



The Borough of East McKeesport

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

December 2014

VOL. 4 ISSUE 4 NEWSLETTER

EAST MCKEESPORT TRIVIA

Who was burgess in East McKeesport when WWII started?
What two policemen walked a beat in East McKeesport at that time?

CLEAN UP DAY

What a fabulous CLEAN UP DAY in East McKeesport!!!!
October 18 turned out better than I ever could have dreamed.



When you consider that things worked against us- 1-So many of our regular helpers could not come on that day (but I know you'll be back in the spring) - 2 - At the last minute the time was changed from 9-11 to 10-1, and -3- the meeting place was changed from the Borough Building to the Senior Citizen

Center, also at the last minute - we had an amazing turnout and accomplished a great deal! Thanks to our public works foreman, Joe Clemenic, for organizing



so much of the clean-up (and for cleaning up after the clean-up). Thanks to our police officers, who came out on their free time. Thanks to our council members, who volunteered their time. Thanks to the University

of Pittsburgh, who sent us a busload of industrious, friendly and high spirited students. And thanks to so many residents of East McKeesport, who all worked so hard - and had to show up twice because of the changes. I would love to list the names of all the helpers, but in my haste to get to the Halloween Parade to see my granddaughters, I forgot L. Please mark your calendars now for April 25, our next East McKeesport Clean Up Day!!! It's one thing that we keep our tiny Borough looking great, but it's a marvelous thing that at the same time, we can enjoy the company of our neighbors!!! Thanks again!

NEW POLICE VESTS

The East McKeesport Police Department would like to thank Glenn Engineering, Parkview Federal Credit Union, Wilmerding Moose Lodge #86 and the many generous citizens from the Borough who donated to the bulletproof vest fund for the Borough police department. The incredible generosity shown by everyone makes every officer in the department proud to say they work for such a great community. The Borough will continue to maintain the Bulletproof Vest Fund for the Police

Department Officers and utilize these funds for new officers who join the force and need this potentially life-saving equipment. As we move forward, we will continue to fundraise from time to time as the need arises. Thank you again for your generosity. Chief Russell Stroschein, Borough Council, and Mayor Robert Howard P.S. Thank you so very much to everyone who took the time and money to donate. At this time, we are only \$748 short of our goal of \$7485. If you were planning to donate and haven't yet done so, there is still time to drop off your donation at the Borough building or mail it to the following address 907 Florence Avenue. In the meantime, however, thanks again to the residents of East McKeesport for your substantial and sizeable support. You always seem to pull together for the community when we need you!!! (remember the post office?) Kathi



TAXES

Costs for everything are rising. Our incomes are definitely not rising to keep up. In spite of these facts, your Borough council is pleased to inform you that there will NOT be a rise in our Borough taxes this year.

SEWAGE

At the same time that we are not raising taxes, we have been able to avoid raising our sewage rates. Even though AL-COSAN and the Municipal Authority of the City of McKeesport are both raising their rates to the Borough, our residents will continue to pay \$8.50 per thousand gallons and a minimum charge of \$68.00 per 8,000 gallons.

Our Borough Engineer, Mr. Don Glenn, presented the following: I am pleased to present the 2015 Sewage Budget which reflects the fact that there is no need to increase sewage rates to the residents of the Borough. This is an extremely rare occurrence in times when most communities must raise rates due to Department of Environmental Protection Consent Order mandates, as well as Act 537 activities, directed at the Municipal Authority of the City of McKeesport (MACM) treatment facility. Credit must be directed toward Council, who prudently encountered the Consent Order tasks as well as the activities required under Act 537, one by one, until all were addressed. The current rate structure does allow coverage for the proposed 2015 rate increases by ALCOSAN and MACM, but that does not affect residents.

We are so appreciative for the time, diligence and service

that Glenn Engineering Associates provides our community, constantly helping us to do the best possible assist to our residents. And, again, NO INCREASE. YEAH!!!!

HALLOWEEN PARTY

Even though it was breezy, chilly and a little drippy with rain, we managed to complete our Halloween Parade from the Post Office to the Senior Citizen Building as planned. Prizes



were awarded in the following categories: FUNNIEST; Ava Snyder, PRETTIEST; Mila Miller, SCARIEST; Ava Collazo, BEST GROUP; Mia and Mateo Yezovich, and BEST ALL AROUND; Nate



Ruland. Congratulations to our winners, and thanks to everyone who took the trouble to dress and come to our annual parade.

