

Whitemarsh **LIVING**

WINTER 2010



**STAY INFORMED!
STAY IN TOUCH!
STAY CONNECTED!**

**LAUNCH OF NEW CABLE STATION
SIGNALS TOWNSHIP'S COMMITMENT
TO COMMUNICATION**

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Taste of the Township Enjoy French Country Fare Close to Home at Spring Mill Café

DON'T MISS! GREENMARSH SEMINAR SERIES KICKS OFF FEB. 4TH.



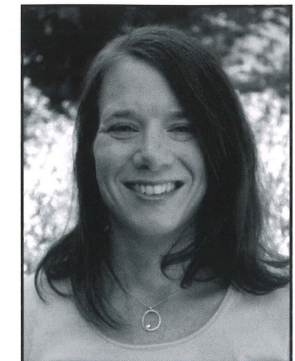
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Whitemarsh Living

WINTER 2010



Dear Whitemarsh Residents:

Happy New Year!

And welcome to the winter issue of *Whitemarsh Living* – one of the many ways you can find out about all the great things taking place in our community.

This issue itself is dedicated to communications and explores how Whitemarsh is working to ensure our residents have access to the latest information about important Township happenings.

From the launch of our new cable station to the revamping of the Township website, the Board of Supervisors is committed to opening up the lines of communication and encouraging a healthy dialogue among community members.

Speaking of healthy dialogues, my fellow Supervisors and I, as well as Township staff, met with residents this summer after they sustained severe flooding in their neighborhoods. I am happy to report that since then we have kicked off three major projects to control stormwater and relieve flooding and expect to allocate substantial funding for several additional stormwater projects in the coming year. Please turn to page 6 for details.

I am also happy to share with you that even in this tough economy the Board of Supervisors passed a budget for 2010 that not only holds the line on spending, but also avoids any increase in property taxes for the coming year.

On a lighter note, don't miss the story in this issue about the Wissahickon Ski Club. Who knew we had a ski slope right in our backyard?

Also, be sure to check out the piece about our history as the leading producer of marble and limestone in the region. As Carol Beam, the newest contributor to *Whitemarsh Living* writes, it all started with the help of one enterprising widow.

This issue also introduces you to four very special people in the Township, volunteers Mark Helms, Robert Bacine and Jack Loughridge, and employee Sandy White. Read about their contributions to the Township and find out what inspires them.

Finally, as the Township moves forward with its heightened communications efforts, please let us know what you think. We want to hear from you in 2010!

Sincerely,

Sara Erlbaum
Chairwoman, Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors

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OF WHITEMARSH LIVING, CALL MICHAEL ZEOCK
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Members of The Media Communications Advisory Board Lend Township Their Expertise

BY DEBORAH STANISH

Since its inception in 2008, the Media Communications Advisory Board has been working to help elevate the way the Township communicates with its residents.

From the launch of the new television station to the Website to the Township's print publications, the seven-member board serves to advise the Board of Supervisors on how to best keep the lines of communication open.

Larry Bender, Creative Director at Drexel University and the Board's chairman, said from the outset it was evident that the launch of the television station presented a unique opportunity to begin coordinating other areas of communication including print and the Website.

"The station doesn't operate in a vacuum but is merely one arm of the communication branch," Bender said. "How people receive information has changed and we need to look at all of those areas to make sure we are putting out a quality product that we can be proud of."

In advising the Township on critical decisions regarding the television station the Media Communications Advisory Board has taken a cautious and financially prudent approach even though the funding for the station was in place a year before the Board was created.

"There was a temptation to rush in and get the station on the air, but we felt it was critical to take our time and do the research to make sure we were not only meeting the needs of today but forecasting future needs," said Bender. "It's all a matter of taking the right steps."

That includes taking the right steps with a keen eye on the bottom line, especially in today's economy.

"While we are trying to enhance communications, we also have to make fiscally responsible decisions," said Board member Suzanne Ryan, Regional Affairs Manager for PECO. "With the television station we are starting small but have plans to grow and will have a product the Township can be proud of." ■



Members of the Media Communications Advisory Board tour the new Whitemarsh cable television station with Director of Operations Stan Finegold, third from left. PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

The Media Communications Advisory Board members are: Drew Albert, Larry Bender, Carol Daufenbach, Duane McCarthy, Suzanne Ryan, Jackie Topaz and Robyn Train.

The Media Communications Advisory Board meets on the fourth Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Township building.

Whitemarsh Elects New Supervisor Melissa Schwartz Sterling

BY KELLY K. BROWN

Whitemarsh Township elected a new member to the Board of Supervisors in November. Melissa Schwartz Sterling, 39, is an attorney with Naulty, Scaricamazza & McDevitt, LLC and an active volunteer in the community. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in government from Franklin and Marshall College and graduated from Widener University School of Law.

"Whitemarsh is a great community," Sterling said. "I want to help maintain the quality of life we have here."

"I look forward to continuing the important work of the previous Board," Sterling added. "We need to continue the focus on stormwater management and I'm pleased that so many projects are in the construction phase, with more in the pipeline."

Sterling grew up in Havertown. She and her husband, Scott, moved to Lafayette Hill 11 years ago. Their daughter, Rachel, is a second grader at Whitemarsh Elementary School.

Sterling and her daughter are excited about the new Koontz Park and the William Jeanes Memorial Library renovation. They are frequent visitors to the library. The Sterling family enjoys attending Township Day, the Fourth of July parade and the Pumpkin Festival. ■



RIGHT: Melissa Schwartz Sterling is the newest member of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors.

PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

2010 Budget Holds the Line on Spending, Avoids Property Tax Increase

In December, the Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors adopted a 2010 Budget that holds the line on spending and avoids any increases in property taxes.

Despite a lagging economy, the Township's revenues in 2009 exceeded original budgeted levels. Moreover, all Township departments managed their expenditures within the original budgeted appropriations.

"The Township's fiscally responsible policy of conservatively estimating revenues and budgeting expenditures to remain within those estimates, has resulted in the Township having reasonable reserves and continued year-end surpluses," said Sara Erlbaum, Chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors. "These reserves have enabled us to avoid a property tax increase in 2010."

She also pointed out that for the first time in many years, expenditures for the new year will actually be less than the expenditures for the preceding year – the past trend has been a rise in expenses from year-to-year.

The Local Service Tax was increased to \$52 – the state authorized maximum – per person per year, effective January 2010. The Local Service Tax, formerly known as the Occupational Privilege Tax and then the Emergency Services Tax, is imposed to ensure individuals who work in the Township, but may live elsewhere, contribute to support the emergency services and Township infrastructure they benefit from when they are in the Township.

For the first time in many years, the Township borrowed money to fund open space preservation and to pursue long delayed stormwater improvement projects. Voters previously approved an increase in the Earned Income Tax to help pay for open space preservation projects – particularly the preservation of Erdenheim Farm. The borrowed funds are allocated: \$10 million for open space preservation; and \$6.9 million for capital projects such as stormwater projects; repair and renovation of Township buildings and a major improvement to the wastewater treatment plant.

