



# Municipal Messenger

## Township of Morris

Morris County - New Jersey - USA

2006 - Volume III , Issue I

### Mayor's Message

By Mayor Robert E. Nace

As we issue our first Municipal Messenger of this year, I would like to share with you some of my comments made at the 2006 Township Committee reorganization meeting.

Maintaining a clear vision for Morris Township that balances the needs of our diverse community will be our greatest challenge in 2006. We will continue to utilize sound business practices and manage our programs to reflect the changing needs of our residents. Work has already begun on several fronts.

Unfunded programs and mandates weigh heavily on our ability to manage our local budget process; and State agencies are often not responsive to the processes and deadlines that are imposed on us. The Township Committee will work to enhance relationships and communications with our state and county leadership.

Like many other communities, Morris Township is now fully built-out. Our tax base is being seriously impacted by a decline in new ratables, skyrocketing residential property values, and a declining commercial tax base. We currently have one of the lowest tax rates in the county for a full-service municipality but will continue to focus on our property tax challenge.

Meetings with other municipalities are also taking place to improve communication with our neighbors and gain a more regional perspective on planning and development efforts. Shared services and cooperative programs with other municipalities will continue to be considered where proven cost effective and mutually beneficial.

Morris Township has always been financially conservative, focused on careful planning and budgeting, and insistent on employing the best and brightest professionals based on their expertise. We commend our employees who work hard to serve our community. All of us are committed to preserving our excellent quality of life!

### Morris County Park Commission Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Reprinted from a Park Commission News Release

The Morris County Park Commission, the largest park system in New Jersey, is celebrating its 50th anniversary. From its first acquisition of 350 acres for Lewis Morris County Park in Morris Township, the park system has grown to more than 17,000 acres and 37 facilities including historic sites, golf courses, outdoor educational and recreational facilities, arboreta, conservation areas, parks, and 150 miles of trails.

The reputation of the Park Commission and its facilities continues to be one of the best in the nation. More than 3.5 million visitors annually take advantage of the programs, special events, and activities provided by a professional staff. The well-run park system has a positive impact on the quality of life in Morris County by enhancing economic vitality, adding value to home ownership, preserving valuable open space and cultural resources, and contributing to personal well-being.

Lewis Morris County Park in Morris Township, opened in March 1958, is known as one of Morris County's premier recreational sites with both open fields and wooded areas. Thousands of visitors each year enjoy the park's many attractions, ranging from boating, fishing, and swimming at the beautiful Sunrise Lake Beach Club to camping, picnicking, and playing on the Saturn Playground. Year-round enjoyment options include hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, plus in the winter, ice skating, cross-country skiing, and sledding. Picnic shelters and grills, as well as three athletic fields, are available to host corporate and large family gatherings. An off-leash area for dog enthusiasts has recently been added. The park is also home to Morris County's Veterans Memorial.

For more information about Morris County's park system and some of



Bike riding on trails in Lewis Morris Park. Picture courtesy of Morris County Park Commission

the upcoming **FREE** family-friendly events at your Morris County parks, see [www.morrisparks.net](http://www.morrisparks.net).

#### Earth Day Celebration –

Pyramid Mountain National Historic Area, Montville, April 22, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

The day will include hikes, games, live animal demonstrations, and more at one of the Park Commission's premiere natural areas!

#### National Trails Day –

Schooley's Mountain, Washington Township, June 3, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Hikers, bikers, and equestrians are welcome to enjoy the trails. Children's Try-A-Thon and picnic luncheon will also be available!

#### Family Celebration –

Lewis Morris County Park, Morris Township, July 29, 1:00 pm - Dusk

Bring the entire family out to enjoy swimming, boating, games, beach volleyball, concerts, food, and fireworks!

#### Country Faire & Harvest Festival –

Fosterfields Farm, Morris Township, September 10, 12 noon - 4:00 pm

Turn back the clock and experience picnicking, games, and activities from the 1880's at a living historical farm!

