



Aston Township

established 1688

Township Times

Volume 7; Issue 1

January 2011



Four-month-old Eva Thompson was among the children greeting Santa for the first time at the annual Holiday Tree Lighting at the Community Center on Dec. 1.

*



Brianna (right) and sister Paradise Rose Schaffer both had Christmas wishes to pass on to Santa Claus.

*



Equipped with their own personalized hats, Santa found it easy to tell siblings Seamus and Hannah McGroary apart.



At the Dec. 15 board meeting, Commissioners President Gary Robinson (right) wished outgoing 3rd Ward Commissioner Joseph Possenti, Jr. all the best in future endeavors. Possenti surprised his fellow commissioners by announcing his resignation, effective immediately, after 15 years of service.

(story on page 2)

To maintain a safe environment

for children, all residents, and especially those living near schools, are urged to **dial 911 or call the Aston PD at 610-497-2633** to report any suspicious activity.



Eagle Scout-to-be Donnie Potts recently joined Barbara DiMario in welcoming a 7-ft. carved angel to the Parents of Murdered Children Memorial Garden in Upper Chi.

(see page 2 for details)



The 2011 officers for the Aston Business Association are (l to r): Treasurer Bill Defeo, President Eileen Nelson, Secretary Terry Yannuzzi, and Vice President Evan Jackson.

ABA Welcomes New Leaders

The leadership for the Aston Business Association recently changed at the annual reorganization meeting.

Eileen Nelson, of Stantec Consulting, has ascended from last year's vice presidency to the role of president in 2011, replacing Jim Stigale, of Danjolell-Stigale Memorial Home.

"I hope to continue the programs that Jim (Stigale) has started, and will be looking to everyone for help," Nelson said of her new posting.

Newly installed ABA officers include Vice President Evan Jackson, of Prudential Financial, and Treasurer Bill Defeo, of Sisters of Mercy, while Secretary Terry Yannuzzi, of Rick's Sheds, returns for another year.



Outgoing ABA President Jim Stigale presented former Aston Beverage owner Donna Kramer with the ABA's 2010 Business Person of the Year Award. Kramer has been a dedicated participant and contributor to community events for many years. She is planning to relocate in 2011, and her presence in the ABA will be missed.

Aston Looks To Establish Year-Round Food Pantry

The Aston Township Community Center on Concord Rd. will now be utilized as a food pantry collection depot, according to Sixth Ward Commissioner Jim Stigale.

Non-perishable food items can be dropped off from 9am to 4pm on Mondays thru Fridays. All donated items will be distributed to needy local families, as contributions (including gift cards, individual cans or cases of food) allow in the coming months.

"So as you shop at the grocery store, pick up an extra item or two and drop them off at the Community Center," Stigale suggests.

*

Angels Share The Wealth

The Aston Angels Network held its 4th annual Holiday Toy Drive in 2010, helping to make Christmas a happier time for struggling local families. Bins placed at select locations from November through December were filled with unwrapped new toys by caring and generous members of the community, making the charitable effort another success.

To learn more about sponsoring or co-sponsoring families in the community to brighten their holidays in 2011, visit info@astonangelnetwork.com.

Commissioner Possenti Steps Down

With a full year left on his fourth elected term as Third Ward Commissioner, Joseph Possenti, Jr. announced his resignation from the board, effective immediately, at the Dec. 15 commissioners' meeting.

As the father of four young children, Possenti cited his need to tend to the demands of a growing family as the reason for his mid-term departure.

"It's time to get some new blood up here for the Third Ward," said Possenti.

The former Sun Valley football star and coach logged 15 years as a township commissioner, serving as board president and vice president.

Possenti joked that he came to the board as its youngest member in 1995, and was still the youngest at the time of his departure.

After his surprise announcement, Possenti was universally praised by his fellow commissioners for the fiscal expertise that he brought to the township as Finance Committee Chair.

The outgoing commissioner offered to help whoever is appointed as his interim replacement, until Third Ward voters elect a commissioner.

"It's been a pleasure serving with Joe," Commissioners President Gary Robinson said in an unrehearsed public farewell. "He's done an outstanding job for this township. His financial knowledge had a lot to do with balancing the budget, year after year. He will be sorely missed."

Third Ward residents interested in the interim commissioners post should send a resume to the township office, clearly marked "Attention: Dick Lehr" and "Commissioners Application."

Regional Effort Lands

Angel In Memorial Garden

The Lord recently moved in strange ways to orchestrate the replacement of a fallen angel at one of his most sacred listening posts.

