



The Milemarker

EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP

The Village of Guthriesville: Historic or Ho-Hum?

What is Guthriesville?

- (a) A small cluster of houses, a few businesses and a reduced speed zone with a couple of traffic lights on a busy highway?
- (b) An important “village core” for its surrounding community?
- (c) An historic resource in need of local, state and federal protection?

Depending on your point of view, it could be any one of these choices. Right now, there’s a pretty heady debate going on at the local level which largely pits those who say “Who cares?” against those who say “It’s a piece of living history worth preserving.”

Highlighting the debate is the fact that most of the people who actually live in and/or own property in Guthriesville seem to belong to the “Who cares?” group.

The village’s historic standing, which could lead to its being included in the National Register of Historic Places, wasn’t much on anyone’s mind until the early 1990s. That’s when the State Department of Transportation did some widening and repaving of Horseshoe Pike where it runs through the Village. Because some of the

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The Guthriesville General Store



The William Guthrie Building



The Joseph Lammey House



The Temperance Hall

Some of the More Noteworthy Buildings

The **Guthriesville General Store**, often known today as Mama Lena’s, is one of the oldest mercantile businesses in Chester County. It was built in 1869 and served as a grocery store, luncheonette and pizza parlor over the years, surviving a disastrous fire in 1944. The original Croppers store was launched at this location in 1953. The building is in the Gothic Revival style.

The **William Guthrie Building**, on the hillside next to the Guthriesville Plaza, also is built in the Gothic Revival style. It is the second oldest building in the village, originally constructed in 1805 and enlarged and altered in 1830.

The **Joseph Lammey House**, in the Federal style, was built about 1835. It is one of two side-hall buildings in the district.

The **Temperance Hall** is at the east end of what is called Lammey’s Row, a group of four houses of which two are historic and two are replacements for structures that were demolished. This 1844 building is in what is called the vernacular version of the Greek Revival style. It is the only survivor of the original four East Brandywine taverns, notable for its refusal to serve alcoholic beverages.

Volume 14, Number 1

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- How do you spot signs of trouble in your septic system? See [page 6](#).
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Who, When & Where

Township Board of Supervisors

Jay G. Fischer, Esq., Chairman
Hudson L. Voltz, Esq., Vice Chairman
David A. Kirkner, CPA, Member

Township Public Meetings

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

First Thursday at 7:30 a.m.
Third Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION

First Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

Second Tuesday at 7:30 a.m.

Public Committee Meetings

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Second Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Second Monday at 7:30 p.m.

ORDINANCE TASK FORCE

Fourth Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

PARK & RECREATION COMMITTEE

First Monday at 7:30 p.m.

Effective March 1, 2007

Township Meetings held at Township Building, 1214 Horseshoe Pike

Important Numbers

Fire and Ambulance911
Police (emergency)911
Police (non-emergency) 383-7000
Police Administration 269-4300
Township Administration.. 269-8230

Township Offices open M–F
9 a.m.–noon and 1–5 p.m.

Telephone Staff Directory

Tax Collector, Patti Piersol
Home Office (610) 269-4054
Weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For all other staff members, call
269-8230 and press the extension.

200 Norann King, Building Dept.
201 Mary Beth Smedley,
Secretary/Treasurer
203 Scott Piersol, Twp. Manager/
EMC and Fire Marshal
204 Matthew Van Lew, Roadmaster
100 Police Administration

Web Addresses

Township: www.ebrandywine.org
Police: www.brandywineregional.org

Historic Village or Ho-Hum?

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work was paid for with federal cash and because a number of the homes were well over 100 years old, PennDOT was required to file a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) with state historical authorities which noted that Guthriesville might make the fed's National Register.

Once the paperwork was filed, most everyone who knew about it forgot about it.

Enter Wawa

Just over five years ago, Wawa's location experts figured the corner where Horseshoe Pike meets Bondsville Road would be a good place for a gas station and convenience store—in spite of the fact that Sunoco already was well established kitty-corner from the proposed Wawa site. To develop a workable site, Wawa's engineers said a number of existing buildings would have to be acquired and demolished, including the so-called Mama Lena building, the Brandywine General Rental store and the Good Machining building on Bondsville Road.

