

What's Goin' On

# Around Town

## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTERS

Winter/Spring 2015

Volume 9 - Quarter 1



# NEWTOWN

## TOWNSHIP

**FLIP OVER**  
for Parks and Rec  
Winter/Spring  
Classes!

### NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Michael Gallagher



Kyle Davis



Ryan W. Gallagher, Esq



Phillip Calabro



Jen Dix

### NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP SNOW ANGELS ARE NEEDED!

Last winter's record snowfall left many elderly and those with physical disabilities trapped in their homes, isolated and afraid that ambulances and vital emergency services would be delayed in reaching them. The solution was the creation of the Newtown Township Snow Angels, a free program designed to help elderly or infirm Newtown Township residents clear snow from their driveways and sidewalks during winter storms.

The Newtown Township Snow Angels relies on neighbors helping neighbors. Newtown Township wants to link volunteers with residents' age 60 or older or with a physical disability. To be considered for this free service they must reside in Newtown Township without a household member able to shovel snow living in the residence and lack snow removal resources.

This volunteer opportunity is open to anyone living in Newtown Township and is great for families and high school students. Volunteers are asked to help at least one resident for the entire 2014 - 2015 winter.

To register as a volunteer with the Newtown Township Snow Angels program and ensure that township elderly and disabled are cared for this winter, please contact Newtown Township, Parks and Recreation Director, Kathy Pawlenko at 215- 968-2800 ext. 272 or email [kathyp@twp.newtown.pa.us](mailto:kathyp@twp.newtown.pa.us)

Pictured are our first volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 29 and 99 with Bill Pitts the District Chair from the Bucks County Council.



Pictured are Bill Pitts, Cody Sullivan, Mark Sullivan, Roy DiFiori, Will Shikrallah, and Bill Shikrallah

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### IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### Emergency Dial 911

Non Emergency Response Newtown Police, Rescue Squad and Fire Department . . . . . 215-598-7121  
Newtown Police Office (non emergencies) . . . . . 215-579-1000  
Newtown Rescue Squad (non emergencies) . . . . . 215-968-3500 ext.2  
Newtown Fire Department (non emergencies) . . . . . 215-968-3731  
Newtown Township Administration . . . . . 215-968-2800

### TOWNSHIP DIRECTORY

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### CATCH BASIN CARE

#### IT IS ILLEGAL TO DUMP ANYTHING OTHER THAN RAINWATER DOWN A CATCH BASIN!



Catch basins are the grated storm drains that you see on almost every street corner. They are also called storm sewer inlets – typically located next to street curbs – that are the entryway from our streets to our storm sewer system. Pet wastes, oil, leaves, grass clippings and other debris DO NOT go to the wastewater treatment plant when dumped into catch basins. It all goes directly to our streams, creeks and rivers. When catch basins get clogged with fallen leaves and debris, water can no longer be drained from the street. Water ponds along streets and can flood intersections causing localized street flooding which can be a hazard to the traveling public. Do not sweep or blow yard waste into the street, gutters or catch basins. **Remember: Trash in our streets ends up as trash in our waterways!**

Properly dispose of leaves and grass clippings by composting or by throwing them in the trash. Contact your waste hauler to determine their yard waste requirements.

To report an illicit discharge into the storm drain system, please call the Newtown Township Public Works Department at 215-968-2800 x 246.

## MESSAGE FROM CHIEF HENRY PASQUALINI:

Driving in snow is serious business. Before you head out in inclement weather try asking yourself the following questions. Is this trip really necessary? Is my vehicle ready for this trip? Am I mentally and physically prepared to make this trip? If the answer to any of these are "No" you may want to reconsider going out. Things can change in a big hurry during a snowstorm and can literally become deadly during a blizzard. Even when the storm is over, the slippery streets still present serious safety hazards and visibility issues. Slow down - braking takes longer on slippery roads so the slower you go, the easier it will be for you to maintain control of your vehicle. Increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. Before starting out in bad weather test your brakes to see how far it takes you to stop. Visibility is almost always poor when driving in snow so turn your headlights on. If you must travel, keep your car gassed up so that the fuel lines don't freeze. Completely clear snow off of the entire car, including the roof, and remember to sweep the taillights and headlights. Watch out for slow-moving vehicles like snowplows, and try not to get too close. Also try to avoid passing these vehicles. Stay alert and keep two hands on the steering wheel and two eyes on the road at all times.



