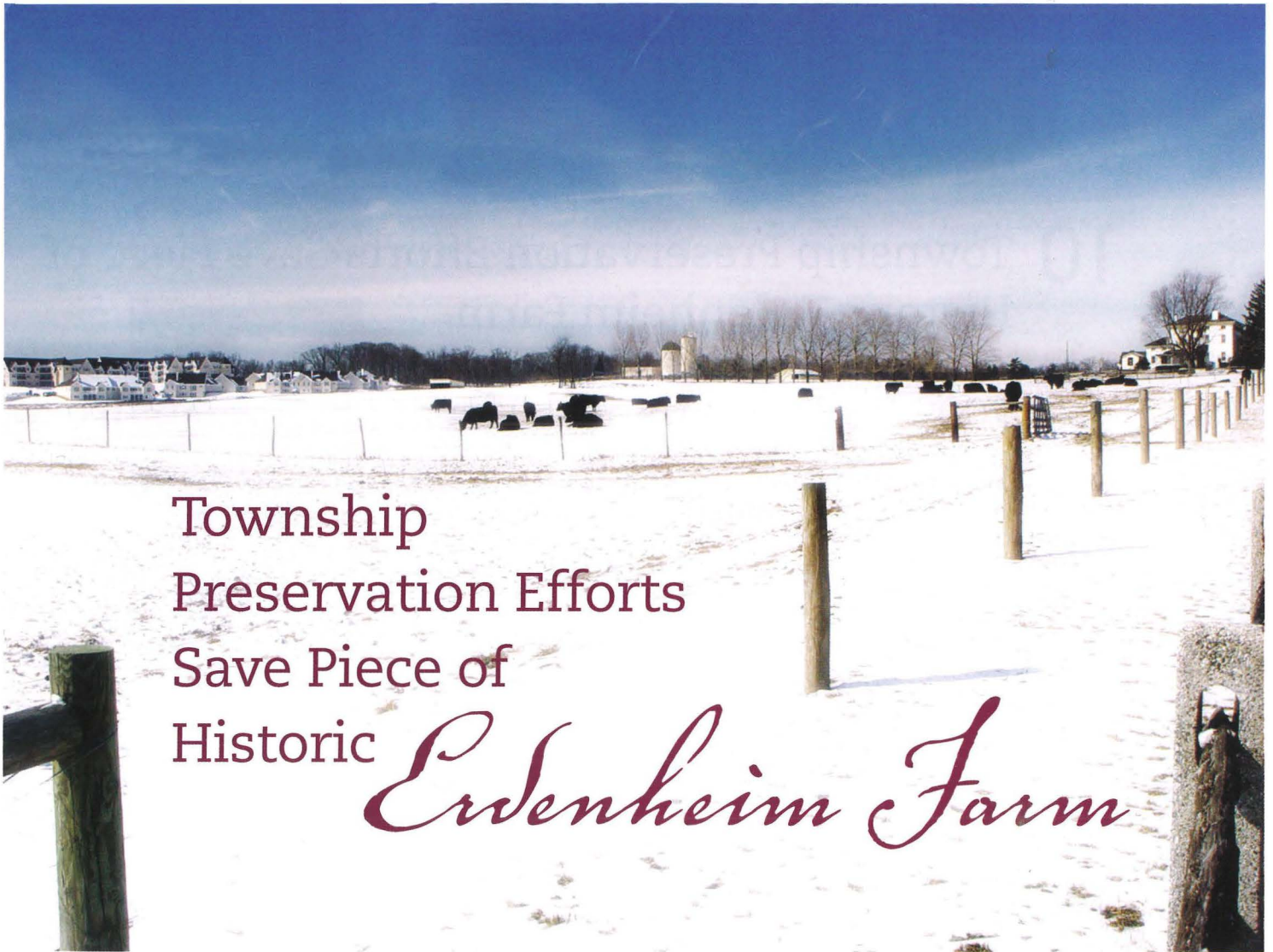


Whitemarsh Living

WINTER 2009



Township
Preservation Efforts
Save Piece of
Historic

Edenheim Farm

2009 Budget
Strikes Careful Balance

Read all about it:
William Jeanes Library
in Midst of Reinvention

Business Spotlight

Check Out The Market of Lafayette Hill

Taste of the Township

Local Deli a Savior for Families on the Go

Volunteer Spotlight

80-year-old "Coach" Still Going Strong



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Whitemarsh Living

WINTER 2009

Dear Whitemarsh Residents:



Thank you for picking up the winter issue of Whitemarsh Living – the first of 2009. By now the holidays are over, and we're all settling into a new year. I hope it's a good one for you and your family.

This issue looks back at some of the Township's accomplishments in 2008, many of which could not have been achieved without you and the hardworking men and women who keep the Township running every day. I also am pleased to report that even with all we accomplished last year we were able to end 2008 with a budget surplus.



Of course, this provides some security as we move forward in 2009 and forge ahead during these tough economic times. As you will read, the Board of Supervisors passed a budget for the year that holds the line on taxes and fees, and balances fiscal responsibility while still investing in the Township's future.

Investing in our future is a theme that runs throughout this issue, starting with our main story about the preservation of the Angus Tract of Erdenheim Farm. The Township invested an estimated \$2.1 million in open space funds to preserve the 98-acre parcel so future generations can enjoy one of the last remaining open spaces in our community. The preservation – which cost a total of \$13.5 million – was a Herculean effort involving dedicated members of the Whitemarsh Foundation along with county and state officials and officials from the Colonial School District. I commend this group for their commitment and dedication and look forward to future preservation projects.

In addition to learning about our open space efforts, you'll also read about how our wonderful William Jeanes Library is reinventing itself to better serve our community in the age of technology and how the Whitemarsh Art Center is expanding its programs beyond its walls.

This issue also treats you to features on The Market at Lafayette Hill and Pete's Deli. Be warned: if you aren't hungry before you read these pieces, you will be afterward.

Finally, the new year has ushered in a new trash collection schedule. Please don't miss the article and the handy information along with it.

As always, this is your magazine. If you have ideas for stories, businesses you would like to see profiled, volunteers who deserve recognition or any other suggestions, please let us know.

Thanks for reading!

Sincerely,

Leslie S. Richards

Leslie S. Richards, Chair 2008
Board of Supervisors

Sara J. Erlbaum, Chair 2009
Board of Supervisors

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NEW FOR 2009:

At the January 5, 2009 organization meeting the Board of Supervisors elected **Sara J. Erlbaum** as Chair and **David E. Brooke** as Vice-Chair.

Whitemarsh Living

EDITOR: KIM MAIALETTI

CONTRIBUTORS: DOUG HERRSCHAFT, KELLY K. BROWN, DEBORAH STANISH

COVER PHOTO: COURTESY OF ERDENHEIM FARM

DESIGN & PRINT: GIULIA SCIAMANNA, PSC INFO GROUP

TO SUBMIT STORY IDEAS FOR FUTURE ISSUES OF WHITEMARSH LIVING, CALL
MICHAEL ZEOCK AT (484) 533-2214.

Township Moving Forward in Addressing Stormwater Runoff

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

Whitemarsh Township is moving forward with three major projects to address stormwater runoff and help alleviate flooding in neighborhoods throughout the municipality.

Back-to-back storms with torrential rains in August 2004 brought widespread flooding and wreaked havoc on the Township, forcing residents out of their homes and causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage.

Since then, Township officials have been developing solutions to help avoid similar catastrophes in the future.

Three major projects are in the works. The first, in the Whitemarsh Woods and Westaway Drive area, is expected to have funding approved early this year, with construction slated to begin in the spring. The other two projects – one along Barren Hill Road and the other in the Joshua Knoll and McCarthy Park area – are awaiting clearance from the state departments of Environmental Protection and Transportation.

"I'm sure for the average person that it looks like not much is happening," said Leslie Richards, of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors. "I promise you this, we're moving forward on a consistent basis. There's momentum, a slow constant movement, but there is momentum."

(continued on page 14)

Art Center Partners With Community Organizations to Go Green & Beyond

BY DEBORAH STANISH

Reduce, reuse and recycle isn't just a slogan to the Whitemarsh Community Art Center.