Enter the Preservationists and the Problems

The key problem is the 137-year-old Mama Lena building, at one time the Guthriesville General Store, owned by Claudio and Antoinetta DiGiamberardino. Under the geography of the DOE that the transportation agency filed with the State, this building and most of the others in Guthriesville would fall within a proposed historic district. Pending a final state and federal ruling on such a district, no major changes can be made to any building within the district—and a demolition of Mama Lena's would be "major." This did not please Mr. DiGiamberardino and his attorney. Yet stopping demolition of the building is a key goal of the Township Historical Commission. Its Chairman, John Black, supported the Commission's case with the

domino theory. Under this theory, if Mama Lena goes, then there could follow a series of other demolitions to the east with significantly historic old homes being replaced by fast-food outlets, junk shops and who knows what else. The "Save Mama Lena's" campaign—key part of the larger "Save Historic Guthriesville" campaign—also recently won the backing of Preservation Pennsylvania, a state-wide supporter of "heritage sites" which chose the building as only one of two in Chester County that it says is critical to save.

There Are Further Complications

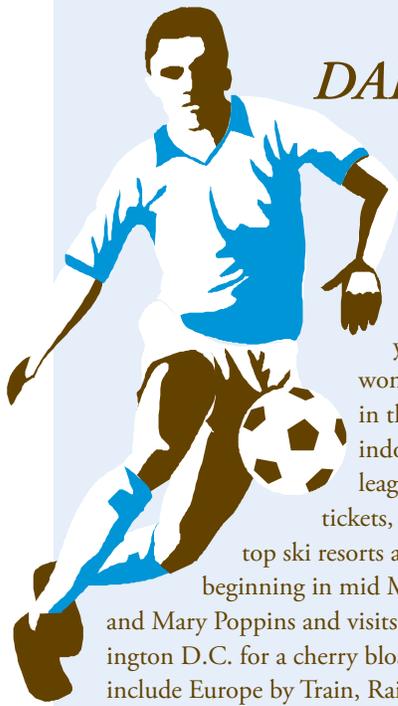
Because Wawa wants to cover a stream that runs through its proposed property, the Army Corps of Engineers has to be involved to make sure nothing nasty happens to a local waterway. And once the Corps became involved, its voice was added to the conservationists', saying no demolitions could take place until the applicant proposes alternatives to demolition of the historic building.

In short, until a lot of these issues become untangled, the existing shape and form of buildings within the historic district, which extends from the Horseshoe Pike-Bondsville Road-Hopewell Road intersection to a point just east of the Brandywine Country Living Agway, remain frozen.

“Under John Black's domino theory, if Mama Lena goes, then there could follow a series of other demolitions to the east with significantly historic old homes being replaced by fast-food outlets, junk shops and who knows what else.”

Before we try to untangle some of the issues in more detail, consider another complicating factor. After the Township's Ordinance Task Force labored about the project for many months, it presented to the Board of Supervisors a radically reshaped ordinance on Historic Resource Protection Standards. This document came up for

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DARC Lines up Winter Sports

The Downingtown Area Recreation Consortium (DARC) has lined up a number of keep-active, keep-alert and have-fun activities for winter and spring. These include after-school art and science clubs, dance, chess, rock wall climbing, various exercise classes, home improvement workshops and youth sports programs. There'll also be men's and women's basketball pickup games this winter (and more in the spring). New this winter and spring are a senior indoor softball league and a recreational indoor soccer league for kindergarten through sixth graders. Discount tickets, available through March, are being offered for many top ski resorts and discount amusement park tickets will be available beginning in mid May. Spring bus trips include Broadway shows *Wicked* and *Mary Poppins* and visits to St. Michaels (MD), New York City and Washington D.C. for a cherry blossom tour. DARC also offers contracted tours that include Europe by Train, Railroads of West Virginia Adventure, Hawaiian Cruise and Niagara Falls. Contact DARC at **610 269-9260** or **www.darcinfo.com**.

Mark Your Calendar

COMPOSTING CLASSES

The Chester County Solid Waste Authority is offering courses on "how to become a certified master composter" at three different sites this spring. All classes are from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. For more info, call 610 273-3771 ext. 228 or ext. 226.

