

Whitemarsh **Living**

FALL 2009

Public Works Working for You

Plus: Can You Guess How Many Tons of Leaves the Township Collects? How Many Traffic Signs it Replaces? Test Your Public Works IQ Inside

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Newest Park

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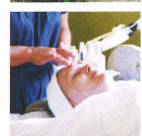
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ON THE COVER:

Mike Whalon works on an outbuilding for the Township's rotary fan press project. The project will update the Township's sewage treatment facility and increase the sludge processing capacity.



Dear Whitemarsh Residents:

For most of us, summer takes on a slower pace as we enjoy vacations and time away with family and friends. But for the men and women in the Public Works Department summer is as busy as ever as they take advantage of the longer days and warmer weather to make important improvements to the Township's infrastructure.

In this issue, writer and Township resident Deborah Stanish provides us a closer look at the inner-workings of Public Works and how our in-house fix-it team is saving our streets, our sewers and our bottom line.

This team also deserves special recognition for its service in responding to the flooding that occurred in our Township in August. Public Works employees worked around the clock to help clear roadways, remove debris and most importantly, keep residents safe. The Township couldn't be more fortunate to have such a dedicated group of workers.

Also in this issue, we begin a new feature that will regularly explore a piece of Whitemarsh Township's rich history. This feature is a direct response to readers who asked that we provide more information about the Township's place in the history books.

Writer Kelly K. Brown in a separate story updates us on the preservation of Erdenheim Farm, which has been a working farm since the days of William Penn. Brown is also a Township resident and is responsible for many of the photographs in this issue.

Of course, Whitemarsh Living wouldn't be complete without our business and taste sections. Read how business owner Lisa Kasmien turned a nail salon into a full service salon and spa, and check out Doug Herschaft's piece on The Lucky Dog Saloon & Grille. It will make your mouth water.

As summer winds down and we usher in the autumn season, I encourage you to join your neighbors at some of the many exciting fall events happening around the Township. See pages 6 and 7 for a sampling.

Lastly, don't forget about the Township's leaf collection program (see page 15), another great service of the Whitemarsh Township Public Works Department.

Sincerely,

Sara J. Erlbaum, Chair
Board of Supervisors

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Planning to Preserve: Commission Helps Township Retain Traditional Character

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

With its well-kept neighborhoods and tree-lined streets, along with its picturesque farms and pasturelands, Whitemarsh Township has a special charm that sets it apart from most other inner-ring suburbs of Philadelphia.

It is not by accident, however, that the Township has maintained this charm for so many years. In fact, quite the opposite is true.

Twice a month members of the Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission meet publicly to review potential land use developments and determine how they fit into the overall goal of preserving and enhancing the Township's quality of life.

Specifically, the Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission provides advice to the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board with respect to comprehensive land use planning and existing land use in Whitemarsh Township.

Guided by the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2003, Commission members volunteer their time and talent to protect the goals and vision outlined in that Plan.

Folks like Peter Cornog, who joined the Planning Commission in January, spoke recently of the values that help shape their decision-making.

"Planning is a necessary component of a dynamic Township," said Cornog. "I feel like we help guide the Township into the 21st century. In a fundamental way, most of what we do is preserve Whitemarsh Township."

Planning Commission Chair Ken Parsons joined the Commission in 1991. He is a veteran of Philadelphia politics, and when he moved to Whitemarsh he wanted to be involved in his new community.

"We have to be attuned to the character of the town and how things fit into Whitemarsh Township," said Parsons. "I try to make sure that the Planning Commission is a

(continued on page 8)



Left: Former Whitemarsh Parks and Recreation Director, Don Koontz, 82, was honored on May 27 at a ceremony in which the Township's newest park was dedicated in his honor. From left, Sam Friedlander, granddaughter; wife Harriett Koontz and daughter Katie Koontz. Right: Don Koontz, along with Township officials, break ground for Koontz Park, dedicated to the former Parks and Recreation Director on May 27.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

New Park Honors Recreation Pioneer

BY DEBORAH STANISH

For 33 years Donald Koontz devoted his life to Whitemarsh Township Parks and Recreation. As the first Parks and Recreation Director for the Township, he laid the groundwork for the park system we enjoy today.

Now Whitemarsh Township will honor his legacy by giving its newest park his name.

"Koontz was really ahead of his time," said Doug Knauss, the current Director of Parks and Recreation. "He helped pioneer the recreation facilities in Whitemarsh. He devoted an incredible amount of time and energy to developing the Township's four main parks, and some of the programs he helped initiate are still in existence today including the little league and basketball programs."

When complete, Koontz Park, located on Hart's Lane, will feature perimeter trails, an American With Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant playground, a three-quarter basketball court as well as an onsite recreational building and the Township's greenhouse.

Knauss is particularly proud of the playground.

Designed so a child in a wheelchair or on crutches can access the elevated portion of the playground directly from the access path, the equipment will increase the available play experience for all children.

"All of our playgrounds meet current ADA requirements but don't really give children with needs a

true experience of the playground," Knauss said. "We wanted to take this playground to the next level. All of our new equipment goes beyond the ADA standards and will allow children with needs to do activities above ground level as well as at ground level."

In addition, the Koontz Park playground surface will be a rubberized surface as opposed to woodchips to enhance the experience for children with mobility challenges.

In addition to making the park accessible to children with disabilities, the Township aimed to make the park accessible to the neighborhoods. Trails will give non-motorized access to the Reserve neighborhood and Evergreen Circle.

"Not only are we servicing a new section of the Township, we are adding 3.19 acres of open space that will have no infrastructure impact," Knauss said. "It is a win-win situation."

Koontz Park has been in the planning stages since the Township purchased the property in 2006 with a grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and help from Rep. Mike Gerber. The Township received a further \$100,000 grant from the Widener Memorial Foundation for the ADA-compliant playground.

The Township held a groundbreaking ceremony on May 27. Demolition of one building was completed in August, and the Township anticipates Phase I of the park will be complete in October. ■

Another Preservation Victory for Erdenheim Farm

BY KELLY K. BROWN

In June, Whitmarsh Township celebrated the completion of the final phase of the preservation of the entire 450-acre Erdenheim Farm. The historic June 1 settlement on the remaining parcels of the farm guarantees this unique and irreplaceable farmland will remain as open space in perpetuity.

There will not be a crop of McMansions sprouting up on Erdenheim Farm. No clusters of town homes along Angus Way or Sheep Lane. No strip malls for a quick cup of coffee. Just the quiet beauty of the farm as it has been enjoyed by so many for so long.

It took 10 years and 10 parties at settlement to reach this point, but Hugh Moulton, Chairman of the Whitmarsh Foundation, said it was worth the effort.

“Erdenheim Farm is a 450-acre landscape with extraordinary views, important environmental resources, and a rich agricultural heritage,” said Moulton. “Preservation of the farm has been the largest and most important conservation project in Southeastern Montgomery County history. It could not have been accomplished without widespread community support, especially from Whitmarsh Township, for which the Foundation is extremely grateful.”

