

**BIRMINGHAM  
TOWNSHIP**

**CHESTER COUNTY**

# Birmingham Bugle



Board of Supervisors:  
John L. Conklin-Chairman  
William Kirkpatrick -  
Vice-Chairman  
Al Bush - Member

Administrative:  
Quina Nelling-Secretary/  
Treasurer  
Gail Ayers-Office  
Assistant

Zoning Officer and  
Building Code Official:  
Rich Jensen

Township Solicitor:  
Joseph Brion, Esquire

Newsletter Editor:  
Judy Jensen

Birmingham Township:  
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Police Administrative:  
Thomas Nelling -Chief of  
Police  
Phone: (610) 793-3333  
Fax: (610) 793-0319  
Police, Fire, Ambulance  
Calls: 9-1-1  
Email:  
birminghampolice@  
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Township Committees:  
Board of Supervisors  
Planning Commission  
Zoning Hearing Board  
Historic Architectural  
Review Board  
Recreation, Parks, and  
Open Space  
Historic Commission

The Birmingham Town-  
ship Office is open Mon-  
day to Friday from 9:00  
AM to 3:00 PM.

1040 West Street Road, West Chester, PA. 19382-8012

Winter, 2011

## Mandatory Recycling

For several years, many Township residents have voluntarily recycled through their trash hauler. Over the last four years, residents and businesses have recycled 640 tons in 2006, 644 tons in 2007, 523 tons in 2008, and a surprisingly low 345 tons in 2009.

Beyond the environmental benefit of recycling, there is an economic benefit to the residents of the Township. Trash haulers are required to pay \$2 per load dumped in a landfill into a State fund. The fund is used by the State to reward municipalities for their recycling performance. Yearly, the State rebates

the Township based on a report submitted with the tonnage recycled in the Township from data supplied by the trash haulers. This year, we are eligible for an \$18,000 rebate, which will go into the general fund. This money helps in controlling property taxes.

Recognizing the success of the voluntary effort within the Township, the Board of Supervisors felt it made environmental and economic sense to make recycling mandatory. Thus, on October 4, 2010, the Supervisors enacted an ordinance requiring recycling of certain recyclable materials by all residents and businesses

in the Township.

Residents and businesses who currently recycle should continue their efforts as in the past. Residents and businesses not currently recycling must contact their trash hauler who will provide a recycling container. The mandatory recyclable materials are glass containers, bimetallic cans, aluminum cans, high-grade office paper, newspapers, corrugated material and #1 and #2 plastic containers. Failure to recycle can result in fines of not less than \$50 or no more than \$600.

## A Letter to Residents

*by John L. Conklin, Chairman, Board of Supervisors*

Dear Residents,  
The year 2010 offered a few surprises. Fortunately, the costly heavy winter storms in February were in part offset by funds we were able to secure through the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Association.

The real estate slump depressed transfer revenues and property valuations early in

the year, but Township revenues have nearly recovered. We were able to maintain our local police coverage, and in large part, our annual road maintenance program. The competitive environment produced road bids approximately 10 percent below our engineering estimate.

Full year maintenance costs included the new Birmingham

Hill trail and we were able to cover the repair of a building leak, including replacing landscaping. The small property tax increase and the implementation of the Local Services Tax this year helped and we can budget for 2011 without an increase in taxes or sewer fees. Again, we are able to avoid an Earned Income Tax, *(continued on page 2)*

## A Letter to Residents

*(continued from page 1)*

which is imposed in most municipalities in the County.

In early fall 2011, the Township will celebrate its 325th anniversary as an incorporated Township, the oldest Township in Chester County. Volunteers on our Recreation, Parks and Open Space Committee (RPOS) with other neighbors on the Historic Commission will be planning events. If you are able, please contact these groups to help out and stay informed.

Your Board thanks all of our volunteers who helped us in 2010. The Board meets the first and third Mondays of each month at 7:30 P.M. Residents are encouraged to attend and participate in these public meetings.



## Local Services Tax

Effective January 1, 2010, Birmingham Township enacted a Local Services Tax (LST) at the rate of \$52 per year. Taxes collected for the first three quarters of the year total a little over \$25,000. The enactment of the LST tax enabled the Supervisors to avoid a real estate tax increase as the yearly LST tax will generate about the same revenue as one mill of real estate taxes. As there is no earned income tax in the Township, the LST tax ensures that all those employed in the Township contribute toward the services provided.