There were 35 children in attendance and a wonderful visit from the Litterbug!!

Our first PET Costume Photo Parade Contest on October 19 did not have the participation we had hoped this year. An error



in the title called it the DOG Photo Contest instead of the PET Photo Contest.

No matter what kind of pet you have, that animal is invited to join in next year's contest. This year's winners were Jamie



Lipesky's Yorkie for BEST ALL AROUND and Judith Bannister's puppy for PARTICIPATION. Congratulations to both winners, and, everyone else, start preparing now for next year's contest. Thanks.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Winter is coming and along with it the thrill of Santa is coming to East McKeesport. Our yearly Christmas party for kids 12 and under will be held on Saturday, December 13, from 12-2 pm. In addition to a delightful craft and pizza for lunch, this party is the perfect opportunity for our kids/grandkids to get a picture with Santa Claus (free of charge because you can use your own camera). Please call Connie at 412-824-2531 by DECEMBER 8, so we can make sure we have everything we need for a fantastic day for our kids!!!

SANTA ON THE FIRE TRUCK

Sunday, December 21, is another important East McKeesport day. Beginning at 6:00 p.m., Santa will board the fire truck and ride around our town, waving and tossing candy canes to our children. Keep a lookout so we can run outside and enthusiastically jump up and down and cheer as he comes. It is suggested that residents my age and older hold on to a railing or fence while jumping to avoid falling. Thanks.

2015 CHILDREN'S PARTIES

Next year's parties for our residents who are 12 and under have been scheduled. Please mark your calendars now, so our children and grandchildren don't miss out on the fun. Our Easter party will be held on Saturday, April 4, the Halloween parade will take place on Sunday, October 25, and our Christmas celebration will be on Saturday, December 19. Hope to see you there!

IMPORTANT OFFICE CHANGES

For as long as I can remember, our Code Enforcement Officer's office has been upstairs, and the Tax Collector's office has been downstairs in the back. But things do not always stay the same. Within the last several months our Code Enforcement Officer (Jamie Dinkfelt) has also taken on the position of Assistant to the Borough Administrator. Because her second position requires her to work more closely with Connie, she needs to be closer to that office. We came up with several ideas for building walls and creating new offices, etc., but Bob Ferrainolo, our Tax Collector, decided it would just be easier to switch places. So they did. Now Bob is on the second floor in the front corner of Council chambers, and Jamie is on the lower level in the rear office. As residents, our only job now is to remember – and to assist in our remembering, the signs have been changed to accommodate the physical change of our officials. Thanks for your cooperation.

WINTER REMINDERS

Please remember that residents are responsible for clearing the sidewalks in front of their property when it snows. Additionally, we ask that residents DO NOT throw snow into the streets.

Our Public Works Foreman, Joe Clemenic, has a great idea for us, so read carefully! When the snow plow clears one side of a Borough street, if we and our neighbors move our cars briefly to the other side of the street (even if we are parking illegally for that short time), Joe will plow the other side of the street and remove the snow that mounds up between the cars. If you see that one of your neighbors has not remembered to move the car, please remind him so that we can keep our streets as clean as possible.

DEMOLITIONS IN PROGRESS

Many residents have been concerned about a number of abandoned, derelict homes in the Borough, and with good reason. A myriad of problems are caused when homes stay uninhabited over a long period of time. We are finally in a position to announce that the following homes will be demolished by the end of this year: 581 Helena, 906 Broadway, 1207 Morelle, 523 Woodmont, 418 Leslie, 1360 Broadway, 1336 Wilm- erding, 1329 Hilda, and 1305 Hilda. We appreciated your patience as we worked



to accumulate the money as well as permission to move ahead with this project.