2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Construction of the first improvements in Koontz Park, including a playground funded by a \$100,000 grant from the Widener Memorial Foundation
- Contracts awarded for three major stormwater improvement projects, and completion of four smaller localized storm water management improvements
- Launch of the new Whitmarsh cable television station
- Received a grant from state Sen. Vincent Hughes for two motorcycles for the Police Department
- Placed the first K-9 unit in service for drug detection and tracking of suspects and missing persons
- Acquisition of 33 acres of open space on the east side of Manor Road
- Completion of three major road resurfacing projects

2010 INITIATIVES

- Formal opening of the Township's newest park (Koontz Park) on Harts Lane
- Planning of Township's first dog park on Flourtown Road at edge of Erdenheim Farm
- Completion of planning and initial construction for trail on Angus Tract portion of Erdenheim Farm
- Completion of stormwater improvement projects started in 2009, and commencement of several additional projects
- Commencement of renovations to the abandoned incinerator building as the new fleet maintenance garage
- Commencement of the long-awaited Germantown Pike improvement project
- Completion of planning for three new trails and bike paths, and a Master Plan for the Riverfront District
- Continue search for a tenant to occupy the old, now vacant, Fort Washington train station
- First phase of renovations to Leeland Park
- Acquisition of the new software for the Finance and Building and Code Enforcement departments to enhance Township operations and record keeping

REVENUE AND INCOME

FUND BALANCE	5,023,890
EARNED INCOME TAX	4,350,000
REAL ESTATE TAX	3,393,912
BUSINESS TAXES	2,649,000
SEWER SERVICES USER FEES	2,221,175
GRANTS & OTHER FINANCING RESOURCES	2,193,275
REFUSE FEES, LIGHT & HYDRANT FEES	1,633,500
OPEN SPACE EARNED INCOME TAX	1,250,000
STATE REVENUES	606,000
PARKS & RECREATION USER FEES	400,963
REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX	400,000
RENTAL INCOME & CABLE FRANCHISE FEES	381,600
PA LIQUID FUELS TAX ALLOCATION	348,000
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE	326,200
PERMITS & LICENSES FEES	256,500
INTEREST INCOME	105,210
TOTAL	25,539,225

2010 BUDGET

CAPITAL PROJECTS	4,515,000
POLICE PROTECTION	4,288,923
OTHER FINANCING USES	
INSURANCE & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	3,248,965
SEWER SERVICES	2,644,175
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE	2,340,890
ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE	2,334,406
REFUSE & RECYCLING	1,395,233
PARK & RECREATION	995,953
FIRE PROTECTION	894,063
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	889,417
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION	715,000
LIGHT & HYDRANT	508,000
LIBRARY	465,000
PUBLIC RELATIONS & INFORMATION	233,200
DEBT SERVICE	71,000
TOTAL	25,539,225

EXPENDITURE

ABOVE: Images courtesy of Whitmarsh Township & Google



PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

Stormwater Solutions Underway

BY KELLY K. BROWN

The Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors recently kicked off three major stormwater projects to help fix flooding problems that have plagued the Township for years.

Supervisor Bob Hart noted that projects of this magnitude take a long time to guide through the planning and engineering process, and the Board and Staff worked hard to ensure they remained on track.

Hart was instrumental in bringing a Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Hazard Mitigation Officer to Whitemarsh to tour areas of the Township impacted by the August 2009 floodwaters.

He pointed out that the Board of Supervisors is already working on the next round of stormwater management projects.

"We have met with our engineers and prioritized our projects for 2010. We expect to allocate significant resources for several additional stormwater projects in the coming year," said Hart. "We will also continue our efforts to find resources at the county, state and federal levels to assist flood victims."

Here's a look at the current stormwater projects:

- The Joshua Knoll/McCarthy Park Stormwater Improvement Project began in November and is expected to be completed late this spring. The existing

Joshua Knoll detention basin will be deepened to hold more stormwater and more slowly release it after a storm. A new retention basin will be created at McCarthy Park, which will receive the stormwater from the Joshua Knoll basin.

The McCarthy Park basin will be a constructed wetland. Water will fill the basin and drain only to a certain level, leaving a marsh-like environment. The wetland provides a water quality benefit by filtering the water. New plantings will encourage a healthy ecosystem, attracting birds and other beneficial animals. A number of design elements have been incorporated to discourage mosquitoes.

With the aid of a substantial federal grant from PENNVEST, the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority, the Board of Supervisors approved nearly \$1.1 million dollars for the project.

- The Barren Hill Stormwater Improvement Project is also underway. A stormwater conveyance system will be installed on the north side of Barren Hill Road from Brook Lane to River Road. New curbing and sidewalk improvements on the north side from Brook Lane to River Road will also be part of the project.

New inlets will be added to the swale on the south side of the road. A new piping system will be installed to direct water to the tributary on the north side of the road that leads to the Schuylkill River.

The project is expected to cost \$700,000 and be completed in six months, weather permitting.

- A third project is also underway for the Whitemarsh Woods/Westaway area. Two existing basins will be reshaped to detain water and discharge it slowly.

The Fields Drive Basin will be like a bowl with a pin-sized hole, allowing the water to be absorbed by the ground or to slowly release after a rain event, when the storm drain system will not be overwhelmed. New piping and numerous inlets, replacement of curbing and repaving of Fields Drive from the basin to Westaway Drive will all be part of the project.

The Fox Drive Basin will also be reshaped to better hold water. For now, it will continue to outlet on Westaway Drive, but at a slower rate of discharge. Future plans may include a piping system that would connect the basin to the existing system.

The expected duration of the \$435,000 project is three months, weather permitting. ■

DETENTION OR RETENTION?

With so much focus on stormwater issues, you may be asking yourself, "What is the difference between a detention basin and a retention basin?"

In a nutshell, detention equals detain, then drain; retention equals retain and remain.

A detention basin is designed to detain or hold stormwater for a limited time and then slowly drain it. A retention basin functions properly when it retains water in the basin.

Skiers Find Slice of the West in Whitemarsh

BY DEBORAH STANISH

Matthew Sabia, Jr., calls the monthly meeting of the Wissahickon Ski Club to order with a gavel made from a cross-country ski shoe.

The first order of business?

Prospective members must describe which vegetable they would be and why, if they were vegetables that is. This is indicative of how it normally goes at this light-hearted club of about 200 members.

While the club itself is fairly typical of area ski clubs – organizing trips, social events and swap meets – there is something special that sets this one apart.

The Wissahickon Ski Club has its own ski hill, complete with a lodge, lighted trails and a tow rope, located right on Barren Hill Road.

"Most of the time people drive by and don't believe this is a real ski hill," said Sabia, club President. "But at night, after a fresh snowfall and the lights are on, they can't believe what they're seeing. They're entranced by it."

Founded in 1945 by Joe Poley and Martin J. Wilburger, the Wissahickon Ski Club was created to promote Alpine skiing. First leasing the land, members painstakingly cleared the hill, cutting trails and building the first tow rope, powered by a Model T engine. The Club purchased the land in the 1950's, added lights to the trails and turned the warming shack into a ski chalet.

Today, thanks to the legacy and foresight of those founding members, current members reap the benefits of having a ski slope with a 540-foot elevation, practically in their back yards.

Prior to the monthly meeting, members mingle on the chalet's deck, grilling sausages while the large, outdoor stone fireplace takes the chill out of the autumn air. Laughter and drinks abound. Clearly, this is a club that takes its fun seriously.

