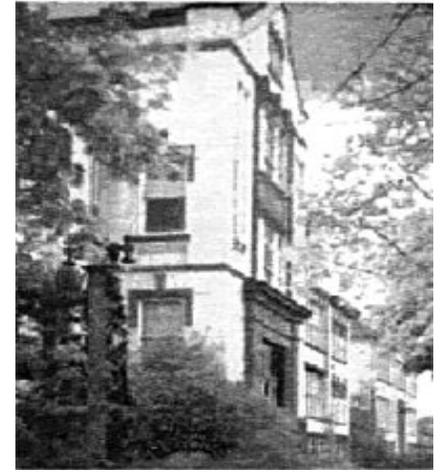


Newport Community News



*A Newsletter of the
Newport Township Community Organization*

*Fall 2005
Number 3*

State of the Township

Newport Township has thousands of acres of abandoned mining land, now owned by the non-profit corporation Earth Conservancy. Seventy percent of the Township is forest, including scenic landscapes. If only there was a way to put this land to productive use, many of us have thought. Now there may actually be a way.



Dan Kowalski, President of the Black Diamond ATV Club, and his wife Leona

In April, a study funded by the Earth Conservancy, the State's Department of Conservation of Natural Resources, and Luzerne County concluded that the abandoned mining land in Newport Township was a good place to put a recreation area for All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's). ATV use is growing, with 4800 registered vehicles in Luzerne County alone, and 141,000 statewide as of March 2004. ATV users spend money on food, gasoline, lodging, all of which leads to local spending and possibly new businesses in the area, including in Newport Township. The recreation area would charge for use of its trails, and a contribution from this to the Township would help pay for local government services that we all use. So would increased tax revenue from any new Township businesses and their employees.

Dan Kowalski, resident of Alden and Township Deputy Fire Chief, has been involved in the effort to make this recreation area a reality. He is the founder and President of the Black Diamond ATV Club, whose members not only get together for ATV use

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A Message from the President

Steve Phillips, a resident of Wanamie, is President of the Newport Township Community Organization.

The Newport Township Community Organization continues to strive to assist in making the municipality an attractive location for existing and potential residents and businesses.

At the July meeting of the Newport Township Board of Commissioners, the Community Organization presented the Township's Commissioners with a list (given in separate article in this newsletter) of five areas upon which the Organization felt that the elected officials should focus attention. This is the second year that a five-point plan was drafted by the Organization and submitted to the Township Commissioners.

The Community Organization will continue to offer its assistance to the Board of Commissioners to aid in addressing the five areas of concern, but will also be prepared to offer its constructive criticism when deemed appropriate.

The organization remains committed to helping insure that the Township's ordinances are adhered to, and that the municipality does not become a haven for slum landlords and property owners who neglect their responsibilities. It should be noted, however, that this Organization and the Township's officials need the assistance of all residents to bring alleged violations of the municipality's ordinances to their attention in order that corrective measures can be instituted.

The extreme heat of the summer of 2005 has postponed the big junk pick up scheduled for the Sheatown section of the Township until September 17.

Once again everyone is reminded of the Community Organization's second annual Fall Festival slated for October 29 between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm at the Holy Child Grove in Sheatown.

We encourage all residents of Newport Township to become members of the Community Organization and make our community a better place in which to live. ♦

People

Mark Ptashinski

Mark Ptashinski, a resident of Glen Lyon and 2005 graduate of the Greater Nanticoke Area High School, was valedictorian of this year's class.

He was a member of the school's Robotics Club, which participated in a nationwide competition of a thousand participants in Ohio this past April. Nanticoke was the only high school that represented the state of Pennsylvania and the Club finished in the top ten.

Mark played trumpet and trombone and euphonium (a scaled down tuba) in the high school band. Last summer, he auditioned for and was accepted to the Performing Arts Institute at Wyoming Seminary. For six weeks, participants attended classes and had private lessons. Guest conductors who were professional musicians led performances every week. Mark intends to pursue a spot in the concert band in college.

Mark is an avid chess player who won first place in the school's chess tournament. He was a reporter for the school newspaper and contributed stories on current events and sports. He enjoys baseball, football and fishing.

Mark will attend the University of Pittsburgh this fall, where he plans to major in physics and minor in chemistry. After graduation, he would like to pursue research in space science or astronomy. Good luck, Mark!

Dean Myers

As head coach of the Newport Township Little League All-Stars, Dean Myers of Alden led the team to the finals in the District 16 Tournament in July. By defeating Edwardsville/Larksville and Back Mountain American, the team earned a berth in the Losers Bracket Final. Back Mountain National won the championship by defeating Newport by a score of 6 to 1. Newport has not won a district title since the 1950's.

