



The Borough of East McKeesport

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

MARCH 2015

VOL. 5 ISSUE 1 NEWSLETTER

EFFORTS TO REVITALIZE BUSINESS DISTRICT UNDERWAY

East McKeesport Council is committed to taking proactive steps to revitalize our business district. Our business district located on 5th Avenue runs perpendicular to Route 30 and offers a vastly different commercial experience. This commercial space is such a great asset to the community, and with strategic support and planning can become a vibrant business district once again. We envision a walkable commercial corridor that provides shopping and dining experiences for residents as well as those traveling through East McKeesport. Council has engaged Town Center Associates to help East McKeesport with our business district planning and management. Town Center Associates provides comprehensive support to traditional downtown-based, main street communities. We will work together to implement strategic actions to deal with the existing problems in the business district, as well as formulate an action plan that will allow for revitalization and reinvestment. In addition, East McKeesport was selected by Carnegie Mellon University to be a community for their Sustainable Community Development project. Students will be creating a sustainable street design that can be used to conceptualize how sustainable improvements can create a vastly different business environment. As with any project within our community, Council cannot do this alone. We will need support from our residents and business owners to take part in the revitalization of our community. Please be on the lookout for more information in upcoming newsletters on what you can do to ensure East McKeesport remains a welcoming community to current residents and business owners, outside shoppers, and new businesses. Liz Kozub

EAST ALLEGHENY HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS SPRING MUSICAL

East Allegheny High School will present their spring musical, Godspell, from April 16-18. Godspell is the story of the formation of a community through their diverse backgrounds. Using skits, songs, improv, and games, it teaches the importance of tolerance, acceptance, and collaboration. With a score by Tony-award winning composer Stephen Schwartz [Wicked, Pippin], it features classics such as Day By Day, Turn Back O Man, and Save the People. This year's cast includes East McKeesport residents Miracle Brocco, Adam Bannister, Brooke Bannister, Casey Bell, Kasey Neiderlander, Jansen Simone, Symone Williams, and Chamari Willis as well as 22 other students from the communities of North Versailles, Wilmerding, and Wall. Shows are Thursday, April 16 and Friday, April 17 at 7:30, and Saturday, April 18 at 2:00 and 7:30. Tickets are \$10 for Adults, \$7 for Senior Citizens and Students, and \$5 for the Saturday matinee. Tickets can be purchased at the high school or by calling 412-824-8012. For more information, visit www.eachoir.org/musicalhome.htm. Amanda Rosco, Musical Director, EASD

WE NEED YOU ON OUR CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

We have always been very satisfied having Stacy Mays, Jim Sokolowski and Todd Waszkiewicz acting as our Civil Service Commission. Todd, however, moved out of the Borough last year, and we have thus far been unable to replace him. If you are a resident of voting age and are not an employee of the Borough, please help us by sending a letter to Connie at 907 Florence Avenue or at administrator@eastmckeesport.com indicating your interest in serving on the Civil Service Commission. In a small borough such as ours, this volunteer position does not take countless hours of your time. All you will be asked to do is work with us when we are hiring or promoting a position that requires the administering of a Civil Service test. We need your help. Please apply now. No experience necessary.

SPOTLIGHT ON EAST MCKEESPORT RESIDENTS DEON SMITH

Our very own Deon Smith, a junior at EA, starting quarterback for this year's EA football team, a 3.0 student, and a delightful, personable and charming young man, has been named to the Dynamic 33 in football for this region. He started playing flag football at 6 years old, moved up through the Termites and Mighty Mites, and, in 7th grade began to play for the School District. As a sophomore, he was a starting cornerback almost all year. Deon is a dynamic team leader and a great decision maker. Last year he trained with Dave Loya every Tuesday. Deon would love to make



a career in football (he used to play basketball, too, but now is a one sport man); nonetheless, he is determined to attend college first. This past year he threw over 900 yards, rushed over 700, had 12 p a s s i n g t o u c h d o w n s and 7 rushing touchdowns. It looks like he is just the beginning of a string of athletes coming from the Smith

household. As a freshman, his sister is a starting shooting guard for the varsity basketball team, and his 11 year old brother is a quarterback for the Mighty Mites. Congratulations to Deon Smith for his current achievements and best wishes for a hugely successful future.

BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Normally, Council meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Be aware, however, that is not the case this April when the meeting will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Please mark your calendar, so that if you plan to attend, you attend on the actual date. Council meetings - 6:00 -Thursday, March 12, 2015; Wednesday, April 8, 2015; Thursday, May 14, 2015.

HILLTOPPERS SUPPORT THE BORO - AGAIN

On Monday, February 9, Betty Kukla, President of our local Hilltoppers organization, along with Vice President Marie Howard, presented a check for \$400 to Chief Stroschein and Mayor Howard to complete donations for the police vest fund. Mrs. Kukla says that, "It is only by the



members coming and participating that we are able to do these kinds of d o n a t i o n s . " With that, she urges everyone to "Come and join!"

The organization plays Bingo every Monday and has their monthly meeting the first Wednesday of each month at the East McKeesport Senior Citizen's Building. Dues are \$20 a year and that included the Christmas party, which was at Rene's last year (members were fed a meal and given a poinsettia, free with their membership). Trips with the organization are also free with the membership - they are planning a trip to the casinos in the near future). Everyone is welcome! The club has members from North Versailles, Irwin, Port Vue, Pitcairn and various other neighborhoods. So come to Bingo next Monday, and bring a friend - no matter where they live!!!

EAST MCKEESPORT 50'S AND 60'S TRIVIA

(This should be easy if you lived in East McKeesport during the 50's and 60's)

1. Name the four doctors who had their practices in East McKeesport during this time.
2. Name the three food markets (and their owners) located in East McKeesport.
3. When these local markets were closed, there were 2 other stores open late, where Mom could get bread, milk or lunchmeat for Dad's lunch tomorrow. Name them.
4. What was the "famous" landmark East McKeesport for known for?
5. What was the name of the car dealership in town and what kind of cars were sold there?

RECOGNITION FOR OUR BOROUGH SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY:

East McKeesport is among a select group of high performing municipalities to become certified through the Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification program. We are recognized at the Associate level of certification for meeting the program's rigorous performance criteria which tracks 131 policies and practices that define a sustainable community. The Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification, administered by the Pennsylvania Municipal League in partnership with Sustainable Pittsburgh, is designed for municipalities that are working to save money, conserve resources, and serve vibrant communities. Originally deployed in Southwestern Pennsylvania by Sustainable Pittsburgh, the certification has gone state-wide recognizing small, medium, and large municipalities across the Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania Municipal League and Sustainable Pittsburgh applaud municipalities for their demonstrated commitment and sustainability performance. In earning the Associate certification, East McKeesport is acknowledged for its progress in addressing such areas as community design and land use, energy efficiency, health and wellness, mitigating blight, intergovernmental cooperation, recycling and waste reduction, fiscal controls, and internal management and operations. Details regarding how we are addressing these areas can be found on the certification program's website: www.sustainablepacommunitycertification.org. East McKeesport is proud to be recognized as an Associate Certified Community by the Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification program. **BANNER COMMUNITY:** East McKeesport has, once again, achieved the status of Banner Community. East McKeesport has distinguished itself as a municipality who has implemented Benchmark Good Governing Practices as a leader in delivering services and strengthening the quality of life for our constituents. We are proud to be recognized by the Allegheny League of Municipalities as a Banner Community.

RECREATION MEETING - YOU'RE INVITED

Please clear your calendar for Monday, March 9 at 7:00 so you can come to the East McKeesport Borough Building (on Florence) and meet with our Recreation Committee. We are planning a community picnic for July 12, and we would love your participation and input in our planning that event and future events. Thanks in advance for your participation.

DECEMBER 2014 CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 13, 2014, was a delightfully fun-filled day for the 29 children who attended the East McKeesport Children's Christmas Party. National Honor Society student, Madison Christner, helped with the setup, aligning tables and chairs, organizing party items and filling stockings with wonderful treats. Two other members, Chasey Wakefield and Beth Clark, worked with the kids during the party itself. Home Depot arrived with lawn ornaments for the kids to make - it was so cute to watch the kids hammering them together and then decorating them. And, of course, no Christmas party would be complete without pizza (from Merlino's - yum) and a visit from Santa. A great time was had by all. If you have children 12 and younger, mark your calendar now to join in the fun on December 19, 2015.