The wooded 3.5-acre Parents of Murdered Children Memorial Garden off Furey Rd. in Upper Chichester was established in 2000, and now holds 53 memorials honoring the memory of lost children. PoMC Delco Chapter Founder/President Barbara DiMario has enjoyed a long and mutually-beneficial relationship with the Boy Scouts of America, whose members have now done nine Eagle Scout projects to enhance the PoMC site.

The latest scouting contribution came on the heels of the garden's wire-framed guardian angel being destroyed by a fallen tree branch last spring. Seeking a replacement, DiMario (an Aston resident) put feelers out, hoping for a civic-minded scout to provide a new Angel of Hope. Donnie Potts, of Ridley Park, is a Ridley High School junior and a member of Troop 43 of Woodlyn. By chance, Scoutmaster Fred Sach learned of DiMario's needs and knew Potts was looking for such a project to fulfill his Eagle Scout requirements. Potts then went about raising \$1,200 to fund the creation of a new angel. A chainsaw artist in South Jersey was engaged to carve the pine statue and mount the 350-lb. angel on an oak base.

Rick Yannuzzi offered storage space at Rick's Sheds in Aston, until the hillside site in the PoMC garden was wired for lighting and prepared for the angel's delivery on Dec. 22.

Yannuzzi is no stranger to helping out DiMario or Eagle Scouts. The PoMC park is home to two gazebos, three footbridges, and two storage sheds, all donated by Rick's Sheds.

Snowfall Requires Extra Safety Measures

Among the lessons learned from last February's record-setting snowfall is the immutable fact that additional safety precautions must be taken to survive a snow event on the highway.

PennDOT urges all residents to observe the following safety rules during and after a snowfall:

-Maintain twice the normal following distance behind other vehicles when snow is falling. Following too close is the cause of most snow-related crashes.

-Stay at least six car lengths behind a snow plow. Never try to pass a snow plow, as the plow blade is wider than the truck.

-Since windshield wash is used more frequently during the winter, the reservoir under the hood needs to be checked and refilled more often.

-Before driving, always clear snow and ice from the mirrors, front and rear windshields, hood, roof, and tail lights of a vehicle.

Holiday Trash Collections

In observance of New Year's Day, township offices will be closed and

no trash or recycling will be collected

on Monday, Jan. 3

Monday's trash & recycling route will be picked up on Tuesday, Jan. 4

Tax Increase Pared Down

Commissioners have approved a final 2011 operating budget for Aston Township that will require a 0.35-mill property tax increase to balance, which is almost half the millage increase proposed in the preliminary budget.

The new tax rate is 4.0 mills. The total breaks down to 3.39 mills for general purposes, .47 mills for debt payment, .10 mills for fire protection, and .04 mills to fund the library.

Third Ward Commissioner/Finance Committee Chairman Joseph Possenti noted that the 2011 tax increase is Aston's first tax hike since 2007.

Meanwhile, the annual trash service fee will hold steady at \$220 per single family unit in 2011. If this amount is not paid in full by June 1, collections for that property will cease until the fee, plus a 10% penalty, is paid.

This year's final budget total is \$11,018,000, which represents a 7.7% increase over 2010 spending.

Rising operating costs include a 3% pay increase for all full-time township employees and 2% for part-timers.

The root of the tax increase is \$800,000 of capital expenditures in 2011, according to Possenti.

Other anticipated expenditures for next year include new computer equipment for the township office, the hiring of an additional police officer, and the purchase of new vehicles for the code enforcement and police departments, and a new dump truck for public works.

The township will maintain a \$200,000 road improvement program in 2011, and allot the same contributions made in 2010 to support the library, fire companies, and youth athletic leagues.

The purchase of a new truck for recycling collections (\$147,000), backflow check valves for Edgar Ave. homes (\$72,000), and an emergency generator for the Community Center (\$80,000) will all be covered by funding received through grants.

Electric Options

Offer Savings Opportunity

Commissioners have approved a proposal to switch electric providers. The township will now purchase its electricity from Glacial Energy, saving an estimated 17 percent in energy costs in 2011.

***** PECO will be hosting an **Energy Education Seminar at the Aston Public Library on Saturday, Jan. 8 at 10am**, to provide the public with information about changes in electric bills and tips for saving energy and money.

Swiss Farms Eyes Aston

A 1,750-sq. ft. Swiss Farms drive-thru convenience store may soon be built in the vacant lot across Pennell Rd. from the municipal building.

The land development approval process for the proposed chain store will begin in January. Construction is expected to start this spring.

Township Donates Police Cruiser

Commissioners have agreed to give the Aston-Beechwood Fire Co. a 2006 Ford Crown Victoria that has lived a hard life as an Aston PD squad car. The vehicle is currently undrivable, due to a bad transmission.