## Eager Teens Gain Hands-On Experience In Morris Township's Junior Firefighter Program

By Fire Chief Craig Goss

The Morris Township Fire Department and the Township Committee have teamed together to meet a mutual goal – getting teenagers interested in firefighting service so that youths who volunteer might develop into future firefighters for the Township. A recent Junior Firefighter graduate, Drew Wnek, is evidence of the program's success. "Being a junior volunteer firefighter helped me gain experiences a person my age would not normally have. I encourage others to give it a try," he said.

The program gives high school students the opportunity to learn through both classroom instruction and hands-on experience. Teenage recruits take 135 hours of training at the Morris County Firefighters and Police Training Academy. Once the initial training is completed, the teens report to the Collinsville Fire Station, one of five fire stations in Morris Township along with Fairchild, Hillside, Mt. Kemble, and Woodland. There they join with adult firefighters in attending meetings, participating in monthly training exercises, and riding out on calls.

Wnek said, "It has been awesome going out to help people. I have a different perspective now after fighting a fire that destroyed a home, helping care for elderly folks evacuated from a building, and participating in drills with other firefighters. I enjoy going on calls and was able to do everything as a junior that adult volunteers do, except for going inside a burning building."

"NJ state law prohibits junior firefighters from entering a burning building or being placed in harm's way. We explain the safeguards in the program to parents in detail," said Fire Chief Craig Goss. The youths are provided with pagers and can be 'on call' daily, coming to the scene of an emergency to assist adult fire personnel. However, receiving a page does not obligate a teen response due to their junior status.

Training exercises include working fire hoses, raising and lowering fire truck ladders, operating equipment on fire trucks, and familiarizing themselves with all the other rescue tools such as self-contained breathing apparatus. They also learn CPR, get first aid instruction, and participate in various fire and smoke simulations. In addition to gaining a good knowledge of fire protection and safety, junior firefighters also learn the value of responsibility, teamwork, and leadership.

Wnek's mother said, "To see Drew take on this role makes my husband and me very proud. Through the program's rigorous practical and academic training, as well as the required discipline, Drew has developed a more mature understanding of community."

After junior firefighters turn 18, they are eligible for an additional 15 hours of training which allows them to graduate to full-fledged firefighters after passing a required NJ certification examination. Drew Wnek said, "I passed the written and physical tests and have now graduated from the junior program. I fully intend to continue as a volunteer. I even asked several admissions directors if there was an opportunity to volunteer while I am away at college."



Pictured: Drew Wnek in dress uniform at Peapack where Morris Township won a trophy in the marching competition during a firefighter parade.

Another junior firefighter graduate, Brian McNally, is equally pleased to have had an opportunity to participate in this volunteer program. What he learned will be put to good use as he has recently been nominated by Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen to the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Chief Goss said, "Fire science is offered as a major in certain colleges. In addition to being a volunteer or paid firefighter, there are other significant career opportunities associated with learning about firefighting, including jobs in security & protective services, insurance loss protection, arson investigation, architecture, and even construction. The advantages from being a junior firefighter can go on for a lifetime."

There have been five high school youths involved in the Township's Junior Firefighter Program – Daniel Goss (Morristown), Jack Lachford (Delbarton), Grant Lechman (Morristown), Brian McNally (Morristown) and Drew Wnek (Seton Hall Preparatory). More teens have expressed interest in joining the program during the coming year.

"Our residents receive Fire Services provided in large part by volunteers, with real cost savings to the Township," said Mayor Robert Nace. "Getting our youth introduced to volunteer service early helps prepare them for a more rewarding life. We are truly fortunate to have such generous young people in Morris Township. Their families should be extremely proud of them."

Teenagers and their parents who would like to do something important for the community are encouraged to join this program. For more information about the Junior Firefighter Program, please contact Morris Township Fire Chief Craig Goss at (973) 326-7461.