EASTER PARTY

April 4 will be another exciting day for children, ages 12 and under, in the community, as East McKeesport holds its annual Easter Party from noon until two o'clock at the Senior Citizen's Building on Chicora Street. Along with our traditional visit from the Easter bunny, children will be treated to a magician, pizza and an Easter egg hunt. Please sign up by March 20 (412-824-2531) so we can assure that we have enough of everything for everyone in attendance. Please add our Halloween parade (October 25) and our Christmas party (December 19) to your calendar, as well.

BOROUGH MAP

We were thrilled to build a new Borough Map as a parting gift for 2014. There are a few corrections you may want to make on the 'map' side of the map, however. First, we all know that our zip code is 15035, so that is the easiest correction. Also, please bear in mind that one of the phone numbers for County Hauling is wrong. When you need to get in touch with County Hauling, please call 724-929-7694. Also, the Police non-emergency number is 824-0324. The last mistake was not marking Broadway Extension. Residents, please accept our apologies - we love you. Thanks.

NORTH VERSAILLES LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN:

STORY TIME - Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. Ages birth - Pre-K

LEGO CLUB - Thursdays at 4:30 p.m.- School age children (Legos are provided)

TUESDAY TEEN TIME - March 3 and 17, April 7 and 22, May 5 and 19 at 4:30 - Teens

FITNESS FUN - Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. - Ages 2-5

ST. PATRICK'S DAY EVENING STORY TIME - Tuesday, March 17 at 6:30 p.m. - All ages are welcome.

EASTER MAKE & TAKE - March 30-April 4 - Stop in to make an Easter craft.

SPY TRAINING - April 14 at 6:30 p.m. - Stealth maneuvering, code breaking, etc. - All ages are welcome.

EARTH DAY MAKE AND TAKE - April 20-25 - All ages are welcome.

MOTHER'S DAY MAKE AND TAKE - May 4 - 8 - Stop in a make a gift for Mom

MINECRAFT - May 12, 6:30 p.m. -minecraft themed games and a craft - All ages are welcome.

CSI INVESTIGATION - May 19 at 6:30 p.m. - unique CSI experiments

SATURDAY MOVIE MATINEE - Second Saturday of every month at 1:30 p.m. - All ages are welcome.

ADULTS:

DIY GREEN CLEANING - Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m. - learn to clean using natural products you already have at home.

COOKING CLUB -Second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Call for information.

KNIT/CROCHET CLUB - Last Thursday of every month from 6:00-7:30p.m. - Bring your current projects or questions.

TECH TIME - Second Wednesday of every month from 2:00-4:00p.m. - Bring your devices and get help learning to use them.

NOVELS AT NIGHT - First Thursday of every month from 6:30-7:30p.m. - Call the library for the book selection of the month.

COMPUTER CLASSES - March 10 and 12, April 14 and 16, May 12 and 14 at 6:30 - no prior knowledge required. (Class limit is 4)

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK - April 12 to 18 - activities, raffles, etc. Check with library staff for more. For more information or to sign up, contact Taylor at reedyoungt@einetwork.net or call the library at 412-823-2222.
www.northversailleslibrary.org

REMINISCING WITH ROY

Well, here are some winter ramblings! Before most people had four wheel drive vehicles, East McKeesport and Wilmerding would close Iceplant Hill (there used to be an iceplant at the bottom) because cars and trucks could not navigate the deep snow! This was a sled riding bonanza! We would make a sled train with our Flexible Flyers by lying on the sled and grabbing the feet of the person lying on the sled in front of us! The train could reach the length of ten sleds! The leader would then zig zag down the street causing the tail end of the train to whip back and forth! The top third of the hill was a normal ride, but the real dare devils would go all the way to Wilmerding! (Of course it was very long pull back up the hill!) The real old timers might actually remember the ice plant itself or how we told the ice truck driver how much ice we needed! We had a card with different numbers on it and the way it was hung in the window indicated the weight of ice that was needed! There were no refrigerators - those were the days of real ice boxes! Another cold thought! There were no snow days on the school calendar because there were no school buses! Everyone walked to school! Remember the snow chains on cars! They are pretty hard to find now! And some the older cars (early 50s type) still had places to put a crank in the engine for cranking by hand in the coldest weather! The cars that are called cross-overs now were called station wagons back then! Another cold weather treat was the multiple buckles on the rubber boots that fit over the leather shoe that almost every kid wore to school! Remember when mom made hot cereal (oats or farina) to send us off to school! One last thought! How about spoonfuls of cod liver oil to supplement our vitamin D in the winter! YUCK!!! Roy Thorpe