In December last year, the Whitmarsh Foundation and the Township closed a deal to preserve the 98-acre parcel known as the Angus Tract. The purchase was funded with public and private dollars, including \$1.9 million of Open Space funds from Whitmarsh Township.

The Township contributed an additional \$8 million of Open Space funds for the Whitmarsh Foundation's purchase of the 91-acre parcel known as the Sheep Tract.

Peter McCausland, Chairman and CEO of Radnor based Airgas, Inc. and his wife, Bonnie, purchased the remaining 245 acres of the farm and plan to make it their home. They will lease the Sheep Tract from the Foundation, assume responsibility for the maintenance of the Angus Tract, and continue the farming operations that have been happening since the time of William Penn.

“We consider ourselves very fortunate to be able to live on Erdenheim Farm and continue farming operations there,” said Peter McCausland. “We hope that others will step forward and do their best to prevent excessive future development in the Whitmarsh community which might have an adverse impact on the quality of life in our community.”

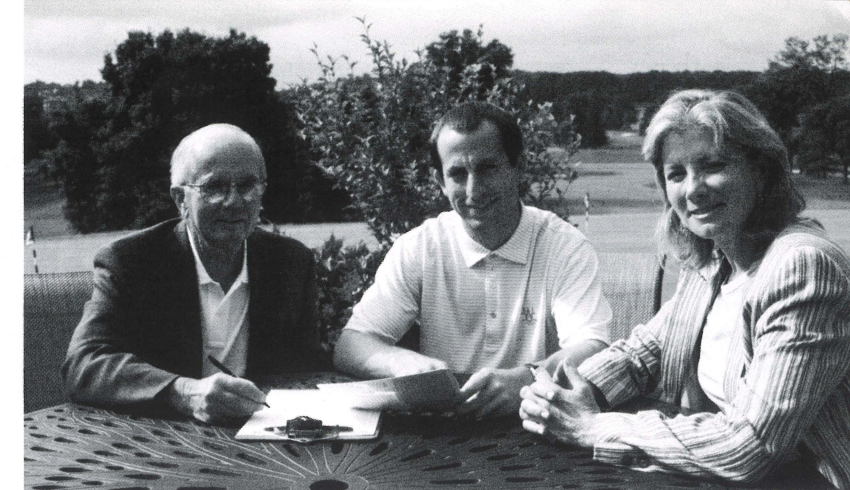
Looking Ahead

Now that the sale is complete, what can Whitmarsh residents and others expect?

Much will stay the same, given McCausland's plans to continue the stewardship of the farm that the Dixon family maintained for so many years. The

Hugh Moulton, Chairman of the Whitmarsh Foundation and Township Open Space Committee member (left), discusses plans for the Triple Crown Golf Outing with David Pagett, Head Golf Professional at Whitmarsh Valley Country Club and Kimberly Sheppard, Executive Director of the Whitmarsh Foundation.

PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN



property will still be known as Erdenheim Farm, complete with cattle and sheep, an occasional tractor rolling down Flourtown Road and wide-open fields.

There will be limited public access to the portions of the property owned by the Whitmarsh Foundation. Walking trails, a dog park and an Environmental Education Center are anticipated.

The Township is in the early stages of planning a 1.5 mile perimeter trail for the Angus Tract. A small parking lot will enable residents who are out of walking distance to take advantage of this new amenity.

Located across Flourtown Road on the Sheep Tract will be a dog park – a first for the Township.

“The Dog Park is our first priority for the Farm,” said Doug Knauss, Director of Parks and Recreation. “We have a three-acre easement for the park, of which we will use about two-and-a-half acres. There will be a parking lot and other than that, no development.”

The Foundation has dedicated a 10-acre portion of the Angus Tract for a stormwater mitigation project, which will be completed within the next two years. The Colonial School District is considering an Environmental Education Center for an existing building on the Angus Tract.

An easement on the Equestrian Tract on the northeast side of Stenton Avenue will enable completion of the County Green Ribbon Trail from Fort Washington State Park in Whitmarsh to Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. Trail easements on the Sheep Tract will provide links between the County Cross County Trail, the Green Ribbon Trail, the Township trail system, and the new dog park on the Sheep Tract.

For its part, the Whitmarsh Foundation cannot rest on its laurels, despite the significance of what it accomplished.

Foundation for the Future

Finding the funding for the Angus and Sheep Tracts was just the first step for the Foundation, a tax-exempt public charity that was founded eight years ago with the goal of preserving Erdenheim Farm.

The Foundation's Board includes representatives from The Hill at Whitmarsh, the Whitmarsh Valley Country Club, the Whitmarsh Township Residents Association, the Whitmarsh Valley Farms Group and one at large representative.

According to the Foundation's Executive Director, Kimberly Sheppard, the new focus for the group is to raise money to maintain and steward the property owned by the Foundation.

“We are in the process of planning an endowment campaign,” said Sheppard. “Our goal is to raise \$5 million for future stewardship of the Angus and Sheep Tracts.”

Toward that end, the Foundation is holding its fourth annual Triple Crown Golf Outing. The Whitmarsh Valley Country Club will host this year's event on Oct. 19. Sunnybrook Golf Club and the Cricket Club also host the fundraiser on a rotating basis.

“The golf tournament has netted between \$60,000 to \$80,000 in each of the past years,” said Sheppard.

Registration and sponsorship information for the Triple Crown Golf Outing can be found on the Foundation's website at whitmarshfoundation.org.

*Individuals can also make direct donations to the Foundation's endowment, either through the website or by mailing a check to **The Whitmarsh Foundation, P.O. Box 538, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444.***

Left: Whitmarsh Township is celebrating the preservation of the Erdenheim Farm, as seen here from the barn on Flourtown Road. Plans are in the works for limited public access to the Angus and Sheep tracts of the farm now owned by the Whitmarsh Foundation.

FALL OFFERS FUN FOR EVERYONE

BY DEBORAH STANISH



As soon as the air turns frosty our thoughts turn to pumpkins. This fall opportunities abound to take advantage of crisp, autumn fun.

On Oct. 10 the Whitmarsh Business Association (WBA) will hold its 5th annual Fall Pumpkin Festival at Miles Park in Lafayette Hill.

According to Jody Davies, Association President and Festival Co-chair, the event is an opportunity to bring community and business together in a positive, fun way. Funds raised from the Fall Pumpkin Festival are used to support local community activities.

This year the Fall Pumpkin Festival will feature hayrides, Halloween bingo, spooky stories hosted by the William Jeanes Memorial Library as well as pumpkin carving and scarecrow making demonstrations. The day also will include a costume parade and pumpkin decorating contest, an exhibit by the Elmwood Park Zoo, and arts and crafts led by the Whitmarsh Arts Center.

"This event has grown in community participation over the years," said Davies. "We have over 100 volunteers, the majority coming from the Plymouth Whitmarsh National Art Society and the National Honor Society."

In 2008 attendance was estimated at 5,000. The WBA hopes that with the continued support of the community the event will continue to grow.

The Association continues to seek corporate, business and individual sponsors. Advance ticket sales will be available at a 20 percent discount to

all sponsors and Association members. For more information visit www.whitmarshbusiness.com.

