



2004 - Volume I , Issue II

Municipal Messenger

Township of Morris

Morris County - New Jersey - USA

Mayor's Message By Mayor H. Scott Rosenbush

As the Fall of 2004 approaches, we come to several occasions on the calendar for reflection and thanks. We take time to give our sincere thanks for the donations from Dick and Jackie Deskovick that enabled the Township to dedicate a gazebo as part of a multi-phase project memorializing those lost in the 9/11 attacks (see article this page). We also owe our gratitude to the Morris Plains Rotary Club for its generous donation to help beautify our Township (see article on page 2).

There are many opportunities available for people who want to give back to the community - private and public, service-oriented and financial. We rely on the efforts of hundreds of volunteers who help make Morris Township

such a wonderful place to live. Be sure to read the message from our Health Department on opportunities to volunteer in a new critical emergency preparedness and response program (see article on page 3).

Mark your calendar for various upcoming events in Morris Township including the exhibitions, educational programs, performing arts, and special events at the Morris Museum (see article page 3), as well as those noted on the back page of this newsletter, especially the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony. I hope to see you all there.

I know that we'll be giving many thanks to many more people in our community this Fall.

Morris Township's 9/11 Memorial Begins With Gazebo Dedication By Robert E. Nace, Deputy Mayor

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the numbing reality of terrorism struck this country. Every one of us will forever remember where we were that fateful morning as four airplanes carrying innocent people became victims of religious fanaticism. In Morris Township, six families lost fathers, mothers, husbands and wives.

On June 13, 2004, Morris Township dedicated a gazebo as an initial phase in a multi-phase project to memorialize those lost in the 9/11 attacks.



Pictured left to right: Dick Deskovick, Jackie Deskovick, Kim Deskovick, Bob Nace, Kathleen Hyland, Rick Watson, and Scott Rosenbush. Picture courtesy of Cindy Zimmerman.

300 to 400 residents joined the Township Committee in a turn-of-the-century day of music and song. Led by the Morristown High School Marching Band and the harmony of two barbershop quartets, residents also enjoyed ten-

cent hot dogs and five-cent birch beer.

The 28 foot gazebo is constructed of aluminum products, designed to make it virtually maintenance-free. The effort to design and construct the gazebo is the result of the gracious donation of one of Morris Township's finest families, Dick and Jackie Deskovick.

From the onset of the project Dick and Jackie were instrumental in the design, engineering, and construction efforts with Dick overseeing construction on a daily basis.



Pictured left to right: Ronald Ayers, Jackie Deskovick, Kim Deskovick, and Dick Deskovick. Picture courtesy of Cindy Zimmerman.

The Township is blessed to have such dedicated supporters of their community.

On September 11, 2004, at 10:00 A.M., the public is invited to join in the dedication of our 9/11 Memorial at the gazebo to honor the six Morris Township residents whose lives were lost in the attacks on the World Trade Center. This is the second phase of the Township's 9/11 Memorial project.

The gazebo and other phases of the 9/11 Memorial project are planned to provide the Township a place where the community can come together to celebrate life and a place of reflection. In the future, as a third phase, a memorial walkway honoring our Emergency Service Workers will be constructed along the brook leading from the gazebo.

Morris Plains Rotary Helps Beautify Morris Township

Reprinted from Morris Township Press Release

Speedwell Avenue was lined with American flags from Hanover Avenue to the Vail School on the Fourth of July, thanks to a \$3,000 project funded and coordinated by the Morris Plains Rotary Club. Members spent several Saturday mornings, digging footings, pouring concrete, and embedding PVC pipes to hold the 50 American flags donated to Morris Township. Now the banners will wave proudly for almost two miles in Morris Plains and Morris Township for Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, & Veteran's Day.

"We are grateful to the Morris Plains Rotary Club for their donation to Morris Township," said Mayor H Scott Rosenbush. "This effort compliments our recent efforts to improve the esthetics in this neighborhood." The Morris Township Committee also recently demolished an abandoned gas station on Speedwell Ave. as part of its beautification efforts and plans to create a landscaped public parking lot on the site. In addition, they have installed barrel plantings and electronic snowflakes to bring holiday cheer to the strip in December.

Members of the Morris Plains Rotary and Morris Township officials are pictured below. Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders worldwide who provide humanitarian service and help build goodwill and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotarians who are members of more than 30,000 Rotary clubs in 162 countries. The Morris Plains Rotary Club meets every Friday morning at 7:47 am at the Bretton Woods Inn, 361 Speedwell Ave., Morris Plains. New members are welcome.



Shown are members of the Morris Plains Rotary Club during initial installation efforts, donating their project to Morris Township officials.