With an eye toward education and creativity the Art Center has introduced a new slate of programming with a decidedly environmental focus and is partnering with community organizations to take their "going green" message outside of their walls.

"It's really a natural step for the Whitemarsh Art Center," explained Executive Director Chris Dwyer. "Not only have we created a "Going Green With Art" program, we are actively working with Whitemarsh Township Parks and Recreation as well as other organizations to bring this programming out into the community."

This past fall three of the Art Center's instructors, Mary Ann Lenhard, Claire Perles and Keira Santoli worked with more than 400 students at St. Philip Neri Catholic School to create bio-degradable planters made from the students' recycled lunch bags.

The program proved successful, with the Art Center and the school working together to craft a program that fit in with both the school's science and art curriculum.

"Recycling, saving the environment and our natural resources are very important concepts to our school children," said school principal Bernice Annechini. "This program tied into all of that and the children had a chance to create something special."

Michael McBride, a fifth-grader at St. Philip Neri, said the program helped make recycling – and learning – fun.

"It was a really cool program because you could recycle something and it goes right into the earth to give back nutrients," said McBride. "This was more fun than regular recycling because you actually get to choose what the bags were made into."

To the program's instructors, turning recyclables into art isn't much of a stretch.



PHOTO COURTESY OF: PEG McBRIDE

Fifth-grade students at St. Philip Neri Bridget Horan, Nicolette Vogelmann, and Emily McMullen tear lunch bags into strips that were turned into pulp. The pulp was formed into biodegradable planters for a "going green" art project conducted at the school by Whitemarsh Art Center.

"Art lends itself to recycling, not only in reusing products in the process but also in the mechanics," Lenhard said. "Artists have always used things beyond their original purpose but by doing a program focused on remaking what is essentially trash into art is really exciting."

The partnership with Whitemarsh Township Parks and Recreation Department is another demonstration of how community organizations can work together to provide more opportunities for Whitemarsh residents.

Doug Knauss, Director of Parks and Recreation, said it's a matter of combining resources to offer the best possible programming.

"Both organizations have similar goals of bringing quality programs to the community and a partnership helps us both realize those goals," said Knauss. "Working with the Art Center to provide programs with a recycling focus we're building on each other's energy. It's a win-win situation."

Whether it's turning vinyl records or old sweaters into art, the instructors at the Art Center are inspired by the challenges of taking their programs beyond the walls of the Center.

(continued on page 15)

2009 Budget Balances Fiscal Responsibility with Investments in Township's Future

BY KELLY K. BROWN

The 2009 Budget for Whitmarsh Township balances careful financial stewardship with necessary expenditures to maintain and improve the community. There are no tax increases, no new taxes and no fee increases this year. Working within these limits the Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors was still able to adopt a budget to provide outstanding services for Whitmarsh residents.

"The Board of Supervisors is planning for the long-term while maintaining the existing great qualities of our communities so Whitmarsh can continue to be a fabulous community for future generations," said Sara Erlbaum, of the Board of Supervisors.

The year 2009 will be exciting for Whitmarsh Township. The Board of Supervisors has set an ambitious agenda for new projects and implementation of long-range plans.

Historic open space preservation tops the list.

Revitalizing the Lafayette Hill business center along Germantown Pike will provide a shopping district to be proud of, once the dust settles from construction.

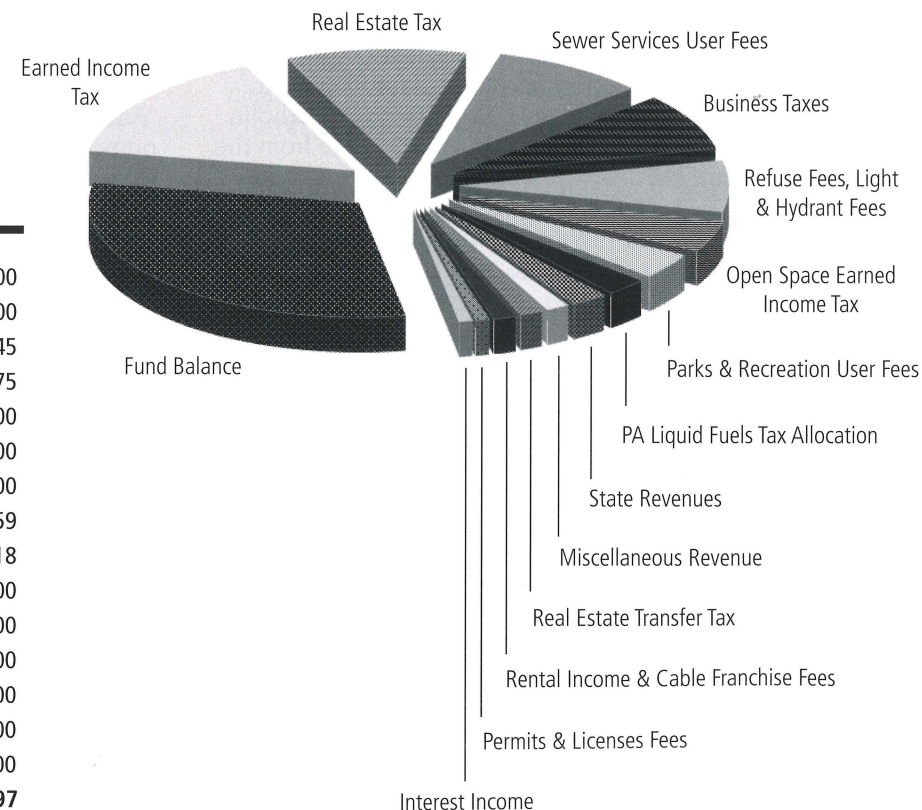
Now that the major renovation of Miles Park is complete and being enjoyed by so many, parks in other neighborhoods will be upgraded.

The important, if not glamorous, work of improving sewer systems to reduce flooding continues. More roads will be repaved. The new once-per-week trash collection contract will save more than \$205,000 this year and have a positive impact on the environment.

In 2009, the Township expects to go to the capital markets to borrow as much as \$14,260,000 to carry out important open space purchases and to finance the storm water and capital projects highlighted above.

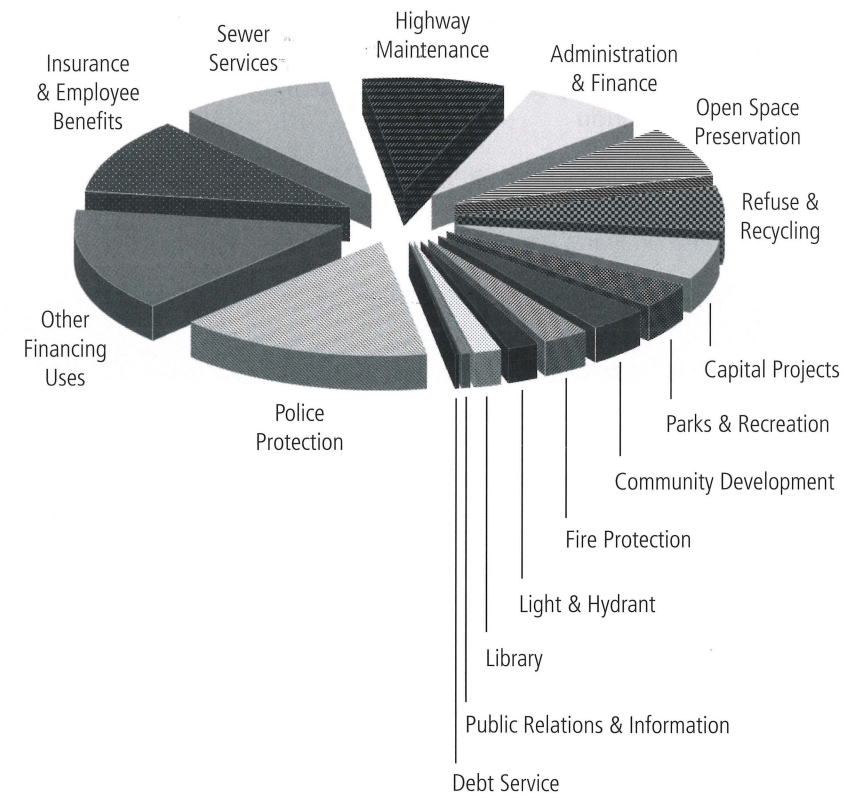
Revenue & Income

Fund Balance	\$ 8,628,200
Earned Income Tax	\$ 4,350,000
Real Estate Tax	\$ 3,022,145
Sewer Services User Fees	\$ 2,624,175
Business Taxes	\$ 2,262,000
Refuse Fees, Light & Hydrant Fees	\$ 2,013,400
Open Space Earned Income Tax	\$ 1,250,000
Parks & Recreation User Fees	\$ 1,026,959
PA Liquid Fuels Tax Allocation	\$ 709,318
State Revenues	\$ 583,500
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 420,400
Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$ 400,000
Rental Income & Cable Franchise Fees	\$ 378,600
Permits & Licenses Fees	\$ 256,500
Interest Income	\$ 200,000
TOTAL	\$28,125,197