Dean is quick to credit his assistant coaches, Gene Domulevicz and Mike Yalch, for their dedication to the team. He focuses on teaching the players defensive strategy and fielding. "I'm a defensive guy. I teach a lot of fielding situations, knowing what to do with the ball before you get it, knowing what to do when you get it. We spend a good hour and a half on fielding at practice." The last half hour, no one is idle. The players practice batting, pitching, fielding, and running bases in smaller groups.

Dean also credits the players. "I had a bunch of good kids.

They paid attention to detail and worked hard." Members of the team are: Cody Tsevdos, Lucas Domulevicz, Alex Passetti, Josh Lukaszewski, Dominic Policare, Chris Holt, Eric Haver, Mike Yalch, Jeff Waugh, Brian Smatko, Dan Byorick, and John Clawson.

Dean also coaches football and basketball. He has been coaching since 1986 and is a Phillies and Penn State fan. He and his wife Richelle have three sons, Jake 13, Tyler 9 and Luke 3.

Wanda Cotter and Brian Treshnik

Wanda Cotter and Brian Treshnik are proprietors of The Office bar-and-grill in Lee, which opened in January of this year. The Office serves a diverse menu with daily specials from 2:00 P.M. to 2 A.M. Wanda has 13 years of experience working for a family restaurant in Waymart, where she learned about restaurant management from the owner.

The unusual name, The Office, comes from a group of elderly customers who regularly came into the Waymart restaurant after working the late shift in the wee hours of the morning. They called these restaurant visits "stopping by the Office."

The Office features a pool table, dartboards, television, and jukebox. The cheeseburgers and chili are quite tasty. Thursday is All-You-Can-Eat Pasta Night. The grove is available for picnics and other events.

Wanda and Brian have two daughters, Ambrosia 15 who is an accomplished horseback rider, and Skyanne, 9 who has a flair for music and writing songs.

Wanda and Brian, welcome to Newport Township!

Henry Lipsky

Henry Lipsky was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery on July 14.

He was born in Glen Lyon on November 8, 1921, graduated from Newport High School in 1939, and entered Penn State University. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, he volunteered for service in the Army Air Corps, and served as Second Lieutenant with the Eighth Air Force, based in Ridgewell, England. As a navigator, he flew thirteen combat missions over France and Germany from October, 1943 until January, 1944, when his plane was shot down over Oschersleben, Germany. He was held as a prisoner of war in Germany until the end of the war in May, 1945. For wounds suffered in the downing of his plane, he received the Purple Heart.

In 1947, he graduated from Penn State and entered Georgetown University Law School, from which he graduated in 1950 with an L.L.B. He worked as an attorney with the Federal Trade Commission from 1951 to 1980, serving as Assistant to the Director of the FTC's Bureau of Restraint of Trade and liaison to the Department of Justice.

He was married to Jean Lothrop of Philadelphia in 1947 and had two sons, Richard and Robert. His sister is Wanda Jarecki, who lives in Glen Lyon. ♦



Valedictorian Mark Ptashinski

State of the Township (continued from page 1)

but also provide volunteer search and rescue services and work for civic causes, such as raising money for autistic children. Dan, a member of the committee that wrote the report, is an articulate person who spends a good deal of time giving presentations on the feasibility of the recreation area and its benefits for the local economy. One presentation was before Luzerne County Commissioners in the spring of this year.

Clearly, the possibility of an ATV recreation area is something that we residents of the Township should pay attention to. Here is the story in more detail.

Feasibility Study

In November 2003, with growing numbers of ATV users who wanted legal areas for riding and, at the same time, increasing illegal use of ATV's, the Earth Conservancy (EC) requested funding from the Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR) and Luzerne County for a study of the feasibility of an ATV recreation area in the lower Wyoming Valley. EC formed a study committee consisting of representatives of the County, EC, DCNR, local government (including Joe Rymar, Newport Township Commissioner), and an engineer from the Pennoni Engineer-

ing Company, which has an office in the Harrisburg area

The report, released in April, answered the question of whether such a recreation area is financially possible by estimating the number of ATV users and the amount they spend. It estimated that there are about 50,000 ATV users within a one hour drive of this area, and about 500,000 users within a three hour drive. It put the average spending of a visitor to an ATV recreation area at about \$40 to \$60 a day. Needless to say, the potential money involved is impressive.



Steve Phillips, President of the Community Organization, and Mary Margaret Kashatus

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State of the Township (continued from page 3)

Another indication of the amount of spending that this project could attract is the experience of the ATV recreation area run by Tower City Trail Riders, Inc., an abandoned mining area off Route 81 just north of the Harrisburg. This recreation area has about 2000 members, each of which pays dues of \$250 a year to make use of riding trails on about 6000 acres of land.