"It's all for fun," said longtime member Donald Sabia. "If it's not fun, it's not worth anything. That's why we're here."

(Ski Club cont. on next page)

ABOVE: Officials from the Township, Pennsylvania Representative Michael Gerber's office, state Sen. Vincent Hughes' office and PEMA met with residents to discuss alternatives for dealing with the aftermath of flooding in August 2009.

(Ski Club continued)

However, there is a serious component to the organization. The club is member-supported so maintaining the facility is critical to its success. Because of that the organization has a more selective membership process than other area ski clubs.

"We run a significant operation and want to make sure whoever becomes a member is interested in participating fully and bringing a positive attitude," said member Cliff Sharpe. "That includes coming out for work days and participating in social activities like the ski trips."



PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

Membership requirements include nomination and sponsorship by a club member, a commitment to be an active participant and an initiation fee of \$350 per family and \$250 per individual. Yearly dues are \$120 per family and \$60 for an individual member.

While the first flake signals the beginning of the season and a five-inch snowfall is cause for celebration, the club doesn't let a little thing like lack of snow get in the way of pursuing their love for the sport. The club runs multiple trips throughout the year to local resorts such as Elk Mountain in Pennsylvania and White Face in New York. They also run a trip each year to a European or western U.S. resort.

"It's like a community," said Donald Sabia. "We go away on trips because we like each other and want to hang out with each other."

Just as the ski industry has gone through changes, so has the ski club. Snowboards are as common a sight on the hill as skis. Members who joined as young adults or who grew up in the club now bring their

own families to the hill, and a younger generation is stepping into leadership roles.

A member since 1960, Wally Barrie, who is still skiing at 78, gives credit to those individuals.

"It's a different club than when I joined but the younger members have done an incredible job of keeping the spirit and intent of the club alive," Barrie said.

Tom and Dawn Gale joined as young adults 13 years ago. They now bring their own children, three-year old

twins Charlotte and Graciene, to the club.

"The first snow day is like a party," said Dawn Gale. "It's like a movie, everyone shows up bringing food and drinks. It's a great atmosphere and I'm thrilled that we get to share that with the girls."

Former competitive snowboarder and club vice-president Peter Rubincam said going to the club feels like coming home.

"I learned to ski on this hill back in the 80s," Rubincam said. "When I returned back home from competitive snowboarding I sought this place out.

"You have to see this place covered in snow, it's a slice of the west in Whitemarsh," Rubincam continued. "This place not only fosters a love of skiing but a camaraderie that makes that connection deeper."

For more information about the Wissahickon Ski Club visit www.wissahickonskiclub.org/.

ABOVE: Members of the Wissahickon Ski Club settle in by the fire for their monthly meeting in a chalet at the base of the ski slope on Barren Hill Road in Lafayette Hill.

The Great Stone Age of Whitemarsh

BY CAROL BEAM

Limestone and marble quarries that made Whitemarsh Township famous have left their traces all around us.

Our local story started on a stone tablet – one that stretches some 58 miles, from here to Chester and Lancaster counties. Today, it lingers in street names, in remnants of the old quarry works and lime kilns, and in a quarry still in business.

Limestone was being dug from the ground in Whitemarsh as early as the late 1600s. And the industry took off with the help of an enterprising widow known as Madam Farmar.

According to history books, Farmar: "found as good limestone on the Schuylkill River as any in the world, and is building with it."

Farmar's lime was believed to be the first used in Pennsylvania and her numerous kilns were located at Whitemarsh quarries.

"Not many towns exceed Whitemarsh in the value of the products of its mines and quarries," wrote William Buck in his 1859 book titled History of Montgomery County. "The excellence of 'Whitemarsh lime' is known over the union."

An 18th century map shows quarries scattered throughout Whitemarsh. Huge pits existed where the Township now has its post office and where Miles Park, Sherry Lake, Cedar Grove and the Green Valley Country Club are now located.

The last remaining quarry is located on Stenton Avenue and is now owned by Highway Materials. Carol Corson, of Chestnut Hill, is the great granddaughter of the company's founder. Corson puts the founding at about 1838.

"It's the oldest working quarry in the United States," she said.

The most precious load to be drawn from Whitemarsh quarries was a blue, mottled marble. The industry was so important, that until 1883 Lafayette Hill was called Marble Hall.

One of the great sources for this blue marble was a quarry called Big Blue by some, Old Blue by others, at

the site of the Lafayette Hill post office. (Directly behind the post office there is a street aptly called Quarry Lane.) The General Lafayette Inn on Germantown Pike still has a mantle of its famous marble, and a slab of blue marble was shipped to D.C. to represent Pennsylvania at the Washington Monument.

In time, however, the veins of marble ran out and the problems of fighting seeping water became overwhelming. One by one the quarries were abandoned and left to fill with water, many becoming local swimming holes.

Lifelong Lafayette Hill resident Joe Spare, 92, swam in them and his memories of Big Blue are vivid.

"Big Blue was the biggest, and it was deep," Spare said. "There were big trees along the sides and we used to put ropes on them and swing out into the water."

Spare also swam at Donovan's Quarry, where the baseball fields of Miles Park are now.

"There was a sandy beach and a platform in the middle of the water," he said. "In the winter we skated on it."

He also remembers a few tragedies, accidental drownings and suicides in the deep, cold water. These frightening events prompted the Township to begin filling the holes in 1930s.

Nonetheless, filled in, covered over, built on, quarries are our history, carved in stone. ■



PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

ABOVE: A lifelong resident of Lafayette Hill, Joe Spare, 92, stands behind the Lafayette Hill Post Office in Bob and Carol Getz's backyard, site of the former Big Blue Quarry. Years ago the site was a swimming hole, and Spare fondly recalls swimming there and splashing into the water from a rope tied to a tree limb.

WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP STRIVING TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS

BY DEBORAH STANISH

New TV Station and Improvements to Website Planned for 2010

We live in an age of 24/7 accessibility. You can order a bestseller, pay your electric bill and check the top news stories within minutes thanks to the Internet and hundreds of specialized cable channels.

For municipal governments, keeping abreast of technology and information can be like trying to catch a runaway train, a challenge increased by the diversity of residents and their communication-style preferences.

It is a challenge that Whitemarsh Township is committed to meeting.

"We recognize that we need to get information to residents, particularly when it impacts them directly," said Sara Erlbaum, Chairwoman of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors. "We also need to provide access to information of a more generalized nature and have resources available in a format residents can easily obtain."

To accomplish that, the Township uses a variety of communication platforms ranging from traditional print media to the Internet. Additionally, this year the Township will see a new medium enter the communication fold.

Whitemarsh TV, a cable television station funded by franchise agreements between the Township, Comcast and Verizon, will debut with a variety of Township-related content. The project has been

years in the making. With the support of current and past Boards, the station will be available to keep residents updated on necessary information and will also have the ability to broadcast public interest items.

Initially conceived to broadcast Board of Supervisors and other critical Township meetings, it soon became apparent the station could broaden its reach.

"The station will be able to provide content in a number of ways," said Stan Finegold, Director of Operations for the station. "Certainly broadcasting meetings is one way. We will also use a bulletin board that runs continuously on the station with messages that can be repeated as much as we'd like."

