

Newport Community News



*A Newsletter of the
Newport Township Community Organization*

*Summer 2006
Number 6*

State of the Township

Remember when our community had neighborhood grocery stores, restaurants, hardware stores, barber shops, and operating mines and garment factories. Remember Grotsky's furniture and appliances, the Sugar Bowl, M & B's, Danoff's Market, Peterfreund's Furniture, Luigi's Café, Mar-Jo's photography, Godelski's Economy Store, Poggie's Barber Shop, Rushin's Furniture and Appliances, and Baigis's Groceries. What happened to these kinds of businesses? Why are all of them gone?

Why is there so little money collected in taxes? Why does the Township budget spend on each resident about 25% less than what our neighboring South Valley communities of Nanticoke and Plymouth Township spend and only about one-quarter of what Wilkes-Barre spends?

We all know the short answer to the question of the cause of our economic decline: the mines closed and everything supported by the mining income declined. But we now can read a more detailed description of this process in a "Strategic Plan" commissioned by the South Valley Partnership, a voluntary group working to improve business conditions and the quality of life in the Newport Township-Nanticoke-Plymouth Township region.

The report begins with a description of the people, businesses, and the conditions of the roads and buildings and recreation areas in the three municipalities. The following list (Census 2000 figures) gives the flavor of the report's findings by comparing house

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A Message from the President

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

During the past three months, members of the Newport Township Community Organization have continued to monitor the monthly meetings and work sessions of the Township Commissioners and to provide input on a variety of topics.

On April 22 members of the Organization worked on the Great PA Cleanup via cleaning roadside litter along the Municipality's major thoroughfare. After the four-hour litter pick up, all involved in the day's activity convened in the Municipal Building to enjoy refreshments donated by area businesses. Special thanks should be given to Palmira Miller, Secretary of the Community Organization and driving force behind organizing and coordinating our effort.

We thank Township Commissioners John Zyla and Tom Kashatus and Public

Works Supervisor Joe Hillan who assisted in the pick up and disposal of discarded items.

The Community Organization had representatives present at the Luzerne County Community College to hear a public presentation from the South Valley Partnership and its consulting firm regarding the proposed future plan for Newport and Plymouth Townships and Nanticoke City. At this juncture, the Community

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Betty Grabowski of Glen Lyon. The house behind her was approved for demolition by the County Commissioners. See page 4.

People

John Forgach

Historian Extraordinaire John Forgach can tell you just about anything you ever wanted to know about the history of Newport Township High School. Neatly arranged and categorized are graduation programs, pictures, newspaper articles, yearbooks, even



John Forgach with his history of Newport High School

such memorabilia as a brass buckle from a late-1930's band uniform and bricks from the high school building. He even has a complete list of graduates between 1891 and 1947, which numbers about 3,000. The first class in 1891 graduated all of 3!

John grew up in Glen Lyon and graduated in 1948. He worked for Biscontini's as a rock-picker on the strip mines behind Enterprise Street. In 1951 he joined the Army and was sent to Korea, assigned to the Army Security Agency as a voice intercept operator. In 1954, he attended Bloomsburg University, earning a 4-year degree in education.

John spent 28 years teaching science and social studies at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, VA. If that name sounds familiar, it is the same school where Coach Herman Boone led the football team to glory in the movie, "Remember the Titans."

In 1985, John retired from teaching and moved to Lily Lake. A Wyoming Valley commemorative program on World War II piqued his interest in honoring those from Newport Township who lost their lives serving in the military. He collected their pictures and life stories, which are now on display at Alden Manor Restaurant.

John also has scrapbooks on such topics as the actress Olga Trotzski, the history of mining in Glen Lyon, and sports, but none give him more satisfaction than his collection on Newport High School. "I can't imagine anyone having more," he says.

What stories he can tell! Perhaps one day, Ken Burns will come knocking on his door!

The Tarnowski Family

The Tarnowski Family of Glen Lyon has been making Polish sausage for 60 years. In that time, it is estimated that folks in Newport Township and beyond have consumed over 3,000,000 pounds of their sausage. Now that's a lot of kielbasa!

The story begins when, as a young man, Tad Tarnowski worked at People's Market in Nanticoke. After serving in World War II, he returned home, married the former Sophie Klish, and started his own grocery business. The first store opened on the corner of Park and West Main Streets in February, 1946. A kielbasa smokehouse was located behind the store.

