newsletter for

North Coventry Township

www.northcoventry.us

Don't Miss The Coventry Woods Festival



Win this Oil Painting of the Great Oak - $5 per chance, three for $10
see color photo on our website

The fifth annual Coventry Woods Festival will be held on Sunday, May 19, 2013, from 1 to 5 p.m., at the Fernbrook Access to the Coventry Woods, 1954 St. Peters Road, intersection of St. Peters Road and Fernbrook Lane. This festival is designed to recognize and celebrate North Coventry as a healthy community with healthy lands. The festivities are sponsored by the Township Parks and Recreation Commission and will be held rain or shine.

Family! Fun! Raffles!
Pony Rides!
Friends!
Goat Races!



Bring family and friends to experience the former Camp Fernbrook which, through the hard work of our Open Space Committee, has added such a wonderful gateway to the over 600 acres of the Coventry Preserve. The event is truly a family affair with food, music, games, hikes, and the Fernbrook Derby Goat Races! Please join us for a ceremony at 2:30 p.m., honoring Andy Paravis for his years of service to the Township.

This year we will also be having a special raffle of the painting *Great Oak* by Ellen Nelson. The painting measures 16" by 26". You can purchase one ticket for $5, or three tickets for $10. It is an oil painting on wood with a custom frame. All profits go to the Woods.

In addition, the Township Committees and Organizations group will be sharing exhibits; perhaps you will find a wonderful volunteer opportunity.

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Spring 2013

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North Coventry Township Police Department

North Coventry Township Police Department is proud to introduce the newest addition to their force, K-9 Brox. Brox is an 18-month-old Belgian Malinois/German Shepherd mix. Brox was named in honor of fallen Plymouth Township K-9 Officer Bradley Fox, who was killed in the line of duty.



Brox came to the Department from Czechoslovakia in September 2012. Brox is handled and cared for by Officer Jesse Smith, and both are currently in training at the Philadelphia Police Department K-9 Academy. Brox completed patrol class in February and will be finishing narcotics detection at the end of April 2013. Brox has already been put to work apprehending a felony retail theft ring suspect fleeing from the Coventry Mall.

Brox follows in the footsteps of previous K-9's Wax, Greif, and Cezar. Brox was purchased with funds donated to the Police Department by Patriot Buick/GMC in Boyertown. He is a wonderful addition to the Department and will continue to be a great asset.

- As warm weather approaches, we would like to remind all residents that the best way to deter vehicle theft is by simply locking all car doors and keeping valuables out of sight.

- The Police Department has three certified child safety seat installation technicians. Safety seat inspections and installations can be scheduled by calling the Police Office 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday at 610-323-8360.

- With the redesign of the Route 422 interchanges and ongoing construction well into the future, the speed limit on Route 422 within North Coventry and Lower Pottsgrove Township has been reduced to 40 MPH. The new posted speed limit is in effect at all times, as work is done on a 24-hour basis. Municipal police and Pennsylvania State Police have been strictly enforcing the new speed limit for the safety of both motorists and construction crews.

- North Coventry Police use a variety of speed timing devices, which include Accutrack, Tracker, VASCAR, and ENRADD, an infrared speed timing device. Municipal police in Pennsylvania are restricted by law from using radar. Should you have a speeding concern on your street, please contact the Department and we will use a visible radar trailer or a covert system to record dates, times, and vehicle speeds to verify speeding issues.

- The Department recently purchased new vehicles, including three Dodge Charger Police Packages and two Dodge Ram trucks. The trucks are built for police, fire, and emergency response. With the rural nature of North Coventry, four-wheel-drive is essential to access remote locations. The new vehicles and all related equipment were purchased utilizing drug forfeiture money from an asset forfeiture program that the Department participates in, along with the Drug Enforcement Administration. The vehicles and new equipment were purchased at no cost to our tax payers.