The Supervisors, together with Finegold and the newly created Media Communications Advisory Board have made critical decisions as to cameras, broadcasting equipment as well as content and scope. For example, they selected camera equipment that would allow them to move freely around the Township, allowing for filming of events from soccer games to parades.

"Because of our mobility we can also create content such as filming segments on Township history or covering an event at the Whitemarsh Art Center," Finegold continued. "Taking it a step further we can tap into the resources



ALL PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

of the community and offer things such as demonstrations from local chefs and artisans."

The newest addition to the communications family provides the Township a unique opportunity to cross platform information, building on content in a way that offers more benefit to residents. Web streaming television content on the Township website is in the works as well as tapping into the resources of *Whitemarsh Living* magazine.

"It makes sense to use all of the information that we have in a cost effective manner," said Township Manager Christopher van de Velde. "We are creating content for the magazine that can then be extrapolated into a program for the television station which can then be streamed onto the website with links for additional information. It's an opportunity to get the most value for our money."

To help facilitate this process, the Township website will undergo a necessary overhaul. Rapidly changing technology and an increasingly computer savvy customer base has required the Township to take a look at the website and re-examine how it is being used by the residents.

"We live in a more interactive age," said Supervisor Bob Hart, who serves as the communications liaison to the Board. "The website was very functional for the time in which it was created but

residents and technology have moved on and we need to move forward as well.

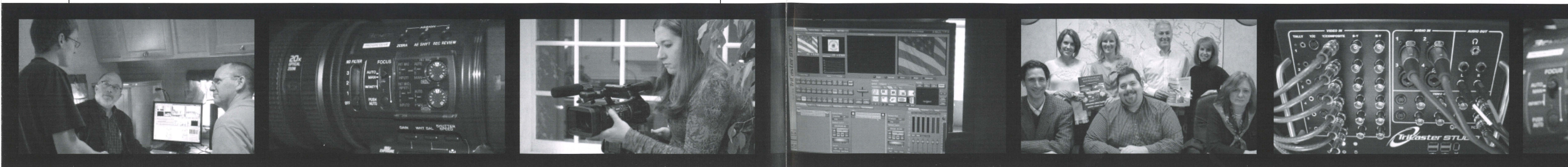
"We live in an age where people don't want to be limited to a 9 to 5 schedule," Hart continued. "They want access to information when they need it which is not always when the Township Building's doors are open."

The Township Parks and Recreation Department has already taken steps to make the website more functional for its users. Real time updates on program cancellations provide critical information and residents have the ability to search for, register and pay for programs online.

The Township is shooting high with its communication goals but is still grounded in the reality that the Township has a broad demographic. While the world has become increasingly technology driven, consideration has to be given to those residents who, for any number of reasons, are more comfortable working outside of cyberspace.

"We are clearly in a transitional era when it comes to information," said van de Velde. "But we can't lose sight of the fact that not every person in the Township is comfortable embracing technology. So while we continue to grow in that area we will still continue to provide information in traditional ways including print and personal contact."

(Communications cont. on next page)



ABOVE: Whitemarsh Township Supervisor Leslie Richards narrates a segment for Whitemarsh TV at the WBA Fall Pumpkin Festival with station Director of Operations Stan Finegold.

Former Supervisor Kelly Wall Trades Board for Bench

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

Kelly Wall sits at her law office desk on a chilly, late October afternoon. The lean, 52 year old has a warm smile and relaxed manner. A row of framed family photos adorns the top of a low filing cabinet. A sheet of paper filled with positive affirmations that she turns to when she needs to refocus hangs on the wall.

The distractions can be many for a single mom, Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors member, solicitor for Montgomery County Children and Youth Services, and busy lawyer. Not to mention one who is in the final two weeks of an election campaign for judge on the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court. It's an election she will win on Nov. 3 to become one of six women on the county bench.

While the dream of becoming a judge has been with her for a long time, Wall admits she hasn't always been this focused.

"I didn't apply myself as fully as I could have in high school," she says wryly.

Wall is the fourth of nine children, raised in a working class, Irish household.

"There was a side of Kelly that was always testing," says her mother Kathleen McGee-Burns. "She was always pushing and we were always pushing back."

After graduating from Plymouth Whitmarsh High School in 1975, Wall wasn't sure of her direction.

"I did some community college," she says. "I waitressed and traveled some. I finally settled into interior design as a project manager."

In her early 20s, Wall found herself at a crossroads. Despite enjoying project management, she was unfulfilled.

"I was 23 or 24 years old and thinking I had to do something with my life," she says. "I spent a week alone at a family shore house, thinking. In the end, I decided to go back to school."

A Temple University advisor told her that, working straight through, she could finish her degree in a year. So, Wall moved back home, continued full time as a project manager, and bartended weekends. A year later, in 1990, she obtained a communications degree from Temple.

She already knew the next step.

"I planned to go to law school all along," Wall says. "It was the hardest thing I've ever done. I was a total nerd in law school. I taped courses, transcribed them, and kept meticulous notes. It was worth it."

Wall has since spent her career mainly in family law, specializing in child custody.

"I see people at the lowest times in their lives, and I try to see them through to a better time," she says. "Even though they may not like everything I have to tell them, they know I'll protect their emotions at a vulnerable time."

Wall spent years studying judges in court. The ones she admires are those with compassion, who understand their decisions affect lives, and who take the time to explain their rulings. It's an approach Wall internalizes, and one which fellow Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors member Leslie Richards has seen in action.

"Kelly always gave a reason for her votes," says Richards. "If she did give an unpopular decision, she spent the time to tell us why."

"Her genuine concern for the Township came through," says Richards. "I feel our current board always puts the best interests of the Township first. And I think Kelly shared that goal."

A lifelong Whitmarsh Township resident, Wall joined the Board of Supervisors in 2005. It was an opportunity to give back to her community. Asked what she is most proud of from her tenure on the Board, she answers without hesitation.

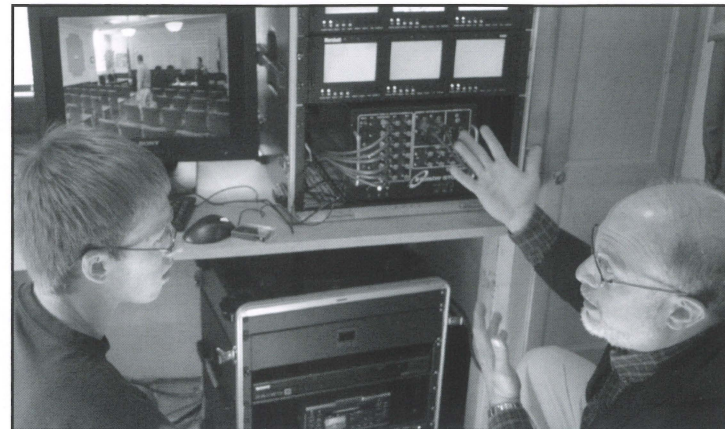
"Erdenheim Farm," she says. "To have all that fall into place my last year on the Board was great."

Wall sees success as a matter of hard work, focus, and keeping a positive attitude.

"Accept that you have to work for what you want," she says. "You have to stay focused and keep a balanced life, in terms of friends, family, and work."

Wall counts her mother as a role model, and the admiration is mutual.