Expenditures

Police Protection	\$ 4,334,692
Other Financing Uses	\$ 4,127,387
Insurance & Employee Benefits	\$ 3,032,929
Sewer Services	\$ 2,624,175
Highway Maintenance	\$ 2,435,560
Administration & Finance	\$ 2,142,840
Open Space Preservation	\$ 2,000,000
Refuse & Recycling	\$ 1,813,388
Capital Projects	\$ 1,552,000
Parks & Recreation	\$ 1,026,959
Community Development	\$ 995,247
Fire Protection	\$ 818,687
Light & Hydrant	\$ 508,400
Library	\$ 462,253
Public Relations & Information	\$ 133,800
Debt Service	\$ 116,880
TOTAL	\$28,125,197



2009 Initiatives

Township Cable Station – to keep the public informed and continue improved openness and transparency of local government

Germantown Pike Revitalization – to improve the quality of life in Whitmarsh for residents and people who do business here

Erdenheim Farm – continuing the emphasis on preserving land to save tax dollars while investing in an exceptional asset

Police Canine Unit (proposed) – two dogs will aid in drug and explosive detection, as well as tracking of suspects and missing persons

Police Motorcycles – \$30,000 state grant obtained with the assistance of state Sen. Vincent Hughes will cover the purchase and equipping of two motorcycles

Skate Board Park – proposed for this year; final location to be determined

Koontz Park on Hart's Lane – the implementation of the first phase of the master plan will feature ADA accessible playground equipment as well as pathways to provide access for nearby residents

Leeland Park – this neighborhood park will undergo an overall renovation as the first phase of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is put into action

Stormwater relief – planned for the Barren Hill area, the McCarthy and Joshua Knoll neighborhood, and along Westaway Drive

Major software upgrades for Finance and Building and Codes departments – to replace outdated programs and provide better customer service and workflow distribution

Expansion of Township office space – for more efficient use of property

Continuation of roadway resurfacing schedule – to maintain the infrastructure

Construction of a fleet maintenance garage

Long-term projects such as sewer maintenance and improvements, and implementing recommendations from the Storm Water Task Force – to protect property and public welfare

2008 Budget Accomplishments

BY KELLY K. BROWN

In 2008 the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors moved forward on many long desired and needed Township improvements. Long-term planning for numerous projects was put into action with positive results.

While maximizing services, the Township worked to minimize expenses. The Public Works Department handled projects in-house achieving significant savings. Used trash trucks, instead of new, were purchased to collect yard waste. The wastewater treatment primary clarifier was repaired rather than replaced.

In addition to saving money, the Township pursued alternative sources of funding. Considerable grant and sponsorship dollars were obtained. Cable franchise fees, a new revenue source in 2008, will cover costs for the Township cable station, and other communication efforts.

Whitemarsh Township finished the year with a budget surplus. The following list highlights the 2008 accomplishments:

Support for Public Safety & Well-being

- Fully staffed police department – first time in seven years, allowing for better traffic safety enforcement
- Increased contributions to library and fire departments
- Assisted ambulance association with purchase of second ambulance and staffing

Dedication to Open Space & Land Stewardship

- Acquisition of East 33 Property – preserved 33 acres of open space off Manor Road between Hagys Mill Road and River Road. This was the first purchase by the Township using designated open space funds.
- Erdenheim Farm Angus Tract – 98 acres of irreplaceable farmland protected from development in collaborative effort with other public entities and the Whitemarsh Foundation through conservation easements purchased by the Township.
- Stream bank restoration – planted more than 1,000 native trees and shrubs along Manor Road to restore the creek ecosystem.
- McCarthy Park storm water management project started – joint effort with Colonial School District to eliminate invasive plants and replace them with native plants to provide natural flood protection.

Improvement for Area Parks

- Miles Park transformation – completion of pavilion, concession stand, restrooms and ball fields; parking capacity doubled
- Koontz Park on Hart's Lane underway – renovated greenhouse now in use for classes and to cultivate plants for Township beautification
- Joshua Pedestrian Trail completed – from Germantown Pike to Ridge Pike
- Park Ranger Program initiated – Township ambassadors to monitor and assist park patrons on evenings and weekends

Tackled Traffic Congestion & Safety Issues

- Major upgrade to Butler and Flourtown intersection – contributed funds, along with the developer, to realign Flourtown Road and greatly improve traffic flow
- Four-way stop added to Barren Hill and Hart's Lane intersection
- Road resurfacing – 18,530 lineal feet of roadway repaved on Cannon Hill Road, in Whitemarsh Woods Developments and on Harts Lane

Advancements in Handling Storm Water, Wastewater & Trash

- Purchased two used trash trucks – to comply with new yard waste collection rules
- Single stream recycling – invested in 5,275 bins for residents' use in the highly successful new single-stream recycling program in partnership with RecycleBank
- Storm water improvements – improved safety on Ridge Pike at Park Avenue by installing new drain and piping system to eliminate frequent water accumulation; stream bank restoration at Militia Road and Toland Drive to correct drainage issue
- Refurbished portions of the wastewater treatment plant, and pursued various upgrades to the collection system

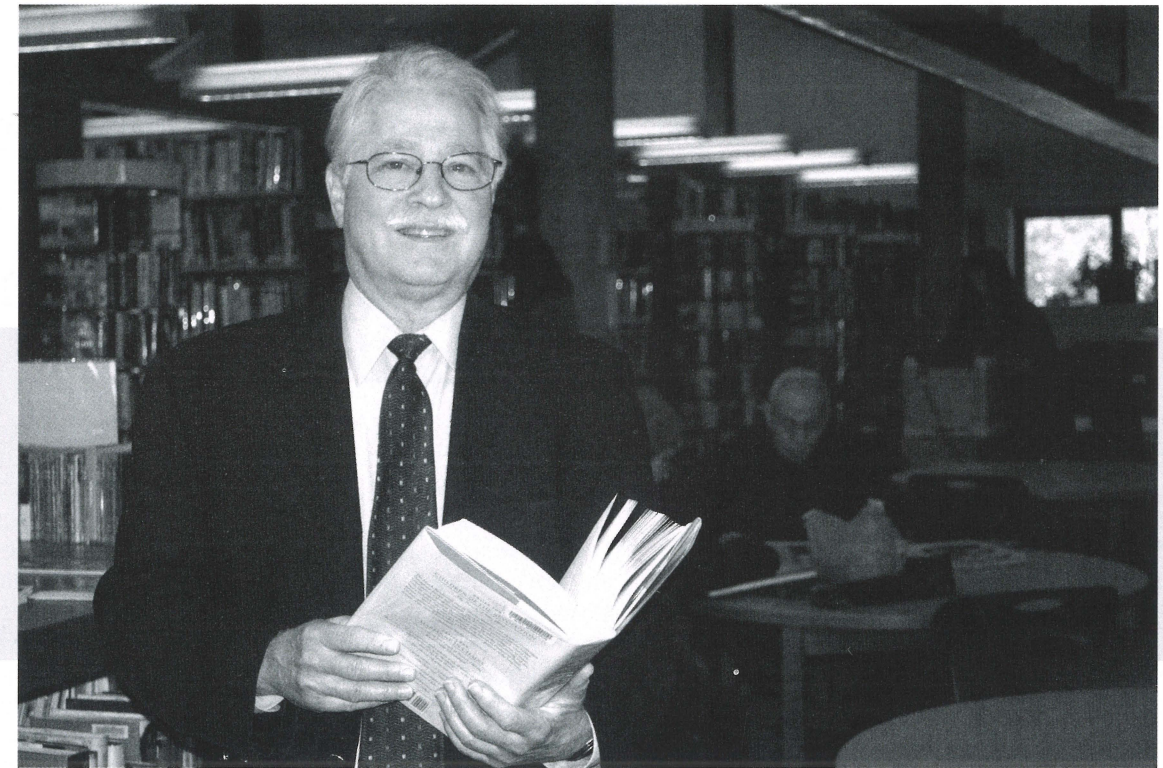


PHOTO BY: KELLY K. BROWN

Elliot Shelkrot, Interim Director of the William Jeanes Memorial Library, is leading a reinvention of the library.