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Directory

Township Office

845 S. Hanover Street
Phone: 610-323-1694 Fax: 610-323-7239
The township building and police administrative offices are open
Monday through Friday, from 8:30 *a.m. until 4:30 p.m.*

Board of Supervisors
2nd & 4th Mondays 7pm
James Marks, III, *Chairman*
E. Spencer Claypoole
Vice-Chairman
Harvey Greenawalt, Jr.
Rebekah Elliott
Richard Scheler

Planning Commission
3rd Wednesday 7pm
Jay Kline, *Chairman*
Pat Washburn,
Vice-Chairman
Dennis Gallino
David Mariano
Phyllis Chambers
James White

Zoning Hearing Board
2nd & 4th Thursdays
As needed 7pm
Ed DiCesare, *Chairman*
Albert Wrigley
Vice-Chairman
Virginia Lebon
Charles G. Stacks
Glen Hoff-Alt

Parks And Recreation
1st Wednesday 7:30pm
Jay Erb, *Chairman*
Colleen Skelton, *Secty.*
Steve Weil, *Treas.*
Michael Trahey
Jeremy Dalton
John Ellwanger
David Edleman

Environmental Advisory Council
3rd Wednesday 6:30pm
Adam Sager, *Chairman*
Bill Cannon
Kim White
John Werth
Chris Washburn
Pat Washburn

Historical Commission
3rd Thursday 7pm
Spencer Claypoole, *Chairman*
Isabel Rosewarne
Emeritus
Alice Sharp *Vice-Chairman*
Louise Griffiths, *Secty.*
Joan Cleveland
Pat Smith
Gladys McGrath
Cheryl Barr

Open Space Review Board
4th Tuesday 7pm
Chris Washburn, *Chairman*
Susan Deegan-Watson
Phyllis Chambers
Spencer Claypoole
John Ellwanger
Richard Scheler

Municipal Authority
4th Tuesday 7:30pm
Jay Meloy, Chairman
Dennis Hullmann
Robert W. Barlow
Richard Armstrong
Tim Forester
James D. Scheffey Solicitor
Steve Dunning, Manager

Water Authority
3rd Monday 7pm
Dennis Hullmann, Chairman
Timothy Forester
Barry Boettlin
Mike Gammon
Keith Learn
Ken Bickel
James D. Scheffey Solicitor
Steve Dunning, Manager

Township Manager
Kevin Hennessey
610-323-1694

Financial Officer
Debbie Giordano
610-323-1694

Administrative Assistant
Lois Lucas
610-323-1694

Building Code/Zoning Officer
Deborah Russo
610-323-1694

Road Department
Jonathan McKee Jr.,
Road Master
Rick Kirk
Steve Shillinger
Dave Bertolet
Dave Rishel
Brad Holloway

Real Estate Tax Collector
Nance Sparks
610-970-0334

Fire Department
Norco Firehouse
610-323-3263
Fire Dept Fax
610-327-0714

Fire Marshal
Ron Comtois
610-323-1694

Fire Chief
Terry Hipple

Emergency Management
Matt Galamba
610-323-1694

Police Department
For all **police,** *fire* and Medical emergencies: dial **911**
Non emergencies
call 610-323-8360
Fax: 610-326-2925

Police Chief
Robert Schurr
610-323-8360

Police Administration Manager
Ann Gery
610-323-8360

Pennsylvania Game Commission
610-926-3136

District Justice
James DeAngelo
610-469-1910

State Senator
44th District
John Rafferty
610-469-8390

State Representative
26th District
Tim Hennessey
610-326-2626

Chester County Court House
800-692-1100

OJR School District
610-469-5100

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Coventry Woods and the Free Love Valley Movement

By E. Spencer Claypoole, Chairman, North Coventry Township Historical Commission



Within Coventry Woods a radical religious group called the "Battle-Axes" was created in the mid-1800s. The name "Battle-Axe" is taken from the Bible, specifically Jeremiah 15:20: "Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war: and with thee will I break in pieces the nations; and with thee I destroy kingdoms..." The founder of the movement was Theophilus Gates, and the sect flourished from 1837 to 1857.

Gates was 50 years old in 1837 when the Battle-Axe sect took hold of nearly three dozen Coventry residents. Prior to this time Gates could probably be called a failure. Gates lived for years in Philadelphia, where he published a weekly five-cent pamphlet about his beliefs with little success. Two brothers from the Township, David and Dan Stubblebine, made coffee grinders in their two story log workshop on Cold Springs Road, which they sold in Philadelphia. Presumably, this is how Gates and the Stubblebines were to meet.

David Stubblebine and some of his children became members of the Battle-Axes. By 1840, Gates and his wife moved to the Rinehart farm in East Coventry. He preached that the Second Coming had occurred and that the Coventries were the new Garden of Eden. Traditional organized religion was abhorred and the movement emphasized nudity, free love where marriage had no place, and other unethical views. As such, David's wife, Catharine Bachman Stubblebine, and her oldest son did not join the group and Catharine and her son left David and moved to the Fernbrook house, now known as the Catherine Stubblebine House.