"We're all extremely proud of Kelly," says McGee-Burns. "After the election, Kelly said something that I thought was really admirable. She said, what better example is there to her son, Liam, than that so long as you study and work hard you can achieve what you want?"



(Communications continued)

Personal contact is something the Township takes seriously.

"It can be very easy for people to get lost in the shuffle when they call an organization," said Michael Zeock, Whitmarsh Township Community Services Coordinator. "The mission here at Whitmarsh Township is to treat every call as if it were a personal call, to make sure the resident gets the answers or assistance they need and provide a level of customer service that is unusual in the governmental sphere."

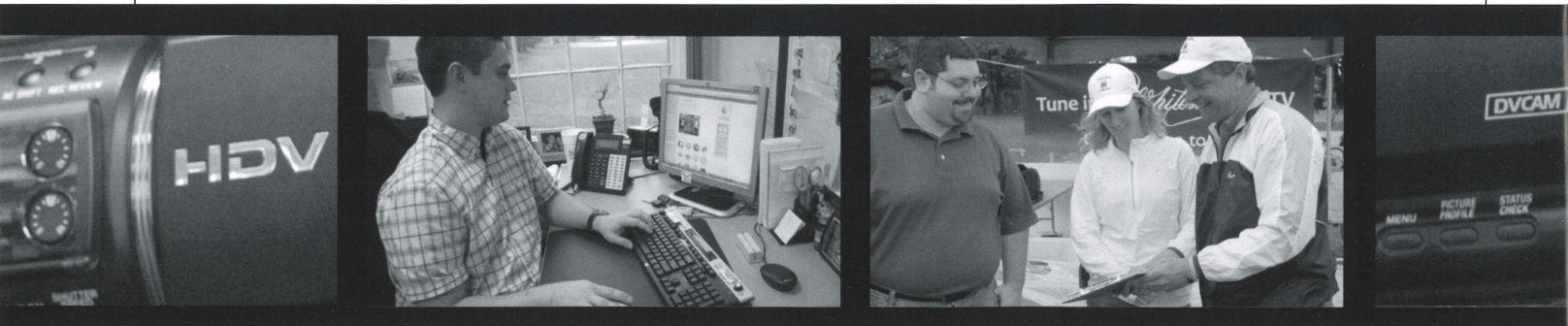
Van de Velde also sees the role of communication within the Township as twofold: providing necessary information to its residents but also to assist

in creating a sense of community and fostering appreciation for that community.

"It's not merely a 'feel-good' task but one that has tangible results," said van de Velde. "By highlighting the positive aspects of a community, we increase its attractiveness to new residents and businesses. This helps property value and tax revenues."

The Township stands on the brink of a new communication era. By bringing all of the communication strands together, creating conformity of information and easy access, Township residents will be able to stay informed, stay in touch and stay connected.

For more information visit www.whitmarshtpw.org



TOP LEFT: Whitmarsh Township Supervisor Bob Hart conducts interviews at the WBA Fall Pumpkin Festival at Miles Park.

TOP RIGHT: Applied Video Technology Technician Sean Henzie, left, reviews new equipment for the television station with WTV Director of Operations Stan Finegold.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Media Communications Advisory Board Chair Larry Bender inspects the camera equipment for Whitmarsh TV.

ABOVE: Kelly Wall and her son, Liam Nester, 12, take a break from campaigning at the WBA Fall Pumpkin Festival.

Whitemarsh Recognizes Longtime Volunteers

BY KELLY K. BROWN

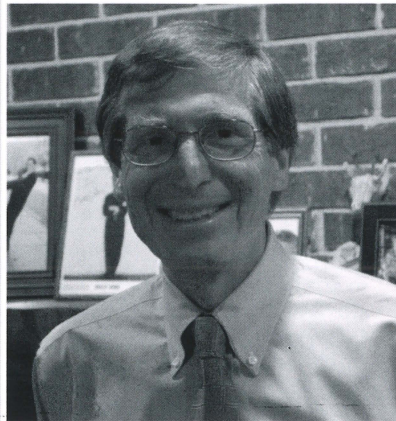
The Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors recently recognized Robert A. Bacine and John (Jack) Loughridge for their more than 25 years of service to the Township.

Board Chairwoman Sara Erlbaum commended the men for their ongoing commitment to the Township.

"Robert Bacine and Jack Loughridge have both helped shape the Whitemarsh Township we know and love today," Erlbaum said. "The Board is grateful for their contributions and looks forward to their continued involvement."

ROBERT A. BACINE

Bacine has been a member of the Zoning Hearing Board since 1985 and before that served as a civilian representative for the Spring Mill Fire Company and as a member of the Police Pension Committee. He also served as a member of the Planning Commission.



PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

As an attorney, Bacine, 67, specializes in estate planning and estate administration, as well as tax planning. Outside of the office, he enjoys sports, especially baseball. If he had time for a vacation he would "tour the United States and go to baseball games, starting at the beginning of the season."

An avid Phillies fan, Bacine recently read Phillies announcer Chris Wheeler's *View from the Booth*. Bacine met Wheeler more than 30 years ago when Bacine was the program chair for B'Nai B'rith. That connection led to an invitation to spring training in Clearwater, Fla. and he and his family have happily returned many times since.

Bacine and his wife, Diane, have been married for 43 years. They have a daughter, a son and four granddaughters, all in the area. They have lived in Lafayette Hill for 38 years.

Bacine is also an active volunteer outside the Township. He serves as Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Valley Forge Military Academy, from which he is a graduate. He is involved in the Rotary of Blue Bell and is active in the Montgomery County Bar Association.

"The best way of becoming part of the community is to become involved and that's what I've done," Bacine said. "I hope to continue to serve on the Board as long as I'm healthy and able to do it." ■

ABOVE: Robert Bacine, 67, has served on the Zoning Hearing Board since 1985.



JOHN (JACK) LOUGHRIDGE

Loughridge, 87, helped found the Historical Architectural Review Board in 1972 and has been serving ever since.

Loughridge moved to Lafayette Hill, known then as Barren Hill, in 1947. He and his wife, Martha,

have been married for 65 years and have raised four children. They live across from the site of the former "Big Blue Quarry."

Loughridge grew up in Germantown, where he attended Germantown High School, until he spent a year at Germantown Academy on a football scholarship.

"For years I played squash and tennis at the Philadelphia Cricket Club," Loughridge said. "Now I'm too slow - two new knees and one new hip."

Yet Loughridge still heads to his real estate office, dressed in his signature suit and bow tie, every day.

One of his preferred vacation spots is Stone Harbor, where he and his family owned a house.

"We like Cape May and I love North Carolina. If my wife died before me, I'd move there immediately," Loughridge said.

Loughridge fondly recalls an earlier time in this area.

"Back in the days when we were growing up, there was a place where all the Big Bands came in," Loughridge said. "Four or five of us boys - we didn't have dates - stood right up next to the stage. We saw Benny Goodman and Glenn Miller - all the big names." ■

ABOVE: Jack Loughridge, 87, a founding member of the Historic Architectural Review Board, has served for more than 27 years.

Employee Spotlight: Sandy White

BY DOUG HERRSCHAFT

Sandy White has worked in the Accounts Payable Department for Whitemarsh Township since 1990. While many people know her as the sewer billing clerk, she is also an avid orchid grower with hopes of entering area flower shows in the near future.