You also might want to consider keeping the items listed below in your vehicle.

### WINTER SURVIVAL KIT FOR YOUR VEHICLE

- Flashlight with fresh batteries
- Blankets
- Booster cables
- Warning device, such as flares or reflective triangle
- Small bag of abrasive material, such as sand or cat litter
- Cloth or a roll of paper towels
- Small shovel
- Cell phone
- Can of de-icer
- Ice scraper



## IMPORTANT NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP MEETING DATES

*(unless otherwise noted)*

### Board of Supervisors

2nd & 4th Wednesday, 7:30 pm

H.A.R.B.

2nd Wednesday, 9:30 am

### Parks and Recreation Board

1st Wednesday, 7:00 pm

### Environmental Advisory Council

4th Monday, 7:30 pm

### Planning Commission

1st and 3rd Tuesday, 7:30 pm

### Zoning Hearing Board

1st Thursday, 7:00 pm

### Technology Committee

Last Tuesday, 7:30 pm

### Economic Development Committee

2nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm

## SNOW PROCEDURES

Newtown Township Public Works Department has developed a formal plan of action for snow and ice control. The following excerpts are some of the areas we find most important for you, the resident, to be informed of. Working together we believe we will be able to proactively assure a smooth operating procedure for combating winter storms. Please familiarize yourself with these guidelines and adhere to them. Ultimately, you will be helping your township to help you. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

### SALT APPLICATION

Salt and/or magnesium chloride will be applied when snow begins to lie or rain freezes on road surfaces. Salting assignments shall be in accordance with snow and ice control maps. Salting will cease when snow reaches a depth of two inches, except when salting and plowing simultaneously.

### SNOW REMOVAL / PLOWING

Snowplowing usually begins when depth reaches two inches or at the discretion of the Director of Public Works or authorized representative. Each township street will be plowed to the curb, widening the street and allowing for additional snow, unless otherwise directed. Snow will be plowed from roads in order of priority starting with primary, arterial, secondary, and lastly, 153 cul-de-sacs.

### PARKING DURING WINTER STORMS

It is an ordinance by law that no vehicle should be parked on any township road once ice or snow had accumulated to one (1) inch in depth. Any vehicle in violation of this law will be towed and impounded. A fine may also be attached.

### SNOW REMOVAL FROM SIDEWALKS

It is the responsibility of the property owner to clear a pathway on the sidewalk within 24 hours after the snow has stopped falling. Snow is to be placed on the property owner's property. Snow should NEVER be placed in the roadway.

### FIRE HYDRANTS

Homeowners are asked to clear snow from around the fire hydrants near their homes.

## NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC WORKS SNOW REMOVAL ORDINANCES 201-204 AND 602-605

Require **ALL** vehicles must be removed from any road or street after an accumulation of one inch or greater of snow until snow has been completely removed from the entire width of the cartway, until 24 hours after the storm. Vehicles in violation may be towed and impounded on the authority of the Chief of Police or Director of Public Works.

Sidewalks must be cleared of snow and ice within 24 hours after the end of a snowfall or ice storm. If you are unable to clear your own property of snow and ice, it is recommended that you contact a landscaping or snow removal service company.