Site 1 Classes Meet on Mondays

Monday, March 5, 12 and 19

(Snow date Monday, March 26)

At the Authority's offices at 7224 Division Highway, Narvon, PA

Site 2 Classes Meet on Tuesdays

Tuesday, March 6, 13 and 20

(Snow date Tuesday, March 27)

At Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Road, West Chester, PA

Site 3 Classes Meet on Wednesdays

Wednesday, March 7, 14 and 21

(Snow date Wednesday, March 28)

At Owen J. Roberts Middle School, 981 Ridge Road, Pottstown, PA

FAMILY DAY IN THE PARK

Sunday, June 24

At the Community Park on Dilworth Road

GO FLY A KITE DAY & ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

The Park & Recreation Board also has plans for a "Go Fly a Kite Day in the Park" (with date and details to come) and its annual golf outing (date to come). Check the Township Website **www.ebrandywine.org** for late details.

Guthriesville

continued from page 2

Supervisors' action at their Dec. 7 work session and set off some loud protests, mostly from those within the proposed historic district. But the document's impact stretches far beyond the village boundary and could put stringent restrictions on the owners of older homes in the Township. The protests were strong enough for the Supervisors to postpone any action on the newly-revised ordinance. Township Manager Scott Piersol said Township attorneys are taking a new look at the ordinance and expect to report their findings no later than April.

The People Speak

Over a couple of different hearings on the historic district, a small group of local owners spoke up—earnestly, angrily, loudly and almost uniformly in opposition to the proposal. The main thrust of their comments was that the Township is, in effect, guilty of "takings"—that is, denying property owners the right to dispose of their own property as they see fit and without constraints. A couple of homeowners said that without any company pension to support them in their old age, instead they expected the sale of their homes to produce their financial nestegg.

What can and can't be done by the owner is determined at two levels. Surprisingly, designation of the village on the National Register of Historic Places puts no restraints on an owner, according to Bob Wise, head of Wise Preservation Planning, a consultant to the Township on this whole process. "Under the National Register, you can sell, remodel or demolish," he told a special Dec. 12 meeting called expressly to consider the move to create a Guthriesville historic district. Moreover, owners in an historic district may qualify for grants to improve their properties and owners of commercial enterprises can qualify for significant tax relief on the cost of repairs and renovations under certain conditions.

The restraints affecting Guthriesville are local and it's clear that the Supervisors want to define very clearly what changes they will allow.

Thus, much criticism was directed at the proposed changes in the Township's

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Village of Guthriesville

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Historic Resource Protection Standards. The ordinance submitted to the Board of Supervisors for their endorsement and approval on Dec. 7 spells out the steps owners who want to demolish or remodel Class I or demolish Class II properties must take.

“A lot of the houses here have a very low structural integrity. We’re not dealing with castles and pyramids. Why do we have to go through all this stuff?”

Any building within a district that has received a DOE (determination of eligibility for the National Register)—namely all the properties in the proposed Guthriesville district—would be classified as Class I. An owner there who wants to demolish a building must:

- Hire a structural engineer to describe the property,
- Provide recent interior and exterior pictures and a site plan showing all buildings and structures on the property,
- Give date of purchase and ownership history of the historic resource (the house) and
- Provide an assessed value of the land and any improvements.

The “to do” list for renovating also calls for fairly strict limits on how the job is done in terms of design and materials.

Louis Colagreco, the attorney for Mr. DiGiamberardino, claimed the cost of preparing for a demolition permit for a Class I structure could total as much as \$25,000—a figure Jay Fischer, Chairman of the Supervisors, called unrealistically high. Mr. Colagreco also charged that proposed changes in the historic resources ordinance are either too vague or actually illegal. He added that if Mr. DiGiamberardino isn’t able to activate the demolition permit he has for Mama Lena’s and, instead, has to rehabilitate the building, it could cost him \$90,000 to \$100,000. “I agree with the

intent of the ordinance,” Mr. Colagreco said, “but you’re digging into the wallets of the property owners.”

Dennis Whitely, owner of the site of the former Guthriesville Tire & Service on the corner of Horseshoe Pike and Hopewell Road (he moved the operation to a new site in West Brandywine some time ago), also criticized the costs the new ordinance could involve. “A lot of the houses here have a very low structural integrity,” he said. “We’re not dealing with castles and pyramids. Why do we have to go through all this stuff?