## Help Your Kids Stay Drug Free

By Mac Drug Free Staff

Helping your child say no to the pressure to 'party', whether it is drinking or using drugs, is a battle all parents face during the teenage years. Kathleen Hyland, board chairman and long-time supporter of nonprofit TeenPride, knows the importance of talking to children about abstaining from drinking and drug use despite the social pressures in today's society.

TeenPride's preventive and educational program on drugs, referred to as the Mac Drug Free Program, is presented annually in the Morris School District, the Peck School, Delbarton, and St. Virgil's and also helps parents in the effort to combat teenage drinking and drug use.

Unfortunately, many parents have no idea or may be in denial that their child is involved with a dangerous drinking or drug habit. The Mac Drug Free Program helps parents learn the behavioral signs that could indicate a child may be experimenting with drinking or drugs such as poor grades, cutting classes, mood swings, and lying or vagueness about plans.

A parent's 'cheat sheet' of today's most common choices, symptoms of usage, and their deadly consequences is available at TeenPride and covers:

- Alcohol (booze)
- Date Rape Drugs (roofies, forget pill)
- Cocaine/Crack (coke, blow, snow)
- Ecstasy (E, X, XTC)
- Heroin (dope, horse, smack)
- Marijuana (grass, weed, hash, herb)
- Inhalants (spray, huffing, sniffing)
- Methamphetamine (crank, meth)
- Tobacco (chew, smoke)

Talking to your kids about drugs and alcohol is the best way to encourage safe behavior during your child's teenage years. Being an observant parent also helps keep children safe from harm. It's up to parents to work together to keep the tumultuous teenage years drug free and healthy!

TeenPride is supported by Morris Township as part of the Municipal Alliance's Mac Drug Free program. To become involved with prevention and intervention efforts in our community or to learn more about TeenPride and the Mac Drug Free programs, call (973) 377-9390. Together, we can keep our kids & communities drug & alcohol free!

## Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association (FMBA) Local #70 Sponsors Scholarships

The Morris Township Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association (FMBA) Local #70 is pleased to sponsor two \$1,500 scholarships. To be eligible, students must be a resident of Morris Township, a graduate from high school in 2006, and have intentions of entering a college, university, school of nursing, business, or trade by October 1, 2006. Completed applications must be submitted by April 15, 2006.

Application forms are available in Morris Township at the Mt. Kemble Fire Station on Springbrook Road, the Collinsville Fire Station on Whippany Road, or by visiting [www.fmba70.org](http://www.fmba70.org). Students meeting the scholarship criteria are encouraged to apply. Please note that the FMBA Local #70 reserves the right to discontinue the scholarship program at any time, without notice.

## Township Open Space Trust Fund Gets Grant For Spence Property Acquisition

By Thomas Kenny, Special Projects Coordinator

In December 2003, Morris Township acquired the Spence property, a 16.5-acre parcel located on Washington Valley Road for use as open space and passive recreational activities. The property lies within the Washington Valley Historic District, a residential and agricultural area that predates the Revolution, and is near 900 acres of county-owned property. Morris Township purchased the property for \$1.3 million with a grant in the amount of \$800,000 from the Morris County Open Space Trust Fund, as well as funds from its own Open Space Trust. Subsequent to the closing, Morris Township filed an application under the New Jersey Green Acres program for reimbursement of up to 50% of the purchase price.

In September 2005, Morris Township was notified by Green Acres that the total eligible costs for this project were \$1,416,743 which included land acquisition and other eligible expenses. Of this amount, 50% was reimbursed as a matching grant which the township has received and deposited in its Open Space Trust Fund, providing over \$700,000 for future land acquisitions.

## Your Township Committee

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

Check our website at: [www.morristwp.com](http://www.morristwp.com) or refer to your Municipal Calendar for more information on key dates for Morris Township meetings & other 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](mailto:kcarman@morristwp.com)

## Township History Tours Offered By Preservation Commission In May

By Paige L'Hommedieu

The Historic Preservation Commission will offer *FREE* "Visit The Past" bus tours of Morris Township historic sites on Saturday, May 6, 2006. These docent-narrated tours will last approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. Tours will depart at 11:00 am from the Municipal Swimming Pool parking lot on South Street.