From Haunted Gardens ...

For a spooky, nighttime treat, head to the Highlands Mansion and Gardens on Oct. 25 for the annual Pumpkin Show at The Highlands.

Master Carvers and local residents Haldy Gifford and Ellen Glendinning will once again showcase their carving skills with an outdoor show that features intricate pumpkin carvings in the likeness of celebrities, cartoon characters as well as more traditional scary images.

According to Liz Gavrys, the Curator for Education at the Highlands, the event draws more than 1,000 people to the Mansion's garden.

"It is really a magical experience to walk through the gardens when it is pitch black and see all the glowing pumpkins," said Gavrys. "We offer quite a few programs but this event is something the entire family can enjoy."

The event began nearly 10 years ago when Gifford and Glendinning met and discovered their mutual interest in pumpkin carving. What started as a small event in local backyards moved to various locations as it grew in popularity, has now found a home at the Highlands where the show has spent the past four years delighting pumpkin-lovers.

"It is truly amazing what Gifford and Glendinning manage to create," said Gavrys. "People are inspired to go home and try it themselves." And

(continued on page 8)

PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF WHITEMARSH BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR FALL FUN

TOUCH-A-TRUCK

Date: **Saturday, October 3**

Time: 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Miles Park, Joshua Road & Germantown Pike

Cost: Free.

For more information call (610) 828-7276 or visit the Whitmarsh Township Parks and Recreation website at www.whitmarshparks.org

HAUNTED BARN

Date: **October 15, 16 and 17**

Time: October 15 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.;

October 16 and 17 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Location: Cedar Grove Barn, Cedar Grove Road

Cost: \$10 per person for pre-registered tickets; \$12 per person for walk-up tickets.

Group tickets: \$8 per person for pre-registered groups; \$10 per person for walk-up group tickets.

Wristbands, good for all three nights: \$12 per person, pre-registered or \$15 per person for walk-ins.

For more information call (610) 828-7276 or visit the Whitmarsh Township Parks and Recreation website at www.whitmarshparks.org



5TH ANNUAL FALL PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

Date: **Saturday, October 10, 2009**

Time: Noon to 5 p.m.

Location: Miles Park, Joshua Road & Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill

Rain Date/Time: Sunday, October 11, Noon to 5 p.m.

Cost: Admission is free, but some events will carry a small charge.

For more information visit the Whitmarsh Business Association's website at www.whitmarshbusiness.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITEMARSH BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

PUMPKIN SHOW AT THE HIGHLANDS

Date: **Sunday, October 25**

Time: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Location: The Highlands Mansion & Gardens, Rt. 73 & Sheaff Lane, Ft. Washington

Cost: \$10 per car for Highlands members and \$15 per car for non-members

For more information call (215) 641-2687 or visit www.highlandshistorical.org

WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP'S 1ST ANNUAL HALLOWEEN DECORATING CONTEST

WILL YOUR HOUSE BE THE SCARIEST?

Judging will take place Friday, October 30th. Winners will be announced on the Township Website, www.whitmarshntp.org, on November 3rd. Prizes will be awarded at the Supervisors Meeting on November 12th at 7:00 p.m.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

HAVE FUN!!

Please drop off Registration Forms at the Whitmarsh Township Building Reception by **Monday, October 26th**. For more information contact Mike Zeock at 484-533-2214 or email mzeock@whitmarshntp.org

PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN



if you do get the urge to try your hand at carving your own masterpiece, local farm Maple Acres will be on hand with pumpkins of all shapes and sizes for sale.

... to Haunted Barns

Whitemarsh Township Parks and Recreation Department offers its own slate of fall family activities beginning with its annual Touch-a-Truck event and annual Haunted Barn.

Miles Park will host the third-annual Touch-a-Truck event on Oct. 3 from 1 to 3 p.m. Trucks from Whitemarsh Township fleets, Public Works, police, fire and ambulance will be available for a hands-on experience. Admission is free and snacks will be available for a nominal cost.

The Haunted Barn at Cedar Grove will be taken over by Ghouls, Ghosts, Monsters and more. All three levels of the barn will be converted into scenes of Halloween fun.

"The Haunted Barn is a fun Halloween event that used to be held every year," explained Whitemarsh Township Parks and Recreation Director Doug Knauss. "We took a hiatus several years ago because there were a lot of haunted houses in the area. We decided to bring it back last year since the number of area haunted houses has declined and it was a success. We're hoping to see it grow even more this year."

The Haunted Barn is recommended for ages 8 and older.

"It's clearly make-believe and you can tell it's people in costumes but it's a Haunted Barn so it is definitely recommended for older children," said Knauss. ■

non-partisan endeavor that's attuned to the community. What we as the Planning Commission have to do is play a role that weighs the facts of each issue and does what's best for the Township."

Parsons has a big picture view of the Commission that guides his work there.

"What I try to do on my watch is refocus the Planning Commission on this process of making the Planning Commission favorable to the community as a whole rather than individual developers or projects," said Parsons. "I see the Planning Commission as a facilitator in issues, to see the big picture and help make projects beneficial to everyone in the community. I feel honored to have been involved in the community this way."

Involvement in the community in a way that produces positive results for all its members is the fundamental motivator for Cornog and Parsons.

"I always appreciated it when I would go to a Board of Supervisors meeting and saw the Supervisors asking the tough questions of developers wanting to build in the Township," said Cornog. "The Township is only as good as the people who volunteer their time and energy to make the Township what it is." ■

The Planning Commission consists of seven residents appointed by the Board of Supervisors who serve four year terms.

The Commission meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Township building at 616 Germantown Pike.

For more information visit the Township website at www.whitemarshtwp.org

Kenneth A. Parsons, Chair
J. David Shula, Vice-Chair
Peter B. Cornog
Christopher Gubeno
Richard F. Leonard
William F. O'Donnell
Scott Quitel

PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

History Hiding in Plain Sight

BY KELLY K. BROWN

A tangible piece of American history is hiding in plain sight in Lafayette Hill, and Ben Franklin may have helped put it there.

How many times have you driven along Germantown Pike between Barren Hill Fire Company and Crescent Avenue. Have you noticed a monument resembling a small tombstone on the north side of the road in front of Tony's Foreign Car Repair?

It would be easy to miss it where it rests, surrounded by asphalt, reportedly knocked askew by a snowplow and surrounded by cigarette butts.

Yet this stone marker is one of several in the Whitemarsh area surviving from Colonial times.

Scholars agree these carved stones – which bear a numeral, the word "to" and the letter "P" – were used as mile markers along Germantown Pike more than 200 years ago. The carved number refers to the number of miles to the center of Philadelphia, noted by the letter "P".

Eugene P. Hough, whose company Heritage Guild Works specializes in cemetery and monument preservation, believes the mile markers were part of an early postal system that was established by Benjamin Franklin in the mid 1700s.

Hough, who describes himself as an "old soul from the 18th century" explains that Franklin, in his role as postmaster for Philadelphia, may have directed that mile markers be placed along Germantown Pike to aid in the delivery of mail and the calculation of postal rates.

