

Bridgewater News

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Mayor
PATRICIA FLANNERY

Township Council
HOWARD NORGALIS
Council President

DAN HAYES
ALLEN KURDYLA
MATT MOENCH
CHRIS ROSE

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.bridgewaternj.gov



YOUTH OPEN GYMS

Youth recreation centers are now open on Friday evenings from 5:30-8:00 at Bradley Gardens School and on Sunday afternoons from 2:30-5:00 at Adamsville School. All Bridgewater-Raritan students grades 7-12 are invited to attend free of charge. These drop-in centers feature an open gym for basketball and other games. Pizza and soda are served to all children who attend. Staffing is provided by the Bridgewater Recreation Department and Family and Community Services of Somerset County. If you have any questions, call Chris Poulsen at (908) 725-6300 ext. 5210 or email Chris@bridgewaternj.gov.

A Message From The Mayor

I construct this letter to you as my last before I leave office on December 31. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve as your Mayor. At the same time, I have no regrets about stepping aside and believe having a fresh outlook in the Mayor's chair will give a new perspective on the issues facing our community.

The role of Mayor is a broad one that involves oversight of the many Township departments and 200 members of the staff. It involves drafting new and amending existing legislation to present to the governing body. The Mayor attends countless meetings with other government entities, including neighboring communities and county and state agencies. Presenting the perspective of Bridgewater's 45,000 residents on topics from property tax reform, to land use proposals, to NJDOT road configurations, involves doing the research to understand the issue, then gathering the feedback of our local experts as well as residents. I had the opportunity to speak before New Jersey Assembly and Senate legislative committees and the policy makers of two governors on behalf of legislation important to us here in Bridgewater.

Another facet that took a lot of my focus as Mayor was working on changing the Affordable Housing laws which have been burdensome, costly and ineffective. Although new legislation that would have provided a more equal and fair framework for continuing to provide affordable housing was not adopted, I do believe I contributed to blocking what would have been some very counterproductive and perhaps more burdensome regulations. (While COAH has been abolished, the obligation of the

municipalities to provide for the production of affordable housing has not.)

I met with countless scout groups, attended dozens of Eagle Scout ceremonies, fire and rescue squad dinners, business ribbon cuttings, and spoke at senior citizen, church groups and business group meetings. From the meetings with CEO's of multi-national corporations to reading to school children on Read Across America Day, each represented a different aspect of our diverse and thriving culture and I enjoyed learning something new every day of this job. I had many, many chicken dinners and sat at too many Planning Board meetings that went on past my bedtime. However much I may have toiled to get through those tedious meetings, in retrospect I always thought the effort put forth was important and worthwhile. We established policies that protected our residential neighborhoods and put those policies into place through action.

The completion of the municipal complex is one of my most memorable undertakings. The Township had discussed and debated that project for over a decade. I am proud of the practical and yet beautiful site that came together. Residents can now enjoy programs and services with ease of access, large meetings are accommodated in the meeting rooms, public safety is enhanced with a very functional police building, sports will be enjoyed on the turf field and the site has become a gathering place for social and educational events. The addition of the historic monument through generous donations from residents and local businesses is a great contribution to our community's art and history.

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Mayor's Message (continued)

I met and worked with some truly remarkable people during my term. I am not going to mention any names as I will surely leave out some crucial people. Some individuals were exceptionally intelligent in their fields and shared their knowledge with me. Some were simply great mentors and willing to help me do my job, which would not have been possible without them to back me up. Volunteers are the lifeblood of this community. Whether they participated as coaches or committee chairs or fire and rescue squad members who were absolutely committed to their volunteer efforts, they each make such a difference to this community. My husband Jim deserves particular kudos for his constant support and humorous outlook on the ups and downs of being the spouse of a public servant.

What I wish to leave you with is a reminder that we truly are a 'government of the people'. For government to work best the public needs to be informed on the issues and then share their opinions with their representatives. Your participation in Planning and Zoning Board hearings, as well as Council meetings or on a Township board or committee, is important and lets your opinion be heard and considered. When I began participating in community meetings I never could have imagined it would lead to my becoming Mayor and leading our great Township for the last eight years. The more you become involved in the process the more the outcome will matter to you. Our government is only as good as those willing to step up and do the job. I urge you to not sit at home and complain about what is wrong but become part of the solution! The efforts are great. Thank you.