William Jeanes Library Turns the Page

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

Rapidly developing communication technologies that put enormous amounts of information in the palms of people's hands are forcing today's libraries to do some serious soul searching.

The 82-year-old William Jeanes Memorial Library is no exception, as it grapples with questions about the function of a modern library and the best ways to implement needed change. The answers that the directors of William Jeanes have so far developed have the library in the midst of a reinvention like never before.

One of the keys to its reinvention is the recruitment of the former head of the Philadelphia Free Library, Elliot Shelkrot. Described as a "rock star" in library circles, Shelkrot was coaxed out of retirement to serve as interim director of William Jeanes, in July 2008.

Libraries, in Shelkrot's view, are places where the social and the intellectual merge; vibrant, stimulating environments where thoughts and ideas are shared and explored in community with others. Playgrounds for the mind.

"Libraries are no longer warehouses of books," said Shelkrot. "They are dynamic institutions, exciting,

(continued on next page)

A Look Back

The William Jeanes Memorial Library was founded in 1926, with a \$75,000 gift to the Religious Society of Friends, from Mary Jeanes Miller. The gift, in honor of Miller's first husband, was intended to create a place in which the community, regardless of social standing, could gather and learn together.

The rapidly growing library, at first no more than a single room with a collection of about 950 books, moved to a larger building on the grounds of Friends Meeting House, in 1935. There it remained for nearly 40 years, at one time finding itself embroiled in a McCarthy era controversy, over its hiring and staunch support of the civil rights of Mary Knowles, a librarian who had once been accused of being a member of the Communist Party and who had refused to answer questions before the Senate. The library was vindicated when Knowles was acquitted of contempt of Congress charges in 1960.

By 1971, the library had moved to its current home on Joshua Road.

– Doug Herrschaft

interesting places of ideas where people come to learn together."

Under the leadership of Shelkrot, the library has developed a comprehensive plan, the outlines of which reveal the library's new conception of itself.

Shelkrot envisions a small café where library patrons share a cup of coffee and a bite to eat, while they talk or read, outdoor areas that would invite visitors to enjoy the library's three acres of beautiful landscape and old growth trees, and larger spaces indoors that lend themselves to gathering and easier browsing.

"We're not expanding the library for books," said Shelkrot. "We're expanding it for people. The community wants a building that will be a community center. A good library has programs that entice people into the library and that also bring the library out to the community."

Keeping current and popular books on the shelves is another goal.

"It's not the size of the stacks that's important," said Shelkrot. "What matters is having the right books on the shelves. We heard from the community that they want fresher stuff. So, we entered into a program with McNaughton Publishing in which we can rent hot books, best sellers, and return them. It allows more pre-publication ordering. We're also going to experiment with graphic novels, to draw more kids in."

Shelkrot makes it clear, though, that the library won't allow itself to be buffeted by every fad and marketing scheme that comes along. The library, he says, "will not be consumer driven, but, rather, consumer oriented."

As part of its comprehensive plan, the library is preparing for a physical expansion that will more than double its current 11,000 square feet. The architectural planning, which has benefited from several public meetings and considerable community input, is well underway. New construction also will incorporate environmentally friendly elements.

"We're going to be as ecologically sensitive and friendly as we can," said Library Board Vice President Sydelle Zove. "The new building is going to include green characteristics from windows to heating and ventilation to lighting and other building systems. Retaining the old building as part of

Children's Programs Mix Fun and Learning at William Jeanes Library

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

The toddlers come rumbling in through the outside entrance to the lower meeting room at William Jeanes Memorial Library, followed closely by their mothers, who stake out a spot on the floor. The kids hurry over to a folding table under which small sections of rug are stored. They each grab one and head back to their mothers, dropping their rug on the floor when they arrive. A small area is turned into a personal space, and what was minutes earlier a large, empty meeting room, is now filled with the boundless energy of children.

Storytime begins.

Through a combination of reading, props, and music, Beth Hargis, head of the children's programs at William Jeanes, keeps the kids engaged and having fun for most of an hour. While it seems like pure entertainment, which is certainly one aspect, that's not all there is to it. The Mother Goose puppet, musical instruments, dancing and singing are ways that Hargis, a former elementary school teacher, sneaks learning into fun.

On this day, Jennifer Goren, of Chestnut Hill, is there with her two children Sam, 2, and Ruby, 4.

"Beth is the most patient and tolerant person with the kids," says Goren. "She has a smart way of changing activities to keep kids interested and engaged."

Hargis maintains her philosophy of learning through fun throughout the seemingly endless array of kids' programs at William Jeanes. From storytimes and music programs for the young ones to poetry and book writing competitions for older children, kids are prompted to follow their curiosity and stretch their imagination.

"The music program, for instance," Hargis says, "people just think that's a fun program, but that's not all it is. Music breaks words into syllables, its component parts, which helps kids develop reading and language skills."

Beth Hargis, head of the children's programs at William Jeanes Memorial Library, leads storytime.



PHOTO BY: KELLY K. BROWN

Older children, ages 11 to 17, are encouraged to get involved with the library's Youth Advisory Board. The Board participates in the planning of children's programs, and provides input on the young adult materials the library carries. The Board also plans and chaperones sleepovers for younger children at the library.

"By participating on the Board, teenagers get confidence and a sense of being able to contribute in an older, adult way," says Hargis. "The young kids look up to the older ones, and the teenagers feel like 'gee, I'm really somebody special.'"

In addition to creating a fun and encouraging space for learning and growth, Hargis sees the library's children's programs as playing a support role for parents.

"Children's programs are a resource of materials and a resource to help parents find appropriate materials," says Hargis. "School libraries are great, but are there mainly to support the curriculum and aren't available all the time. I'm always reading kids' books, so I know what we have and am able to suggest appropriate materials to parents."

For a schedule of children's programs at the William Jeanes Memorial Library visit <http://wjl.mclinc.org/calendar.html> or call (610) 828-0441. ■

the new construction is itself a green approach to the expansion project."

Two essential elements of the library's expansion will be pursued simultaneously in the coming months. The first is identifying a new library director to replace Shelkrot.

"It is our thinking that the best candidate we're going to find is someone who is not looking for a job," said Library Board President Don Mattson.

To find that person, the board has authorized a Kansas City recruitment firm to begin the search. The board hopes a new director will be in place by the spring.

The second vital ingredient in completing the project is funding. The library's board is exploring multiple sources, which include individual donors, charitable grants and local and state funding. Locally, the library expects continued support from Whitmarsh Township as well as the Friends of the William Jeanes Library, which has supported the library through fundraising and volunteer activities since 1950.

Finally, the continued involvement of the public is essential to the library's success, as it continues its transformation into a community oriented, intellectual and social center.

"The library relies on a combination of public and private support," said Zove. "The community is vital to the support of the library, so it can be as good as it can be." ■

Preservation of Angus Tract at Erdenheim Farm a Victory for Open Space Preservation

BY DEBORAH STANISH



PHOTOS COURTESY OF: ERDENHEIM FARM

At the heart of a nearly 2,000-acre greenbelt that runs from Philadelphia's Fairmount Park to Upper Gwynedd Township, the 450-acre property known as Erdenheim Farm is a unique slice of Montgomery County and Pennsylvania history.

In December, Whitemarsh Township participated in a deal to purchase a 98-acre parcel of the property known as the Angus Tract in a significant step to ensure the property remains the touchstone of Whitemarsh Township's open space initiative.