I don’t want it.”

Mr. DiGiamberardino was more succinct. “I just want to make a buck,” he declared. “Why do we have all this?”

Because only a dozen or so property owners are affected by the proposals involving the village—many of whom attended the Dec. 12 meeting—Mr. Whitely suggested that the issue be decided by a show of hands. But that idea could not be accepted. The process of turning a determination of eligibility into a full place on the National Register of Historic Places is lengthy and deliberate.

First, Guthriesville’s request has to be sent to the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission. The Commission then must put the issue on the agenda of its quarterly meeting and notify affected owners by registered mail that it has done so. It then polls the owners; if 51% (in this case seven) reject the proposal by responding in writing by certified mail, it fails. If the proposal is endorsed by the owners, the PHMC then forwards the result to the National Park Service which makes the designation.

The proposal to designate Guthriesville as an historic district also could fail if (1) the Mama Lena building, the largest in the district, were demolished or (2) if Wawa built its service station.

What are we trying to save?

John Black, Chairman of the Historical Commission, recalls that when he first moved to East Brandywine some 10 years



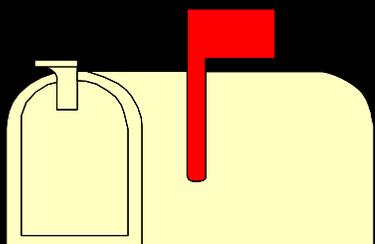
Spread the Word on Open Space

A new sign will start appearing around the Township in the new year. The simple design carries the outline of a tree and the words “Open Space” along with the Township’s Web address, www.ebrandywine.org. Each sign will identify property that has been saved from development by the Open Space Committee or by the Township’s own efforts to require developers to dedicate significant portions of their subdivisions to open space. To get more information about any particular piece of protected open land, check the Web site.

ago, he wasn’t particularly impressed by the Village’s appearance. But as he studied its past, he began to realize what a captivating history it has. In the early 19th century, Horseshoe Pike was the prime road connecting southeast Pennsylvania to the capital in Harrisburg. In East Brandywine alone there were four hostleries for horse-and-buggy travelers. Many of the houses in the Village date from the middle of the 1880s. Harness making, tailoring, weaving, blacksmithing and woodworking were among the trades practiced in the Village. In 1830, the first Guthrieville (the name was used without the ‘s’ in the early days but Guthriesville became the preferred spelling around 1900) Post Office was opened.

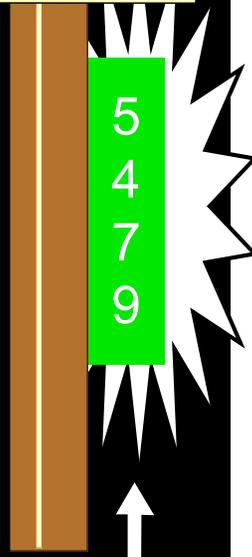
Much of Guthriesville’s early history is well described in Barbara Paul’s *A History of East Brandywine*, a work underwritten by the Historical Commission.

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www.ebfc.org



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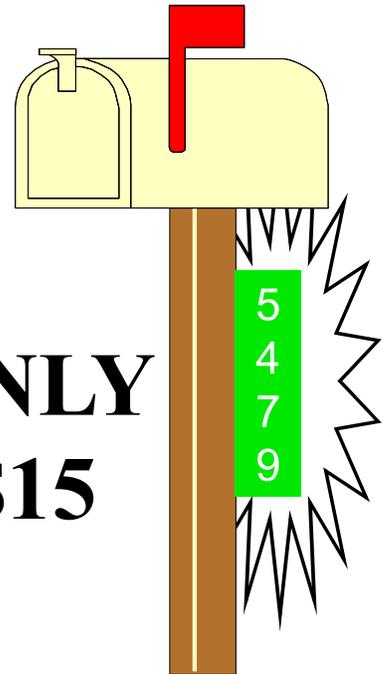
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EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP

1214 HORSESHOE PIKE

DOWNINGTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA 19335-1153

Telephone (610) 269-8230 Fax (610) 269-4157

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Jay G. Fischer, Esq. Hudson L. Voltz, Esq. David A. Kirkner, CPA
Chairman Vice-Chairman Member