### PLEASE ...

- **DO NOT** shovel, blow, or push snow from driveways or sidewalks into roadways. This practice is dangerous and illegal and can leave the homeowner liable in case of an accident. Snow must be kept within the homeowner's property limits.
- **DO NOT** leave trash cans in roadways or near curb areas.
- **DO NOT** leave basketball backstops at curb areas. Damage has resulted to backstops and Township vehicles during snow removal. The Township is not responsible for damage to backstops.

### To contact the Public Works Department

The Township phone number for public inquiries during storms is 215-968-2800 ext. 246. Messages will be received at this number and monitored by the Director of Public Works for appropriate action.



Members of the Newtown Emergency Services Department and the Newtown Fire Association were recognized by Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency for having obtained Emergency Management Basic Certification. Pictured from left to right: Tim Chamberlain, Scott Ratzke, Chief Glenn Forsyth, Steve Katz, Harry Crotte Bucks County EMA, Joe Martindell, John Gundy, Scott Ischinger, and Brian Therien.

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## GENERATOR SAFETY By John Gundy

With the popularity of power generators to supply electricity during power outages, it's a good idea to understand some basic rules.

Generators are rated for the amount of power (wattage) needed to run appliances in your home. All appliances use a certain amount of wattage. Depending on your electrical requirements, a generator will supply that power without a problem. A generator that is underpowered for the type of service, may cause a fire. Check online or with an electrical supplier to find out the exact requirements for your needs.

- Always follow manufacturer's instructions and safety guidelines when using a generator.
- Use a generator or other fuel powered machines outside, away from the home. Generators, as with many gas fueled appliances, produce CO (carbon monoxide). CO fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm occupants in a home.
- The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reported from 1999 to 2010, nearly 600 generator-related CO deaths.
- Use the appropriate size and type power cords to carry the electrical loads to your home. Never use a lamp cord for a generator. Overloaded cords and underrated cords can overheat and cause fires.
- Never connect generators to another power source such as household receptacles. The reverse flow of electricity or "back feed" can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker. Never connect your generator to your electrical panel without the proper attachments and permits.

Educate yourself about generators and how they operate before you purchase one. If you're not sure, ask a certified electrician, electrical supply house or check online.



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*YMCA at Chandler Hall*

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## PLANNING COMMISSION

Among the hardest working volunteers in the Township are the Planning Commission members. Members are charged with reviewing land development, conditional use and zoning applications and must consider not only existing zoning and land development ordinances but the Township's comprehensive plan as well.

Newtown Township's zoning is governed by a Joint Municipal Zoning Ordinance, (JMZO) along with Wrightstown and Upper Makefield, which is unique in Pennsylvania. Every other community in Pennsylvania, with zoning, only has rules and regulations for their own municipalities and does not encompass multiple townships. Zoning must allow for every conceivable use and jointly zoning with Wrightstown and Upper Makefield allows this to occur without each community having to assume the full burden of uses within their borders. Our Planning Commission helps shape this ordinance, suggesting and reviewing amendments to keep up with the ever changing needs of the community, both commercial and residential. Recently the members assisted in reshaping the commercial district along Sycamore Street, helping define the vision of the area as a pedestrian friendly downtown with a blend of business, retail and residential uses, all lining wide sidewalks. They have also undertaken a review of the ordinances governing signs throughout the commercial districts, examining ways to adapt the rules and regulations to accommodate changing business needs and new technologies.

When residents plan to make improvements to their homes and the changes are not allowed by our Zoning ordinance, the Planning Commission helps them prepare for their presentation to the Zoning Hearing Board. Our members work with Township consultants, a planner, attorney and engineer, who formally review plans and alert the Commission members to issues or concerns. While most of the

members have expertise in land use it has mostly been through "on the job training" at Township meetings.

Chairman Allen Fidler, who has been a township volunteer for over twenty-five years, first became involved when an erosion control project at his business, Roberts Nursery, underwent a lengthy review with the Township. He believed that the Township could have more efficiently assisted those in the midst of these types of reviews. He has been a volunteer ever since, helping guide residents and businesses through the review process. He also contributes to his fellow Commission members' understanding of the Township's history and the evolution of the Township's zoning ordinance, as Newtown has changed from a farming community to a very active suburb.