This is a special opportunity to see and hear about the rich history of Morris Township. For more details and required reservations, please call (973) 326-7400 by April 21. Space is limited.

## SMAC Annual Blood Screening Program

By Kevin P. Breen, MPH, Health Department

The Health Department will hold its annual blood screening clinic on April 29, 2006 from 8:00 am to 12 noon at the Municipal Building, 50 Woodland Avenue. The test screens up to 40 parameters including cholesterol (LDL & HDL), triglycerides, electrolytes, liver enzymes, glucose, blood cell, and platelet counts, plus other blood chemistry and hematology tests. The cost for this screening is \$15. It is open to residents 18 and over. Preregistration is required; please call (973) 326-7390 to obtain the registration form.

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www.morristwp.com

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**FREE BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING**  
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9:00 am to 12 noon  
For more information, please call  
(973) 326-7390 – Health Department

**FIRE AND FIRST AID VOLUNTEERS  
ARE NEEDED! HELP US HELP YOU!**  
If you are interested, please call  
(973) 326-7460 – Fire Department  
(973) 539-1776 after 6 pm – First Aid Squad

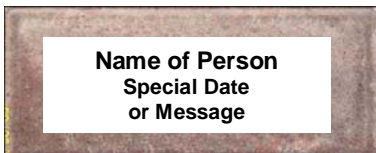
**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**  
**MORRIS TOWNSHIP DAY  
& CARNIVAL AT GINTY FIELD**  
May 25 to May 28, 2006

**Township's Memorial Pathway Offers A Means To Recognize All The Special People In Your Life**  
By Mayor Robert E. Nace and Linda Murphy

Morris Township's Memorial Project at Ginty Field is nearing completion. The entire Memorial Project consists of three phases:

- Phase 1 (completed): A maintenance-free 28-foot gazebo, designed, engineered, and constructed as the result of a gracious donation from one of Morris Township's finest families, Dick and Jackie Deskovick.
- Phase II (completed): A memorial adjacent to the gazebo on Ginty Field, engraved with the names of the six Morris Township residents whose lives were lost in the attacks on the World Trade Center, on a base of rose colored granite topped by a sundial. Twin marble benches flank the memorial with inscriptions selected by the families of the victims.
- Phase III (in progress): The creation of a memorial pathway along Loantaka Brook, using engraved memorial brick pavers with the names of Township emergency services personnel and organizations, as well as our community's special people and family members.

***The Memorial Pathway (Phase III) is your opportunity to recognize and/or memorialize the special people in your life. If you have a family member or special person you would like to recognize, we are offering you an opportunity to purchase an engraved brick paver in their name in order to acknowledge those who have made a difference in your life.*** This could be a favorite teacher who opened your mind to learning; a special friend who has been there for you in your time of need; a member of the community who has tirelessly dedicated time and/or money to help us all; a family member who has a special place in your heart (i.e., spouse, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, children, cousins); or someone you loved who passed away.



The brick pavers will be engraved with epoxy enamel to provide a durable finish. Each paver is 4½ inches by 8 inches so engraving is limited to three lines with twelve (12) characters or spaces per line. A memorial paver may be purchased for a donation of \$50 and funds generated will be used to construct and maintain the pathway. The paver you purchase will be laid in the public section of the pathway.

Please call (973) 326-7400 if you have questions or need more information about this opportunity to recognize a family member or special person in your life. The deadline for purchasing an engraved memorial brick paver is April 1, 2006. To order, you should provide your name, address, and telephone number, along with the name of your family member or special person and the message or dates you want in the engraving. Checks should be made out to the Township of Morris and mailed to:

**Attn: Paver Project, PO Box 7603, Convent Station, NJ 07961-7603**  
**Phone: 973-326-7400**  
**Deadline: April 1, 2006**