A Blossoming Interest: White became hooked on orchids after her husband gave her one as a gift five years ago. She is now a member of the American Orchid Society and has a small sunroom at the rear of her house for her collection. When she is not working she attends orchid seminars around the country.

White has a degree in horticulture from Temple University and once worked at Nucera's Garden Center in Spring House.

No Horsing Around: White is a skilled horseback rider and has taught horse riding to children. She

previously bred and showed Palomino and Arabian horses and still has one today.

Where Else You Can Find Her: Church. White is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Springfield where she's served as a deacon for six years. She is also the Treasurer of the Flourtown Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary.

Family Ties: White and her husband, Don, have been married for 11 years and have one daughter from Don's previous marriage. They live in Flourtown with their 12-year-old black Lab named Kasey. ■

ABOVE: Sandy White, Finance Department employee, has been raising orchids for five years.



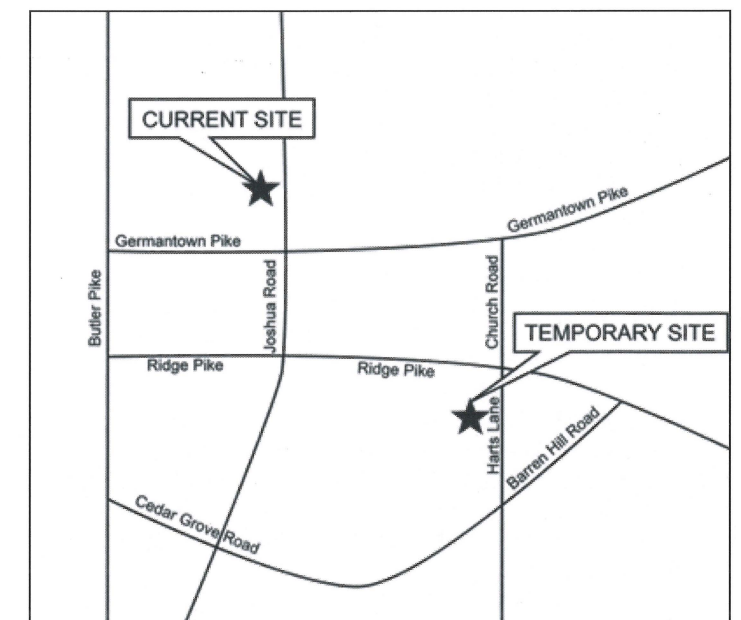
PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

William Jeanes Library Temporarily Relocated

The William Jeanes Memorial Library is undergoing a major renovation. The long anticipated expansion project will add 3,500 square feet to the existing library and feature infrastructure upgrades as well as a completely reconfigured layout. William Jeanes will be closed during construction and relocated to a temporary location at the "White Building" in the new Koontz Park, 2391 Harts Lane. All recent library releases as well as all newspaper subscriptions, most magazine offerings and the entire DVD collection will be moved to the Harts Lane location. A substantial portion of the Children's collection will also be relocated and the Library's popular storytime will continue.

With the inter-library loan program available through MCLINC, library patrons will continue to have access to the full catalog of items. Titles can be requested by calling the library or by using the online search and request system.

For more information on the move, to view the expanded building schematics, to learn about inter-library loans or to see updates on the project, visit the library's website at www.jeaneslibrary.org. To request e-mail updates, e-mail jeanesinfo@mclinc.org. ■





Local Orthodontist Gives Patients Something to Smile About

BY CAROL BEAM

You know something is different about this office as soon as you walk from the parking area. Before you get to the entry door, you see a colorful outdoor seating area set in a beautifully landscaped garden. A fountain trickles appealingly at the back of the garden. It's almost spa-like.

Welcome to the new orthodontia.

Stephen Slawek, D.M.D. opened his practice last summer in Lafayette Hill after almost 20 years in Chestnut Hill. His move is a homecoming: he grew up here, went to St. Philip's and Plymouth-Whitemarsh High School, and still lives in Whitemarsh with his wife, three daughters and one son.

"When this property came available it just seemed like a good idea," Slawek said. "I thought we were just going to paint and carpet, but then we decided to renovate."

A year later, and with the help of his brother-in-law, Jim Kelly, a former homebuilder, his new office was ready for action. He and his associate, Regina Lepore, D.M.D., work together in a practice treating patients from age 7 up.

Their building dates to at least 1752 and was most recently home to a spa and salon. Prior to that it had been a landscape designer's office. Lucky traces of both those businesses set the tone when Slawek decided what to keep and what to change.

"The garden was on the front cover of some fancy horticulture magazine years ago because they had a lot of special plants," he remarked. "When we came it needed a bit of work, but we kept all the plants."

The garden is especially important because huge picture windows look out onto it from the downstairs waiting room and from several of the patient chairs above it. Blocked off from the street, the garden is a safe place for youngsters to run and play while they and their parents wait.



Orthodontics

Once indoors, families find a bright, comfortable space with lots of natural light. At one side of the room, Slawek built a homework bar, an L-shaped counter with high stools where kids can put their time to good use. A look around the back of the bar reveals a mass of books and a Lego table.

Handsome white mantelpieces frame fireplaces throughout the building. Slawek grinned as he pointed to them.

"I made all of these," he said. "I started doing carpentry about 20 years ago, and have done some small projects, but this was the biggest job I've ever done. A lot of my friends went into construction," he added. "I tell them that in my practice I'm doing the same thing as you, but on a different scale."

Renovating such an old building and bringing it up to the high-tech demands of his practice, presented a challenge. Slawek opened a cubbyhole and exposed a mass of wires that service his computer system. Via computer he has access to all files wherever he is.

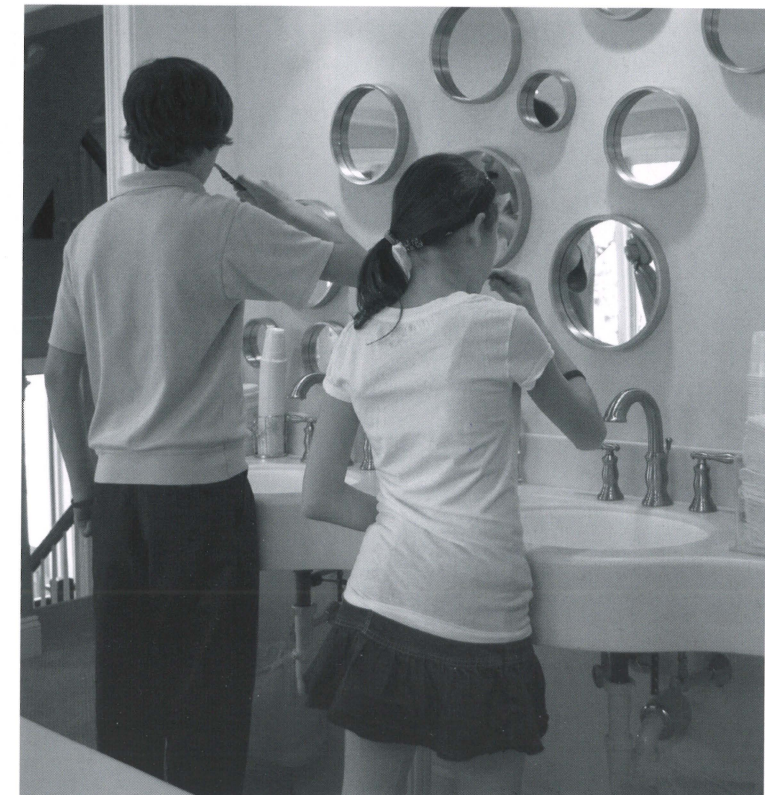
"We're all digital," he said. "X-rays are immediately on the computer, and with a much lower dosage of radiation than the old way."