During the summer months the sect had a pond behind the Stubblebine workshop where they made a ritual parade to the water, all members naked. Locals said that upon reaching the pond, "all hell broke loose." In the winter the ritual was practiced using a large spring house such as Hannah Shingle's across from Shenkel Church. Such activity did not sit well with the local Justice of the Peace, Samuel Willauer. From his house, just north of the Coventry Church on Keim Street, charges of fornication and all manner of lewdness were made in 1842 against sect members, including David, William, and Jacob Stubblebine. The trial took place the next year in a packed West Chester courthouse. Bystanders were disappointed as those charged wore clothing. Catharine Stubblebine was one of three who testified against the Battle-Axes. Prison sentences were handed out, except for Jacob Stubblebine.

The sect further disrupted activity with local church groups. In the spring of 1844, sect members, men and women walked naked down the aisles of Shenkel Church during Sunday services. However, keeping with church tradition, men and women marched separately on either side of the church. Adding to this depraved sense of humor, a sect leader Hannah Williamson (sister of Lydia and successor to Gates) took to the pulpit and lectured members. Hannah did this on more than one occasion and also attempted to do so at the summer Methodist camp site in South Coventry.

On October 25, 1855, Hannah Shingle was murdered in her second floor bedroom by an intruder, using her own axe. The murderer could not be found and Battle-Axe members did not want to be associated in any way. After prison Hannah Williamson left the area and was no longer heard from. Magdalene Snyder died in 1897 and she and a number of the Battle-Axes are buried in the Shenkel Free Burial Ground.

Some members of the Snyder family, whose house is on Unionville Road north of the Berks County line, were part of the sect. A daughter, Magdalene, according to Gates' teachings, one day announced in front of William Stubblebine and his wife Mary Ann that she would now be William's spouse. Mary Ann eventually moved out of their Shenkel Road home. When William died in 1871, she successfully sued for his estate and Magdalene moved into a home in the Cedarville. By 1871 the sect had long since dispersed, but William was said to have been the last practicing member.

In 1930, the area was named "Free Love Valley" when Charles Coleman Sellers, an author, researched the group and wrote a book entitled Theophilus, the Battle-Axe. With sect members living in East and South Coventry Townships, Sellers felt that Free Love Valley should encompass those areas as well as North Coventry Township.

At the May Coventry Woods Festival you may tour the Catharine Stubblebine House if it is open. Visit the historical table for more information about the Battle-Axes. A short video about the Battle-Axe members may also be shown.

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Visible Residential Address Numbering: It Is A *REQUIREMENT!*



The response to the Newsletter regarding the address numbering has been outstanding. A thank you to all of the residents that have complied; however, we still have a substantial number of homes in the township that have not.

North Coventry Township has implemented a program by which all properties must be addressed. The 2009 International Property Maintenance Code, Section 304.3, which was adopted by North Coventry Township, states that **all properties in the township shall have approved address numbers placed in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property.** The address numbers shall be a minimum of four (4) inches high and a minimum of ½" in width. The numbers shall contrast with their background. Also, it should be visible from both directions.

Reflective address numbers are recommended so all emergency responders can find your house number easier at night. Most address numbers that are existing on properties cannot be seen after dark. The goal of the Township Code Enforcement Office is that all residential properties will have an address that is visible and can be seen no matter what hour of the day or night. The reflective address numbers can be purchased from the NORCO Fire House or any home improvement center.

Please remember that all residential properties must be visibly addressed no later than May 31, 2013. All residential properties not addressed will violate the 2009 IPMC, Section 304.3. The Code Enforcement Department will then begin enforcement procedures.

Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs, and Spas Must Be Fenced In!



