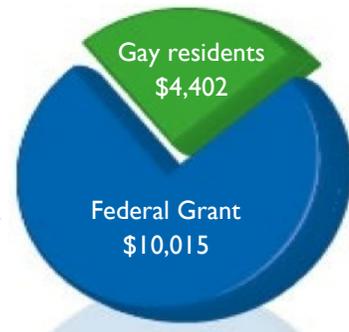
**Sewage Treatment System Fun or Not-so Fun Facts!**

- Serves 68 parcels within Gay
- Project cost totaled \$506,700
- US Government paid \$351,700, or 70% of the cost
- Gay residents used a \$155,000 Federal loan to pay the remaining cost
- Total cost per parcel was \$7,451, but parcel owners pay only \$2,279
- As of 2012, residents still owed \$124,500 on the Federal 40-year loan

So are the new systems worth the cost? That is always difficult to answer in a small community where few people share the burden. If you compare the cost to parcel owners, \$4,402 for both systems combined, it is a good deal compared to the cost of a private well (often \$5,000 to \$8,000 depending on depth) and a private septic system (\$4,000 to over \$10,000 depending of if it requires lift stations and an artificial drain field). Private wells and septic systems do not have Federal grants that pay 70% of the cost! All things considered, the residents of Gay got a good deal as they only paid 30 cents on the dollar for a system that should provide great service for decades to come.

**The dirty truth — Sewage**

**Cost / Parcel: \$14,417**





Sherman Township  
8872 Second Street  
Lake Linden, MI 49945

Phone: 906-296-1211  
Fax: 906-296-1211

E-mail: [shermantwp@pasty.net](mailto:shermantwp@pasty.net)

Meetings: 2nd Thursday of each  
month at 6:30 PM, Township Hall.

Newsletter editor:  
Sherry Middlemis-Brown,  
township resident

**We are on the web at**  
**[http://](http://keweenawcountyonline.org/township-sherman.php)**  
**[keweenawcountyonline](http://keweenawcountyonline.org/township-sherman.php)**  
**[.org/township-](http://keweenawcountyonline.org/township-sherman.php)**  
**[sherman.php](http://keweenawcountyonline.org/township-sherman.php)**

**Sherman**  
**Township —**  
**a great place**  
**to live.**

**[A township of](#)**



## **Sherman Township -- a great place to live.**

Nestled on the east shore of the Keweenaw Peninsula, Sherman Township provides a lovely spot for a permanent or a vacation home. The area has one of the lowest populations in the state, but the township offers the amenities associated with a community. Gay, the township's only village, provides a central focus for Sherman Township activities and contains the icons familiar to township residents. The Gay smokestack, seen for miles, is a navigational aid. The Gay Schoolhouse reminds us of an important heritage. The Community Hall provides handicap accessible meeting space and houses the Auxiliary's Sale and Bazaar. Visit the memorabilia on the stage of the Community Hall to learn more about our community's history. The Township Hall houses the Sherman Township government offices.

## **What's Up?**

*by Sherry Middlemis-Brown*

You can catch up with news for Sherman Township anytime at <http://www.keweenawcountyonline.org/township-sherman.php>. Here are some of the notices available on the web page.

### **Bazaar Time!**

The Auxiliary will hold its renown bazaars from 12:00, noon to 3:00 PM on **June 23rd, July 4th, 14th, 28th, August 11th, 25, & September 3rd** in 2012 at the handicapped accessible Community Hall. Proceeds benefit the Fire Department and community projects. Volunteers are welcome.

### **Recreation Board**

Recreation Board, created March 8, 2012, will craft the plan for Gay Schoolhouse park development.

### **Grant to Develop Park**

Sherman Township submitted a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Passport Grant for the park area next to the old Gay School.

### **2011 Citizen's Guide to Financial Health**

Understand your township government's financial activities.

### **2012-2013 Approved Budget**

The 2012-2013 budgets were approved by the Township Board at the special meeting held March 8, 2012. The budgets are individually listed on the web site:

- General Operations
- Community Hall
- Park Development
- Fire Department
- Water Plant Operations
- Water Plant Assessment
- Sewer Plant Operations
- Sewer Plant Operations
- Sewer Plant Assessment
- Salaries for Employees

### **Past Notices**

- Rural Garbage Pickup Service
- Recreation Board Volunteers Notice
- Board of Review 2012 Information
- Past Board minutes and treasurer reports.
- February Township Tattler