All persons who work in the Township, full or part time, must pay this tax, including self-employed individuals who perform services of any type or kind or engage in any occupation or profession from their residence. Self-employed individuals will need to notify the Township or the local taxing authority, Berkheimer Tax Administration, and a tax collection package will be sent to

## Birmingham Township Sewer Operations

Birmingham Township has 1,522 homes of which only 425 are connected to our sewer plant. In addition to these private residences, most of the businesses located along the 0.8 mile Route 202 commercial corridor in the Township are also connected to this sewer plant. Located behind the Mercedes Benz dealership on Rte. 202, the plant treats and discharges an average flow of approximately 70 GPM into the nearby stream that eventually discharges into the Brandywine. The Township has a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination) permit to operate this plant and is held to very rigorous operational, monitoring and reporting standards. Our longtime operator of this plant continues to be Applied Water Management division of American Water.

2010 was a quiet year for the sewer plant in that we were operating with the two new equalization pumps installed in 2009 during a capital maintenance project. These pumps continuously circulate the waste water being treated so the primary and secondary treatment of the sewage can be effectively completed. These new units are simpler, more reliable, fixed speed centrifugal pumps. The 2009 capital project cost \$118,000 for engineering, equipment and construction and was paid out of the ample capital reserves of your sewer fund.

The Township residents connected to this sewer treatment facility are billed at a rate that is more than 30 percent lower than the adjoining Townships.

*by William Kirkpatrick  
Vice-Chairman, BOS*

you.

All businesses located in Birmingham Township are required to deduct the LST from all employees at the rate of \$1 per week for a maximum annual deduction of \$52. An employee is exempt from the tax and must file an exemption form with their employer if their annual earnings total less than \$12,000.

In the event that a person is engaged in more than one occupation or municipality at the same time, the priority of claim to collect such tax shall be the municipality in which a person is principally employed. Proof of deduction is required to be submitted to the secondary employer by the employee so that he or she can be exempt from having the LST deducted.

The total LST paid by an individual in a calendar year is limited to \$52, re-

gardless of the number of taxing districts in which an individual works during the year. A refund can be requested if employed in more than one taxing district and more than the annual maximum of \$52 was deducted by multiple employers. A copy of the LST refund request form and supporting documentation should be submitted to Berkheimer Tax Administration.

If it is determined that an employee or self-employed individual was obligated to pay the tax and failed to do so, for whatever reason, the tax will be collected in arrears with penalty and interest. Berkheimer Tax Administration has been assigned the authority for delinquent tax collections.

If you have any questions about the local services tax or its requirements, please contact the Township Office for additional information.

## Environmental Stewardship: Protecting Township Streams

The Birmingham Environmental Stream Team (B.E.S.T.) has completed its seventh year of stream monitoring in Birmingham Township. B.E.S.T. tested three streams (Radley Run, Wylie Run and Brinton's Run) in the Township for macro-invertebrates and basic chemicals.

Ten members were involved in this year's work, enjoying several morning hours as guests of property owners Sam Walker, Josh Marsh, Jim Hughes and Carol Hensen. All ages participated in netting macro-invertebrates (small insects that can be seen by the naked eye), identifying and then returning them to the stream. The type and number of macro-invertebrates in the stream serves as an indicator of the quality of the water. Certain organisms, such as caddis fly and may fly larva, cannot survive unless the water is clean, clear, and has the proper temperature and dissolved oxygen levels. Other organisms, such as leeches and black fly larva can survive in warm polluted waters with low dissolved oxygen levels. The more caddis and may fly larva that B.E.S.T. finds, the healthier the stream.

Other water quality indicators tracked by B.E.S.T. include dissolved oxygen, water temperature and nitrates. Cool water absorbs more oxygen than warm water, so water temperature can impact the types of fish and insects that are able to live in a stretch of stream. Nitrate levels can also affect the dissolved oxygen level. These compounds act as fertilizers, spurring a burst of algal growth. When the algae begins to die off, the decomposition process reduces the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water, making it difficult for the native fish and insects to "breathe."