The purchase was the culmination of a long and arduous journey involving a battalion of citizen volunteers, several administrations of Township supervisors, developers, business people, and county and state government officials that began more than eight years ago.

At stake was a property that many Township residents had long taken for granted.

Erdenheim Farm has been in agricultural use since the days of William Penn but came into prominence in 1912 after it was purchased by well-known Philadelphia philanthropist George D. Widener, Jr. During his ownership the "gentleman's farm" became known for its agricultural operations and Widener's passion: breeding and training thoroughbred race horses. Upon his death in 1971, Widener left a portion of the farm to his nephew Fitz Eugene Dixon, Jr., former owner of the Philadelphia 76ers and highly regarded civic leader who famously purchased the iconic LOVE statue and gifted it back to the city of Philadelphia.

Nearly 30 years later, developer John Fleming created Whitemarsh Retirement Partners, a limited partnership created to pursue the building of a

continuing care retirement facility. The partnership entered into negotiations to purchase Eugenia Hospital, a former psychiatric facility that bordered Erdenheim Farm. The 45-acre hospital property was not sufficient for the project, and the partnership approached Dixon who agreed to sell roughly 50 acres of farmland to complete the development.

When the partnership began the process of acquiring zoning approvals, however, a shock wave rippled through the community.

"Naively we all assumed the farm would be there forever," said long-term open space advocate Hugh Moulton, Chairperson and President of The Whitemarsh Foundation, and member of the Whitemarsh Township Open Space Board. "When the issue came up for zoning all of a sudden we realized that Erdenheim Farm was in real danger and that it was possible the entire property could potentially be developed."

The threat of losing the farm served as a wake up call to Township residents that resulted in unprecedented community activism.

"A very significant public opposition was mounted against the proposal," said Moulton. "Although the stated reasons were those you'd expect such as increased density and increased traffic, what really motivated the public was the fear that this was the first domino falling and it would not be long before the rest of the farm was gone."

Kim Shepperd remembers the time as a call to arms.

"It really shook people that this pristine piece of our community was under threat of development,"

(continued on page 12)

The Case for OPEN SPACE

BY DEBORAH STANISH

Whitemarsh Township has made both an emotional and financial commitment to preserving open space. But beyond notions of attractive vistas, what is the real impact of open space for Whitemarsh residents?

Hugh Moulton, Member of Whitemarsh Township's Open Space Board and Chairman of the Whitemarsh Foundation, explains that the impact goes beyond the visual, affecting quality of life, positive growth in the community and municipal services.

"Open space is a key component to the quality of life of a community," Moulton said. "Historically, people used to move to where the jobs were, now that's turned around with jobs coming to the people. The key workers of the future are those in the knowledge and service industry who can live and work where they choose. The character of a community and its amenities such as good schools, recreational activities and appropriate areas set aside for open space make Whitemarsh an attractive and desirable community to homebuyers."

According to the Trust for Public Land's publication Economic Benefits of Land Conservation, proximity to open space has a direct correlation to home values, particularly in urban and suburban areas. By providing that proximity, Whitemarsh Township is building value into its existing housing base and helping homeowners retain that value in a volatile housing market.

By managing open space, Whitemarsh also has the opportunity to manage its growth, an act that has a direct financial impact on residents' and the Township's bottom line. Large-scale residential building puts an increased burden on municipal services and can affect the stability of school districts by greatly

increasing the student-to-school ratio.

Environmental issues also come into play. Stormwater management, a critical issue in Whitemarsh Township, is adversely affected when tracts of open space are developed.

"Even with modern engineering techniques, eliminating open space increases runoff which, in turn, can increase flooding and impact the health of our streams and waterways such as the Wissahickon Creek," said Moulton. "It's really a domino affect."

Whitemarsh Township's commitment to open space is embraced by officials and residents alike, and they are willing to put their money where their heart is. In 2003, Whitemarsh voters approved an open space referendum by an overwhelming majority. In 2006, 62 percent of voters approved an earned income tax of a quarter-percent to be used for open space purchases.

It's an important issue that crosses municipal, county and state borders. In 2007, on average, conservation referenda in the state had passed by a 2-1 margin, according to The Pennsylvania Land Preservation. In addition, The Land Trust for Public Land reports that nationally 65 out of 99 measures passed for a total of more than \$2 billion in funds approved for land conservation.

In the end, even after pouring over the dollar and cents issues, the issue of open space and land conservation still often comes down to the emotional and personal impact.

"To be old-fashioned, it 'restoreth the soul'," said Moulton. "Open space is important to our quality of life; it influences where people want to live and the future we see for ourselves." 🌿



Whitemarsh Township recently closed a deal to preserve 98 acres – known as the Angus Tract – of Erdenheim Farm, which dates back to the days of William Penn. The preservation ensures that the Angus Tract will remain open space.

she recalled. “Everyone had always assumed that Erdenheim Farm was protected, and it was a shock to learn that it wasn’t.”

Under the advice of then State Rep. Lita Cohen, Shepperd, along with other concerned citizens, became an active voice against the development, rallying neighbors, canvassing for support and attending public meetings in numbers so large the proceedings were moved to Plymouth-Whitemarsh High School to accommodate the crowds. The result of that activism was the creation of the Whitemarsh Township Resident’s Association (WTRA) and a clear understanding that Erdenheim Farm was important to Township residents in a way that moved beyond the visual.

Shepperd, a founding member and current president of WTRA said the Township was stunned by the group’s level of organization and the depth of experience of its board.

“We were very fortunate to assemble a dream team,” said Shepperd. “Our board included a land use attorney, an environmental research scientist, a civil engineer, and a director of public safety. We were also fortunate in that we had a very educated Township and that people were willing to donate their time, money and expertise to this cause. It wasn’t just one person, it was the entire community, from block captains to board members.”

The WTRA undertook the challenge of not only appealing to the emotional ties the farm held for residents but to raise awareness of the importance of open space in the community. The group launched a campaign to educate the public about the environmental and economic benefits of

preserving undeveloped lands and how Erdenheim Farm had protected the Township from encroaching urban sprawl.

“The cost benefits of open space are clear,” said Shepperd. “Open space has a positive impact on taxes, infrastructure, schools and the environment.”

According to Moulton, open space helps keep Whitemarsh Township attractive to homebuyers and adds value to the Township by adding quality of life amenities.

“Numerous studies have proven that open space has a direct economic value to a community which made protecting Erdenheim Farm even more critical,” Moulton said.

The community made its voice heard and what happened next was, as Moulton stated, the very model of community cooperation.

A deal was reached under which the developer received the zoning variances and entered into an option, upon the death of Fitz Dixon, to purchase the 98-acre Angus Tract. The agreement stated that the funds for the purchase were to be raised by the community and the property deeded to a land preservation organization. In 2005, that option was assigned to the Whitemarsh Foundation, a tax-exempt public charity established in 2001 to raise the funds necessary to preserve Erdenheim Farm.

The agreement, while a victory for open space, was just the beginning.

Raising the funds necessary to purchase the property at fair market value would prove to be a

challenge. One of the first steps was to reach out to voters. In 2003, Montgomery County residents overwhelmingly approved an open space referendum, signaling their commitment to preserving open space. In 2006, Whitemarsh Township voters approved a quarter-percent earned income tax to help support the purchase of open space lands such as Erdenheim Farm. Meanwhile, the Whitemarsh Foundation began searching for other sources of funding.

Then, in 2006, Fitz Dixon passed away unexpectedly, and raising the money necessary to purchase the property, appraised at \$13.5 million, became a Township priority.

“While we had been hard at work since 2001 to raise the funds we knew would be necessary to purchase the Angus Tract,” said Moulton, “after Dixon’s unexpected death we needed to accelerate those efforts or risk losing the option.”

The upside, according to Moulton, was that everyone was pointed in the same direction.

“There were no adversarial interests involved,” Moulton said. “Everyone, from the partnership to Edith Dixon, Fitz Dixon’s widow, was committed to seeing this land preserved; it was just a matter of gathering our resources.”

Thanks to a unique Tax Increment Financing plan put forth by the developer, the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority approved a plan under which new taxes generated by the retirement development would be applied to the purchase price of the property. This was a crucial piece to the financing puzzle.

