

The Milemarker

EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP

TREASURE HUNT

With a beautiful fall, now's a good time to check out some of East Brandywine's scenic roads—and there are scenes from some of these byways in this issue. If you're planning an outing, try to drive along at least the following roads: Buck and North Buck, Crawford, Dilworth, Hadfield, Highspire, Hopewell, Little Washington, Osborne and Reeds.

A NEW LOOK FOR GUTHRIESVILLE?

Township officials got a preview of a new "master plan" for Guthriesville in a late August meeting. The most radical suggestion is to create a "new village" by building a road linking Bonds-ville Road near its intersection with East Reeceville Road with Horseshoe Pike near the Wright Agency. The triangular area thus formed could be home to a new restaurant, parking space, and a pleasant "sitting area," where local folks can gather and chat, along with the existing homes and businesses.

Just as importantly, this half loop around the existing village core could become a new travel artery for east-bound traffic on Horseshoe Pike. The idea is that by manipulating the timing of the traffic light at the Horseshoe Pike-Bonds-ville Road-Hopewell Road intersection, motorists would find it quicker and more

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Each year, Bob Spatola paints a new picture of the activities at his Farmer in Lyndell Christmas tree farm. Visitors are quick to snatch up reprints.

A Christmas Tree Farm With Strong Local Roots

Each year, Ed Kozlowski plants 2,000 to 2,500 trees. Each year he sells about 1,500—Christmas trees from the only tree farm in East Brandywine, The Farmer in Lyndell. Buyers come from all over, with the most unlikely a man who flew up from Florida in his own plane because he was fed up with the holiday fare offered in his home state.

At its pre-Christmas peak, this thriving local business is an all-hands-on-deck operation for the Spatola family. Its origins date back to 1984 when Bob and Hannah Spatola, in a move to preserve local open space, bought a 20-acre property next door to their Orvilla Farm at Highspire and Marshall Roads. At Hannah's suggestion, they decided to plant trees on their new land the following year, a mix of spruce, Douglas fir and Scotch pine among others. Then they had to wait about eight years until they could bring in their first harvest.

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WHO, WHEN AND WHERE

Township Board of Supervisors

CHAIRMAN

Jay G. Fischer, Esq.

VICE CHAIRMAN

Hudson L. Voltz, Esq.

MEMBER

David A. Kirkner, CPA

Township Public Meetings

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

First Thursday at 7:30 a.m.

Third Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION

First Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

Second Tuesday at 7:30 a.m.

Public Committee Meetings

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Second Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Second Monday at 7:30 p.m.

ORDINANCE TASK FORCE

Fourth Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

First Monday at 7:30 p.m.

Township Meetings held at the Township Building, 1214 Horseshoe Pike

Important Numbers

Fire and Ambulance 911

Police (emergency) 911

Police (non-emergency)..... 383-7000

Police Administration 269-4300

Township Administration .. 269-8230

Township Offices open M to F 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m.

Telephone Staff Directory

Tax Collector, Patti Piersol

Home Office (610) 269-4054

Weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For all other staff members, call 269-8230 and press the extension.

200 Norann King, Building Dept.

201 Mary Beth Smedley, Secretary/Treasurer

203 Scott Piersol, Twp. Manager/ EMC and Fire Marshal

204 Matthew Van Lew, Roadmaster

100 Police Administration

Web Addresses

TOWNSHIP

www.ebrandywine.org

POLICE

www.brandywineregional.org

NEW LOOK FOR GUTHRIESVILLE

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convenient to use the loop rather than the main road.

Other ideas presented by Jim Hartling of Urban Planners, the Philadelphia firm putting together the master plan, include getting:

- A pledge from PennDot not to widen Horseshoe Pike as it passes through the village, thus encouraging commercial and professional firms to invest there.
- A commitment from the Township to offer various investment incentives, perhaps through liberal rulings on various municipal codes.

■ Also, a commitment from the Township to build the equivalent of about a mile-and-a-half of pedestrian-friendly sidewalks radiating in all directions from the traffic light in the center of the village.

■ A transformation of this intersection into a “visual center” containing, perhaps, a plaza or some other key feature and an enlarged Fire Co. presence.

Mr. Hartling said one key to this center’s success could be revitalization of the existing 138-year-old general store a.k.a. Mama Lena’s. He suggested it would be an ideal location for a new Guthriesville post office and/or for specialized retailers. However, unless some unknown white

knight comes forward very soon to buy and restore the building, this particular idea may be swept aside by a demolition crew.