Yet with all the 21st century equipment, it is important to Slawek that the building retains its 18th century charm.

But don't settle in too much here.

With all the emphasis on keeping people happy while they wait, Slawek is adamant about not keeping patients waiting.

Slawek's personal touch is a big part of his attraction. The Nowak family, of Whitemarsh, has been using his practice since the old days in Chestnut Hill. Denise Nowak is in the middle of orthodontia herself right now. She also has three children who see Slawek and expects her youngest to start soon.



PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

"He's got a very easy-going manner," Nowak said. "He makes all of us comfortable."

"This place is very cozy," she continued. "Very elegant. As an adult going in for braces I don't feel like I'm in a place just for children. And he made the most of a beautiful old building. It's a real showplace."

Coming in the future, Slawek wants to keep moving ahead technologically with WiFi in the waiting areas and a Facebook fan page for patients to keep in touch and show off their new and improved smiles. And there are thousands of them. ☑

ABOVE: A welcoming and whimsical atmosphere at the office of Stephen Slawek, DMD, makes brushing and flossing less of a chore.

Slawek Orthodontics
451 Germantown Pike
Lafayette Hill, Pa.
(610) 828-4231

www.slawekorthodontics.com



Spring Mill Café Links Community and Cuisine

BY DEBORAH STANISH

The Spring Mill Café has been a Whitemarsh institution since it opened its doors in 1978. From five tables and a kitchen stocked with utensils from Chef Michele Haines' home, the restaurant now boasts 40 seats, a charming atmosphere

and an unparalleled reputation for both superb dining and intriguing special events.

Throughout its growth, the restaurant never lost sight of its primary goal: serving good food, prepared well.

"I wanted home cooking away from home," explained Haines, who was born and raised in France. "My grandmother was a great cook but it wasn't anything fancy, just delicious and that's how I learned to cook. You expect French cooking to have heavy sauces, we never had sauces but maybe a beautifully seared fish prepared simply. It's a very healthy and very tasty way of cooking."

Keeping things simple but authentic is a philosophy that carries over into all aspects of the restaurant. From the "perfect" crepe pan, much repaired with duct tape that resides in her kitchen to the ingredients used to prepare the dishes, Haines has no patience for the merely adequate.

Long before the locavore movement took hold, Spring Mill Café sought out the best ingredients from farmers markets and from local vendors. Today the restaurant works with Lancaster Farm Fresh to bring in fresh, organic dairy and produce from Amish and Mennonite farmers.

While the food and atmosphere of Spring Mill Café is a draw by itself, Haines, a natural extrovert, has sought to make the restaurant a gathering place. Special theme nights crafted around music and literature along with demonstration evenings, most recently framed around Julia Child's recipes, book months in advance and have helped make the Spring Mill Café a destination restaurant.

Ezra Haines, 36, Michele's son and restaurant manager who formally joined the staff in 1998, explained that these events are a natural outgrowth of Haines' vision.

"There is a natural flow of food and family that goes into the community. Food is often the central thing that brings people together," said Ezra Haines. "The special events that we conduct are an extension of this and my being involved at the restaurant gives my mother the freedom to do more events and explore those avenues."

Continuing in the theme of food and family, Spring Mill Café also embodies a commitment to community, both locally and globally. The restaurant has participated in fund-raising events for local organizations such as the William Jeanes Memorial Library as well as fund-raising events for causes such as Friends Without Borders, ActionAIDS and Doctors Without Borders.

But at the heart of Spring Mill Café is always the food. The restaurant features a rotating, seasonal menu, which in the fall included highlights such as rack of lamb with a rosemary béarnaise, lapin aux pruneaux (braised rabbit in a cognac red wine sauce with potatoes, prunes and mushrooms) and Tangier-style poussin.

"The menu changes seasonally but we will always include our signature pates, the escargot, a



PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

rabbit dish and a daily fish," said Ezra Haines.

In addition to the regular menu, Spring Mill Café offers a three-course prix fixe menu on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays featuring an appetizer, entrée and dessert.

Haines is inspired by travel and posts accounts and photographs of her adventures on her blog: www.michelehaines.wordpress.com. She brings those experiences back to the restaurant to help her create menus and events to keep the dining experience fresh.

"People always tell me I should write a book," laughed Haines. "All these stories should be recorded they say so I began a blog."

According to her son, the blog and the restaurant's website are important components of Spring Mill Café.

"At the website you can view our history, our menu, join our mailing list, learn and see our upcoming events," explained Ezra Haines. "That, along with my mother's blog, really gives you a sense of what the restaurant is about."

Thanks to another blog, Julie & Julia, the inspiration for both the book and the movie, the restaurant has seen a resurgence of interest in French cuisine.

"It's amazing the amount of French restaurants that have opened up recently, which is great," said Ezra Haines.

His mother agreed.

"I think Julia Child captures the essence of French cooking," Haines said. "You want to see the food and when we eat together we talk, socialize, share ideas. It's not just swallowing food in five minutes and then you go. That's what makes the food and Spring Mill Café special." ■

OPPOSITE TOP: Spring Mill Café Executive Chef Michele Haines stirs Butternut squash soup.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Spring Mill Café Manager Ezra Haines discusses menu selections with his mother, Executive Chef Michele Haines.

MIDDLE LEFT: Soup of Butternut squash puree.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Sliced venison with a Black Forest currant reduction and sautéed cabbage.

- 6 cups butternut squash (about 2 large squash) peeled, seeded and cut into 2-inch wide chunks
- Melted butter, for brushing on squash
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt, plus 1 teaspoon
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper, plus 1/2 teaspoon
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable stock*
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 ounces heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

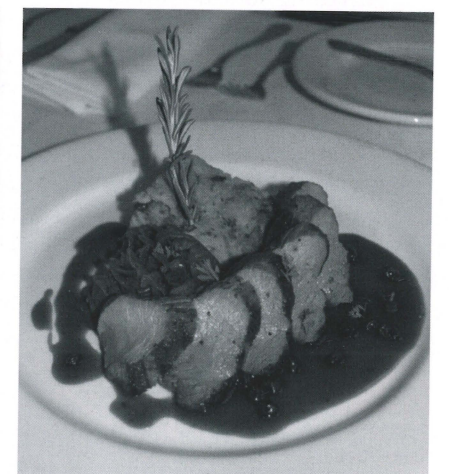
Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Brush the flesh of the squash with a little butter and season with 1 tablespoon salt and 1 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper. On a sheet pan lay the squash out evenly and roast for about 30 to 35 minutes or until the flesh is nice and soft.

Transfer the squash into a pot and add the stock, brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Bring to a simmer and puree using a stick blender. Stir in the heavy cream and return to a low simmer. Season with salt and pepper, serve.