"Are you sure they want it?" Third Ward Commissioner Joseph Possenti asked jokingly, prior to unanimous board approval.

Commissioners Aim To Clean Up Town

Recent revisions to the township's littering law include a prohibition on leaving grass clippings in the street, while certificates of occupancy for residences will be withheld, if sidewalks, curbs, or driveways are in disrepair.

Grass clippings blown or swept into a public street can lead directly to clogged storm sewers, which can lead to roadway flooding. Hence, grass clippings are now deemed as litter, joining the discarding of papers, bottles, and cans as a citable offense.

Whenever a property is sold or transferred to another owner, the condition of deteriorated sidewalks, curbs, and driveway aprons must be addressed. Broken, cracked, or loose concrete presents a public safety hazard, and must be repaired or replaced prior to the issuance of a CO. Commissioners have also amended the property maintenance ordinance to include the removal of weeds in and around the sidewalk and curb area.

Flower or vegetable gardens are the only portion of residential lots that do not have to be mowed and kept as a lawn, under the updated ordinance.

Public Meetings and Special Events

January 3, 2011 (Monday)

**Township offices closed;
No trash or recycling collections
New Year Holiday**

January 10-14, 2011 (Mon-Fri)

Bulk Trash & Appliance Pick-ups

January 10, 2011 (Monday)

**6:30pm in municipal building
Public Works Committee Meeting**

January 10, 2011 (Monday)

**7:30pm in municipal building
Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting**

January 10, 2011 (Monday)

**7:30pm in municipal building
New Construction Committee Meeting**

January 11, 2011 (Tuesday)

**6:30pm in municipal building
Police Committee Meeting**

January 11, 2011 (Tuesday)

**7:30pm in municipal building
Executive Committee Meeting**

January 18, 2011 (Tuesday)

**7pm at Aston Public Library
Library Board Meeting**

January 19, 2011 (Wednesday)

**7pm in municipal building
Board of Commissioners Meeting**

January 25, 2011 (Tuesday)

**7pm in municipal building
Zoning Hearing Board Meeting**

January 25, 2011 (Tuesday)

**7pm in municipal building
Multi-Ordinance Committee Meeting**

January 29, 2011 (Wednesday)

**7pm in municipal building
Planning Commission Meeting**

Aston Seniors

Meet In New Year

Aston Senior Citizens will meet on Thursday, **Jan. 27**, starting at 10:45am, at the Community Center.

The ASC is planning a trip to the Rainbow Dinner Theater to see the comedy *Send Me No Flowers* on March 17. The \$80 tickets include lunch, transportation, taxes, and tips. Sign up at the January meeting.

The Aston-Chichester Chapter of AARP will meet Monday, **Jan. 24**, starting at 10:45am, at St. James Episcopal Church on Concord Rd.

AARP is currently enrolling new members. Dues are \$10 per year. For more information, call President Ruth Brusstar at **610-494-1534**.

Leaf Collections Completed

The township's 2010 curbside leaf collection program wrapped up on Dec. 10, when vacuum trucks made one additional sweep of each cleaned residential neighborhood to complete the task on schedule.

Residents are now asked to dispose of all yard waste in recyclable bags in the regular trash.



On Dec. 20, members of the Aston Police Department delivered the bagged ingredients for turkey dinners, donated by Giant Food Store, so that 15 needy Aston families would have a traditional holiday meal this year. The charitable undertaking was organized by Patrolman/Juvenile Officer Tom Hardy. The recipient families were identified by the Aston Angels Network and local churches.



Eagle Scout Michael Volpe, of Blackthorne Ln., holds the proclamation he recently received for organizing the repainting of the Village Green One-Room Schoolhouse. Fourth Ward Commissioner Gary Robinson (far right) congratulated and thanked Volpe for his efforts, while recognizing Troop 225 Scoutmaster Glenn Clark (far left) and Scout Leader Mike Volpe (Michael's father).

Friends Offer

Framed Photo Fundraiser

The Friends of the Aston Public Library will be hosting a **Silent Auction** of framed photos and prints on Thursday, **Jan. 27** at the Aston Community Center. The photos to be auctioned off were taken by local photographer Ray Pearl.

Bids will be accepted from 9am until 1pm, after which the successful bidders will be posted outside the meeting room entrance.

Items must be paid for and claimed before 2pm, unless other arrangements are made.

Half of all final bids will be donated to the Friends of the organization.

*

*****To become a Friend of the Library, go to www.astonlibrary.org and click on "Join Our Friends" to send in your information.