Pictured from left to right: Michael Loughman, Richard Dugan, Pete Demnitz, Morris Twp. Deputy Mayor Bob Nace, Dave Aussicker, Tom Nunn, Morris Twp. Mayor Scott Rosenbush, Jack Doherty, Bob Dube, Morris Plains Mayor Frank Dreutzler, Morris Plains Rotary Club President Mark Luithle, Vince Novak, Tom Schnipp and Peter Dugal.

Morris Township District Added To National Register

Reprinted by permission of the Morris County Heritage Commission



Photo courtesy of Morris County Heritage Commission

In 2003, the Pruddentown Historic District along Mount Kemble Avenue in Morris Township was added to the state and national registers of historic places. Placement on the registers provides protection to sites when government-funded or licensed undertakings may affect them. Private alterations are regulated only by local ordinances, if any.

The 450-acre Pruddentown historic district contains 33 historic buildings. The hamlet along the road to Basking Ridge, got its start about 1735 when Joseph Prudden settled there. During the late 18th century, the Prudden family opened a brickyard that continued to operate into the early 20th century. The oldest brick structures in the district date from the 1770s.

Researchers believe that Prudden bricks were used to construct the Morristown Aqueduct and the Morris County Court House, as well as other public and private buildings in the area.

Other Morris Township historical areas include Normandy Parkway and Washington Valley. For more information regarding historic preservation in Morris Township, please contact your Morris Township Historic Preservation Commission at 973-538-4956. View the Pruddentown Historic District online at the Heritage Commission's web site www.co.morris.us/heritage or on the web site for the National Register of Historic Places at www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/NJ/Morris.



Photo courtesy of Morris County Heritage Commission

Fun For All At The Morris Museum

By Emily Evans

Founded in 1913, the Morris Museum explores and celebrates the arts, sciences, and history through exhibitions, educational programs, performing arts and special events. Supported through membership, grants, benefits, admissions, and museum shop sales, the museum serves over 200,000 adults and children each year. Come enjoy!!

EXHIBITIONS

- **Springs, Sprockets and Pulleys: The Mechanical Sculpture of Steve Gerberich** May 25 – Nov. 14, 2004
- **New Jersey Artist Series: Antonio Carreño** June 22 – Oct. 3, 2004
- **The Art of the Quilt** Oct 12, 2004 – March 20, 2005

EVENTS

- **Morris Museum's 16th Annual Golf Outing** Monday, Sept. 20, 2004. Ballyowen Golf Club, Hamburg, NJ Call 973.971.3705 for more information.
- **Annual Halloween Extravaganza** Saturday and Sunday, Oct 30 and 31 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day. Costume contests, pumpkin painting, spooky scavenger hunt & faBOOlous craft projects. Call 973.971.3718 for information.

BICKFORD THEATRE

- **10th Anniversary Season at the Bickford: Communicating Doors** by Alan Ayckbourn Oct 14 – Nov 7, 2004; Thurs., Fri., Sat. 8pm and Sun. 2pm. A comic thriller by one of London's most inventive and creative playwrights. Tickets: \$13 - \$27. Call 973.971.3706.

DAY TRIPS

- **Various Day Trips to New York** Call 973.971.3716 to register

The Morris Museum, located at 6 Normandy Heights Rd in Morris Township, NJ, is open Tues., Wed., Fri. and Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thurs., 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and Sun. 1-5 p.m. Admission to the museum is \$7 for adults and \$5 for children, students and senior citizens. Admission is free for museum members and is free to the public every Thursday between 1 and 8 p.m. Call 973-971-3700, or visit www.morrismuseum.org for more information.

Private Well Testing Act

(PWTA) By Kevin P. Breen, MPH,
Morris Township Health Department

A new law went into effect on September 14, 2002. This law requires that whenever a property with a private well is sold or leased, the well must be tested and the results given to both buyer and seller, or lessor and lessee, prior to closing.

The tests required are total coliform bacteria (*E. coli* if positive), pH, iron, manganese, lead, nitrate, all volatile organic compounds (VOC) with Maximum Contaminant Levels and arsenic. The test must be performed on raw, untreated well water. The estimated cost of this testing is \$400 to \$700. A NJ Department of Environmental Protection certified laboratory must conduct all testing. The laboratories can be found in the yellow pages under Laboratories – Testing.

Further information can be found at the toll free hotline 1-866-4PW-TEST (1-866-479-8378) or on the NJDEP website <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/pwta/>

Bio-terrorism Volunteers Are Needed In Morris Township

By Kevin P. Breen, MPH,
Morris Township Health Department

If we experience a bio-terrorism event in our area, there will be regional and local sites set up for the distribution of antibiotics. Point of Distribution (POD) sites will be operated in Morris Township vs. regionally if the nature of the bio-terrorism attack requires distribution of antibiotics in pill form rather than by vaccination.