The Foundation also secured \$1 million in Community Conservation Partnership Program grants, awarded by Gov. Ed Rendell, along with monies from the Montgomery County Open Space program; funds from the Whitemarsh Township earned income tax and \$4.5 million from Merck & Co., as part of a \$20 million settlement for a 2006 chemical spill into the Wissahickon River.

Finally, in September of 2008 the Township entered into an agreement of sale.

Leslie Richards, of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors, likened the sale to a difficult tightrope walk that was executed perfectly.

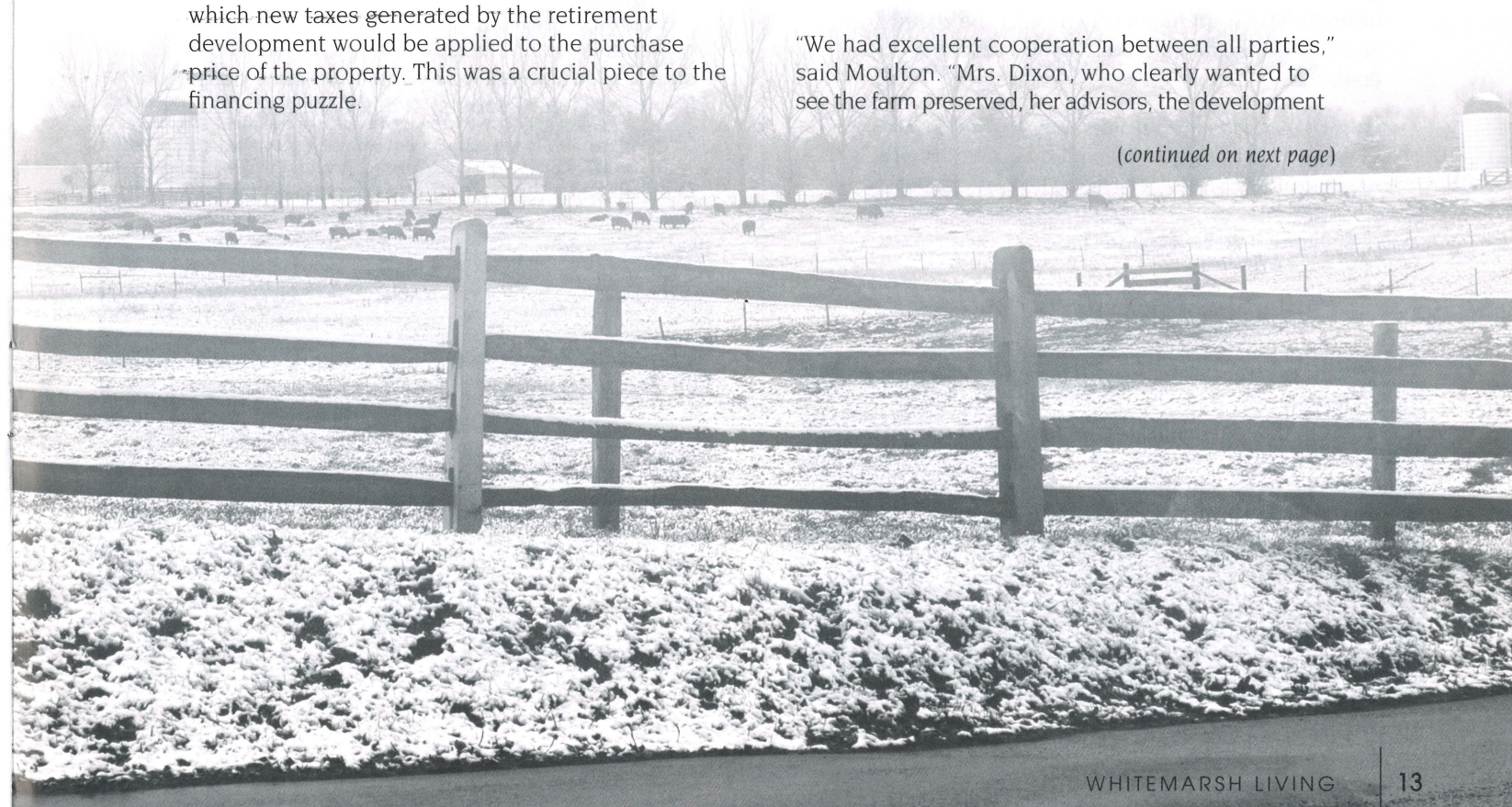
“This couldn’t have happened without a lot of dedicated people including residents, The Whitemarsh Foundation, the WTRA and past supervisors, working very hard to move the process along,” said Richards. “Erdenheim Farm is one of the things that make us a unique Township, and it’s been rewarding to play a part in preserving this piece of history that is so closely linked to our identity. It’s gratifying to know that future generations will get the thrill of seeing the same vistas that we see today.”

Edith Dixon, in a written statement, agreed.

“I am very happy The Whitemarsh Foundation and the residents of Whitemarsh Township have worked so very hard to help preserve Erdenheim Farm,” she said.

“We had excellent cooperation between all parties,” said Moulton. “Mrs. Dixon, who clearly wanted to see the farm preserved, her advisors, the development

(continued on next page)



ERDENHEIM
(continued from page 13)

company, the state, residents and Township have all come together to preserve this unique property."

Now that the Township has obtained ownership of the farm, the challenge is to how to best preserve the property to retain its delicate environmental balance and tradition within the community, while still affording real value to the residents of Whitmarsh Township.

Richards said the Township is carefully considering all options. The creation of an environmental center is in the discussion stage as is a plan to create a trail linking the farm into the existing greenbelt. She stated that the Dixon family expressed a desire that the property remains agricultural, and the Township will carefully scrutinize all options for its use.

What is certain is that the legacy of Erdenheim Farm will live on, not only in its rolling vistas but also in the spirit of community activism that it inspired.

"It's an important part of our culture," said Moulton. "It has a positive impact on our quality of life and our environment and it's something that future generations will thank us for preserving. Our goal, ultimately, is to permanently protect the entire farm and this is a significant step toward reaching that goal." ■

Erdenheim Farm is a working farm. Pictured here is the team that keeps it running.



PHOTO BY: KELLY K. BROWN

STORMWATER
(continued from page 2)

Whitmarsh resident Steve Brown, a former member of the Board of Supervisors, recalled the floods of 2004.

"We were walking in waste deep water and helping people with water in their basements get their stuff out," Brown said. "On Lefrance Drive the water was six to eight inches deep running down the road. It went down people's driveways and right into the doors of their houses."

"The people directly affected were in my face and the board's face about it," Brown continued. "Eventually, many became part of the solution."

Mary Reichley was one of them.

A resident of Lafayette Hill near Germantown Pike and Joshua Road, Reichley had a front row seat to the devastation wrought by the August 2004 storms.

"There was a 30-foot-wide stream of water, four-feet deep that affected the area near the Wawa (at Germantown Pike and Joshua Road)," Reichley said.

Reichley pointed out that Whitmarsh's water runoff issues are a Township-wide problem. "This is a community issue," Reichley said. "Our fear is that people may not want to live here, because people's houses are being flooded. If that happens, property values go down."

In addition to the potential for decreased property values, flooding also causes lost wages, lost business, lost tax revenue and disrupted lives. Moreover, the cost of repairing flood damage puts a strain on the Township budget.

Reichley said she is confident the Board of Supervisors is committed to identifying solutions.

"I have faith that they will stick to their word," said Reichley, "and that in six months we'll have all three of our main projects underway. But, people should still get involved. We want to hear what the community thinks." ■

ART CENTER
(continued from page 3)

"It brings a new energy," Lenhard said. "It's a challenge to creatively craft programs that work within the boundaries of an outside group's time and space but it's inspiring to hear reactions from people who didn't think they could 'do' art."

For Dwyer, these initiatives are just the beginning. He's moving toward a future where the Art Center holds more programs outside of its walls than inside its physical space.