Aston Public Library Director Stephen Sarazin (center) was recently happy to accept an \$1,800 donation check from the ABA and fundraising efforts at Community Day. Handing over the check were Community Day Coordinator Mary Ann Bullen and outgoing ABA President/6th Ward Commissioner Jim Stigale.

*

Storytime Returns To Library

Infant Storytime is returning to the Aston Public Library in 2011!

The popular "Lapsit" Storytime for babies up to 2 years old will be held on Mondays at 10am, starting on Jan. 10. Registration is required for this four-week session. To learn more, visit tinyurl.com/astonkidsevents.

*

All library patrons now have free access to Mango Languages, an online language-learning program. All you need is a library card to get free unlimited access.

A total of 22 languages are offered to English speakers, while English is offered to speakers of 12 other languages. Access Mango Languages at www.delcolibraries.org.

*



Second Ward Commissioner Carol Graham is the familiar face featured on the first of a series of celebrity posters that the Aston Public Library will be creating to promote the endless benefits of reading.

All newsletter submissions must be received by the 24th of the month to be included in the next edition.

Submit newsletter information to newsletter@astontownship.net or to castarkis@comcast.net



The Honorable District Justice Richard Cappelli swore in Officer Colleen Joyce to full-time status, while her husband (Aston Township Assistant Fire Marshal) Sean Joyce and daughter Reagan held the Bible.

*

Aston PD Adds Officers

The Aston Police Department has promoted Officer Colleen Joyce from part-time to full-time status, effective Jan. 8, 2011, while Probationary Patrolman Joseph Hart, Jr. has been hired as a part-timer, effective Jan. 3. Hart must pass physical and psychological examinations, prior to starting his one-year probationary period.

Both police officers are Aston Township residents.



Judge Cappelli also administered the oath to Probationary Patrolman Joseph Hart, Jr., while his mother Dale Hart held the Bible.



At the American Legion Post 926 Christmas Party on Dec. 19, Auxiliary Members Bea Burrell (left) and Marilyn Pondok were able to give Santa their gift suggestions in person.



Despite one of the coldest Decembers on record, construction of a three-story, 84-bed Neumann University student residence hall continues on schedule at Fisher's Corner. Completion is expected by July.

Park Is For Pedestrians

Residents should take note that cars are not permitted in Vinsmith Park. Violating vehicles will be towed.

If any resident knows of an Aston veteran who is returning home from overseas duty, please notify the township office of the expected date and time of arrival, so that a red carpet welcome can be organized.

Beware Vehicle Break-ins

Aston police are advising residents to avoid keeping valuables in parked vehicles or to lock valuables in the trunk. Break-ins occur day and night, targeting locked and unlocked cars. The most common items stolen are electronic equipment, like laptop computers and GPS units.

Boys Lacrosse Sign-ups Open

Aston AA Boys Lacrosse offers instructional programs for grades K thru 2, and fields competitive travel teams for grades 3 thru 8.

"We provide the opportunity for young men to learn and enjoy the exciting sport of lacrosse - the fastest sport on two feet, in a safe and instructive environment," says Aston AA Lacrosse President Kevin Tinsley. Registration for 2011 is available at www.astonlax.com.

For more information, email Tinsley directly at ktinsley@comcast.net.

Seniors Keeping Tabs On Charity

In support of the Ronald McDonald House of Delaware, Aston Senior Citizens are collecting the pop tabs from aluminum cans. The Ronald McDonald House is a home away from home for critically ill or injured children and their families.

The charity receives an average of 30 cents per pound of can tabs collected, with 1,267 tabs in every pound. Collecting just the tab is more space

efficient, as there is more aluminum in each tab than in the can itself.

In 2009, the Ronald McDonald House received \$5,310 from pop tabs, with over 17 million collected by groups like the ASC.

Please bring your tabs to the next ASC meeting, or contact Marge Dwyer at **610-497-1666** for more information.

To learn more about Aston businesses, visit the website at www.astonba.com

Emergency Preparation Begins At Home

When the wind blows hard or the flood waters rise, citizens count on emergency services to protect our town's health and welfare, but it is also important that each individual household recognizes the need for emergency preparation.

Among the precautions that every family should take is establishing a crisis plan in advance.

Many hazardous situations call for sheltering-in-place. A flashlight, battery-operated radio, and fresh batteries are among the items that should be kept at home for emergencies.

If evacuation is called for, secure your home; bring pets indoors and provide them with food and water for at least three days; and bring along extra clothing, medications, and bedding or blankets for your family.