*More or less stock can be used to adjust the desired consistency of the finished product.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings



Spring Mill Café
Spring Mill Café is located at 180 Barren Hill Road.

Lunch is served Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dinner is served Tuesday through Saturday from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. and on Sunday from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Brunch is served on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information or for reservations call (610) 828-2550 or visit www.springmill.com.

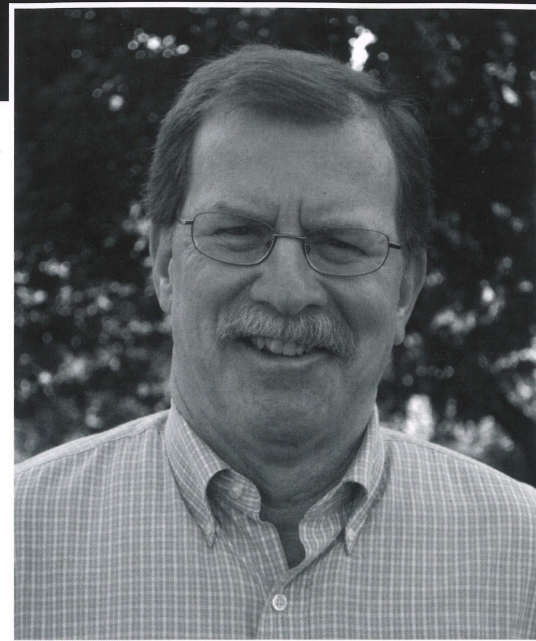


PHOTO BY KELLY K. BROWN

Mark Helms, Still Making News

BY CAROL BEAM

Most people like to plan for their new lives after retirement, but sometimes retirement comes on quickly. When Parkinson's disease made Mark Helms stop his work life, he regrouped and dedicated himself to a world of volunteering. Whitmarsh Township has benefited and so has he.

Helms and his wife, Bobbi, have lived in Whitmarsh for 30 years, raising two daughters. When he's not in one of his volunteer spots (or watching Phillies or Eagles games) he can often be spotted strolling in the neighborhood with his two basset hounds and a cocker spaniel.

Q. What did you do before retiring?

A. I always worked in the news. I was interested in it since high school, and worked at Channel 3, 6, 10, 29, at New Jersey Public Television, and then at KYW radio. I was News Director there for 10 years.

Q. What does a News Director do?

A. You're responsible for news gathering. You decide which stories will be covered and how, and which reporters will handle them. There were about 10 reporters for me to assign on local stories.

Q. What got you started in volunteering?

A. I was 50 when I retired, and I wanted to keep busy and put my time to good use. I knew there was a chance to do things that could really make a difference for people. About five years ago the Township held its first class for the Whitmarsh Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS), and that got me involved helping out the Police Department. We lend a hand with Township Day, with DUI checkpoints, with paperwork, and with special events. I also work on the Philadelphia Food Bank as part of a group through St. Philip's, and on the Township's 4th of July Parade.

Q. What do you do for the parade?

A. There are two jobs for me there. I round up the classic car people and the string bands and get them pointed in the right direction at the right time. This is a fun bunch of people to work with.

Q. What is the latest challenge you've taken on?

A. Our Mother of Consolation, in Chestnut Hill, asked me to teach kids in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades about news writing. I've never done any teaching before, and this sort of scared me, but I went to high school with the principal and he asked me, so I said yes. It's going well. It's a good group of kids, and if I work with them the right way I see the lights go on.

Q. Who had the biggest influence on your life?

A. In terms of volunteering it was definitely my father. He was never afraid to give of his time, whether it was at the church or at school. I didn't realize it when I was growing up, but looking back I see he was always there to help.

Q. What advice would you give to would-be volunteers?

A. Volunteering is a two-way street: you help others, but you also help yourself. Make sure you find something you really like, so that it's something you do well. That works better for you and for the organization. That way you get a real feeling of satisfaction. Sometimes you may not feel up to it, but you go out and do it and you feel great about what you did. You're out there helping people. 📷

ABOVE: Mark Helms, Whitmarsh volunteer and longtime resident, finds many ways to contribute to his community.



PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

From left, Jocelyn Porrino, 13, Christle Masunas, 13, and Sarah Goldbloom join McGruff the Crime Dog.

Brooke Randa, 6, dances along with the performers.

Introducing Hugo, the first canine member of the Whitmarsh Police Department.

The Plymouth Whitmarsh High School Honors Orchestra enriches the festival atmosphere.

Local author Diane Squires, left, and William Jeanes Memorial Library Children's Librarian Beth Hargis in the spirit of the day.

Master Carver Haldy Gifford.

AN AUTUMN HARVEST OF ANNUAL EVENTS

From the WBA Pumpkin Festival at Miles Park to fall fun at the Highlands to the Whitmarsh Foundation Triple Crown Golf Classic, Whitmarsh Township was the scene for good times, good fun and good causes this autumn.

Edith Dixon expresses gratitude to the Foundation and others who helped preserve Erdenheim Farm.

Athena and Nick Karabots acknowledge appreciation for their donation to the Foundation.

Low Gross Winners, from left, Richard Cutler, Dave Espenshade and Chip Sheppard.

The Pumpkin Show and the Craft Show at The Highlands Mansion Gardens draws a crowd.

LEFT & TOP RIGHT PHOTOS BY JAMIE STEWART

PHOTOS BY KELLY K. BROWN

Greenmarsh Seminar Series: Inspire others. Be inspired.

GREENMARSH SEMINAR SERIES KICK-OFF! Free Environmental and Gardening Workshops

Brave the cold to get together with your gardening neighbors to kick off the Greenmarsh Seminar Series. Enjoy an evening with others who share your passion for gardening. See photos from the Garden Tour and Garden Contest. Listen to a short presentation on the environmental importance of gardening. Talk with experts and gather information on organic gardening, native plants, composting and many more topics.

Learn more about the upcoming series of seminars being offered for those interested in making Whitemarsh a greener environment.

This free event will be held on Feb. 4, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill. Registration is required. To register call the Department of Parks and Recreation at (610) 828-7276 or visit www.whitemarsh.twp.org/services/parks/.

To volunteer or for more information contact Mike Zeock, Community Service Coordinator, (484) 533-2214 or mzeock@whitemarsh.twp.

GREENMARSH SEMINAR SERIES – FREE!

- | | |
|----------|--|
| March 1 | Trees – Anatomy and Care |
| March 10 | Top 10 Gardening Ideas to Save the Planet |
| March 11 | The Joys of Backyard Composting
– First 20 to Register and Attend Receive a Free Composting Bin |
| March 31 | Celebrate the Rain: Rain Barrel Workshop
– First 20 to Register and Attend Receive a Free Rain Barrel courtesy of Aqua Pennsylvania |
| April 6 | Creating a Healthy Backyard Habitat
– Invite Birds into Your Yard |
| April 14 | Backyard Water Features
– Build Your Own Pond, Large or Small |
| April 20 | Greener Lifestyles – Healthy Living for You and the Environment |
| May 1 | Beneficial Ecosystems – Encourage native plants and weed out invasives |

All programs begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike.

See the Parks & Recreation Winter Recreator for details and registration information or visit www.whitemarsh.twp.org.