Planning Commission members play a critical role in Newtown Township moving forward in the 21st century while maintaining its historic roots.



Township Planner Micah Lewis, Code Enforcement Officer Martin Vogt, Township Engineer Michele Fountain, PC Member Craig Deutsch, PC Chairman Allen Fidler, Township Solicitor John Torrente, PC Secretary Peggy Driscoll and PC Member Larry Galley (not pictured – Courtney Coffman, Paul Cohen, Shannon Escalante, Dennis Fisher)

## INSTRUCTORS NEEDED!

Have an idea for a class? Do you have a special talent or hobby that you would like to share with the community? Then please contact the parks & recreation office at [recreation@twp.newtown.pa.us](mailto:recreation@twp.newtown.pa.us) for more information about teaching a program with us! We offer a wide variety of program activities and are constantly looking for new ideas. Thank you for your interest in working within your community and Newtown Township Parks & Recreation!



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- Grandparents' Rights



Jeffrey A. Liebmann



Patricia Gordon



David J. Sowerbutts



Mindy J. Snyder

## TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

The Technology Committee was formed in 2008 by Supervisor Mike Gallagher to provide guidance on how best to modernize the Township's use of the many tools technology has to offer. At the very first meeting, Mr. Gallagher led a discussion of ways the Township could benefit from various updates. The members took the ideas from that discussion and began to formulate a five year plan. They interviewed Township Department Heads and employees and talked to their neighbors, the residents.

After creating the initial five year plan, the Committee began to research how best to implement it.

Since that first meeting, the Technology Committee helped the Parks and Recreation Department develop its own website which lists all of its programs, classes and events and allows on-line registration and payment. The Committee then helped the Township move forward on a "paperless initiative". To that end, employees and volunteers began to use GoogleDocs to circulate and share documents, saving countless hours of clerical time making copies and tons of paper each year. Our Supervisors and other committee members are now bringing

their iPads and laptops to meetings instead of reams of paper plans. There have been a number of other, smaller projects the Technology Committee has been able to advise on, including bringing wireless access to all of the community rooms in the Municipal Complex.

Looking ahead, the Committee hopes to guide the Supervisors as they begin to consider an updated website. They will once again survey employees and residents to learn how the Township can best serve the community's needs, providing information around the clock to our busy residents.

The Committee is always looking for interested members. Chairman and Supervisor Kyle Davis first joined the committee because he wanted to participate in Township activities and was looking for an opportunity that would make good use of his professional background. The other members are all professionals in various IT fields, and all have a strong desire to help make Newtown a better place.



Resident Tom Chaar, Members Prasad Ramnath, Jon Schnell and Kyle Davis. (not shown, Bob Penland, Dan Paramesh and Alex Kasyanov)





Dr. Kamat Dr. Dana Cianni

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## NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP'S ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Newtown Township's Environmental Advisory Council was formed in 2005 with a primary goal of educating Newtown's residents on environmental concerns and helping the Township's other committees, boards and commissions understand how best to develop and grow Newtown while remaining sensitive to our impact on the world around us.

Over the years, the EAC has created the Township's master inventory of open space, worked with the Municipal Open Space Program committee to draft our open space comprehensive plan and helped the Supervisors identify and seek funding to preserve the open space on Washington Crossing Road known as the Rockbridge property. In addition, the EAC has worked alongside our Park and Recreation Department on educational programs for both adults and children, most recently sponsoring a booth at Earth Day, where children were able to build their own wooden birdhouses and learn how best to attract birds to their yard. Members have also helped with annual recycling events at the Township building.