Franklin is reported to have done the same thing in New England with the aid of an odometer he designed that sounded a bell every 20 rods, the equivalent of 16.5 feet.

David R. Contosta, Ph.D., professor of history at Chestnut Hill College, explains another use for the mile markers. In 1801, the road we now know as Germantown Pike was established as a toll road, and the milestones served as travel aids.

"The milestones helped travelers know where they were and how far they had to go," Contosta said. "They would know if it was time to rest the horses or stop for a meal."

The milestones also served as an important military tool.

Sandra L. Chaff, Archivist for the Germantown Historical Society Library, cited a paper by Anthony M. Hance from 1914 that detailed how George Washington employed the mile markers to direct his troops.

"By his orders of December 2, 1777, we see how skilfully he used them, not alone to mark the places from which to halt or to march, but where to turn off, and in which direction lay other roads," wrote Hance.

So what remains of these stones that were so helpful before the days of MapQuest and GPS?

The one in Whitemarsh Township, mile marker 11, is waiting for a champion to give its site dignity and presence. A mile closer to the city, just outside Whitemarsh in Springfield Township on Germantown Pike, is mile marker 10. The marker is surrounded by a stone retaining wall at the edge of hole 12 of the Whitemarsh Valley Country Club, obscured from view by overhanging vines and covered in paint.

Mile marker 13 is standing tall in a patch of grass just shy of two miles northwest of marker 11 at the intersection of Germantown and Butler pikes, in Plymouth Township, across from the Plymouth Friends Meeting House.

"The mile markers are worth preserving," said Contosta. "They put us in touch with earlier times and how important the road system was."

Hough agreed.

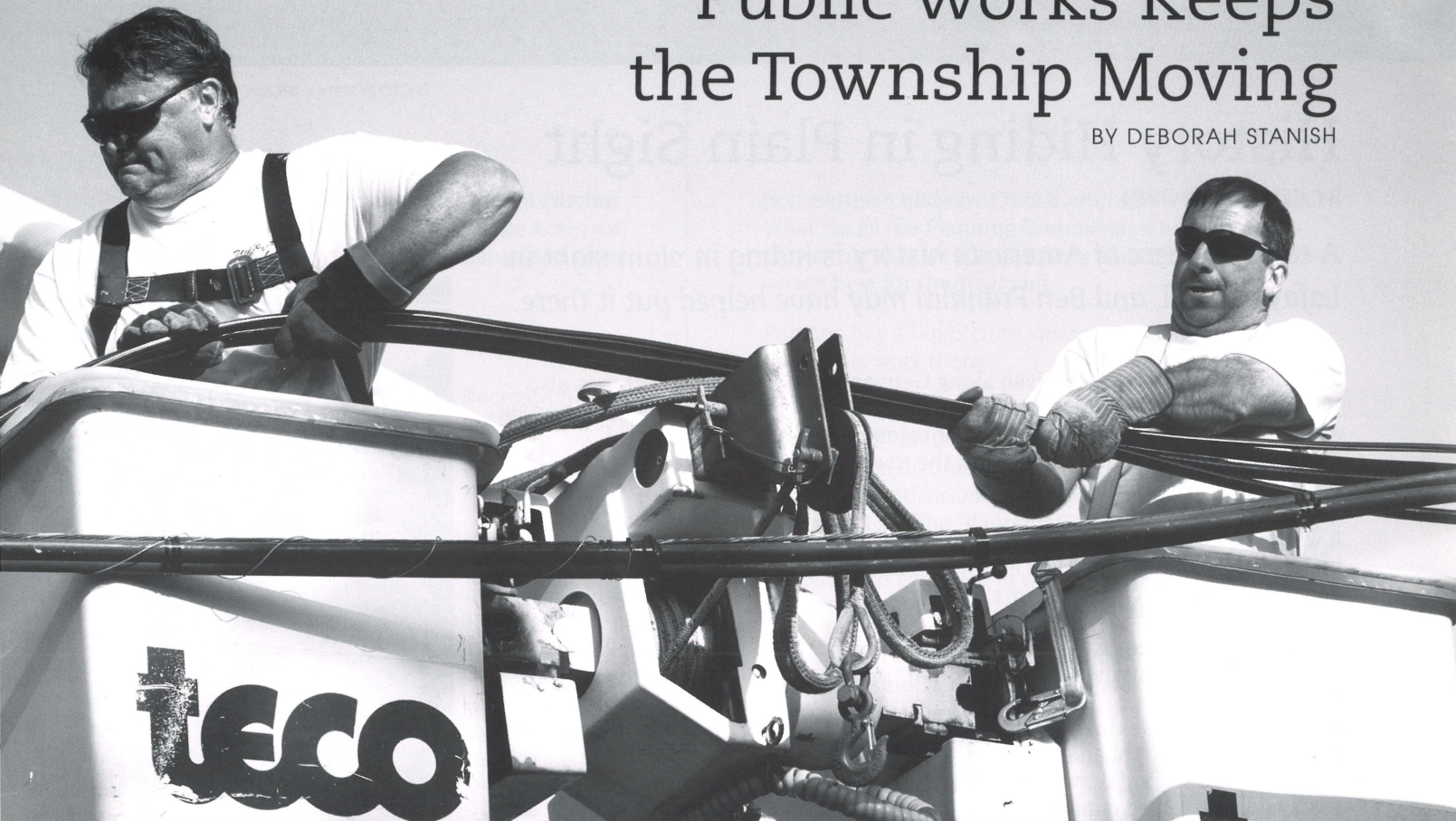
"Whitemarsh should highlight its mark as part of the history of this area," he said. "It is history as we don't know it." ■



Above: Eugene Hough, of Heritage Guild Works, points out mile marker 11, located in Lafayette Hill. This mile marker helped George Washington direct the movements of the Revolutionary War troops, advised travelers when to stop for food or shelter and aided in the delivery of mail.

Public Works Keeps the Township Moving

BY DEBORAH STANISH



It's not a glamorous job. On any given day they are called in to deal with clogged sewer lines, downed trees, potholes or burned out traffic signals. But without the men and women of the Public Works Department, Whitmarsh Township would grind to a cluttered, smelly halt.

The prime directive of Public Works is, and always will be, maintaining the infrastructure of the Township. With increased development over the years and an infrastructure that, in some areas, is 50 to 80 years old, it is a never-ending task.

"Our job is to keep the system working," said Jerome Breitmayer, Director of Public Works. "We're dealing with roadwork, storm water and sanitary issues in an area that has changed tremendously over the past 50 years. It's not a matter of simply jumping on a machine and digging, now you're working in areas with gas lines and communication lines that didn't exist when developments went in.

Above: The recent purchase of a bucket truck gives the Public Works Department flexibility in dealing with a variety of tasks. From assisting in electrical work to changing traffic lights, owning specialized pieces of equipment has saved the Township thousands of dollars. Mike Whalon and Joe Brown use the bucket truck to assist in running electrical wires for the sewer facility upgrade.

PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

Our job is to determine where the infrastructure is failing, prioritize those areas and correct the issues."