SPOTLIGHT ON EAST MCKEESPORT RESIDENTS ROB MAHAFFEY

It is wonderful how many talented, industrious youths we have in East McKeesport. Rob Mahaffey, a sophomore at East Allegheny joined Cub Scouts in 3rd grade, became a Boy Scout in 5th grade and completed his Eagle Scout project this past summer. He is a member, also, of the high school swim team and plays in the band (clarinet, bass clarinet and tenor sax). Rob was part of the volunteer work crew when Justin Welch did his project (the Reading Garden outside the North Versailles Library). Scouts are always working hard to accumulate service hours to move up in rank, and when the Reading Garden was done, Rob thought about doing a pavilion and benches so the policemen would have an outside area where they could take breaks and eat lunch. Of course, over time the original idea grew and grew. Trees were planted to break the wind and create a better visual. Rob added the railing. He wanted nine bushes, but decided instead to keep the scenic rocks. He and his helpers had a concrete pad poured, and began to build the fence. It took 3 weeks to dig and set the posts because instead of soft dirt underground, there was clay and groups of bricks mortared together. But they persevered, and this September, the Sunday after Labor Day, the pavilion was dedicated. Rob is thankful for all the scouts who helped with his Eagle Scout project, and he also thanks Eat n Park for keeping a filled cooler at the site to keep the workers hydrated, and 84 Lumber, who donated the lumber for the project.

Rob is an extremely dedicated Scout. He is a Senior Patrol Leader for his troop, the highest office a Scout can attain. "All scouts are your brothers, so we all work hard to help each other," he says. "If I wasn't a Boy Scout, I wouldn't have gone to Colorado or half the places I've been. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to be a scout. I've probably learned more things that I can use in my life than I have learned anywhere else." The Borough of East McKeesport is proud to have such an enthusiastic, productive young man as part of our population.

HIGHLIGHT ON LOCAL BUSINESS EAST MCKEESPORT GUITAR

We have an extremely interesting new business in town, and if you stop in one day, just to see what's going on, I guarantee you will be just as excited about it as I am! Randy Morrison, originally from Pittsburgh, grew up and graduated high school making "All A's and B's in school because I was afraid of my 5 foot, 100 pound, Italian mother." In the 60's, groups like the Beatles and musicians like Bob Dylan came along, and he



went into his bedroom and made "crazy noises" with his guitar, so his mother made him take classical guitar lessons. After high school, he started at IUP and graduated from Pitt with a degree in social sciences, which, he explained, is "The degree you get when you don't know what degree you want to get." Move ahead to 1995, Randy co-owned a guitar store in K-mart plaza (I'm sure you remember that whole row of stores there before they just ripped them down in 2000), moved to Cindy's Guitar in Destinta Plaza, and when this site in East McKeesport opened up, he jumped on it. Randy has played guitar for over 50 years, and fiddle and banjo for 15. Go into his shop and he will play for you. He will also repair any string instrument (banjo, fiddle, guitar, violin), and he will repair your amplifier, too. Randy also MAKES instruments: hanging in his shop are a Jack Daniel's Banjo and a Resonator guitar, and he made them both. "This resonator guitar is a solid body instrument, but most are hollow body." I would call this a one man operation, except for the fact that for the last 12 years, Matt Hogy (2001 EA graduate), has been giving private guitar and bass weekly lessons in the shop for a mere \$65/month, which is the cheapest rate I've heard in forever. Matt has a Performance Degree in classical guitar and a Masters in Music Education. He teaches all ages from 8 years to 100 and individualizes his lessons to suit the student. He specializes in teaching children with disabilities, including children with autism and because of his studied technique, his patience and his individuation of instruction, he has been extremely successful. One of the things that impressed me the most about Matt is the enthusiastic delight he shows for the success of his students. It is a truly uplifting to welcome this exciting new business with its passionate staff to East McKeesport. They "specialize in people because everyone has an individual need. Many bands and musicians have dealt with us for years because when they bring their instruments here, whatever the problem, we can fix it." Do yourself a favor and stop in and meet our newest entrepreneurs. Besides seeing the cigar box guitars and assorted other fascinating items they sell, they might be able to bring to life that old string instrument in your attic – or you may find a hidden talent in music-making that you didn't know you had. Business hours: M-F 1-7: Sat 11-3: closed Sunday