Through EAC guidance, Newtown has become an Audubon Society Bird Town. Two of our members have been trained to advise homeowners on creating a bird friendly back yard in order to reap the benefits of a healthy bird environment. Our members are appointed to three year terms. Co-Chairmen Autumn Thomas and Steve Jenks first joined the EAC because they had backgrounds in science and wanted to encourage stewardship of our natural environment. Autumn has loved being able to help our residents learn "the value of providing healthy habitats for our own backyards to protect the native wildlife we share." Steve has been thrilled to help organize programs to help his Newtown neighbors "understand sustainable forms of energy, transforming the way we think about how it is generated and consumed."

In 2015 the EAC will once again sponsor Newtown's entry into the Audubon Society's Great Backyard Bird Count. On the weekend of February 13-16, 2015, Newtown residents can register and count the number of different species of birds they see in their own backyards. All you need to do is count birds in your yard for fifteen minutes for one or more days and log into the site with your results. To learn more visit [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org)



Pictured – Autumn Thomas, Shannon Escalante, Ami Easterly, Steve Bacher and Steve Jenks

### Participate in the Great Back Yard Bird Count February 13-16 2015

By counting birds we help scientists learn where the birds are to get a big picture about what is happening in bird populations, and how environmental changes impact bird migrations and populations.

All you have to do is set aside one or two 15 minute intervals on Valentine's weekend and count what you see. Throw out some bread crumbs or fill your bird feeder and look out the window. Then log on and let Cornell Ornithology Lab and the National Audubon Society know what you saw. Be sure to note that you are in Newtown Township, an official Audubon Society Bird Town.

Visit [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org) to learn about the count, register and participate.

## Be Ready! Winter Weather

**Weatherproof your home to protect against the cold.**

- Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home.
- Have your chimney or flue inspected every year.
- Make sure the batteries are working!
- Insulate walls and attic.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows.

**Check out more tips on winter weather indoor safety.**

**Prepare yourself for exposure to winter weather.**

- Never leave lit candles or other flames unattended.
- Bring your pets indoors as temperatures drop!
- Dress warmly and limit exposure to the cold to prevent frostbite.
- Avoid getting wet to prevent hypothermia.

**If power lines are down, call your local utility and emergency services**

If power lines fall on your car, warn people not to touch the car or power lines.

**Make sure your car is ready for winter travel.**

- Check antifreeze level and have radiator system serviced.
- Replace worn tires and check tire air pressure.
- Keep gas tank full to avoid ice in tank and fuel lines.
- Make a winter emergency kit to keep in your car.

[www.cdc.gov/phpr/infographics.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/infographics.htm)

## PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

The Parks and Recreation Board works with our Parks and Recreation Department to advise the Supervisors on park development, recreation activities and preservation of open space.

The Parks and Rec Board helped develop and implement our recreation comprehensive plan. With this as a guide, the members have conducted surveys, worked with consultants and planned and improved Veterans Park, made Roberts Ridge Park completely inclusive, purchased the solar powered restrooms at Roberts Ridge Park and improved the fields and playground at Helen Randle Park. With their guidance, other Township owned land has remained open and undeveloped. The cornfields on Washington Crossing Road, known as the Wiggins tract has remained open, as has the land along Newtown Creek.

Many years ago the PRB helped arrange for the purchase of the 50 acres known as Clark Nature Center. That land is open to our residents for walks in the woods and bird watching. The PRB has helped Eagle Scouts and Council Rock classes plan and execute projects including a bird blind, outdoor classroom, marked and mulched trails, a garden of rare rhododendrons and a community herb garden. Looking ahead, the PRB hopes to continue to guide the stewardship of this unspoiled parkland.