Mr. Hartling acknowledged the uncertainty about the building’s future and said all Urban Planners’ concepts are based on the assumption that a Wawa gas station and convenience store will be erected at the Horseshoe Pike-Bondsville Road corner.

Mr. Hartling is scheduled to present his final report after the deadline for this newsletter. If all the core goals are met, then in Urban Planners’ longer view development of the village could extend along the entire stretch of highway between Bollinger Road in the west and Corner Ketch Road in the east.

XMAS TREE FARM WITH LOCAL ROOTS

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Bob Spatola’s family rose to prosperity in construction and in the wine and spirits business and has had a strong impact on the local community. His father built many homes here and the family donated the land for Spatola Park on Raleigh Drive to the Township. When Mr. Spatola started his new tree venture he persuaded his daughter Kate and her husband Ed Kozlowski to move from Colorado (where Ed was a Mercedes mechanic) to manage the farm.

It was a slow start. In the first year, they sold 56 trees. But the business grew quickly and these days averages about 1,500 trees each holiday season. More have to be planted because not all the new seedlings survive. Ed Kozlowski travels to various Pennsylvania growing farms ev-

ery spring to select his new crop, every so often planning a bigger planting to build inventory. At The Farmer in Lyndell, cutting doesn’t begin until the start of the holiday season with a new cutting every week.

The goal, says Bob Spatola, is to make the tree farm a commercial enterprise with a family-oriented atmosphere. There are hayrides for kids, free refreshments and, weather permitting, family picnics. This is when the Spatola family—four children and spouses and 10 grandkids—sign on as all-purpose helpers. It’s also the time for unveiling Bob Spatola’s new annual painting about some aspect of the farm. All proceeds from the sale of painting reprints (often signed in person by the artist), tips (often generous) given to the kids staffing the refreshment stand and a slice of income generated by tree sales are donated to HandiCrafters Inc.,

in Thorndale. This non-profit group provides vocational rehab and job placement services for people in Chester County with mental and physical disabilities. Bob Spatola is chairman.

In all, Mr. Spatola’s spread extends to 100 acres, one of the largest open spaces in East Brandywine. He also owns a home in Rock Hall on the Chesapeake Eastern shore and it’s there that his wife encouraged him to take up painting. He tried one lesson but didn’t like it so he went on to become a self-taught artist, learning his craft by reading books and visiting art museums. Mostly he likes water scenes, not surprising for a man who putters around the Chesapeake in his own tugboat and who spent about five years in the U.S. Coast Guard. His principal duty was helping install navigation devices across the Pacific; he retired as a commander.



The entrance to what was the old Lyndell Country store is on the left; the Post Office entrance is on the right.

Post Office? What Post Office?

The Lyndell Post Office has to be one of East Brandywine's better-kept secrets. Here's a quiet and friendly place within a couple of miles of Guthriesville where you can buy stamps and mail letters and packages. Contrast that with a trip to the busy Thorndale P. O. or the even busier official Downtown Post Office way off there on Boot Road.

The Lyndell office has a long history. It was established in August 1880 and, after one brief move, has been in its present location for more than 100 years. For many of those years the post office shared the building with the Lyndell Country Store. The store closed a couple of years ago and a proposal to locate a children's daycare center there fell through, largely because there's limited parking space and a busy traffic flow on Creek Road. The store building is now a private residence.

GENEROSITY

Under terms of the late Mrs. Millicent Fails' will, \$18,750 was given to the East Brandywine Community Parks as a final distribution of her bequest. Mrs. Fails was a member of the Krapf family, whose members have given generously to the parks system over many years.

Getting it Straight on Historic Resources

New stringent rules governing the demolition of any historic building in East Brandywine are close to becoming a reality. To be "historic" a structure needs to be at least 50 years old—a standard used by both the state and the county—but the Township is giving a pretty broad interpretation to that rule. In effect, the Township Historical Commission and its consultants will decide if a building is "historic" enough to need special attention.

The goal of the revised ordinance on historic structures is to preserve the best of East Brandywine's past.

The ordinance classifies all historic structures as Class I or Class II. To qualify as Class I, a structure has to be on the National Register of Historic Places, be on its way to certification, be judged of special significance by the County Historical Commission or be within a certified historic district. Today only one building in East Brandywine, the farmstead at the junction of Little Washington and Marshall Roads, meets the individual historic standard. Earlier this year, residents of Guthriesville rejected a move to have the village certified as an historic district.