More than shovels and pickaxes, Breitmayer says that Public Works is as much a job of cost analysis as it is of physical labor. Since he stepped into the job five years ago, Breitmayer, with the backing of Township officials, has brought a "can-do" sensibility to the Department that has revitalized and energized the work force.

"When I first started in the position there were a lot of services that were contracted out," said Breitmayer.

Left: Mike Whalon and Joe Brown assist in upgrading the power supply for the sewage treatment facility. The project is updating the Township's sewage treatment processing, making it more efficient and cost effective.

Right: Chuck Gehringer, Whitmarsh Township Public Works Highway Superintendent, saw-cutting blacktop in order to complete a stormwater drain repair project on Revere Road in Lafayette Hill.



"It soon became apparent that with a bit of re-tasking most of the work could be done in-house at an incredible cost savings."

Breitmayer rattles off numbers with accountant-like precision, and the spreadsheet is his most powerful tool. Honing his skills in project management at Amtrak where he spent 15 years in the Bridges and Building Department and as Director of Public Works in Nether Providence Township in Delaware County, Breitmayer soon realized he had a talent for saving money. Analyzing tasks, breaking them down by manpower and material costs versus the cost of bringing in an outside contractor are as big a part of his job as managing the 26-person staff.

For example, the Township previously hired an outside contractor for all signal and street light issues. A simple light bulb change would cost the Township between \$200 and \$300.

Now, after the Township purchased a used bucket truck from government surplus for \$6,500, it has been able to do the job in house for about \$27 in manpower and \$5 for a bulb, reducing the \$300 cost significantly.

"It really is a matter of numbers and allocating your resources. But the cost savings doesn't stop with light bulbs," explained Breitmayer. "Now the Public Works Department owns a valuable piece of equipment that can be used for other tasks and, if and when it is no longer useful, can be resold to recoup its cost."

The diversification of materials is important, but it is the diversification of the staff that has been the driving force of the revitalized Department. The routine tasks may not change, but the face

behind the wheel comes with more experience and knowledge than ever before. People are brought into the Department not only with an eye on filling the job at hand, but on what additional skills they can bring to the Department that can be used down the line.

Township Manager Chris van de Velde said it is a policy that has helped create a better Department and a better product for the Township.

Both Breitmayer and van de Velde cite the creation of a lands facilities crew, which took over maintenance of the Townships parks and grounds, as an example. Work that was once contracted out at \$100,000 per year is now handled in house. Although that approach initially required additional hires and purchases of additional equipment, the cost savings and aesthetic rewards have been recouped many times over.

"We were able to use the extensive landscaping experience of Gary Hill, now the Head Foreman of Grounds," said van de Velde. "Hill not only helped maintain and improve our properties, but was able to reconstruct the greenhouse at Koontz Park."

The greenhouse is now a focal point for some fun programs that have benefited Township residents, and it provides plants used for public Township spaces. Moreover, the Township since 2005 has acquired more property and created more trails, all of which require maintenance and upkeep.

"The outside maintenance of those properties and trails would have negatively impacted our budget," said van de Velde. "So the initial expense of establishing a grounds crew has ended up saving the Township considerable money."

(continued on next page)



Top: Stormwater drain upkeep is one of the Public Works Department's critical tasks. Crews regularly clear the tops of drains, paying particular attention to clearing debris prior to severe storms. Capital projects, such as the repair on Revere Road are regularly scheduled to keep the infrastructure functioning. From left: Chuck Gehringer, George Kobi



Bottom: Public Works employee Ryan Gallagher assists in stormwater drain repair. Keeping more work in-house as opposed to contracting with outside firms has not only had a positive financial impact, it has also added a level of responsibility and job satisfaction for employees.

The list of in-house projects and tales of ingenuity continues to grow: the guy digging the sewer line is also the guy running the computer that operates the sign machine, punching out hundreds of street signs that meet new PENDOT requirements at half the cost of an outside vendor. The guy driving the snow plow is the guy who ran a cost analysis and figured out that buying a used tank truck would save the Township thousands of dollars.

"It has changed the Department," said Breitmayer. "We do things differently now, we recognize and encourage ingenuity and allow an outlet for talent which has brought a sense of pride and accomplishment to the Department. After each job the crew tries to figure out how they can do it better and faster next time."

Another critical step for Breitmayer was creating formal positions for the key people in the Department, giving them a title and recognition within the Township. Public Works now boasts an Assistant Director, a Highway Superintendent, a Sewer Superintendent as well as Head Foreman positions in grounds, highway and sewer.

"These guys were doing all of this before, without recognition," said Breitmayer. "They have the skills to lead and manage that deserve to be acknowledged. It gives people acknowledgment for a job well done."

Jack Fields, the Assistant Director of Public Works, agreed.

"It was a very positive change and boosted morale. Everyone wants to be recognized, not just with a title," Fields said. "We've got welders, carpenters, guys with masonry and electrical skills.

We've got a skilled automotive technician who services our fleet beyond the basic mechanics," Fields continued. "When you break it all down by what a guy is making an hour compared to what it would

cost to outsource, recognition of their contribution is a small price to pay."

The increased responsibility and variety of jobs is one that Fields believes the Department has embraced.

"We are constantly being handed new challenges and, more importantly, the guys want to get out there and do different things," Fields said. "It's not an easy job, but it's a satisfying job. At the end of the day you walk away feeling like you've accomplished something."

Fields is the driving force behind the Department's recent equipment acquisitions. Recognizing the Department didn't have the budget for necessary equipment, Fields did the research and made

the connections to begin purchasing government surplus equipment. Each piece of equipment is purchased with not only an eye to the task it is required for, but also additional Township needs and always with an eye to reselling once it is no longer useful.

"Part of my job is to make sure that each Division has the proper equipment when it is needed, to make sure it is maintained and available. To be efficient, we need to be proactive rather than reactive."

The attitude is infectious.

"When we get a call, our first response is let's figure it out," said Breitmayer. "We've got a lot of talent right here, and if it's not something we know how to do, is it something we can learn how to do." ■

Public Works by Some of the Numbers

Wielding spreadsheets and calculators, the Whitmarsh Township Public Works team analyzes each decision to determine the best, most efficient and cost effective way to accomplish the job. In Public Works, it is a game of numbers.

Total fleet trucks owned by Township: 31

Leaf vacuum trailers owned by Township: 7

How often leaves (yard waste) collected:

At least once per week between mid-October and mid-December

Yard waste collected per year: 750 tons

Annual cost to collect yard waste by Township: \$125,000

Annual cost to collect yard waste if by outside contractor: \$300,000

Traffic signs replaced as of June 2008: 148

Sanitary pipe replaced from January to June 2009: 120 feet

Dewatered sludge hauled in 2008: 111,000 tons

- BY DEBORAH STANISH

Meet Highway Superintendent Chuck Gehringer

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

Highway Division Superintendent Chuck Gehringer and his staff spend their days making sure the Township's streets, bridges, and storm sewers are in good repair. They remove snow, collect residential bulk, pick up yard waste like leaves and grass, and maintain Township-owned buildings, parks, and open space. That's in addition to the several calls a day that flow into the Public Works office about items that unexpectedly need service.