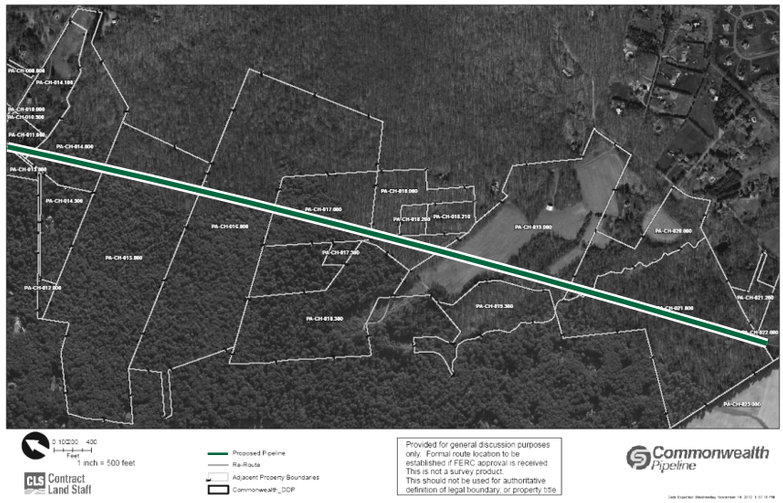
All existing inground and above ground pools, spas, and hot tubs in North Coventry Township must meet the following regulations of the **2009 International Property Maintenance Code: Section 303.2 Enclosures***–Private swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas, containing water more than 24 inches in depth, shall be completely surrounded by a fence or barrier at least 48 inches in height above the finished ground level measured on the side of the barrier away from the pool. Gates and doors in such barriers shall be self-closing and self-latching. Where the self-latching device is less than 54 inches above the bottom of the gate, the release mechanism shall be located on the pool side of the gate. The gate must automatically close and latch. No pool enclosure shall be removed, replaced or changed in a manner that would reduce its effectiveness as a safety barrier.

*Spas and hot tubs with safety covers shall be exempt from the provisions of this section. All swimming pools shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition and in good repair.

Township Code Enforcement has started inspection for compliance of the 2009 IMPC, Section 303.2 Enclosures. All swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas that are not in compliance will be in violation of this code. The Code Enforcement Department will begin enforcement procedures.

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Proposed Pipeline in North Coventry on Hold!



Last November Township Manager Kevin Hennessey received a call from a representative of Commonwealth Pipeline asking permission for a crew to conduct a survey through Coventry Woods. When the inquiry was brought to the Board of Supervisors, it was the first anyone in the Township was aware of the plan to construct a natural gas pipeline through North Coventry Township.

The Commonwealth Pipeline is one of about seven proposed projects to pipe the Marcellus Shale Natural Gas throughout the state. UGI Corporation has a facility outside of Reading, PA, and is a partner in the proposed Commonwealth project. Their location is the reason the project would curve through North Coventry while bringing the natural gas from the Williamsport area to the greater Philadelphia area. When Township Manager Hennessey asked for a map of the proposed route, he was given maps that showed the line to go through the center of densest part of the Coventry Wood Preserve (see photo). Should the project proceed as planned, a minimum 50-foot-wide section of the woodland would be clear cut, causing extensive environmental damage to the eco system, allowing invasive plants to encroach an additional 50 feet on either side of the pipeline right of way.

Representatives of the pipeline were invited to the Board of Supervisors meeting but the project was put on hold and, despite the initial acceptance of the invitation to attend a meeting, no representatives have appeared. No permission by the Township was ever given to conduct the survey and after a multi-municipal meeting on the pipeline, the North Coventry Board of Supervisors on February 11, 2013, unanimously adopted a **Resolution objecting to and opposing the proposed path through North Coventry.** (See resolution on Township website) As of this date, "The sponsors of Commonwealth Pipeline have suspended development of the project." Concerned residents can view the pipeline's web page at www.commonwealthpipeline.com/pipeline. The Supervisors are actively following any developments regarding this project and are continuing to join in the local coalition to oppose the proposed route. Please contact the Township office if you have been contacted or are contacted in the future by representatives for the Pipeline.