Brothers Edwin, Leo, Chester, and John joined Tad and in 1951, a second grocery store was opened down the street at 77-79 West Main. In 1962, Tad opened a third store on East Main Street in what is now Dr. Wolanin's Office. The smokehouse was relocated to the back of the property, where operations continue to this day. In 1965, the second store moved to the building where Glen Lyon Pizza is now located. The next generation took over in 1990. Mike Tarnowski, Chester's son, has been making kielbasa full time since 1998.

Tarnowski's kielbasa has traveled to such places as Kentucky, Texas, California, Washington State, Arizona, Colorado, and even Thailand. Recently, 27 rings were shipped to a family reunion in Anchorage, Alaska!

When asked for the recipe for this famous sausage, Mike replied, "You can't put a price on it. The recipe is so priceless, it is not for sale."

Jonathan Benick

Jonathan Benick loves hitting....baseballs, that is. Weight on back foot, shoulder pointing toward the pitcher, rear elbow bent and held high, waiting for the pitch. Timing and instinct are everything to a good hitter.

Jon honed his skills in a variety of settings, beginning with the Newport Township Little League. He played for Nanticoke High School and in the summers was either off to baseball camps or played American Legion Baseball. He continued at the collegiate level at Auburn and the University of Virginia. He was drafted by the San Diego Padres in 2001 and spent the last two years in the Pittsburgh Pirates system. A switch hitter, he led the South Atlantic League in home runs and earned a place on its all-star team in 2004.

When asked what his most memorable moment has been in baseball, Jon was quick to respond. "The day I got drafted. When I was given the chance to play professional baseball, with all the talent that's out there, that is a thrill."

Jon began this season in March with the Winnipeg Goldeyes of the independent Northern League, but since then has left the team and decided to end his career in professional baseball. He plans to keep in touch with the sport through coaching.

Jon is the son of Buddy and Mary Ann Benick of Glen Lyon. He has a wife Katie and son Tyler. We wish him the best. ♦

State of the Township (continued from page 1)

hold income, home values, and percentage of housing units that are vacant in Newport Township, Luzerne County, and the state of Pennsylvania. Dollar amounts are in thousands.

	Median Household Income	Median Value Single Family Owner-Occupied Home	Percent of Housing Units Vacant
Newport Twp.	\$32.1	\$58.5	17.4
Luzerne Cty	33.8	84.8.	9.7
Pennsylvania	40.1	97.0	9.0

Surprisingly, Newport’s residents have about the same average income as that of the entire Luzerne County, which is about 20% below that of Pennsylvania as a whole. But in housing values we lag far behind both county and state; our homes on the average are worth about 30% less than those countywide. The most dramatic difference between Township and County is in the percentage of vacant households, ours almost double that of the county.

The report explains the decline of the South Valley, including our Township, by saying that suppose we start with the fact that many of our residents have jobs outside the area. This job flight, the report says, is a big contributor to the loss of retail businesses locally. People who travel to work, it seems, tend to spend their money in stores and restaurants near their jobs or along their route there. This makes businessmen reluctant to invest in new businesses in the Township and to upkeep old buildings, which in turn results in lower tax receipts, making local governments reluctant to spend money on streets and sidewalks.

Because of this, the appearance of the region suffers. And potential residents and businessman do not see our community as a desirable place to live or invest, and more area residents must find jobs outside the area. We have come full circle.



Mike Tarnowski runs a successful Glen Lyon Polish sausage business celebrating 60 years of management by family members.

We have here a downward spiral of causes and effects that produces or contributes to many of the problems that we see in our community, such as neglected and abandoned houses and local government services at only a basic level

But the report is positive and encouraging in suggesting that there is much we can do to improve the situation (such as investing in our buildings and roads and making use of the recreation potential of the landscape) and that there is help in state grants to improve business districts (the Main Street program) and neighboring residential areas (the Elm Street program). There is also help in groups that are expert in revitalization, such as the Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI) at Cornell University.

What do you think of this view of our community? Do you think it describes our Township accurately? Do you think it tells us anything about our future? ♦



Variety of annuals
Hanging Baskets
Geraniums Cemetery Logs
Combo-Pots Vegetable Plants
Fall Mums

8 Kirmar Parkway, Alden 542-2316 735-2004
(Hroback's Garage)
Next to Clawson's

Opening in Mid-August for the Fall Season

**Mil-N-Jim's
Parkway Inn
Alden, PA**

**Full Restaurant Menu
Served Daily 11-11
570-735-2745
24 West Kirmar Avenue**

The Community Organization is putting together a

Book of Family Recipes

Send your family recipe to

**Carolyn Phillips
110 ½ Railroad Street
Wanamie, PA 18634**

Phone: (570) 736-6007

**Open: Everyday
4pm-10pm**

Glen Lyon Pizza

Party Platters Fund Raisers Weekday Specials!