Scott T. Piersol, Township Manager

Mary Beth Smedley, Township Secretary/Treasurer

Matthew VanLew, Township Roadmaster

January, 2007

Mama Lena's Restaurant, formerly the Guthriesville General Store and Post Office, is proposed for demolition at the new Wawa store site at the corner of Rt. 322 and Bondsville Road. Wawa has offered to permit the building to remain, even though a demolition permit has been granted, as long as Wawa is not responsible for adaptive reuse, preservation or ongoing maintenance. With that in mind, would you, as a resident, be in favor of:

1. Spending Township funds in order to preserve and maintain the building?
_____ YES _____ NO
2. Spend Township funds from a general account which may necessitate a tax increase?
_____ YES _____ NO
3. Designate a special account such as was accomplished with the Open Space Referendum where each taxpayer/household pays a set amount per year? _____ YES _____ NO
4. With approximately 2,200 households and estimated restoration costs in excess of \$300,000, would you be willing to pay \$50/year over 2 or 3 years for restoration?
_____ YES _____ NO
5. Would you be willing to contribute up to \$50/year for annual maintenance in the event the building cannot be sold? _____ YES _____ NO

Responses are due to the Township not later than Friday, March 2, 2007.

(Optional)

Respondent Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number: () _____ - _____

E-mail address: _____

This survey may also be completed online at www.ebrandywine.org

EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP
1214 HORSESHOE PIKE
DOWNTOWN, PA 19335

Place
Stamp
Here

**MAMA LENA SURVEY
EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP
1214 HORSESHOE PIKE
DOWNTOWN, PA 19355**

Wow, That Was Some Christmas!



© George Chiodo

Anyone who traveled on Hopewell Road near Corner Ketch Road this winter got to marvel at the “Christmas House” owned by Stephen Sarmento. His father, the late Frank Sarmento, began the decorating about 10 years ago, just before his death. His son and widow, Doris, kept up the celebration, adding new features each year. How many individual pieces in the collection? Not sure, says Steve. How many different lights? Not sure. But he is sure of one thing: people notice. “They honk their horns, they yell and on Christmas Day they bring candies and cookies,” says Steve. A group of second graders even brought a gingerbread house. Mrs. Sarmento is regularly approached when she shops by people who say they love the lights. The Sarmentos asked the Township to express their appreciation to everyone who has driven by or stopped at their home, and for the many cards and letters thanking them for their Christmas display.

One Way to Thwart Identity Thieves

Chief Mark Kocsi of the Brandywine Regional Police has warned residents a number of times to take precautions to avoid identity theft. One useful suggestion: buy a simple shredding machine and chop up critical documents.

But not everyone has a shredder. A call from a resident to ask if it’s okay to burn a pile of old financial records prompted Township Manager Scott Piersol to think of some big-time shredding. DNB First did offer a shredding service to customers last year and Mr. Piersol thinks the service might be offered by the Township if residents would welcome and use it. There probably would be a small fee though the Township may approach local state legislators to see if they could get a grant to cover the costs.

If you’re interested in the idea of a shredding service, please contact the Township at www.ebrandywine.org or give them a call at **610 269-8230**.

Is Your House Number Visible?

The East Brandywine Fire Company is selling reflective address markers for \$15. The markers feature pre-drilled holes and are visible during both the day and the night. In an emergency, if the Fire Company can’t find you, then they can’t help you. To learn more or to order a reflective address marker, see the insert included in this issue of *The Milemarker*.

Showing Respect for the Flag

The end of life for the flag of the United States is a solemn and fitting ceremony. You don’t casually discard a worn out or damaged flag.

The traditional process is to cut the flag into pieces and, according to the U.S. Scouting Service, “burn it in a modest but blazing fire.” The burning itself can be full of ceremony. A full-scale retirement may involve recitations, moments of silence and song and patriotic readings.

Such treatment is beyond the means of most flag owners but the Boy Scout Council of Chester County is ready to lend a hand for local owners.

Kevin Short, a member of Hopewell Troup 8, received permission from the Board of Supervisors to install a Flag Retirement Box at the new municipal complex as his Eagle Scout Project. Residents will be able to drop off old flags in the box, which is bright red and similar to boxes used by the U.S. Postal Service. Members of Troop 8 will collect the flags monthly and turn them over to the local VFW who will retire them in an appropriate way.