So, what does Chuck do when he's not looking after the Township's infrastructure? Here are some interesting facts about the Township's Highway Superintendent.

Homegrown: Grew up in the Cedar Heights neighborhood of Whitmarsh Township. Bought a house in the same area in 1990.

Husband and Father: Married since 1991. He and his wife, Denise, have one son, Chas, who is 14.

Team Player: Played football (outside linebacker) at Archbishop Kennedy High School and at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY.

Nittany Lions Fan: Favorite sports are college football and lacrosse. Favorite college teams are Penn State and Duke.

Well Rounded: Likes fly fishing, hunting, and reading anything from philosophy to mysteries.

Country Boy: Favorite style of music is country.

Studious: Currently taking night classes in management and political science at Montgomery County Community College.

Memorable Work Moments: Blocks of ice that hung nearly six feet off the ground from trees after the blizzard and subsequent flood of 1996.

The time he was called to pick up a supposedly dead deer, which got up and ran off as soon as he touched it. ■



PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

Township Upgrades Sewage Treatment Facilities

BY DEBORAH STANISH

Sewage treatment – it is the least pleasant but arguably the most critical of all Public Works services.

Currently, Whitemarsh Township is in the process of upgrading its aging sewage treatment facilities with state-of-the-art equipment that will be more cost effective, more pleasant for the surrounding community, and more environmentally friendly.

“Whitemarsh basically had a system that was 50-plus years-old,” said Public Works Director Jerome Breitmayer. “Not only did it need to be upgraded, it was in danger of failing.”

After a complete assessment of the entire system, the Township adopted a priority upgrade list. As of now, Public Works is halfway through the list.

Whitemarsh previously used a sludge press system to treat sewage. The odors resulting from the use of this equipment would permeate the entire facility and on hot humid days would be noticeable for neighbors.

With the new system, everything will be enclosed and will process sludge three times faster than in the past. That means that instead of running treatment six days a week, the Township will be running only three days a week, saving time and money. As an added bonus, the new equipment will reduce odors as well as the cost of processing wastewater.

It is anticipated that this new sludge processing system will be up and running this month.

“We are installing state-of-the-art equipment, which will make the plant run more efficiently and improve the quality of life for Whitemarsh Township residents,” said Breitmayer.

“It will take more time and more money before all of the wastewater treatment and sewage collection upgrade project is 100 percent complete,” Breitmayer continued. “But this sludge press project is a huge first step.”



Top: Public Works employees make upgrades to the Township’s aging sludge press. New equipment will contain odors, save money and protect the environment.

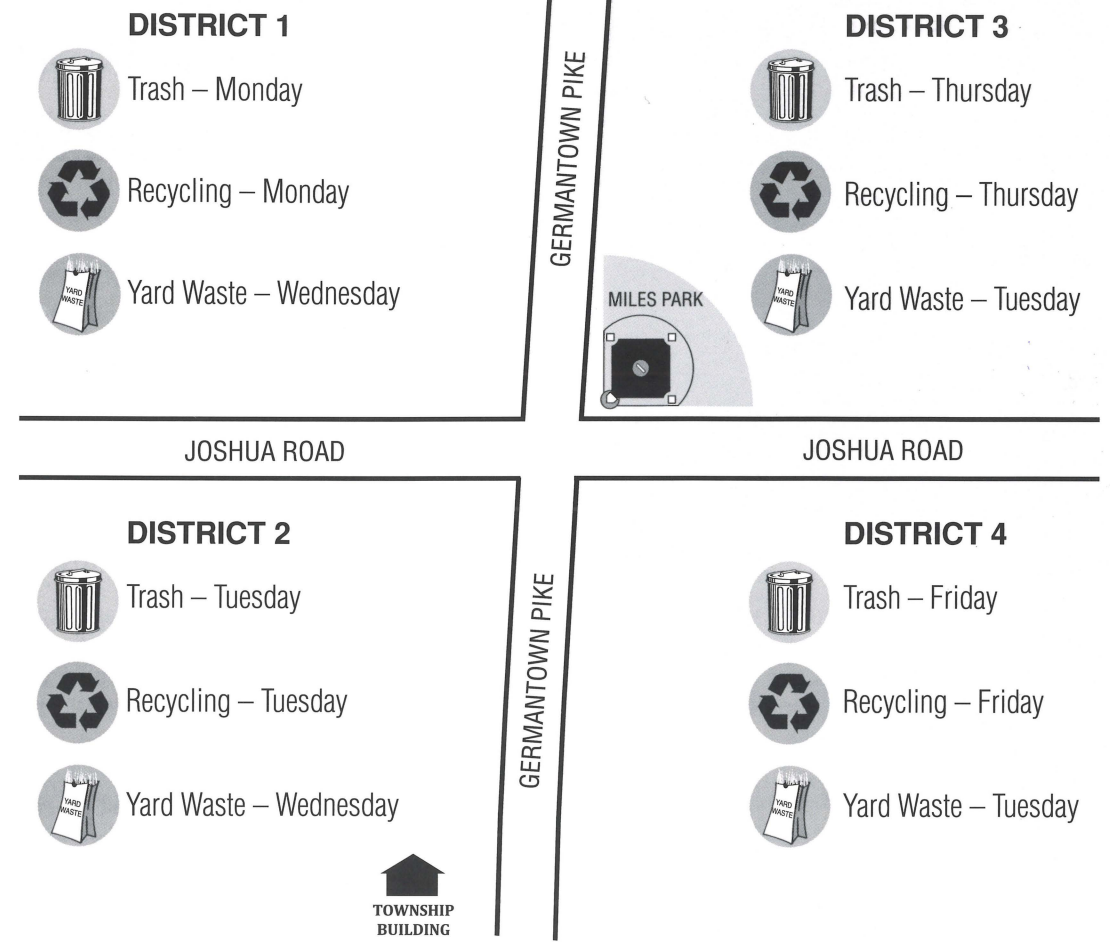
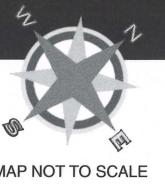
PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

Bottom: Public Works Director Jerry Breitmayer and Assistant Director Jack Fields examine the new sludge press system, which will update the Township’s aging waste treatment facility with more efficient processing and a state of the art odor containment system.