Pick up or Delivery Available!

Township Public Business

Demolition of Dilapidated Buildings

The Township's program to demolish dilapidated buildings is making steady progress. As we reported in the Winter 2005



Al Rende and his mother Helen during the Community Organization's May hike on the beautiful mountain above Wanamie

newsletter, Newport Township received a grant of \$125,000 in December from Luzerne County's Office of Community Development (OCD) for the demolition of uninhabitable buildings. *Of about twenty-seven buildings under consideration for eventual demolition, two have passed tax, title, and legal hurdles and were approved for demolition under the program by the County Commissioners on May 17.*

In carrying out the program, the owner of the property to be demolished submits an application to the Newport Township

Authority. The Authority solicitor, Jonathan Spohrer, begins the process (paid for by the Authority) of completing the tax search, title search, and lien search. Any problems, such as back taxes, unpaid liens and/or unclear titles that may emerge in these areas will prolong the process to demolition. These problems must be addressed and solved if the application is to move forward. An inspection for hazardous materials, such as asbestos and stored chemicals, is also paid by the Authority, and is a requirement that must be completed. The application is then submitted to the Newport Township Solicitor Richard Shiptoski. After his review and acknowledgment that everything is in order, Township Manager Richard Zika will forward the owner's application and an application for demolition from Newport Township to Luzerne County OCD for approval by Luzerne County Commissioners. After their approval is received by Newport Township, then the bidding process for demolition may be started. At the present time there are nine applications in the system for demolition of dilapidated properties.

Changes in Building Code Enforcement

John Wilkes, our building code enforcement commissioner, reports that Township Business Manager Rich Zika has assumed responsibility as of May 1 for occupancy permit inspections. The Middle District Inspection Agency (MDIA) did this work in the past. This agency will still do other kinds of inspections. The MDIA billed the township \$60 for each occupancy permit inspection. That cost was passed on to the property owner. Now the township will be able to keep the inspection fee, and a \$25 inspection application fee, for its own general fund. How much of Mr. Zika's time will be needed to do these inspections is not yet known. Mr. Wilkes also hopes to find a part time licensed inspector to do the other inspections currently being done by MDIA.

Mr. Wilkes reminds the township property owners who have tenants that every time a tenant moves out the owner must apply

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Lexington Village Inc.

Luzerne County's Only Affordable
Luxury Adult Apartments

2-bedroom units Must be 55 or older

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Cones
Sundays
Shakes
Flurries
Ice's

Dream Whip
Ice Cream

&

Mini Golf

Fries
Burgers
Hot Dogs
Wimpies

Alden Road Nanticoke, PA

735-2771



Township Public Business (continued from page 4)

for a new occupancy permit and have the property inspected. This requirement is for the protection of the landlord and the tenant. Mr. Zika and Tanya Gronkowski, the Township Administrative Assistant, check daily for properties that are advertised for rent or for sale either in the newspapers or on the Internet. They then send letters to the owners of these properties reminding them what to do to be in compliance with building codes.

Beyond safety, a larger purpose of code enforcement is that, if properties are kept up to code, there will be fewer properties that fall into such a condition of disrepair that the only way to fix them is by demolition. Then the value of all properties in our township will be greater.

State of the Township's Fire Fighting Equipment and Personnel

The Township's fire fighters have written a report on the state of fire fighting equipment and personnel. The following is a summary from that report of fire and rescue vehicles and personnel.

Engine Number 1 is a Class A 2001 pumper truck purchased by the Board of Commissioners independently of the firemen's association.

Engine Number 2 is a Class A 1985 pumper truck. It is twenty-two years old, and two years ago failed to pass inspection until local prison inmates made necessary repairs. Currently this vehicle needs an overhaul of the brake system, the exhaust system, and most importantly its pumping system. This truck was built by FMC, a company now out of business, so parts to repair or overhaul it may not be available.

Engine Number 3 is a 1949 Ward LaFrance pumper truck. This vehicle is fifty-seven years old and is still useable, but it no long-

er meets present day standards of pumping power and other requirements. It is used primarily to carry much of the auxiliary equipment that firemen need to combat different kinds of fires, and it can still pump water.