The collection box will have a large decal of the U.S. flag and a legend to show that it is sponsored by Troop 8 and the VFW.

The Sad Story of K-9 Nelo



Nelo was born in Slovakia on July 20, 2005. He was formally sworn in by District Justice James Charley as the new K-9 member of the Brandywine Regional Police on Nov. 15, 2006, and mistakenly shot dead by a hunter on Nov. 27. A well-attended memorial service was held for him in the Brandywine Baptist Church on Dec. 11.

The young German Shepherd, trained to sniff out narcotics, broke loose from Officer Denise Knoke, his handler, after being scared by a firecracker. A wave of public sympathy swept through the area after Nelo disappeared and turned to grief when his body was found in a wooded area of West Caln Township, not far from where he bolted. A local man told police he had mistaken the dog for a coyote.

Municipal Building Update

The Township is hoping to move into its new quarters in March. Public meetings are tentatively expected to be held at the new building beginning March 1. Check our website for up-to-the-minute news on our pending move.

How to Spot—and Prevent—Septic System Problems

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has issued a report on how to spot signs of trouble in an on-lot septic system and what to do to avoid trouble. Even the best system can malfunction occasionally, DEP says. The result is likely to be costly repairs and contamination of the surface and groundwater.

It lists the following signs of trouble:

- The toilet runs sluggishly
- Sewer odors in the house and/or drinking water.
- Illness, often to household visitors.
- Sponginess around septic tank.
- Dosing tank (to which effluent is pumped from septic tank) runs constantly or not at all.
- Dosing tank alarm light is on.
- Backup of sewage into laundry tubs or other fixtures.

Among the steps to avoid malfunctions, says DEP, are the following:

- Conserve water and reduce water flow into the septic tank.
- Have the septic tank pumped at least every 3 years.
- Avoid putting chemicals into the septic tank.
- Don't use the toilet to dispose of bulky, slowly decomposing wastes.
- Inspect the septic tank, pipes and drainage field annually.
- Maintain accurate records of your system (location, design, inspections, etc.)
- Prevent runoff from down spouts, sump pumps and paved surfaces from getting into the system.
- Keep heavy equipment and livestock away from the system.
- Do not plant trees or shrubs over or close to the septic system.

The Township expects to implement a Sewage Management Program, which will require septic tanks to be pumped at least every 3 years, and a basic inspection, later in 2007.

Croppers Still Seeks a Way to Expand

Officials from Associated Wholesalers Inc. (AWI), owner of the Croppers store in the Brandywine Village shopping center, say they're still trying to figure out how to make the store larger. They want to expand their offerings of perishables and hot foods.

With the prospect that the next door Rite Aid drug store will move to a new home in a building Gambone Brothers plan to put up along Horseshoe Pike in an extension of the center, AWI considered expanding into these quarters. But officials told the December meeting of the Planning Commission that this space would not meet their needs as it would involve moving all of the preparation area for the deli, bakery and produce departments. AWI still wants to expand to the west but has not been able to reach an agreement with Gambone officials who recently bought the Watters and Spence properties to the west of the shopping center and will build new commercial space and more than 120 homes on the land.

Bruce Rawlings, Chairman of the Commission, told AWI's representatives that the Township doesn't want to lose the Croppers store and understands the competition it faces from a number of the larger markets in the area. He urged AWI to get together with the shopping center owners and Gambone officials to reach a "creative" expansion plan that satisfies everyone's needs. He asked AWI to report back to the Commission no later than April 30.

Trouble with Taxes

In spite of threats that municipal liens may be placed on their properties if the owners fall behind in tax payments, there are a significant number of people who aren't paying up.

Mrs. Patti Piersol, the Township Tax Collector, reported that as of Oct. 31, unpaid taxes for 2006 totaled \$98,931. Outstanding payments from 2005 totaled \$11,010 and the total for the years 2000 to 2004 totaled \$22,654. This represents a drop of almost \$50,000 from the previous report, a result of follow-up demands for payment from the Tax Collector.

Mrs. Piersol urged residents to pay attention to incoming mail from Berkheimer Associates, the firm that prepares the tax notices and helps collect the taxes and fees. Some said they thought the letters were junk mail and tossed them. But the Berkheimer return address is clearly marked on the envelope and the tax forms.