If you would like to volunteer for a day of stream monitoring, please contact:

Doug Marshall: dkmarshall2@verizon.net  
 Jacquie Roach: JRoach1025@aol.com  
 Marlou MacIver: marloumac@verizon.net

## Historic Commission

The Birmingham Township Historic Commission was created in January 2009 to preserve the unique historic character of Birmingham. It is currently made up of seven residents who volunteer their time. Here are a few of the projects worked on during the past year:

- This past summer, members visited all 79 properties currently listed on the Township's "Inventory of Historic Resources" to confirm and compile data about the properties and photograph the structures. This information will be used to build a computerized map that will be available to the Township.
- In partnership with the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department and Radley Run Country Club, the Historic Commission co-sponsored the "Town Tours

### Please consider implementing some of the following water quality improvement tips in your household:

- Fix leaking faucets or toilets.
- Properly maintain your septic system.
- Consider using native plants in your landscaping. They are adapted to the conditions in this area and require less care, fertilizer and water.
- Have your soil tested to find out what it needs before using lawn fertilizers. Read, understand and follow the application directions when using fertilizers. Try to minimize the amount of fertilizer that lands on sidewalks and driveways.
- If you are thinking about adding a patio or repaving a driveway, consider the use of porous materials that will let rainfall soak in, rather than run off.
- Make sure your gutter downspouts are directing runoff onto grassy areas. The vegetation acts to absorb some of the runoff and filters pollutants from what passes through.
- If you work on your own car, be sure to recycle your used oil and anti-freeze. Never dump these chemicals (or anything else) into the storm drains.
- Pick up after your pets to keep waste from washing into our streams.
- Keep your car in good working order and fix any leaks that might be dropping fluids onto the ground.
- Wash your car on a grassy surface to allow the vegetation to absorb and filter dirt and detergents out of the rinse water. Don't just let it run down the gutter into the storm drain.

*by Will Snook, Chairman of the Historic Commission*

and Village Walks" historical walking tour of the James Painter House and associated grounds in Radley Run. Built in 1770, the Mansion House, as it is affectionately called, was sold in 1897 to Mr. Charles Mather, the long-standing "Master of Fox Hounds" at the Radnor Hunt. Mr. Mather expanded the property from a 118-acre working farm to the premier fox hunting lodge in Chester County with a "hunting box" of over 500 acres. The August 19th tour saw attendance of more than 560 participants and volunteers.

- The Historic Commission undertook improving its knowledge regarding the two cannons that currently sit alongside Birmingham Road. Member Lloyd Roach researched their history *(continued on page 4)*



**Birmingham Township**  
**1040 W. Street Road**  
**West Chester, PA 19382-8012**

## Historic Commission

*(continued from page 3)*

and presented an interesting report on the cannons. First reported as placed in 1895, they played a role in a celebration on September 11, 1915 attended by the French Ambassador to the United States. Mr. Roach's report can be found on-line on the Township's Web site.

- On November 30th, Member Matt Bedwell (Great, Great-Grandson of the aforementioned Mr. Charles Mather) and Recording Secretary Jacquie Roach were recognized by the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department for their research contributing to the completion of the County's detailed study of troop movements at the Battle of Brandywine. The Township was presented with an atlas depicting the structures and topography of the area as it was on the day of the battle and an interactive computer program illustrating in detail the troop movements across our Township. These resources will be made available to residents in the near future.

The Historic Commission will be continuing its effort to protect the unique character of Birmingham Township's historical resources. An outline for a series of educational events is taking shape and we look forward to sharing these with fellow residents.

Volunteers play an important role in our ability to offer services while keeping costs down. Please consider offering your help where you can. It can be rewarding and is basically helping your neighbors.



## 2011 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection

Bring unwanted hazardous household automotive products, home maintenance, and lawn and pest control products to the next Regional Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Hazardous Waste Collection. Collection sites are open from 9 AM to 3 PM. Tentative collection dates for 2011 are:

**April 9** - CAT Pickering Campus  
1580 Charlestown Road, Phoenixville, PA

**May 21** - Owen J. Roberts Middle School  
981 Ridge Road, Pottstown, PA

**June 24** - CAT Brandywine Campus  
1635 E. Lincoln Hwy, Coatesville, PA

**September 10** - New Garden Township  
8934 Gap Newport Rd, Landenberg, PA

**October 8** - Government Services Center  
601 Westtown Road, West Chester, PA

Please note that computers are only accepted on April 9 (CAT Pickering Campus); June 24 (CAT Brandywine Campus); and October 8 (Government Services Center).

### Save the Date

In 2011, we will be celebrating the 325th anniversary of Birmingham Township, the oldest Township in Chester County, with a Township event. Please save the date, Saturday, August 27, 2011, to join your neighbors in honoring the history where we live.