

February 2016

I'm writing this on Sunday morning, right after the big snow. The town is beautiful beneath its new white blanket and a bright blue sky - quite a change from 24 hours earlier.

The full-moon nor'easter had blown in with some dire predictions, so I'm happy to report that Little Silver came through with minimal (though hazardous) flooding, and no injuries or property damage, after receiving nearly two feet in 30 hours or so. Jonas was non-stop, with heavy snow, high winds, and tides that challenged all of New Jersey.

During the course of the storm, I was privileged to ride with our officers in one of our (free from the DOD) humvees, which easily navigated the deepest flood waters, capable of reaching any resident in distress. I also stopped at the fire house on Saturday night, along with Councilman Galante, to see how our volunteers were doing.

And that provides the basis for this month's message: With each passing year, I am more convinced that our EMS, our Fire Department, and our Fire Police - all entirely volunteer - are not only trained and equipped to handle any emergency that comes our way, but that they also, as residents, feel that they have a personal stake in each and every call, making them the best possible emergency responders for our town.

That means we are all in good hands when disaster is knocking at the door. And I have to say that our public works men - some of whom had been up for more than 20 hours straight, working to clear the roads during a relentless storm that kept wiping out their hard work - showed remarkable resilience and good humor under some seriously trying circumstances. I would put them up against any town when it comes to clearing out the ice and snow.

So less than ten hours after the snow stopped falling, the hill behind Markham Place School is full of sledders, kids are playing in the snow, shovelers are shoveling, JCP&L is working on the last of the two downed wires we experienced (with very few outages), and Public Works is working to restore our roads, parking lots, and school access ways to normal.

And some of our police officers, unexpectedly called into duty all weekend, were getting a well deserved break.

So much goes into preparing for storms that most people never see: conference calls with the Governor and his cabinet, the County Office of Emergency Management, and our local police and planners; and planning and communication among our emergency workers, our Administrator, our Police Chief and his officers, and the editor of this Newsletter, Linda Goff (who promptly posts all the latest information on littlesilver.org). I don't have the space to thank everyone by name, but I hope everyone knows that their efforts are appreciated.

And that includes our residents, by the way. You all heeded our warnings: Stay off the roads and let our police and public works men do their jobs; anticipate power outages by fueling and testing generators, and by otherwise having a plan in place should the lights go out; bear with us when we cancel garbage collection and close the recycling yard, in order to maintain safety and clear road ways. We know that's not always easy. It's inconvenient. But it is necessary. So thank you all. Heck, some of you even posted your appreciation on Facebook, suggesting that our guys working out in the storm be offered a cup of coffee, or water, or a wave of thanks as they came by. That's community.

All that said, nothing is ever perfect, and your governing body and all who work for the borough are always looking for ways to do something better. So this is an invitation to call or email me or Borough Hall with any suggestions or complaints. If you don't tell us, we may not know. My contact information is below.

This is also a call to continue to support our efforts, even after a storm. The borough can't shovel every sidewalk. If you have a sidewalk, please include it in your snow removal efforts, particularly if you are on a school route, or on a route to the train station or downtown. Please continue to act and drive cautiously in the ice and snow. And as one of our firefighters advised, if you use gas power, clear your dryer vents and the gas meter to prevent the possibility of carbon monoxide infiltration.

Lastly, if you have not already done so, please go to www.littlesilver.org and follow the directions for signing up for the Two River Alert System, also known as Code Red. It is the most efficient and direct way for the town to communicate emergency information to everyone in an instant. If you have any difficulty signing up, please call Borough Hall for assistance.

In other matters, in addition to the information in the yearly poem read at the Reorganization Meeting (and posted on the website), I would like to let everyone know that the County has been good enough to select Little Silver for a \$121,000 grant to improve our recreation fields. Our Recreation Director, Doug Glassmacher, looks forward to putting that to good use.

I'd also like to let everyone know that, according to Zippia (not really sure what that is), Little Silver is one of the ten happiest towns in New Jersey (ranked number 5). We on the Governing Body hope that applies to all of you.

As always, please call Borough Hall with any concerns, or contact me directly by calling my home phone at 732-576-8595, or emailing me at bobneff80@gmail.com.

Robert C. Neff, Jr.
Mayor, Borough of Little Silver