REDFX WRITES

DO YOU REMEMBER: HANGING OUT AT JONES PHARMACY? PUTTING ON A MIXTURE OF BABY OIL AND IODINE TO GET THAT PERFECT TAN AT BLUE DELL POOL? THE THREE SWIMMING POOLS(BLUE DELL, RAINBOW GARDENS,AND KENNYWOOD)? WORKING FOR MINIMUM WAGE(65CENTS AN HOUR) AT THE LOCAL GAS STATIONS? CRUISING THE EAT N PARK IN YOUR CAR WITH SMITTY GLASS PACK MUFFLERSANDBABYMOONSPINNERS?DOESANYBODY REMEMBER WHO THE B.A.G. WAS? HOW ABOUT AN ICE COLD BOTTLE OF MISSION ORANGE POP BOTTLED RIGHT THERE IN WILMERDING,PA.? DaveR

NOTES

- Dave Rotelli wrote to congratulate the Borough for demolishing the list of abandoned houses. Thanks, Dave, for your support.

- He also sent in 3 Trivia Questions - but he didn't know the answers, so I am forwarding these questions to you, the residents, and, hopefully, you will be able to help us out here

1. Why and how was Playford Avenue named? Many streets have women's names and many have Indian tribes, but how did Playford come about?

2. Where did all the stone come from that was used to build East Field (1936)? He thinks we had a stone quarry in town. Did we have a quarry, where was it, and was that the stone that was used at the field?

3. Who carved the date into the cornerstone on the high side of East Field? Dave thinks it may have been his grandfather, Placi Rotelli, and Bill Correll thinks it may have been a man named Piczi. Or maybe both these names are the same person. Does anyone know??

- In the last newsletter we failed to mention that our new guitar/music store is located right on Fifth Avenue next to where the old Texaco station was located. Stop in and see the marvelous homemade musical instruments.

- Residents are AGAIN reminded that County Hauling DOES not take electronics in their normal Thursday trash pick up. If you have a TV or other electronic device, please call 724-929-7694. Thank you.

TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Dr. Harry Hackman, Dr. Sam Dechter, Dr. Ruth Masters, Dr. Raymond Masters

2. Sigler's Market, owned by Lester Sigler; Star Meat Market, owned by Harold and Sidney Gottlieb; B&B Market, owned by William Breznahan and William Byron.

3. Kram's Korner, later known as Smith's Corner Store, and Brown's Dairy Store.

4. The 4 gas stations at 5th Avenue and Lincoln Highway - an Atlantic (later ARCO), 2 Gulf, and an Amoco.

5. Ponsetto Motors. First it was a Studebaker dealership, then a Chrysler-Plymouth dealership.

HEY, KIDS, JOIN US FOR CLUB R.O.C.K.!

Club R.O.C.K., which stands for Reaching Our Community's Kids, is the energetic and exciting Children's Program at Broadway Alliance Church! We meet every Wednesday through May, from 6:15-7:45 PM. ALL children, ages 3 through Grade 5, are invited and welcomed to attend! Weekly activities include a Bible lesson/story, fun games, creative crafts, delicious snacks, exciting music, new friends, and more! Special events include a Harvest Party, Christmas Program, Valentine Party, S'Mores Night, Pajama and Movie Nights, Easter Celebration, and More! There is no cost involved. For more information, please call Broadway Alliance Church, under the leadership of Rev. Alan Thompson, at (412) 824-3198! Bring a friend! See you Wednesday! AND...Mark your Calendars for "Camp KILIMANJARO", our exciting Vacation Bible School coming in June! Judy Bannister