These Township sites will need many volunteers - both medical and non-medical personnel - to help staff it. Some of the responsibilities of non-medical volunteers include clinic flow personnel, referral personnel, antibiotic supply management, IT support, forms distribution and collection, and so forth.

You could be essential to the success of this critical emergency preparedness and response program, and we want to let you know how you can participate. If you are interested in volunteering to assist us in the operation of Morris Township's POD sites, please respond directly to me at 973-326-7390 or kbreen@morristwp.com.

Your Township Committee

H. Scott Rosenbush, Mayor
Robert E. Nace, Deputy Mayor
Kathleen G. Hyland
Richard A. Watson
Jan Wotowicz

Check our website at: www.morristwp.com or refer to your 2004 Municipal Calendar for more information on key dates for Morris Township meetings & activities.

Acknowledgements

Volunteer Senior Editor

Linda K. Murphy

Township Senior Editors

Karen J. Carman, Admin. Ass't.
Fred J. Rossi, Twp Administrator

Questions and/or comments may be sent to kcarman@morristwp.com

For Your Health –

by Kevin P. Breen, MPH,
Morris Township Health Department

For more information on the programs described below and to obtain the Annual Flu Clinic dates, times, and required pre-registration forms, please call 973-326-7390.

Annual Flu Clinics

Flu immunization clinics will be held this Fall at the Township Municipal Building, 50 Woodland Ave. This program is available at *no charge* for residents aged 65 and older with Medicare Part B (medical insurance). A \$10 fee will be charged to residents without Medicare Part B. Those residents under 65 with a chronic condition will require a physician's note to participate in the clinic. Pre-registration is required. No walk-ins will be accepted! Please call in mid September for flu clinic dates & times.

Blood Pressure Screening

All Township residents who are 18 years of age and older can take advantage of *FREE* blood pressure screenings held on the third Wednesday of every month, except August. Come to the Township Municipal Building, 50 Woodland Ave. from 9:00A.M. to 12 noon. Pre-registration is not required.

Township of Morris
P.O. Box 7603
Convent Station, NJ 0796-7603

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9/11 Memorial Ceremony
September 11, 2004

Held in memory of the six Township residents who lost their lives at the World Trade Center in 2001.

Morris Township Day
Golf Tournament
October 11, 2004

Curbside Leaf Collection
Begins October 12, 2004
Ends December 11, 2004

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE IN
THE GENERAL ELECTION
November 2, 2004

2004 Property Taxes Pressured By Commercial Tax Appeals

By Richard A. Watson, Morris Township Finance Chairman

Citizens in Morris Township may have experienced 'sticker shock' from their most recent property tax bills. Many members of our community are not aware that the Township controls only 24.3% of this bill. The bulk of your property tax payment goes to the Morris School District - 60.2%, while 15.5% goes to the County of Morris.

How will we spend your money? The largest components of our Township's 2004 budget are salaries for Police, Fire, and Roads / Sanitation workers. While the total workforce in the Township is virtually unchanged from last year, New Jersey's compulsory arbitration laws, and their implementation, virtually mandate salary increases approaching 4% despite the lower inflation rate. Health insurance costs have also risen above the inflation rate and this caused a 2004 budget increase of \$200,000, though coverage is not expanded and we have negotiated some cost sharing with our employees. These factors, combined with rises in other insurance & fuel costs, contributed to an overall spending increase of about 6%.

The principal components of the Township's revenue are NJ state aid, prior Township budget surplus, & local property tax.

- NJ has increased its aid to municipalities by less than 1% in 2004, despite mandating wage increases and enacting new storm water management and other regulations that cost our town additional money. This forces a higher portion of our costs to be borne by the other components of the revenue stream.
- The Township's budget surplus, which refers to the amount of cash left over at the end of the prior fiscal year, normally is \$4 million or more, but at the end of 2003 was only \$2.4 million. This is due to an extraordinarily high number of successful commercial tax appeals, many based on a decline in property value due to lower commercial rateables (determined by the rent that can be charged), that required us to refund a total of \$2.8 million during 2003.
- At the same time, the market values of residential properties have dramatically increased, which puts more of the tax burden onto the homeowner. As much as we might like to shift more of the taxes to the commercial properties, the law doesn't permit us to assess any property more than its actual fair market value.

The Morris Township Committee recognizes that the local property tax increase for 2004 was considerable, though our tax rate of 49.4 cents still compares favorably to Morristown's 88 cents and with the rates in other towns. We realize the budget pressures and have ordered a reduction in non-salary expenses across all departments by an additional 5%, as well as a temporary reduction of the local open space tax. We'll continue to try to avoid property tax increases in the future. Please feel free to contact us with any suggestions, questions, or concerns you may have.