PHOTO BY DEBORAH STANISH

Whitemarsh Trash & Recycling

what goes where when



- Bulk Items** – Thursday, by appointment – All Districts
- Household furniture & major appliances, televisions, vehicle tires & batteries
 - **LIMIT 1** item/household per week
 - Call by 3:00 Tuesday to schedule for same week curbside pick-up
 - No charge to residents for this service



- Leaf Pickup** – continuous rotation – All Districts
- Beginning October 19 through mid-December
 - Free curbside collection of piled leaves



- Electronic Recycling** – including computers, monitors, printers, microwaves
- **NO TELEVISIONS**
 - Free drop-off at the Township Building during business hours



- Other items recycled at the Township Building**
- Cell phones, CFL lightbulbs, rechargeable batteries
 - Regular batteries may be disposed of in trash



Whitemarsh Township Building
616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill
Monday – Friday 9:00 – 5:00
(Summer Hours: 8:30 – 4:30)
Phone: 610-825-3535
www.whitemarshtwp.org

Please check the website for detailed guidelines and exceptions



Lisa Kasmen (left), owner of Heaven & Earth salon and spa, believes in bringing innovative techniques to her clients, stating that it shouldn't be necessary to go into the city or spend an exorbitant amount of money to get quality beauty care. Also pictured: Jackie Lee Lecks

Local Salon and Spa Offers Little Piece of Heaven on Earth

BY DEBORAH STANISH

A high-end salon with a neighborhood feel, Heaven & Earth salon and spa brings a touch of glamour to Whitmarsh Township.

Owner Lisa Kasmen, a lifelong Whitmarsh resident, says that part of the appeal and charm of the salon is the staff's connection to the area.

"Everyone pretty much grew up close to here, either in the neighborhood or surrounding area," Kasmen says. "There's a definite sense of six degrees of separation, everyone knows someone who knows someone."

Despite the local flavor, Heaven & Earth is more than your corner beauty parlor; it's a full-service, head-to-toe salon with a 21-person staff, cutting edge marketing strategy and plans for a future expansion.

At its heart is Kasmen.

In 1988 Kasmen and a group of business partners opened Nails Unlimited at 508 Germantown Pike. Three years later they moved the business to what is now the location of Heaven & Earth.

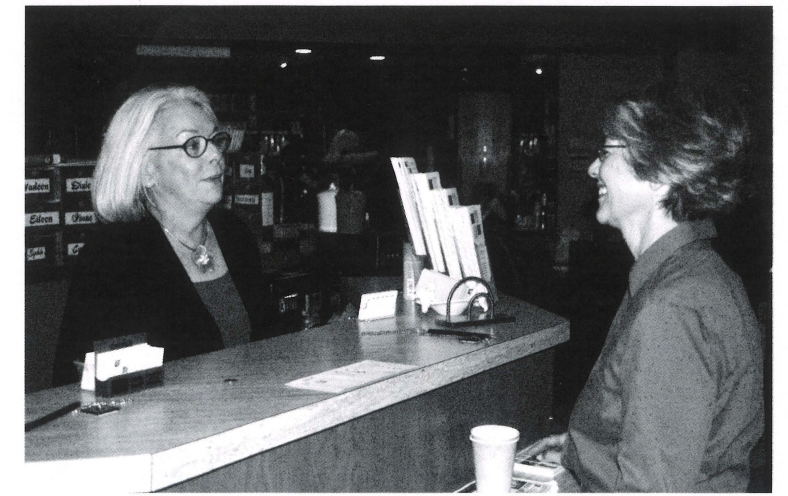
She soon realized that with so many nail salons cropping up the business needed to expand its horizons if it wanted to stay competitive.

"When the downstairs portion of this building became available, it seemed like an omen to expand now or don't do it at all," Kasmen recalled.

Moving on without her partners and as the sole proprietor of Heaven & Earth salon and spa, Kasmen expanded the former nail salon into a full service salon and spa bringing cutting edge techniques and beauty trends to Whitmarsh residents.

"I believe good beauty services should be affordable to everyone," Kasmen said. "I strive to keep staff as current as possible with trends in the beauty and

Heaven & Earth salon and spa prides itself on its nurturing atmosphere and commitment to customer service. Georgia Vivino (left), receptionist/booking director and life-long Whitmarsh Township resident, helps bring a personal, local feel to the business. Also pictured: Lynn Gallagher



fashion industries so people don't have to travel to the city to get top-notch services."

The services offered are comprehensive. Hair and nail care are coupled with massage, hair removal, make-up artistry and skin care. While the basic services are always the most popular, Kasmen and her staff enjoy dealing with the specialty items and bringing those services to their clientele.

They attend the shows in New York, read about the industry, and hold monthly staff meetings to determine what people are looking for or what trends are going to hit.

According to Kasmen, the summer's biggest trend was the Brazilian Keratin treatment, a process that seals the hair cuticle to reduce frizz.

In addition to its up-to-the minute beauty services, Heaven & Earth is also on the cutting edge of technology, harnessing the power of the Internet to reach out to its customer base.

The Heaven & Earth website not only lists available services and operation information, it also offers online specials and beauty tips. There are also links to the Heaven and Earth blog with "before" and "after" photos as well as links to relevant local vendors for bridal services.

The website is part of Kasmen's plan to offer the best, most comprehensive beauty services in the area in a manner that goes beyond the norm. She is currently in the process of planning for an expansion to a larger space that will allow her to increase her services as well as provide a higher level of care to her clientele.

"With an expansion we will be able to provide so much more," Kasmen said. "I owe it to our customers and our staff, some who have been with me since I was 19, to provide the best environment possible."

Still, Kasmen knows that it's the neighborhood feel and family-like atmosphere that keeps customers coming back. And, in Kasmen's case, it is real family with mother Georgia Vivino as the salon's receptionist and husband Andrew, an attorney, as bookkeeper.

"I know it sounds trite, but my staff is like my family," Kasmen said. "We're diversified, like a real

family, but we have a connection and are very in tune with our clientele. My mother can tell you everyone's schedule in Lafayette Hill."

Longtime customer Harriet Ellis says the personal service and commitment to care are what has kept her a customer for 20 years. Ellis met Kasmen when Kasmen first started out at Nails Unlimited and has stayed a loyal customer as the business has grown and expanded.

"Lisa has created a business reflective of her personality," explained Ellis. "The customer service is excellent. You actually build a relationship with the staff rather than just running in and having a service done."

Ellis said that the Kasmen's commitment to bringing new and innovative services have helped to create a loyal customer base.

"She doesn't rely on the same old things and is always on the cutting edge in terms of products and services," Ellis said. "It's hard to hold onto clients for 20 years because people are fickle by nature, but she seems to have created this warm environment that keeps you coming back." ■

Heaven & Earth Salon and Spa
is located at 511 Germantown Pike,
Lafayette Hill.

They are open Monday, by appointment,
Tuesday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.;
Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and
Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information or to make an
appointment, call (610) 828-0211 or visit the
website at www.heavenearthsalon.com



Heaven & Earth salon and spa, located at 511 Germantown Pike, offers innovative services with a neighborhood feel.

PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

TASTE OF THE TOWNSHIP



Barrie and Steve Marino own The Lucky Dog Saloon & Grille on Germantown Pike. Barrie is known for her creative and delicious desserts, including the peanut butter chocolate napoleon.

PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

Desserts to Beg for at The Lucky Dog Saloon & Grille

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

It was early in 2001, and Steve Marino was watching a football game at home with some friends. Steve had been in the restaurant business since he was a kid, starting out as a dishwasher and busboy and working his way up through the industry. He had opened a few restaurants for others in Philadelphia and the surrounding area, and had even spent several years as the head of an upscale eatery in Lake Tahoe.