Our current Board is made up of volunteers who came together to assure Newtown continues to grow as a community, through our parks, trails and recreation programs for children and adults. Our chairman Andrew Levine and member Sue Sutton have each been volunteering for close to twenty years. Our other members have come to the committee through their shared interest in both preserving open space and providing recreation for our residents. Over the years many of our

members came to us because of their involvement in community sports associations, including Council Rock Newtown Athletic Association, Rock Softball and CYO. Denis D'Arcy became involved as a result of his involvement with planning our skate park. He wanted to help provide opportunities for kids to "play outside." Kathy Kelly and Sue Sutton first volunteered because of their desire to preserve open space. They have worked hard to see that parks like Roberts Ridge and Silver Lake retain a rural appearance while providing passive recreation. All of the members have enjoyed working with Kathy Pawlenko, our Parks and Recreation Director, and even volunteering at Township events including the annual Youth Yard Sale and Candy Cane Hunt.



PRB Members Dennis D'Arcy, Sue Sutton, Kathy Kelly and Park and Recreation Director Kathy Pawlenko (not pictured, Chairman Andrew Levine, Vice Chairman Joel Grosso and members Mark Joseph, Mark McMenamin and Anne Porter)

Judy Loftus

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## HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

Our Historic District, consisting of properties along Sycamore Street, has been part of the National Register of Historic Places since the early 1980's, when it joined with Newtown Borough's Historic District. As a requirement of the Department of the Interior, changes and improvements to properties in the Historic District must be approved and granted a certificate of appropriateness by the Board of Supervisors at the recommendation of our HARB.

As HARB member Harriet Beckert explained, being on Newtown's HARB is a little tricky, as Sycamore Street has evolved since the 1680's and includes colonial, Victorian and even modern architecture and everything in between. While the Department of the Interior provides some guidelines, our HARB members must have a deep understanding not just of architectural history but of Newtown's history, as it has grown and changed from William Penn's "new town" founded in 1682 to the County seat in the 1700's to a stop on the underground railroad, to a thriving farming community to what it is today and what it hopes to become as Sycamore Street grows into the center of our shopping district.

HARB meets with homeowners and business owners who plan to make changes to their properties and helps them select

appropriate styles, colors and textures. This has been no small task, as the street has seen some big new projects attempting to fit in nicely with the existing street. HARB has worked hard to see that new construction blends with history.

The focal points of the street, and of Newtown Township, are the Newtown Presbyterian Church, built in 1734 and even used to house the Hessian soldiers taken prisoner by General Washington after the Battle of Trenton in 1776 and Olde St. Andrew's Church, erected in 1880 and painstakingly restored in 2001 with the help of HARB to guide the process's historic accuracy.

Each of the HARB members has volunteered in an effort to preserve history and understanding of the significance of Newtown in Pennsylvania and United States. HARB members include the Township Codes Inspector, a real estate representative, an architect and a Planning Commission liaison, along with some residents with an interest in art, architecture and history. All are dedicated to helping property owners maintain the integrity of their historic homes and businesses. Our current Board members are Bill Mahler, Mike Crane, Doug Terry, Harriet Beckert, Joseph McKernan and Peggy Driscoll.

## HOW TO REGISTER FOR PARKS & RECREATION PROGRAMS!

We have plenty of registration options! You can print and then mail the registration form in with your credit card and class information. You can also stop by our offices and register in person, we are open Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm and closed on Holidays. You can call within those same times and speak to our staff to register over the phone: 215-968-2800 ext. 239. You can fax us the registration form to: 215-504-2202. Finally, you can register online through our secure website after creating or logging in to your current account at [www.newtownfun.com](http://www.newtownfun.com)!

### 1 MAIL-IN

Newtown Parks & Rec.  
100 Municipal Drive  
Newtown, PA 18940

### 2 FAX-IN

Fax to: 215-504-2202  
Complete the registration form with credit card information including signature in order to register.

### 3 PHONE-IN

Call 215-968-2800 ext. 239 to register by phone. All phone registrations must be paid by **Visa, MasterCard or Discover.**

### 4 WALK-IN

Walk-In Registrations  
Parks & Rec. Office  
located at the  
Newtown Municipal  
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### 5 ONLINE

Go to  
[www.newtownfun.com](http://www.newtownfun.com)  
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