Verizon TV Service Likely by Spring

Most disagreements by the Township that delayed granting Verizon the right to offer cable TV service here have been resolved. For residents who want to see competition for Comcast—currently the only cable provider—the date to look forward to should come soon.

Even if it had permission, Verizon can not currently offer cable service to local homes because it lacks the necessary distribution equipment in their local offices. It now expects to start offering service sometime toward the end of 2007's first quarter. Service may not be available to some homes in the Lyndell area until late 2007 or early 2008, when Verizon installs the distribution equipment in their Glenmoore central office.



Winter on Rock Raymond Road. The beauty of an old red barn greets travelers as they wind up the curves to Hopewell Road. © George Chiodo.

On the Move

The following real estate transactions took place between mid September and mid December.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 28 Batten Dr. | \$ 474,000 |
| 1670 Caln Meetinghouse Rd.. | \$ 245,000 |
| 161 Crawford Rd. | \$ 500,000 |
| 12 Cumberland Dr. | \$ 964,779 |
| 16 Cumberland Dr. | \$1,332,269 |
| 35 Cumberland Dr. | \$1,024,932 |
| 36 Cumberland Dr. | \$1,103,770 |
| 101 Elmwood Dr. | \$ 367,500 |
| 4 Englerth Ln. | \$ 881,141 |
| 341 Hadfield Rd. | \$ 310,000 |
| 431 Hopewell Rd. | \$ 675,000 |
| 1036 Hopewell Rd. | \$ 530,000 |
| 81 Margil Farm Dr. | \$ 720,000 |
| 214 Montpelier Dr. | \$ 520,000 |
| 4 Township Rd. | \$ 50,000 |
| 32 Wellesley Ln. | \$ 430,000 |
| 6 William Penn Dr. | \$ 650,000 |
| 75 Yellow Wood Dr. | \$ 236,797 |

Source: Weichert Realtors, West Chester.

School to Stay

It's official. The School District has changed its mind about temporarily closing the Brandywine-Wallace elementary school. Population projections guarantee it will have plenty of students to fill its halls.

The idea of demolishing the existing building and putting up a new one has been shelved. Instead, the District will do major renovations to the school over the coming summer vacation.



The Milemarker
 Winter 2007
 Volume 14, Number 1

Editor
 George Holmes

Art Director
 Nina Pringle

Send community news to:
 Mary Beth Smedley
 1214 Horseshoe Pike
 Downingtown, PA 19335-1153
 marybeth@ebrandywine.org

MOTORISTS' ALERT:

New Driving Laws

Drivers in Pennsylvania better get ready for two new rules of the road that can bring heavy fines for those who ignore them. First, be sure to clean any snow or ice off your vehicle before heading for the highway. If either falls from the vehicle and causes injury or death to other motorists or to pedestrians, the driver may be liable for a fine of up to \$1,000. Second, effective Jan. 29, any driver in Pennsylvania who turns on windshield wipers (even only on intermittent) must also turn on his or her headlights. Failure to do so can bring a \$25 fine and administrative costs that quickly bring the total to \$100.



"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" Words by Percy Bysshe Shelley, photo of blossoming dogwoods © George Chiodo

Township Taxes to Creep up Another Half Mill

Preliminary budget figures for 2007 showed a small surplus of about \$45,000 but unexpected costs related to construction of the new municipal complex pushed the figures into the red. As a result, the Board of Supervisors at a special Dec. 28 authorized another half-mill increase in the real estate tax, pushing the total of 2.5 mills.

The new increase means that the owner of a home with an assessed value of

\$225,000—the average in East Brandywine—will pay about an extra \$112.50 in real estate taxes this year.

In addition, residents face a \$10 hike in their higher refuse-collection fee.

The hitch at the municipal building came from the land it stands on. When contractors started to excavate for the foundation and for various electrical and sewer connection lines they hit massive, deeply-settled boulders (anyone who tries

to garden in East Brandywine knows well the forbidding rocks that seem to lie just beneath the surface). Removing them was a major task.

For all the problems, the complex is soon due to be completed with the administrative staff and the police expecting to move in by March or April.

Total revenues for 2007 are budgeted to come in at around \$4.9 million.



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