Now, it was his turn to try his hand at launching his own restaurant venture. All the pieces were in place except one – what to call it. Steve and his wife and business partner, Barrie Marino, had been through thousands of names, but couldn't settle on anything.

"Then one of my friends turned to me and said 'You're opening your own restaurant? You lucky dog.' And, I went 'That's it! That's the name of the restaurant,'" said Steve, sipping a soda at one of the tables in his cozy, wood toned restaurant.

After graduating from Temple University with a degree in business management, Steve opened the TGI Friday's on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, in 1988. He later started work on an MBA at the University of Maryland.

"After the first year of graduate school, I went to Lake Tahoe to do some skiing," said Steve. "I figured I would be there six months and ended up staying for seven years."

But by the fall of 1999, Steve was back in the Philadelphia area, opening La Parisian, in Ardmore, Pa. for the owners of the locally well-known restaurants Savona and La Toscana.

It was while working as La Parisian's general manager that Steve met his wife Barrie, then a hostess. Barrie joined forces with Steve to open The Lucky Dog Saloon & Grille in May of 2001.

"We first thought we would have a low key menu," said Steve. "Steaks and burgers. But, customers started asking for pastas and other stuff and it evolved from there. I do all the cooking and development of new dishes, and Barrie makes all the desserts. She's a wiz at desserts."

Barrie, a stay-at-home mom and baking enthusiast who taught a baking class at Chestnut Hill College, has developed all of The Lucky Dog's luscious desserts including regular offerings such as apple crisp and the possibly immoral warm chocolate cake with a molten chocolate center. On any given night, the menu also may include special treats like the jaw-dropping cinnamon bread pudding with vanilla bourbon sauce and the peanut butter chocolate napoleon - layered peanut butter cookies stuffed with ice cream, homemade cream de cacao, and ganache sauce.

"Barrie has probably come up with 40 or 50 desserts," said Steve. "She's always working on something new."

Families enjoy outdoor dining as part of the Township's new "village zone."



But, as everyone knows, no dessert before dinner.

At The Lucky Dog, though, that's hardly a painful proposition. From classics like Buffalo wings, steamers, and pot stickers, to inventive strawberry or goat cheese salads, to rib sticking meals like a 16 oz. rib-eye steak or sesame crusted tuna, The Lucky Dog has something for every taste.

If you happen to be more thirsty than hungry, The Lucky Dog also offers a welcoming bar that carries 15 beers on tap, and does daily drink specials that include their signature Skinny Martini, a low-calorie delight that comes in a multitude of flavors. Trivia buffs love The Lucky Dog's Tuesday night trivia challenge where winners take home prizes like t-shirts, mugs, and the occasional set of Phillies tickets.

If enjoying a meal at an outdoor café sounds like what you're looking for, The Lucky Dog has that, too, in large part due to the new "village zone" created by the Township. The restaurant's new outside seating, set off from the hustle and bustle of Germantown Pike, provides diners a welcoming refuge.

In fact, the first and most enduring feeling you get at The Lucky Dog Saloon & Grille is that you've found a place to escape the outside world and enjoy a ball game with some friends at the bar, or a meal with your family. ■

Lucky Dog Pumpkin Cake

4 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 cup butter melted
1 can (1 pound) pumpkin
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cloves
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon ginger
½ teaspoon nutmeg
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 cups flour

Mix eggs, sugar, and butter very well. Add pumpkin and spices, and mix well. Add flour last. Mix gently until flour is incorporated.

Spray pan very well with non-stick cooking spray. Pour into prepared pan. Bake 350° F about 1 hour until pick in center comes out clean. Let cool.

Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve warm with ice cream.



The Lucky Dog Saloon & Grille

417 Germantown Pike,
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444
(610) 941-4652

Open seven days a week. Lunch is served
Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dinner is served
Monday through Thursday from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.,
Friday and Saturday from 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
and Sunday from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

A bar menu is available
Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to close,
Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and
from 10 p.m. to close,
and Sunday from 4 p.m. to close.

For more information, visit
www.theluckydogsaloon.com



PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

Holocaust lecturer Hannah Seckel

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

Hannah Seckel has called the United States home for nearly 60 years. Born in Czechoslovakia, she escaped the Holocaust when her parents sent her to live in Denmark.

She emigrated to the U.S. in 1950 and became an American citizen in 1955. Seckel speaks several languages, and taught French and German in the Abington School District and English as a Second Language to Vietnamese and Russians in Philadelphia.

Now retired from teaching, she stays active with The Friends of the William Jeanes Library, volunteers at the Holocaust Oral History Archive of Gratz College, and lectures about the Holocaust.

Q. Where were you born?

A. In Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic. I don't want to say what year.

I came to the United States in 1950. I was going to come with my parents, but World War II broke out. My parents sent me to Denmark in 1939 to live on a farm. That was the last time I saw them. They were taken to Sobibor, a concentration camp in Poland.

When I was old enough, I came to the United States on my own.

Q. Do you have any children?

A. I have three. One daughter lives in Lafayette Hill and one lives in Boston. My son is vice president at Wachovia Bank.

Q. What do you hope people will take away from your lectures on the Holocaust?

A. My purpose is to convey that you cannot stand silently by when other people are being persecuted. I want people to develop tolerance and understanding.

I lecture for anyone who asks. I do most of my lectures at universities and high schools. I just spoke last month in the Philadelphia Naval Base.

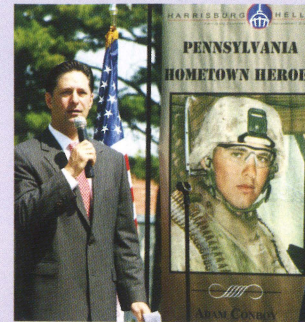
Q. What do you do to stay active?

A. I volunteer at Gratz College at the Holocaust archives once a week. I check audio tapes for accuracy. We find Holocaust survivors by advertising Holocaust meetings, and we ask attendees if they would like to do an interview about their lives. I have the decision to send the audiotapes to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. or not. The people we interview live mainly in Pennsylvania and South Jersey.

I also volunteer with the Friends of the William Jeanes Library, which I started doing when I retired. We do fundraising for the library. I get something out of it knowing I'm doing some good for the community.

I also play tennis, Bridge, and swim to stay active. I read and meet with friends. I'm passionate about literature, mostly historical literature, and I like going to see the Philadelphia orchestra. 🎻

May



Whitemarsh Township honored military members and remembered those who had fallen while serving in the inaugural Memorial Day Observance.

PHOTOS BY FRANCES ZEOCK

June



More than 100 people turned out to tour some of the hidden garden wonders of Whitemarsh during the first ever Township Garden Tour.

PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN



July

Whitemarsh Township celebrated Independence Day with a lively parade down Germantown Pike, followed by free food and fun at Miles Park.

PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

2009 Whitemarsh Township *Garden Contest* First Place Winners



Commercial

Joan Leiby & Vic Petrone

Lafayette Hill Studios



Habitat



New

Audrey & Jim Williams

Sean McGinley



Horticulture



Vegetable

Steve & Diana Decker

John DiDonato



Pleasure