TAX ASSESSOR

Residents are reminded that they may be eligible for a \$250 reduction in their property taxes if they are a senior citizen (65 and over), disabled or a veteran. Income limitations may apply. For more information, please contact us at 908-725-6300 ext. 5120 or at taxassessor@bridgewaternj.gov, or visit us in the municipal building. Our office is open Monday - Thursday from 9 am - 5:00pm and Friday from 8 am - 5 pm. Property record cards are also available for review during those hours.

Just a reminder that property taxes are due on the following dates: November 1, February 1, May 1 and August 1. Sewer taxes are due annually on June 1.

State of New Jersey Property Tax Reimbursement and Homestead Benefit application deadlines are October 31, 2011.

BRIDGEWATER RECREATION NEWS

Mark your calendars. We are currently registering for the following programs with deadlines quickly approaching:

- Wrestling 2011-2012 – registration deadline Thursday, November 3, 2011
- Ski Program 2012 – registration deadline Friday, November 4, 2011
- 4th Grade Club Night Evolution – registration deadline Monday, November 14, 2011
- Winter Indoor Football Training – registration deadline Friday, January 20, 2012

Registration forms are available on our website at www.bridgewaternj.gov.

Bridgewater United Soccer Club - upcoming events:

In-Town Soccer registration begins on Monday, October 24, 2011. The deadline to register is Monday, February 27, 2012 by 5:00 pm.

To register please visit www.bridgewaterrec.com.



Please call us at 908-725-6373 if you have any questions, or email us at recreation@bridgewaternj.gov.

FREE LEAF BAGS

Free leaf bags are now available for pick-up by residents at the Bridgewater Public Works Department, 1450 Route 22 East in Bridgewater from 8 am – 3 pm Monday-Friday. Senior citizens age 65 and older can also pick up leaf bags at the Bridgewater Senior Citizen Center at 455 Somerville Road in Bridgewater from 9 am – 3 pm. Residents are limited to two bundles of bags with 20 bags in each bundle. Additional bags may be purchased at local hardware stores.

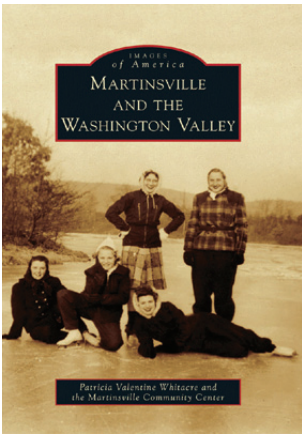
Bags are to be used for leaves only. Other yard waste will not be picked up and should be brought to the Bridgewater Yard Waste Site on Foothill Road behind Costco. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 7:30 am – 4:30 pm and Saturdays from 7:30 am – 2:00 pm. See our website for more information.

Leaf pick-up will begin on November 1, 2011 and continue through the end of the year. There is no set schedule for pick-up, so we ask you to be patient. Your leaves will be picked up before leaf season ends.

History of Martinsville Told Through Photographs

Local author Patricia Valentine Whitacre and the Martinsville Community Center have created a fascinating look at Martinsville in the early 1900's through their recently published book entitled *Images of America – Martinsville and the Washington Valley*. The book boasts more than 200 vintage images and memories of days gone by, and depicts the area's rural lifestyle and leisure activities in the first half of the 20th century. The authors hope that as newer residents, and especially children, learn our history, they will be inspired to preserve the vestiges of this historic heritage.

All of the images in the book came from the private collections of present and past residents. There are images in the book of Martinsville before the disastrous 1923 fire that burned the village center. Present roads in Martinsville are named for the early residents who are pictured and described in the chapter, "A Melting Pot of Neighbors."



Profits from the sale of the book will benefit the Martinsville Community Center. The book is available at area bookstores, independent retailers, and online retailers, or through Arcadia Publishing at www.arcadiapublishing.com or at 888-313-2665.

SENIOR CITIZEN ACTIVITIES

In addition to the many activities listed on the senior citizen calendar on the Bridgewater Township website, two special events are being held this fall at the Bridgewater Senior Citizen Center at 455 Somerville Road in Bridgewater. First is the Holiday Boutique on November 16 from 10 am – 2 pm. Visitors can purchase holiday gifts and other items from the many area vendors who will bring their products to the senior center, with part of the proceeds being donated to local families in need.

The second event is the Nutcracker Suite to be held on December 3 at 1 pm. The New Jersey Youth Ballet will present this wonderful program, again with part of the proceeds being set aside for needy families. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children and senior citizens, and can be purchased by calling 908-874-8800. A limited number of senior citizen tickets are available for purchase at the senior center. Call 908-575-8021 for more information on those tickets.