We are looking for North Coventry History



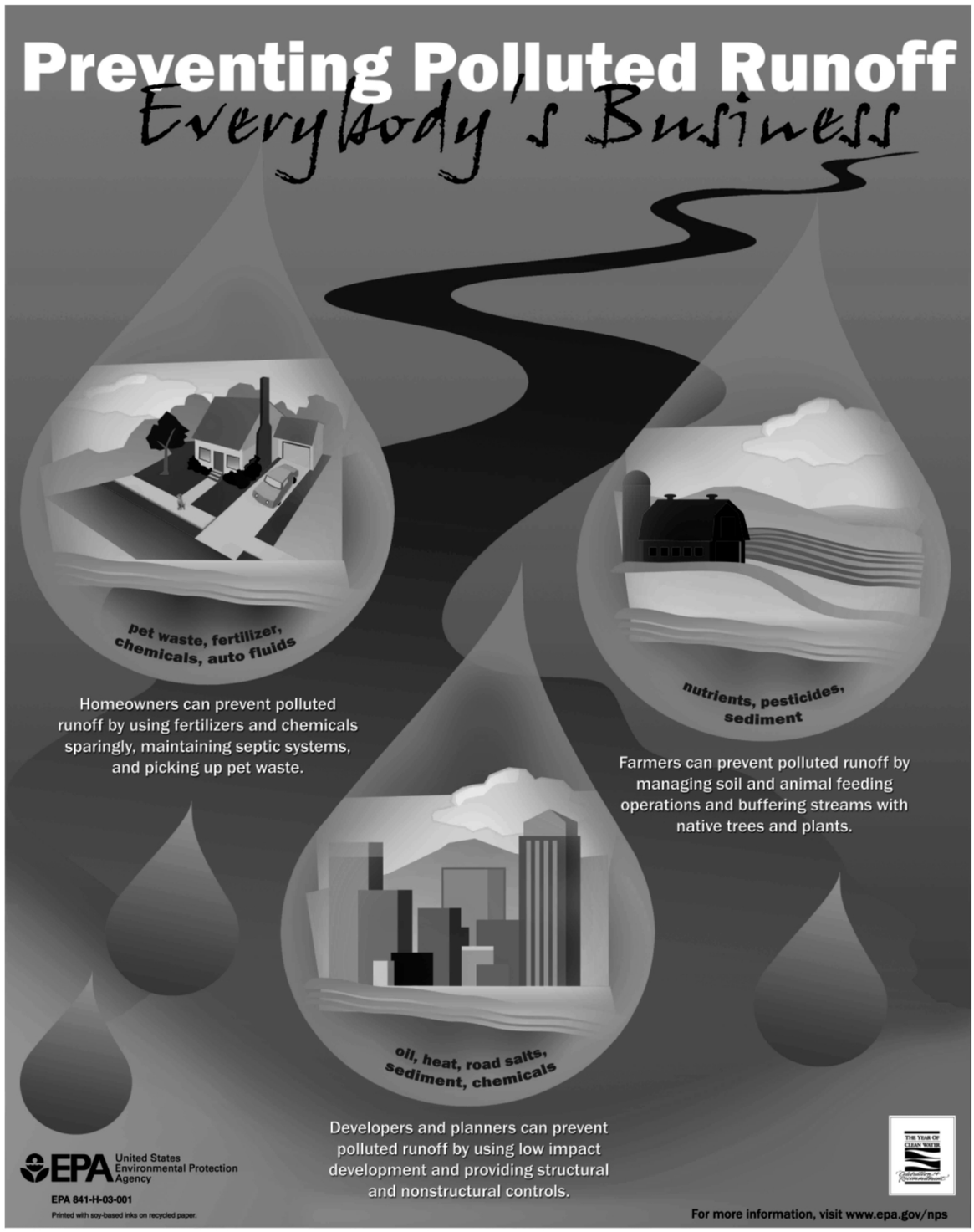
Do you have North Coventry Township History in your attic or maybe in that dresser drawer?

Please share your photos, newspaper articles, etc. of North Coventry Township with our Historical Committee.

We will copy them and return them to you. Call the township or a member of the Historical Committee found in the directory.

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Preventing Polluted Runoff From Harming North Coventry Streams



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North Coventry Township
845 S. Hanover Street
Pottstown, PA 19465

Phone: 610-323-1694

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Interim Township Supervisor



Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Rick Scheler. I have been appointed interim Township Supervisor following the untimely death of Andy Paravis. I have been married to my wife, Sheree, for 37 years. We have three daughters, all graduates of Owen J. Roberts; two granddaughters; and have lived in our North Coventry home for the past 33 years. I am a member of Shenkel United Church of Christ where I served on consistory, as well as other various committees.

Following my 1973 graduation from Williamson Trade School with a degree in Specialized Technology, I started working in the masonry industry and have spent the last 40 years self-employed as president of Scheler & Shifflett, Inc. I continue to do so throughout a five-county area.

My experiences have given me knowledge of human resources, finance, insurance, and safety procedures. I have been a township zoning board member for the past seven years (three as Vice Chairperson) and am currently on the Open Space Review Board. I am confident my experiences have given me the basis to help our Township achieve its goals in the coming years. My desire to serve our Township is why I am running for the remainder of the unexpired term as Supervisor in November's election.

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