Joe Maloney and Russ Sager doing heavy lifting during the Alden Big Junk Cleanup

The report goes on to say that both the availability of land in Newport Township and the support of the ATV community in the area contribute to the feasibility of this project. Several thousand acres of EC land in Newport Township, much of it between Nanticoke and Glen Lyon, is full of dirt mining roads. Although the EC has plans to develop some of the land for residential and

industrial use, that still leaves a good amount of land that, the EC says, it is not opposed to selling for ATV trails. The Newport Township Commissioners have said that, although they do not want the trails to adversely affect Township residents, they are interested in seeing the detailed plans.

In the next issue of this Newsletter, we will discuss how this ATV recreation area would be set up and what effect it would have on local business and on your personal life. ♦

Newport Township Contact Information

Business Manager	Rich Zika	735-4735
Building Code Official	Rich Zika	735-4735
Exec. Dir., Newport Twp. Authority	Palmira Miller	736-6637

Township Commissioners:

Building Code Enforcement	Tom Kashatus	736-6981
Fire Department	Joe Rymar	735-1123
Police Department	John Zyla	735-1714
Street Department	Paul Czapracki	736-6859
Parks and Recreation	John Vishnefski	735-6984 ♦



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Seasonal Events

Fall Festival

The Newport Township Community Organization invites you to its second annual Fall Festival in Holy Child Grove in Sheatown on Saturday October 29 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Palmira Miller and Carolyn Phillips, co-chairs of the Fall Festival



Carolyn Phillips and Palmira Miller are co-chairpersons of the committee that is planning the event. Their committee has planned to have crafters, food vendors (selling haluski, hot dogs, potato pancakes, pierogi, and drinks), Stuccio's pizza, a bake sale, pony rides, a petting zoo, a children's Halloween parade, a static show of remote-controlled airplanes by the Wyoming Valley/RC Flyers, instant bingo, a Chinese auction, Newport Township sweatshirts for sale, demonstrations by firemen of fire safety and by police of their rescue dogs, and also music by the band Triple Play.

In other words, we have something for practically everyone. Last year, not only was the Festival a great deal of fun, but it raised money for community improvement and demonstrated that Newport community members can work together for common goals. Come out, have a good time, and support community revitalization.

Recommendations to the Newport Township Commissioners

The original purpose of the Community Organization, formed by residents in May 2004 at the request of the Township Commissioners, was to be an advisory group to the Commissioners. This summer, the members of the Community Organization, as they did last year, submitted to the Commissioners a list of recommendations for improving Township government services. There are five recommendations, listed in descending order of priority:

- Strictly enforce all township ordinances, with emphasis on those relating to abandoned vehicles, ATV's, animals, including pets, and noise.
- Develop a comprehensive twelve year plan for the community, including road maintenance and development regulations for new construction.
- Initiate a demolition program for dilapidated homes, garages,

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Seasonal Health

Fire Safety

Fire causes many deaths and terrible injuries each year. Burning materials give off lung damaging, cancer causing gases and particulate matter.

Autumn is the time to clean out houses and garages. According to the EPA, materials that give off toxic gases and release lung damaging particulates are burned in outside barrels and bon fires by people who do not realize the damage they are doing to their and their neighbors health. Dioxins linked to cell damage and cancer are given off by most burning materials. Microscopic particles released during burning are particularly damaging to children and the elderly leading to asthma attacks, breathing difficulties and even heart attacks. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation declares "People should never burn the following items: plastic, foam cushions, furniture, rugs, floor coverings, appliances, rubber, tires, metals, glass, tree stumps, roots, asphalt shingles, any roofing materials, drywall, insulation, or any pressure treated wood (including deck lumber, railroad ties, and telephone poles treated with chromated copper arsenate, creosote or pentachlorophenol). Additionally, individuals should never use the ashes from a burn barrel to fertilize a vegetable garden. The ashes can contain numerous hazardous materials that would be harmful if ingested"

In the autumn, people spend more time indoors cooking, using space heaters, and smoking. According to the Hillsville Volunteer Fire Department of Virginia, children of all ages set over 100,000 fires annually. Children usually play with fire in bedrooms, closets, or under furniture which are filled with material that catches fire easily. Pots left unwatched on stoves till they overheat and catch fire, and careless smoking in bed and on flammable furniture, contribute to many house fires. Space heaters set too close to walls and curtains or tipped over cause many fires. Lock up all matches, lighters, and candles to keep them away from children. Do not leave pots unattended on the stove. Smoke only outside if possible. Keep space heaters in a safe location and monitor them always. The aforementioned actions may prevent a deadly fire in your home.

Dry leaves, dead summer garden plantings, debris from summer storms surround the outside of our homes with very flammable materials in the fall. According to an internet fire safety site, have an area of at least 30 feet around the house free of all dry matter. Keep roofs, overhangs, and area under porches free of debris. Remove tree limbs to 15- 20 feet above the ground, and do not let tree limbs overhang roofs. If your grass goes dormant in the winter, mow the grass low in the fall.