Bridgewater Police Go High Tech to Search for Missing Children

Bridgewater Township Police Chief Richard Borden has implemented a program called A Child Is Missing (ACIM) Alert. The program is a high tech method of searching locally for missing children, missing elderly (often with Alzheimer's), college students, and missing persons who may be mentally or physically challenged or disabled. Upon receipt of a reported missing person officers will evaluate the information to see if the missing person meets the criteria for activation of an alert as set forth by ACIM, a nationwide non-profit organization that helps law enforcement agencies locate missing persons. If the criteria are met Bridgewater Police will contact ACIM. The call initiates a rapid process of information gathering and use of sophisticated mapping systems. ACIM then launches potentially thousands of calls within minutes with an alert message detailing the missing person's description, last known whereabouts, and pertinent information. This alert message will also include the Bridgewater Police Department phone number for use by anyone with information relating to the missing person. The program is a free service to law enforcement. The Bridgewater Police Department will evaluate each potential activation to ensure it is appropriate to the case and to ensure the system is optimally used.

Phone numbers that are called by this program include listed numbers and mobile numbers available to ACIM in the selected area. To enter your cell phone, unlisted, broadband/voice-over IP or TDD/TTY device number visit www.achildsmissing.org and click on "add your name" to enter your contact information. This information will only be used for emergency message alerts.

E-NEWS

A limited number of paper copies of this newsletter have been made available at locations throughout the Township. To receive future copies and other relevant news items by email, please forward your name, address, and email address to newsletter@bridgewaternj.gov.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM

Affordable Housing - Per State legislation, Bridgewater Township remains committed to providing housing opportunities for a broad range of households from diverse social and economic backgrounds. Income based programs offer properties throughout Bridgewater Township for purchase and for rent.

The Affordable Housing purchase program is available in nine Bridgewater Township developments, including Vanderhaven Farms, Beacon Hill and Bridle Club on Vanderveer Road, Glenbrook and Stratton Meadows on Milltown Road, Bridgewater Oaks and Stratford Place on Route 22, Loft Farms on Chimney Rock Road and Crossroads on Routes 202-206. These developments contain efficiencies and 1, 2 and 3 bedroom low and moderate income resale units, most of which are interspersed with market-price units. Prices range from approximately \$40,000 to \$150,000.

In all of our developments, the purchase price of an affordable property is based on the proposed purchaser's

gross household income. In order to purchase, an applicant must be able to meet the Township qualifications and be able to obtain a mortgage from a lending institution.

The Township also offers one and two bedroom low and moderate income rental units within Village at Bridgewater, which is located off of Woodlawn Avenue. Monthly rentals are approximately \$670 - \$1050. The income range to qualify for this program is approximately \$20,000 for a household of one person to approximately \$95,000 for a six-person household.

You may obtain an application and information about this program by calling the Housing Office at 908 725-6300 ext. 5245 or visiting the Township Website at www.bridgewaternj.gov.

Housing Rehabilitation - The Housing Office also offers a housing rehabilitation program for eligible households. Up to \$20,000 worth of weatherization, health and code issues



can be made on your home. Call the Housing Office for more information and an application.

Affordability Assistance Program - Homeowners living in Affordable Housing units and are behind on their maintenance fees may be eligible for assistance. Please call the Housing Office for more information and an application.

Senior Housing Opportunities

- For information on affordable senior housing at the Centerbridge II apartment complex, call 908 725-6030.
- For information on subsidized senior housing at the Centerbridge I apartment complex, call 908 725-7899.
- For information on shared senior housing, call Cooperative Housing Corporation at 908 526-8130.

Domestic Violence Response Team Volunteers Wanted

Want to make a difference in the life of a domestic violence victim? Bridgewater Township and The Resource Center of Somerset are looking for new members. Become a Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) volunteer member and work with the police in your community to help domestic violence victims through their crisis. We provide 24-hour on-call service, one-to-one crisis intervention, information referral, aid in securing emergency shelter, safety planning strategies, understanding the dynamics of domestic violence and the cycle of violence, and advocacy for rights of victims. Join our team now. Forty hours of specialized training is provided to each new member. Contact DVRT Coordinator Annmarie Crispino at 908-359-0003 ext. 219 or at annmarie@resourcecenterofsomerset.org, or contact Patty Padovani at 908-725-6300 ext. 5245 or at welfare@bridgewaternj.gov.