"What we are doing is creating a virtual art center," explained Dwyer. "We have a great facility at Cedar Grove Park, but we are limited in space. By expanding beyond our building and partnering with community organizations we are only restricted by the number of instructors we have. We could, theoretically, have an endless number of classes going on. It's an exciting time of growth and possibility." ■

Whitmarsh Community Art Center instructor Mary Lenhard demonstrates how to make artisan paper out of recycled paper products. The technique was used by students at St. Philip Neri Catholic School to create biodegradable planters out of recycled lunch bags. From left: Lenhard, Carole Kelly, Denise Novak, Diane Wetherill and Susan Wasserman.



PHOTO BY: DEBORAH STANISH

Germantown Pike Revitalization Project to Begin This Spring

BY KELLY K. BROWN

Whitmarsh Township is expected to begin construction on Phase One of the Germantown Pike Revitalization Project this spring. The project aims to transform the main corridor of Lafayette Hill into a town center that residents and visitors alike will enjoy.

The project area extends from Joshua Road to Church Road on Germantown Pike and includes expanded sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings and accommodations for new street lamps and plantings. The project, which preserves the Pike's rich architectural heritage, also will provide solutions for storm water management.

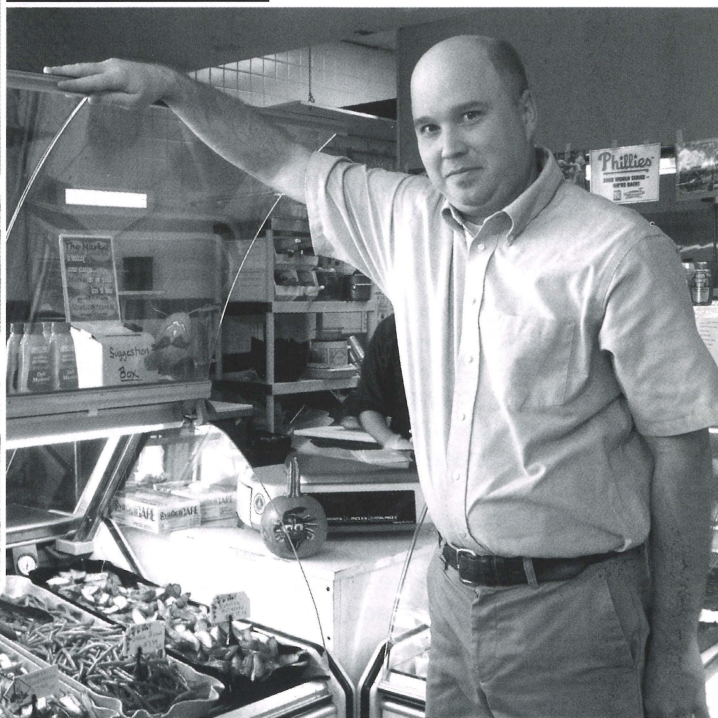
"This revitalization will create a vibrant main street for our community," said David Brooke, of the Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors. "The beautified Germantown Pike will be pedestrian-friendly and welcoming, which will benefit both our residents and business owners."

Plans for the revitalization project came together after numerous public forums and committee meetings as well as discussions with property and business owners along the Pike, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

During the forums, residents requested a more pedestrian-friendly town center lined with trees and benches, where people could walk from one store to the next. Participants envisioned a place where employees could safely cross the street to enjoy lunch and children could safely bicycle to Miles Park. Residents also expressed concern over parking and traffic flow along the Pike. Several traffic calming strategies have been incorporated in the revitalization plan. ■



Joe Santora, meat manager, and James Parker, seafood manager, offer personalized service to customers.



Store Manager Dan Belfield with a selection of The Market's quality prepared food items. The store features an in-house chef who prepares specialty items fresh daily.

PHOTOS BY: DEBORAH STANISH

Neighborhood Market Offers Locally Produced Specialties

BY DEBORAH STANISH

From hand-picked fresh produce to locally produced artisan cheeses to gourmet prepared foods, The Market of Lafayette Hill is a dream of a neighborhood grocer.

For owner, Pete Liccio, variety, quality and freshness are the hallmarks of his business. Liccio strives to create a boutique market that offers the freshest options and can quickly respond to customer demands.

"We have the ability to offer quality over quantity," said Liccio. "I go down to the markets every morning with my produce manager and we break open boxes and hand select what we're bringing into the store. I look at the seafood every day and pick the best.

"We have our own chef and our own baker in the store who prepares a select number of items each day," Liccio continued. "We're not selling things that

are just coming off a corporate truck or cooked in a warehouse and sent to us in bulk, we offer a more personal experience."

Larger grocery stores will always have their place, but Liccio is in on the ground floor of a recent movement in the grocery marketplace. "Grab and go" markets, featuring quality prepared foods and smaller inventories are an increasing trend as are smaller stores with a focus on local, organic and gourmet foods.

Liccio also owns One on One Seafood Company, and provided seafood to the market when it was known as Top Shelf. He purchased the store five years ago and began the process of rebranding the business and building the current boutique market.

The Market's smaller size allows them to buy more locally produced goods including hummus, cheeses



Fresh baked items, prepared on-site by The Market's own baker, include their signature "Market Cake." The cake, layers of chocolate cake and chocolate cheesecake covered with a chocolate ganache, is a customer favorite.

and locally roasted coffees, said store manager Dan Belfield.

"It's really difficult for a small producer to sell their goods to a large chain store," said Belfield. "But here at The Market we can offer our customers the best of local goods from these small producers as well as a selection of quality grocery items."

Belfield also noted that because of The Market's small size, its staff has the opportunity to develop relationships with customers.

"If they can't find something we'll get it for them," Belfield said. "They know they can count on us to listen and meet their needs."

It's this business philosophy that has kept Barbara Resch of Lafayette Hill coming to the store since its opening.

"Their meats and seafood are the best, incredibly fresh," said Resch. "I can find things here that I can't find anywhere else and I can find it quickly."

Liccio credits his employees, many of who worked for Top Shelf, as critical to the success of the business.

"Our employees are great," he said. "We have a few that not only live in the neighborhood but were long-time employees of Top Shelf. They know the customers and can offer that level of service that only a neighborhood market can." ■

The Market of Lafayette Hill

531 Germantown Pike
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444
610-941-7101

Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Saturday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Serving Up Soup, Sandwiches and Salads at Pete's Deli

BY KELLY K. BROWN



Above: Owners of Pete's Deli, Sandra and Tom Oxenreider. Below: The picnic tables on the side of Pete's Deli were a welcome addition.



Pete's Deli
801 East Hector Street
Conshohocken, PA 19428
610-825-8555
Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Whether it's a quick dinner before the soccer game or a convenient lunch during the workweek, Pete's Deli offers its customers plenty of delicious hot and cold sandwich and salad choices for families and professionals on the go.

Hot roast pork sandwiches. Homemade chicken salad. Hoagies made to order.

All on "the best rolls around from the Conshy Bakery," says owner Tom Oxenreider.

Tom and his wife, Sandra, took over the deli on the border of Whitmarsh and Conshohocken a year and a half ago, after purchasing the business from a friend. The deli is named for its original owner, Pete Ianuzzi, who started the business more than two decades ago.

Prior to owning the deli, Tom worked as a golf pro. He switched careers after 25 years in hopes of building a better future and a possible career path for his two children.

Sandra brought a background in food service management, having worked for 11 years at two local country clubs, making the transition to owning and running the deli easier.

The couple kept the existing menu virtually the same, with a few additions like fried mushrooms and calamari, which are popular items, Oxenreider said.

They also added picnic tables on the side of the building enabling customers to enjoy their sandwiches and salads outside instead of having to take them back to their office or try to eat them in their car as they're headed to their next stop.

The deli is now open on Sundays and the Oxenreiders plan to expand their dinner offerings along with the catering side of the business.

While Pete's is well known for its hoagies and cheesesteaks made with premium meat, the deli's chicken salad is a favorite among customers.

"We go through 60 pounds of chicken a week," Sandra Oxenreider said.

All of the salads – potato, slaw, macaroni, pasta, chicken and tuna – are homemade and made to order.

And now that the weather is colder Pete's is also serving chili and hearty soups.