The mini-pumper is a 1977 Chevrolet Rescue Vehicle purchased with state grant funds. It is a four-wheel drive truck with a 300-gallon water tank on board that can be used while the truck is in motion, and so is ideal for fighting brush fires in off high-way situations. Fire Chief Dan Kowalski says that the truck was in very good condition as purchased. However, the company decided to have a few maintenance items like tires, belts, and hoses replaced to ensure its dependability.



Kirsty Robertson and Kristin Garnet of Cavalry Bible Youth at the Great PA Cleanup

The fire department also has a six-wheel/all-wheel-drive/all terrain vehicle, acquired from the PA Forestry Service at no cost. This vehicle can be used for off road rescue as well as for fight-

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The Italian American Sporting Club

Corner of Apple and Orchard Streets Glen Lyon

Invites you to join us for
Bingo

Every Tuesday

Doors open 3:30pm Early Bird 5:30pm

Everyone Welcome

(570) 735-2225
(570) 735-0167 FAX

Middle Road
Nanticoke, PA 18634



Jeff Stewart

Restaurant, Lounge, Catering



Township Public Business (continued from page 5)

ing brush and forest fires.

The Newport Township Volunteer Firemen’s Association has thirty-seven active firemen. The average turnout at a serious fire is about twenty men. At lesser events the average is about seven. These are very good turnouts when you consider the many communities that can’t find adequate volunteers. About a fourth of these volunteers are also either Emergency Medical Technicians or trained in special techniques.

The Association also has a Junior Firemen’s Association, now with six members. Junior members are limited in what they can do for safety reasons.

Because the Township has 485 structures of three or more stories, the firemen believe that a ladder truck should replace the ailing engine number 2. But a new truck would be expensive and a low cost used truck would be so old that it would likely develop mechanical problems in a few years.

ATV Recreation Park

In April 2005, 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 the Newport Township was a good place to put a recreation area for All Terrain Vehicles (ATV’s). In April of this year, a Development Plan for the Newport-Nanticoke area, commissioned by the South Valley Partnership, stated that the proposed ATV recreation area would attract commercial development such as lodging and food and clothing sales.

An access point for this recreation park could be placed in the Glen Lyon area. This would bring the expected commercial development to Newport Township.

This recreation area has the potential to bring vast changes to our community, some good and some perhaps not. It seems that we should all now think about what this would mean for us.



Devon Bogdon receiving a trophy from Cub Scout leader Chris Miller at Troop 430's Soap Box Derby in April

Proposed Burning Regulation

According to Township Commissioner John Wilkes, about half a dozen residents a year complain about their neighbors’ burning outside their homes. As of early June, the Commissioners are discussing a proposed amendment to the Nuisance Ordinance that in general prohibits nighttime burning, transporting materials onto a resident’s property for burning, and fires whose smoke or odors drift onto another resident’s property. There are exceptions (cooking is permitted) and other provisions. The Commissioners plan to vote on the proposed ordinance at their meeting in July. ♦

(570) 736-6585

Jarnowski's Market

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Made All Year Round**

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Up to 7 Days Before Glen Lyon, PA 18617**



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Chet



Seasonal Events

The 2006 Great American Cleanup Report

The Newport Township Community Organization took part for the second year in The Great Pennsylvania Cleanup Event which



Left: Palmira Miller coordinated our Great PA Cleanup effort.
Right: Volunteers John Jarecki and Mary Margaret Kashatus

is a statewide cleanup campaign involving local and state government, businesses, waste haulers, and environmental and civic groups. Palmira Miller, secretary of the Community Organization, coordinated our effort. The PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Transportation (PennDOT), in cooperation with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, Inc., sponsored the Great Pennsylvania Cleanup, which runs from March 1 to May 31, 2006.

On April 22, fourteen teams spread out through Newport Township, cleaned 35 miles of roads, picked up 348 bags of garbage, 393 tires, and 420 bottles. A total of 67 volunteers worked 368 hours, and removed 18,692 pounds of garbage on the main streets from Lee to Sheatown, with PennDOT workers following right behind to remove the debris from the streets.

From April 17th to the 22nd we sponsored a Big Junk Drop Off. Ten volunteers worked 144 hours to separate recyclables and assist residents with junk brought into the Recycling Center. Throughout the week 5,400 pounds of material were recycled, and 18,980 pounds of garbage were collected and discarded.

Thank you to the Commissioners, the Firemen, Police Officers, and the Department of Public Works (for their support), Waste Management (for free landfill space), Mascaro and Solomon Waste Reduction (for dumpsters), local sponsors (for refreshments), national sponsors, and all the volunteers.