Class II is much broader and covers some 300 homes. Most of these are noted on the Township's historic resource map, a document drawn up by the Historical Commission (anyone with an older home can contact the Township to see if they are on the list). Since any home

built after 1957 will be defined as "historic," the Task Force revising the ordinance agreed that it would directly affect only those judged by the Historical Commission to have special historic qualities. The need for what might be called a Class IIA or Class III designation seems sensible as more and more local homes will meet the 50-year benchmark in the next decade.

The ordinance makes a clear statement about "demolition by neglect." It also makes clear that the developer of a subdivision must protect and screen any historic structures that are within or close to his property.

Demolition by neglect—allowing a building to fall into such disrepair that teardown is its only acceptable future—affects the owners of all Class I or II buildings. It is a repeated source of concern to the Township. The newly-revised ordinance is designed to stop that practice and any owner guilty of such neglect could be required to restore the building to its original condition.

The Board of Supervisors authorized the ordinance changes to be sent to the County Planning Commission for their required review. The County suggested some fairly minor changes. The Supervisors will consider the revised ordinance at a public meeting October 17th. The revised regulations could go into effect before the end of the year.

Private Government; The HOA Growth Market

“That will be the homeowners’ association.”

It’s like a throwaway line by developers when a member of the Planning Commission asks, “Who’s going to take care of that?” But taking care of “that” may be more than a minor chore. Consider that existing or yet-to-arrive local residents are or will be responsible for such varied tasks as:

- Maintaining a large earthen dam containing a small and attractive lake (Villages at Timberlake Homeowners Association off North Guthrieville Road)
- Maintaining roadway retaining walls (by the proposed Ponds at Brandywine HOA off Dowlin Forge Road)
- Taking care of tennis courts (Pinebrook Village HOA off Horseshoe Pike) and a swimming pool (Hedgerow HOA, also off Horseshoe Pike)

■ Dealing with maintenance, including snow plowing on various roads not dedicated to the Township (including the proposed 125-unit subdivision planned north and west of Brandywine Village Shopping Center).

Obviously people who buy homes in such controlled communities know what they’re getting in to, or at least so you’d think. But there can be some unpleasant surprises. AARP, which publishes a “Bill of Rights for Homeowners in Associations” recently reported on a couple of very tough cases. In one, an 82-year-old Texas widow who owed \$814.50 in back dues lost her \$150,000 property to foreclosure. In the other, an Arizona couple who had a \$66 association debt ended up paying more than \$7,000 in lawyer’s fees to save their home.

Being part of a homeowners’ or condominium association is a rapidly growing trend. Today, one in every five or six residents of East Brandywine lives in such a community. When all the residential developments now working their way through the planning process are approved and built out—maybe six or seven years from now—probably about one in two of all local residents will be part of such an association. What’s happening locally mirrors what’s happening nationally. Today about 50 million Americans, roughly one in six, live in communities where homeowners’ associations set and enforce the rules.

Homeowner association fees vary widely, depending on the services provided. The monthly range can be from about \$50 into the hundreds of dollars. Capital improvements can be costly. For example, residents of the Timbers face a major bill for repair of the dam on their property, according to one homeowner. Nearly a year ago the small lake had to be drained because of a problem with the pipe outlet structure.

Restrictions on resident actions can involve color in drapes or exterior paint, flag displays, outdoor clothes lines, parking (and the type of vehicle that may be parked) and garden plantings. Recently, a member of the Hopewell Homeowners Association told a meeting of the Township Planning Commission that his association’s rules would not allow him to add extra buffering or a fence

between a proposed hot tub and his neighbors’ homes. A quick Web search reveals many horror stories of members who violated an association rule.

Associations also can rally to help members. The Keats Glen association brought scores of members to both Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission meetings to protest a developer plan to convert a cul-de-sac into a through road. They won their case when the Board agreed to limit through access to emergency vehicles. At Cumberland Ridge, off Rock Raymond Road, the homeowners association also went to bat for its members to protest a proposed major pipeline expansion through this upscale subdivision.

The Township maintains a fairly straightforward approach to homeowner associations. If a subdivision provides facilities available only to residents, then they should pay to take care of them. “In general,” says Jay Fischer, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, “we do not encourage the creation of local HOAs. They are a result of a developer wanting to include specific facilities or features.” Adds Township Manager Scott Piersol, “normally the Township accepts roadways and certain storm drainage facilities as they’re considered public improvements that all members of the public can use. But facilities used only by residents of the community are the responsibility of the HOA board to oversee and maintain.”



The lovely lake in the Timberlake development is an overgrown, sunken meadow today. The homeowners’ association is responsible for restoring the lake after a failure of an outlet in the dam last year.