Eliminating most outside voluntary burning, and practicing fire safety indoors and around our homes, will lead to a healthier and safer community for all of us.

Bicycle Helmets

During the summer, a boy was injured in a bicycle accident in Wanamie. So we thought it was worthwhile to remind you again: it's a law in Pennsylvania that bicycle riders under age 12 and passengers under age 5 are required to wear helmets. Be careful out there. ♦

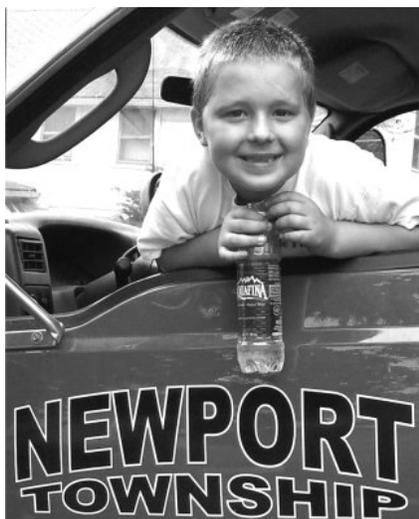
Seasonal Events (continued from page 5)

and sheds throughout the community.

- Provide funding for a full time Township Manager, and also allocate monies to staff and administer a full time Code Enforcement Office.

- Enact a solid waste and recycling ordinance that provides a rebate to senior citizens.

The Community Organization understands that these proposals are suggestions only. But the group believes that, if the Organization and the Township work closely together, we can benefit all community residents.



Jeremy Yakovonis, littlest volunteer at the Alden Big Junk Cleanup

work closely together, we can benefit all community residents.

Full Time Building Code Officer

One of the suggestions made by the Community Organization to the Township Commissioners at their July meeting, and repeated at the August meeting, is that the Commissioners appoint a full time Building Code Officer.

The Township Business Manager now works part time as Building Code Officer. This position involves issuing building permits, contractor work permits, and occupancy permits. It also involves inspecting buildings and properties for violations of the Township's nuisance and demolition ordinances.

The position involves work on one of the most pressing problems the Township now faces, the large number of neglected, abandoned, and uninhabitable properties. It also brings in a great deal of money into the Township treasury. In July, for example, it brought in about \$4500, while by comparison the police department, through fines, brought in about \$1200. During the year through the end of July, it brought in about \$21,000. It is likely that this position will pay for itself.

The members of the Community Organization (at this writing in early September) look forward to hearing from the Commissioners about, what they believe, is a reasonable suggestion.

Update on Neglected and Abandoned Buildings

This summer we reported that the Newport Township Authority was making plans to demolish abandoned buildings. The Authority now has a specific plan. It intends to spend \$25,000 from its treasury and, if all goes well, \$100,000 from a government grant for which it intends to apply. With these sums, it plans to purchase and demolish ten uninhabitable buildings, with the cooperation of the owners. Its procedure will be to buy the buildings and the property on which they stand for \$1. The benefit to the owner would be that he would not longer have responsibility for the property and would not have to pay property taxes.

The Authority would use the \$125,000 to demolish the ten buildings. It would then attempt to sell the ten vacant lots at public auction for \$2500 each, to recoup its original investment of \$25,000.

The Township manager is now sending letters to owners of abandoned buildings that violate the state building code warning them of legal and financial consequences. At the same time, the Newport Township Authority is sending letters to these owners asking them if they wish to participate in their demolition plan. We are now moving forward. ♦

Newport Township Community Organization

110 ½ Railroad Avenue, Nanticoke, PA 18634-4005

Officers

President	Steve Phillips	735-3991
1st Vice President	Russ Sager	736-6823
2nd Vice President	Tom Kashatus	736-6981
Treasurer	Steve Masakowski	735-2367
Secretary	Palmira Miller	736-6637

Calendar of Fall Events

Community Organization Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 6:30 pm at the Knights of Columbus building (formerly St. Denis Church) on East Main Street in Glen Lyon. Fall meeting dates are the following.

- Tuesday September 27
- Tuesdays October 11, October 25
- Tuesdays November 8, November 22
- Tuesday December 13

Township Commissioners Meetings are normally held on the first Monday of the month at 6:00 pm at the Municipal Building in Wanamie. Fall meeting dates are the following.

- Mondays October 3, November 7, December 5

Newsletter

The Newsletter of the Community Organization is printed four times a year. Its purpose is to tell Township residents about the Organization's activities and about their community.

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If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions about this newsletter, please call John Jarecki at 736-6620 or e-mail him at jjarecki@catvexpress.net.