Proper Flag Destruction by the American Legion

If you have an old flag that you would like to destroy, you can give it to a member of the American Legion in Glen Lyon. Legion members destroy flags with respect in an appropriate ceremony each year on Flag Day June 14. You can call Lorri Materewicz (736- 7177) for more information.

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Seasonal Health

Be Safe When Mowing Your Lawn

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says that about 57 thousand people, either mowing the lawn or in the vicinity of the lawnmower, require medical treatment for injuries each year.

According to the Naval Safety Center, a lawnmower blade can spin at up to 200 miles per hour and even a dull blade can cut off fingers and toes. The moving blade can shoot rocks, sticks and toys out at deadly speeds. The hot engine can cause burns and the gasoline used to fuel the mower can catch fire. The Naval Safety Center recommends the following.

Make sure the grass is clear of possible projectiles.

Never pour fuel into a hot engine-fuel vapors can ignite.

Do not let adults, children, or pets be in the area you are mowing.

Wear long shirts and slacks and sturdy shoes when mowing.

Wet grass can be slippery and dangerous to mow.

Be careful on slopes, some are too steep to cut.

Remove the spark plug before working on the lawnmower.

Never let children or pets ride on a riding lawnmower. Be aware of the location of children or pets. Drive slowly and carefully.

Finally, never use a lawnmower while drinking alcohol or under the effects of medications that cause drowsiness or weakness.

Avoid Crime When Out and About

Summer is the time that families go to parks, lakes, and distant areas for hiking, picnicking, camping and vacationing. In their rush to enjoy themselves they often forget that the danger of crime exists even in these areas. Often they find themselves in unfamiliar towns, shopping areas, and parking lots.

The Naval Safety Center gives the following safety tips.

After shopping, get in your car, lock the doors and leave. Do not sit and go through items or linger.

If a thief wants your wallet or purse, throw it in one direction and run in another; the thief will usually go after the wallet.

Notice who is in the car or parking lot near you. Have security escort you to your car.

Always take the elevator instead of the stairs. Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and the perfect crime spot. Remember predators can linger in parking lots. Never leave children of any age alone in a car. Never send children out to a car alone to get something from the car. Be cautious when getting in and out of a car and try not to park near vans or cars with men lingering in them. ♦

Seasonal Events (continued from page 5)



Bernadette Roote and Madelynn Chervenitski, at Cub Scout Troop 430's Soap Box Derby

Children's Summer Activities

Community Organization members Mary Margaret Kashatus and Murph Fletcher have organized summer activities for children at the Wanamie Recreation Park. Activities include sports, games, a book swap, bicycle safety, ethnic dancing, photography, and more. Please read the insert in this newsletter for more information.

Red and Black Newport License Plate Frame

In early June, the Community Organization started to sell red and black Newport Township auto license plate frames in such stores such as the Dollar Store and the Variety Stop in Glen Lyon and the Texaco convenience store in Sheatown. The purpose is both to raise money and to promote community solidarity and pride.

Corrections

In the Spring issue, we mistakenly wrote that the Newport Township Authority applied for the OCD demolition grant. Instead, it was the Newport Township Commissioners. We also misspelled the name of Tom Doughton, an engineer working on the Whitney Pointe Industrial Park. ♦

Newport Township Contact Information

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

Township Commissioners

Fire Department	Tom Kashatus	736-6981
Police Department	John Zyla	735-1714
Street Department	Paul Czapracki	736-6859
Building Code	John Wilkes	735-6914
Parks and Recreation	John Vishnefski	735-6984 ♦

Newport Township Community Organization

110 ½ Railroad Avenue, Wanamie, PA 18634-4005

On the Internet: www.newporttownship.com.

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 Summer 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. Summer meeting dates are the following.

Tuesday June 27	Tuesdays July 11 and 25
Tuesdays August 8 and 22	Tuesday September 12

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

Mondays July 3, August 7, September 6

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.

Newsletter Staff

Editing	John Jarecki	736-6620
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Health	Carol Marcincavage	
Township Business Advertisements	Francis Zaleski	
	Linda Hourigan, Sia Sager,	
	Barbara Pelak	
Distribution	Joe Maloney, Faye Maloney,	
	Mary Margaret Kashatus,	
	Steve Masakowski	

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. ♦

President's Message (continued)

Organization has not taken any formal position on any of the proposals contained in the proposed plan.

Membership in the Community Organization has grown considerably from this time last year. However, there is still room for you, your family, and friends. Won't you join and help us make the Township and better place to live, work, and play?