A Bit of Local Roadside Scenery



North Buck Road. This beautiful old farmhouse on North Buck Road dates from 1747 when a Penn family grant created the original farm, stretching down Buck Road to Horseshoe Pike. David Nace, caretaker of the property and a direct descendant of the MacFarlan family, long-time owners of the home, plans to restore the now-unoccupied building and to live there. This is a private property, not open to the public.



Reeds Road. One of the pastoral highways spinning off Hopewell Road and winding down to Creek Road.



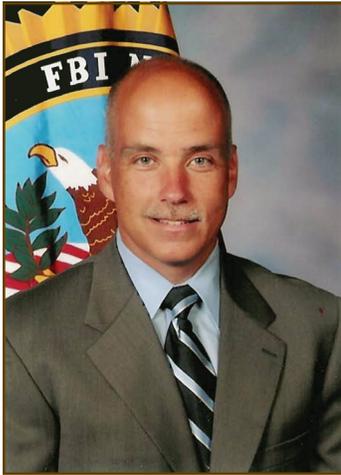
Crawford Road. Perhaps one of the most appealing roads in the township, with a mix of old homes and new, planned gardens and handsome open space.

DOLLARS AND CENTS FOR THE MILL PARK

In a detailed report, the Bondsville Mill Committee has outlined an ambitious future for the proposed 25-acre mill park. In the short term, the Committee wants to develop trails and a picnic area and create a bird and animal sanctuary. Long-term plans call for the demolition of most of the old mill buildings, retaining some of the wall structures once stabilized, and the saving of some of the architectural highlights. The final cost comes in at around \$685,000, with most the money going for demolition and removal of collapsed buildings and the limited restoration of four buildings.

The cash will come from grants and may not be available for some years. Meanwhile, the derelict structures will be sealed off for safety reasons.

Royal Treatment at the FBI for Local Officer



“It was amazing. One day you’re sitting with the head of security for an entire country, the next with the sheriff of a 10-man force in Iowa.”

—Sergeant Eugene Babetski

Sergeant Eugene Babetski of the Brandywine Regional Police has just gone through a life-changing experience—an intense, 10-week course at the FBI’s Quantico, VA, headquarters. It’s designed to give special, advanced training to “selected officers having proven records as professionals.” The goal is to choose people who are moving up into leadership and administrative positions.

This year’s program, the 230th at the FBI National Academy, included 287 men and women from 48 states, the District of Columbia, 23 foreign countries, four military organizations and four federal civilian organizations.

“It was amazing,” says the quiet-spoken Sgt. Babetski. “One day you’re sitting with the head of security for an entire country, the next with the sheriff of a 10-man force in Iowa.”

Being invited to the program is almost as tough as the program itself. The successful applicant has to be nominated by his police chief and his local state representative. Then there’s an exhaustive FBI background check and interviews by FBI staffers. Sgt. Babetski was on a waiting list for six years before being chosen this year.

The formal part of the program stresses advanced investigative, management and fitness programs but some of the greatest benefits come from the contacts with other recruits.

“It’s very spartan and you have little contact with the outside world,” says Sgt. Babetski. “They give you a schedule that spins your head it’s so difficult to follow. This forces you into contact with others in the program. The instructors encourage interaction and socializing.” Among the colleagues he got to know were a campus cop from Texas A&M (his room mate), an Illinois state trooper, a woman from Poland’s National Intel-

ligence Bureau and an officer from Gibraltar, who came complete with bagpipes.

To encourage bonding the program includes field trips. There were ones to police headquarters in New York, Philadelphia and the District of Columbia. Sgt. Babetski led a successful outing to Gettysburg with a side trip, by request of his party, to the

Amish country. One of the best payoffs of the socializing is a Class A contact list: each graduate gets all contact information about other grads and, says Sgt. Babetski, “it means that if you need information from some part of the country where these people live, all you have to do is pick up the phone and remind them that you graduated from the same program.”

The most stimulating courses from the Brandywine Regional officer’s point of view were those on ethics and forensics. “The ethics course was phenomenal,” he says.

And what was the most relevant material for a Brandywine Regional Police officer? “How to handle growth. I had a lot of discussions with people who handle growth issues, hiring, traffic and so on,” says Sgt. Babetski.

When he joined the local force in 1993 there were seven officers; today there are 17 full-timers and two part-timers. Gene Babetski, a specialist in youth, drug and emergency response issues, was promoted to the rank of sergeant last year and at his swearing-in Chief Kosci praised his investigative skills and commitment to the department. Interestingly, as part of the FBI program each participant had to do a self-analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Sgt. Babetski’s study revealed that one of his greatest strengths is loyalty. “East Brandywine is a tremendous place,” he says. “This is not the time of for thinking of going anywhere else.”