IT'S TAX TIME

It's that time of year again. Your 2014 local earned income tax return is due on April 15. Did you know the quickest way to get your refund is to file online? If you live and work in Pennsylvania, you can e-file on our tax administrator's secure website, which is available 24/7 at www.KeystoneCollects.com. Keystone Collections Group's e-file is the easy, fast and secure way to file your 2014 tax return. It lets you file your tax return when it is most convenient for you. You will need your W-2, your Social Security Number and any other income documents that may apply (such as a PA-UE or a Schedule C). Please note that the forms changed this year. If you will be claiming an out-of-state tax credit or if you work in Philadelphia, you may be eligible for a local earned income tax credit up to the amount you owe to your resident municipality. The worksheet on the back of the form will help you calculate your out-of-state tax credit (attach a copy of your out-of-state filing). If you have questions regarding local tax filing, call Keystone's Taxpayer Helpline at 1-888-328-0565 to speak with a local, knowledgeable Taxpayer Service Agent. You can also email your questions to "Taxpayer Support" at www.KeystoneCollects.com. Taxpayers with earned income in 2014 are required to file a tax return by Wednesday, April 15.

SPOTLIGHT ON EAST MCKEESPORT EMPLOYEES POLICE OFFICER STEVEN MINNAJI

A 2000 graduate of East Allegheny, a lifetime resident of North Versailles and East McKeesport, Steven Minnaji wasn't sure what he wanted to do



as a lifetime career. Initially, he went to work for Pepsi, moved on to construction, then went to the Port Authority to work in the Security Department.

After a year at the Port Authority, he was given an opportunity to go to the Police Academy. He went. Ten and a half months later he graduated, and voila, he ended up as a police officer for East McKeesport. Does he like it? He loves it!! He enjoys the people he works with, the people he works to protect, the young people, and especially being able to give back to a community he grew up in and has always loved. We are proud to have Steven as a member of our police force.

HOARDING

Hoarding is an ever-growing problem, especially among seniors. Do you know a hoarder? Are you a hoarder? Even if you're not, it is an interesting topic, interesting enough to have a TV show named after it. We are fortunate in that Lucille Underwood has agreed to do a presentation on HOARDING for our residents - and for anyone in any of our neighboring communities who would like to attend. So spread the word. On Tuesday, April 21, at 6:30, there will be a free HOARDING presentation at the East McKeesport Senior Citizen Center. You are invited. Bring a friend.

CLEAN UP DAY

April 25 is, once again, Clean Up Day in East McKeesport. Mark your calendar now, and please meet us at the SENIOR CITIZEN BUILDING at 9:30 (notice the change, please). The Borough will supply vests, gloves and garbage bags as we split off into groups to do our outdoor spring cleaning. Students and adults are all invited and we definitely welcome the help to brighten up the Borough for the up-coming wonderful spring weather. Plan to stay afterward so we can enjoy a pizza lunch together and discuss the fun we had working together.

HELP

We are requesting your help to keep our residents current on our community events and citizens. Do you know a young person or an adult who deserves to be featured in our newsletter? Is someone celebrating a milestone birthday, made dean's list or honor roll, had a major accomplishment, gotten engaged, married, or had a baby? Do you belong to a local organization that is celebrating an event? We are interested. Please write kathi722@aol.com to give us an opportunity to publish information that may be interesting for others to read. Thanks - Don't have a computer? Call Kathi at 412-823-8831.

PET ADOPTION WEEK IN EAST MCKEESPORT

Pet Adoption Week at Farmers' Insurance (at the intersection of Broadway and Route 30) will be held from May 11th to the 16th. During that week, Steve Gazda and Farmers' Insurance will be hosting the Animal Rescue League, Shelter and Wildlife Center. (ARL) All week long they will have a

"Chinese Auction" with baskets donated by local businesses. Monday-Friday (11th-15th) there will be cats/kittens in the office for



anyone to visit and even adopt on site if they want. Saturday, the 16th, there will be a cookout on the grill, and, in addition to the cats/kittens, there will be dogs/puppies on site, also for adoption. The Animal Rescue League will be giving away prizes and Farmers Insurance will be giving "doggie bags" full of human goodies for the first 50 people who make a \$10 donation to the Animal Rescue League. Overall, this should be a great community event that brings together local business and residents. Our goal is to get 5 pets adopted and raise at least \$500 for the Animal Rescue League. Please plan to attend, and, if you know any pet lovers outside the Boro, invite them to come along. Let's make this first Pet Adoption Week enough of a success that Steve will be able to make it a yearly event!!! Thanks in advance for your support.