REVITALIZING OUR BUSINESS DISTRICT

Your East McKeesport Borough Council has entered into a contract with Town Center Associates, a consulting firm that provides comprehensive support to traditional, downtown-based, main street communities. They use a professional "team approach" and are committed to advancing downtown and economic development and revitalization. Council chose this firm after reviewing proposals and conducting interviews. Town Center offered professional services and resources that can be fully customized to meet our community's distinct interest and needs. They also have experience in the area with other communities as part of the county's Allegheny Together program Allegheny Together, launched in 2007, is a

program designed to assist traditional pedestrian-based business districts throughout the county. Through ongoing support from our County Executive, the program stresses community organization and data-driven planning as a way to direct public investment, spur private investment and revitalize our communities. Your council felt that this type of planning process with comprehensive support is exactly what could benefit our community. We are in the phase of cataloging, researching and reviewing what we have currently in place. Council welcomes both business owners and residents to get involved by becoming part of our Downtown revitalization committee. Contact Council Vice President and Program Coordinator Peter McGinty at pmcginty@eastmckeesportboro.com—or by calling 412-824-3017. It is your community. Be involved! Help make a difference!

TAX COLLECTOR'S HOURS

This is the off season for the tax collector, so for the next several months the hours have been shortened. Throughout December, Bob (Ferrainolo) is only scheduled to be in the office for walk ins on Mondays from ten until noon. In January and February (since December 31 is the start of tax delinquency – and we all try to get them paid before then) there are no scheduled walk in hours. Nonetheless, our tax collector is always at your service. Just call Bob at 412-829-7991 to schedule an appointment at your convenience. Thanks.

REMINISCING WITH ROY

I don't mean to flood you with trivia, but your newsletter just gets my trivia thinking cap on. Remember when East McKeesport had a July 4th celebration with games and prizes for kids. We had our own fireworks display at East Field. The next day we kids would comb the grass at the field for remnants of the aerial star shells, which were small cubes. We would take them home and light them up for our own fireworks display. In those days the school would put on a Christmas music program with the high school chorus. There were no religious or non-religious groups with axes to grind. How about the war bond drives at school? Fruit rolls (not roll ups) for the teachers?? There were no school buses so the kids from the farmland of North Versailles had to be brought to school – or they walked. There were two truck stops in the township, complete with truckers' cabins for sleeping at 75 cents per night. The years have blurred some of the details, but you get a group of us elder statesmen together, and we'll be able to put the pieces together. LOL Regards from the old timer, Roy P.S. I think the Lion's Club even had a donkey baseball game for charity.

FREE FLU SHOTS

A very hearty and sincere thank you to Eastern Area Pre-hospital Services for coming to our Borough Building on October 11 and providing FREE flu shots for our residents. Almost 40 residents showed up and were exceedingly thankful for the opportunity.



nity. Thanks again, EAPS, and we look forward to seeing you next October.

LOU FROM LOU LOUZ 'S JOINS GINGER'S SALON

January 2015 will be an exciting month in East McKeesport as Ginger's Salon (1035 5th Avenue, E. McKeesport, 412-823-7007), brings back an old classic. LOU, formerly from Lou Louz's Styles, joins Ginger in her shop. Lou will be doing haircuts, buzzes and waxing, and she'll be offering \$5 specials. Don't forget – there is always free parking behind the salon on Chicora Street.

POLICE OFFICERS AT WORK

We are always so proud of the work of our police department and the feeling of safety they give our community. We are also always grateful for what they do above and beyond protecting our community. In the last 3 months, all of the officers have done their firearm qualifications. Officer Lowden finished up his Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspections for the year, and the chief completed a course entitled Managing a Professional Police Department.

HILLTOPPERS TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY

The Hilltop Pensioners and Seniors Club will hold their annual free Christmas party for members on Wednesday, December 3 at noon at Rene's restaurant.

Come and join us again at the Senior Citizens Building on Wednesday, January 7 at noon to play Bingo. Non-members are always invited to join us at the Bingo events – and if you like what you see, you can join for only \$20/year. Members come together on the first Wednesday of every month for a free luncheon. It is loads of fun and a great opportunity to get together with friends!!

EAST MCKEESPORT TRIVIA ANSWERS

John Small

Mr. Linhart and Double Ott Chew

COUNCIL, MAYOR AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH

**WISH OUR RESIDENTS A HAPPY HOLIDAY
AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!!**