The Oxenreiders have lived in Lafayette Hill for 16 years and want other Lafayette Hill residents to know that Pete's Deli is closer to home than they might think. 🍷

PHOTOS BY: KELLY K. BROWN

Lincoln Fire Company Serving the Community Since 1929

BY KELLY K. BROWN



PHOTOS BY: KELLY K. BROWN

Above: Serving up smiles and breakfast at a recent Lincoln Fire Company fundraiser are (pictured left to right) Maria Laporte, Ashley Morgan, Liz Laporte, Tracy Bradley, Tim Fleming and Andrea Fondot. Below: Members of the Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors and their families enjoyed breakfast at the Lincoln Fire Company.

Whitmarsh is a township made up of smaller communities, each with its own personality, and some even with their own fire company.

There's Barren Hill Fire Company on Germantown Pike, Spring Mill Fire Company on Hector Street and the Lincoln Fire Company in the Cedar Heights neighborhood.

Lincoln is the smallest fire company in Whitmarsh and the last fire company founded in the Township. Nonetheless it is considered part of the fabric of the Cedar Heights community, and despite previous financial and organizational difficulties, Lincoln is working on increasing their community outreach and taking on new challenges.

Founded in 1929 after two serious fires in the area, Lincoln began with little more than a spare garage, a donated truck and local volunteers.

Since then generations of residents have grown up depending on and supporting the fire company.

Fire Chief, William Bradford, Jr., 35, grew up in a house behind the fire company. He joined because his family was part of the company.

"When I was 5 years old and the whistle blew, I ran to it," Bradford said.

Lincoln has about 25 active members and more than 50 social members. The company is seeing an increase in its teenage members who can join at age 14, said Tom Hunsicker, Jr., president of the Board of Directors, and often an entire family is involved in volunteering at the firehouse.

Sharon Morgan, 42, is chairperson of the newly formed Ladies Committee. Her parents and brothers are members at Lincoln. She joined the Ladies Auxiliary when she was 16.

Her husband, Bill Morgan, is an active member and the company treasurer. Both of their children are junior members. Will, 17, is attending Emergency Medical Technician training with his parents and Ashley, 15, is one of two girls who serve as junior fire fighters.

Lincoln was one of the first fire companies to be state certified for hazardous material emergencies in the mid-1980s and is one of only two fire companies that have a haz-mat unit in Montgomery County. On weekdays, the Whitmarsh Community Ambulance Association houses one of their ambulances at Station 56.

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Lincoln Fire Company
252 Roberts Avenue
Conshohocken, PA 19428
610-828-6535
www.lfc56.com



Joseph "Coach" Paris

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

Almost no one knows Joseph Paris by his real name, but say something about "Coach" and everyone knows the guy you're talking about.

PHOTO BY: KELLY K. BROWN

Paris spent more than 20 years teaching youngsters the finer points of baseball, spending time at Visitation BVM, St. Phillip Neri, and coaching Legion ball for Methacton. During that time he met hundreds of kids, many of whom, now adults, still say hello when they see him in town.

At 80 years old, Paris still stays active in the community, handling daily crossing guard duties and volunteering his time for events like the Whitmarsh Police Department's weeklong Cop Camp.

Q. What is it about kids that you like being around?

A. The joy I get working with kids is the reason I volunteer for activities like Cop Camp and work as a school crossing guard. Kids give you unpredictability. They're fun. I think laughter is the best medicine. I tease people and laugh a lot. People say I'm never serious, but I'm happy and I'm having fun. Working with kids keeps me young...and good looking.

Q. What was your proudest moment as a coach?

A. Our 42-0 record at St. Phillips that spanned the 2000, 2001, and 2002 seasons. It wasn't me. It was the kids. I just pushed them a little. It was a bunch of good kids.

Q. What was your coaching style like?

A. I rarely raised my voice. I taught fundamentals and told the kids to have fun. If kids made a mistake,

I would take them aside and talk to them, not yell at them the way I sometimes see coaches and parents yelling at kids on playing fields today. I don't admire the modern day (professional) ballplayer. They play for money, not the love of the game. The greed bothers me. Back in the day (Ted) Williams and (Stan) Musial got paid, but they played for the love of the game. That's why I like working with kids. I worked with 300 or 400 kids in my life, and they come back to me. They talk to me. I always kept the game fun.

Q. What do you do to stay so energetic?

A. I exercise and stretch everyday at Miles Park or somewhere around here. I don't drink, and I don't smoke. My wife and I also stay active traveling. We've been to Hawaii, Italy, and Las Vegas. I go to the shows in Vegas. I've seen all the greats: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Jerry Lewis.

Q. How long have you been married?

A. We've been married 54 years. There are two keys to staying married that long: trust and a sense of humor. I also live by common sense. I don't make things overly complicated. I like giving to people. If you want me to do you a favor, I'll do you a favor. I don't think of getting anything in return. ■

Successful Recycling Program Enables Twp. to Move to Once Weekly Trash Pick-Ups

BY KELLY K. BROWN

With a focus on financial stewardship along with concern for the environment and a reduction in trash volume, the Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors recently voted to shift to weekly trash pick-ups in 2009.

"People are doing such a great job recycling that we have had a significant decrease in the tonnage of regular trash this year," said Leslie Richards, of the Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors. "This will allow us to switch to once a week trash pick up just like our neighboring municipalities, saving the Township and ultimately the taxpayers more than \$200,000 a year."

The issue of once weekly trash pick up had been raised by local officials in the past, both for the cost savings and the benefit to the environment. This year, however, seemed a good year to try the new schedule because of the changes made in recycling and yard waste pick up, which reduced the volume of regular trash.

Two major changes in the way the waste stream is handled occurred in 2008. The first change was the switch to single stream recycling, allowing for co-mingled glass, metal and paper. The second change was the state mandated separation of yard waste from trash taken to landfills. The result was much less trash.

"Your Township does not need two times a week [trash collection] based on the amount of recycling that is coming out of your Township," said Albert DeGennaro, Corporate Counsel for J.P. Mascaro and Sons, the company that currently collects trash and recycling for Whitmarsh.

(continued on back)

LINCOLN FIRE COMPANY

(continued from page 19)

"The Lincoln Fire Company is a great community resource," said David Brooke, of the Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors. "It is an important place in their community where teens can hang out in a safe environment."

Junior firefighter Christopher Ferris, 15, said he feels the community appreciates the fire company's help. "After the Conshohocken fire on August 13th, people came to the station to say thank you."

Neighbors treat members with home baked cakes and cookies and support Lincoln financially at the company's many fundraisers.

Lincoln reaches out to the public through several events throughout the year. This summer they sponsored their first Community Day at Cedar Grove Park with food and entertainment. Other neighborhood events include a Halloween parade with fire trucks to escort the costumed children and a December luncheon that features Santa's arrival on a fire truck. ■



Lincoln Fire Company has been serving the Cedar Heights community since 1929.



2009 Trash and Recycling Schedule:

Recycle day will remain on the **same day** as it was for 2008.

Trash day will be the **same day** as recycling.

If your trash and recycling day falls on a **holiday**, collection day will be **Wednesday** of that same week.

"There are often times on the second collection day that we'll go by houses and there'll be nothing out for us to pick up. Consequently, you're paying us to drive around your Township for no reason," said DeGennaro.


The Resident Survey on Waste and Recycling, conducted last summer, also supported the change. Of the 1,619 respondents, the majority favored one collection day per week, with up to six containers allowed per collection.

Residents responding to the survey commented:

- "At this point, two collections a week is wasteful. We can do with one."
- "Trash one time per week is fine for our family of five."

- "People need to consume less – will decrease global warming."
- "Why waste gasoline and tax money when most people put out trash only one collection day or the other? Once a week is plenty adequate – like other places."

Of the residents who responded, 90.8 percent said they put out less than four trash containers per week and 60.5 percent put out less than two.

The Board of Supervisors voted for a one-year trash and recycling contract to provide an opportunity to try the once weekly schedule without locking into a long-term contract. This will give the Township a year to evaluate the new collection schedule and make adjustments, if necessary, for 2010. 

"People are doing such a great job recycling that we have had a significant decrease in the tonnage of regular trash this year. This will allow us to switch to once a week trash pick up...saving the Township and ultimately the taxpayers more than \$200,000 a year."

-Leslie Richards, of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors

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616 Germantown Pike
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

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