Sgt. Babetski and his wife of 22 years, Suzanne, have two teenagers, Andrew and Laura. How does his family feel about his job? “They’re fine. But every now and again a teenager isn’t going to feel too good about having a cop as a father.”

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Fall 2007
Volume 14, Number 4

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It's Time for Leaf Collections

East Brandywine scheduled Oct. 29, Nov. 12 and Dec. 3 for fall leaf collection. There are no dedicated days for each development or street this year. Just be sure to have your leaves ready.

Matthew VanLew, the Township Roadmaster, offers these guidelines. "Please place all leaves along the side of the road on the lawn area within six feet of the road edge. Placing leaves on the lawn allows them to dry and the vacuum can pick them up more easily. Leaves must not be placed in the roadway as this can cause a traffic hazard. Leaves in the roadway will not be picked up. Do not block storm drain inlets and drainage areas. Do not mix sticks and branches with the leaves; the leaf vac can't pick them up."



Hadfield Road. A winding highway with beautiful homes set on sweeping hills among fields and woods.



Buck Road. On the south side there's a new development of high-end homes but on the north there's a secluded farm with a long post-and-rail fence cordoning off lush fields.

FIRE COMPANY FIRS

The East Brandywine Fire Company is also in the Christmas tree business. It starts selling trees on the weekend after Thanksgiving and is in business Wednesday nights and weekends until Dec. 25. Proceeds help Fire Company operating costs.

On the Move

The following transactions took place between late June and late August.

21 Blakely Road	\$440,500
380 North Buck Road.....	\$980,000
31 Cambridge Court.....	\$238,000
107 Cherry Grove Lane.....	\$471,000
391 Corner Ketch Road	\$252,350
574 Corner Ketch Road	\$449,900
425 Creek Road	\$276,000
26 Cumberland Drive	\$936,223
29 Cumberland Drive	\$990,517
4 Delancey Place	\$185,000
16 Delancey Place	\$185,000
44 Delaney Drive	\$985,000
405 Dilworth Road.....	\$279,000
3780 East Fisherville Road	\$327,000
109 Governors Circle	\$390,000
124 Governors Circle	\$365,000
14 Grovehill Court.....	\$500,000
92 Hilltop Drive	\$240,000
544 Hopewell Road.....	\$249,900
901 Hopewell Road.....	\$464,000
261 Jefferis Road	\$320,000
260 Lenora Lane	\$524,900
103 Locust Knoll Road	\$307,000
307 McFarland Drive	\$400,000
305 Pinebrook Circle	\$229,000
5 Quail Hill Lane	\$545,000
123 Ridgewood Circle.....	\$399,900
17 Windemere Court	\$215,000
109 Wooded Acres Lane.....	\$450,000
1 Wyndham Court.....	\$192,000
41 Yellowwood Drive	\$255,900

Source: Weichert Realtors, West Chester

What's Happening to Home Prices Here?

Home prices in East Brandywine dipped a bit last year from 2005 but still are well ahead of the Chester County median price of \$270,000. The price picture was mixed for nearby Chester County communities. The figures were compiled by the Philadelphia Inquirer from U.S. Census information.

Municipality	Median 2006 Sale price	% change from 2005	# sales 2006	% change from 2005
Caln	\$235,000	+23%	333	+21%
Coatesville	\$122,000	+32%	222	- 8%
Downingtown	\$198,000	+ 9%	149	- 3%
East Bradford	\$343,000	- 7%	156	-23%
East Brandywine	\$356,500	- 7%	94	- 1%
East Caln	\$313,190	- 5%	132	-31%
Honeybrook Boro	\$217,000	+10%	35	N.C.
South Coatesville	\$153,400	+62%	30	+11%
Upper Uwchlan	\$434,790	+ 5%	458	+61%
Uwchlan	\$359,450	+ 7%	278	- 21%
Wallace	\$386,000	- 5%	36	- 10%
West Brandywine	\$295,000	+11%	101	+11%



Hopewell Road. The shining white building at the corner of Hopewell and Rock Raymond Roads, now a private residence, once was the Hopewell School and also was used for church services. The present stone structure, replacing a log building, was put up at its present site in 1868.

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1214 Horseshoe Pike
Downingtown, PA 19335-1153

PRESORTED STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
SOUTHEASTERN, PA 19399
PERMIT #50

Postmaster: deliver to current occupant