An emergency evacuation supply kit should be pre-packed and easily accessible, and should include cash, non-perishable foods and bottled water, personal toiletries and first-aid items, an extra set of car/house keys, and important documents (photo id, insurance cards, etc.)

In the event of a community-wide emergency, do not call 911 unless reporting an immediate life-threatening situation.

Hometown Historian Tells Tales of Aston Mills

Lifetime Aston resident Paul Dougherty, who founded the Aston Township Historical Society in 1993, recently completed a 40-page booklet of his hometown recollections, entitled *Growing Up In Aston Mills*.

The pocket-sized book gives the reader a glimpse of a by-gone era in

Aston's storied history. The tales told span the 20th century, while the educational text is augmented by black & white photos of yesteryear.

Dougherty reveals many personal details of his own childhood, but also relates the evolution of Aston from industrial mill town to thriving suburb. The booklet contains stories that few Aston residents would recall today, such as the following excerpt:

"Sledding: When Aston Mills kids would go sledding in the snow, we would start the ride at Fishers' Corner and go all the way down Aston Mills hill, across the bridge and part way up the hill on the other side, which is now Birney Highway. Kids were posted at Ford Avenue and Mount Road to watch out for vehicles. When the lookout at Ford Avenue saw that a group was ready to sled down the hill, he would signal the lookout at Mount Road (near the base of the hill) to stop any vehicles from coming up the hill.

After sledders got to the bottom of Aston Mills Road, they would try to catch the back bumper of a car or bus to get a quick ride back to the top of the hill. Most bus drivers did not usually care if this was done."

Copies of *Growing Up In Aston Mills* are for sale for \$5 each at the Aston Township Historical Society room at the Community Center on Monday evenings and every day at Aston Pharmacy, located at the corner of Scheivert Ave. and Concord Rd. All proceeds will benefit the ATHS and help preserve historical resources.

GFWC Open To All Women

The General Federation of Woman's Club of Aston holds monthly meetings at the Community Center on the fourth Monday of every month, from September through June.

Membership is open to all women. If you are interested in community involvement, please come and join us. For more GFWC information, call **610-497-5234**.

Free Smoke Detectors

To learn how to receive a free smoke detector for your home, visit www.astonbeechwood72.com

Penn-Delco Schools Continue Excellence

For the eighth consecutive year, in 2010 every school in the Penn-Delco School District achieved the Adequate Yearly Progress benchmark mandated by the state.

All four elementary schools and Northley Middle School exceeded state averages in both reading and math testing, while Sun Valley High School outpaced state averages in reading.

"This is a phenomenal trend, and our hope is that it is going to continue," stated District Superintendent Dr. George Steinhoff.

You can follow the Aston Public Library on Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/astonlibrary.

Citizens Advisory Committee Looks To Build Team

The Citizens Advisory Committee currently has seven members - one from each ward - but Commissioner Jim Stigale would like to see the group expand.

The CAC has only met a few times, but has already put together an ambitious agenda that will benefit the community, and hopefully attract more residents to join the process.

Although all plans are tentative at this point, the ideas that are coming out of the CAC are impressive and exciting.

Do you have a suggestion for a community event in Aston? If so, please join the CAC.

Recycling Reduces Trash Fees

The amount Aston residents ultimately pay for trash processing depends on the total tonnage collected *and* how much trash tonnage is reduced through recycling.

Recyclables include: cartons (milk/juice), aluminum/metal cans, #1 and #2 plastic bottles and jugs (caps removed), phone books, greeting cards and junk mail, glass bottles and jars, loose metal jar lids and steel bottle caps, paper towel rolls, corrugated cardboard and paper bags (flattened).

***Please note: All recyclables must be separated from regular trash.

Different types of recyclable items can be co-mingled in a recycling can, but newspapers should be bundled or bagged and placed next to the can.



This framed artist's sketch of the historic Village Green One-Room Schoolhouse off Old Pennell Rd. now hangs prominently on the wall of the public meeting room in the municipal building. The artwork was donated to the township by former Aston building inspector Jim Stewart, who now lives in Florida.

Aston AA Basketball Turns 50

The upcoming 2010-2011 season will be the 50th year of community basketball in Aston. Established in 1960, the Aston AA Basketball League remains dedicated to entertaining and educating children.

In celebration of this community spirit, the league is offering team sponsorships. Organizations can sponsor a travel or intramural team for boys or girls at various age groups for a \$500 tax-deductible donation.

The benefits of sponsorship include having your company name on a team's jersey; being listed on the Aston AA website; and getting a team plaque suitable for display.

To learn more, contact Brian Palmore at astonbasketball@comcast.net or Lisa Gray at lisa@phoenixipv.com.
