# New Britain Borough



# NEW8

Volume 21, Number 4

Fall 2012

## New Britain Borough Historic Preservation Committee

invites you to

### Wreaths Across America Ceremony

At the New Britain Baptist Church Historic Cemetery and H. Walter Harvey War Memorial

## Saturday, December 15, 2012 Ceremony begins at 12 noon (sharp)

After the opening ceremony at the War Memorial we will be laying wreaths on the graves of the Veterans.

There is still time to sponsor a wreath. Donations must be in our hands by November 19,2012. They are only \$15 per wreath, and your donation is tax deductible. In addition, Wreaths Across America will give us seven commemorative wreaths for placement around the H.Walter Harvey World War I Memorial which we restored in 2011. Checks should be made payable to Wreaths Across America and sent to the New Britain Borough office at 45 Keeley Avenue, New Britain, PA 18901. With your help, we will be able to place wreaths on the graves of the 70 veterans buried in the cemetery and join a national movement of remembrance in national and private cemeteries across America.



## Return of Weekend Service at Train Station

Good news! SEPTA announced they have resumed Saturday and Sunday service at the New Britain Station effective September 29, 2012.

The New Britain Station will be designated as a flag stop on Saturday and Sunday. Trains will only stop to discharge customers who notify the conductor ahead of time or pick up customers if they are waiting at the station and are visible to the engineer as the train approaches.

Thanks to those of you who contacted SEPTA, state and county elected officials, and those who attended a SEPTA meeting in June, especially Cornelia Humphries, expressing your displeasure at SEPTA's decision to stop weekend service back in December 2011. Thanks to our Borough Council who passed a resolution asking SEPTA to resume service on weekends. A special thank you to our Mayor, David Holewinski, whose tireless persistence was instrumental in changing SEPTA's policy. In addition to other activities, he met with SEPTA four times, three of the meetings were in SEPTA's office in Philadelphia. Last but not least, thank you to Bucks County Commissioner Charles Martin who put in a good word for us with SEPTA. Citizens and elected officials, working together, can make a difference.

## Can You Help?

The New Britain Borough Council recently established an Appointment Advisory Committee to identify and recommend individuals to Borough Council for consideration for appointments to the various boards, commissions and committees. The committee will keep a database of interested individuals who will be contacted when vacancies occur. Some of the positions the committee will consider applicants for are the Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, Borough Council, Nature Preserve Committee, Community and Business Committee, and the Historic Preservation Committee. (continued on p.7)

## **Around Town**

The AROUND TOWN column will be a regular column in our newsletter. We'd like to make it a column about residents and businesses in the borough who have special events and we'd like to acknowledge good deeds. If there is a birth, marriage, milestone anniversary, special birthday, someone in the family graduating college, getting special honors for academic and/or business achievement, someone that performs a good deed or gets special recognition, please let us know. Call the borough office 215-348-4586 or email nbboro@comcast.net.

#### Folk Music Event

**Bucks County Folk Music Shop**, America's oldest acoustic stringed instrument store with the same owner/operator and the world's oldest surviving guitar maker, C.F. Martin & Co., Inc., joined forces for a special night of music and education on Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at the folk music shop on Sand Road in New Britain. Karl Dieterich, owner and operator of the folk music shop since it was established in 1966, said they have been an authorized Martin dealer since 1970 and a certified warranty repair center for the company since the program began in the 1980's. The event was opened to the public and well attended.

#### **Grand Opening**

Go Bananas Frozen Yogurt Store in the Town Center Shopping Center had a Grand Opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony and free yogurt on Friday, September 7<sup>th</sup>. The ribbon cutting was the idea of folks from the **Chalfont – New Britain Business Alliance** many of whom attended the ribbon cutting.



Celebrating the Grand Opening of Go Bananas Frozen Yogurt are (l-r)Art D'Angelo, Insure4Life Financial Services; Dale Rimmer, Dale Rimmer Siding; Josh Hoffman, owner/operator Go Bananas Frozen Yogurt; Sonia R. Smith, Economic & Business Development Program Adminstrator for Bucks County; David Holewinski, Mayor, New Britain Borough; Robert Showalter, Showalter and Associates, Civil Engineering, Land Surveying, Planning; Nicole Hoffman, owner/operator Go Bananas Frozen Yogurt; Amy McKenna, New Britain Branch Manager, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fed Bank.

### Mayor Celebrates 70th Birthday

David Holewinski, Mayor of New Britain Borough, Chairman of the Borough Planning Commission and President of the New Britain Civic Association, celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with a surprise party. And he was surprised! If you see the Mayor around town be sure to wish him a "Happy Birthday".

#### **Duck Derby Hugh Success**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Duck Derby, sponsored by the New Britain Civic Association, held on Saturday, September 22 at the Covered Bridge Park, was a smashing success! It gets bigger and better every year! Many local businesses and individuals donated money and prizes. Even the first prize winner, Doylestown Township Supervisor Barbara Lyons, generously donated her \$500 winnings back to the Civic Association. Proceeds from the event benefit the Civic Association and the New Britain Food Larder. A complete list of Duck Derby winners can be found on the web site, www. NewBritainCivicAssociation.org.





### 3<sup>rd</sup> Fed Bank Supports Local Charities With Pumpkins for Charity Campaign

3<sup>rd</sup> Fed Bank is supporting local charities with its annual Pumpkins for Charity campaign. Staff members have decorated pumpkins and are encouraging customers to vote for their favorite with a cash donation. The proceeds benefit each branch's chosen charity. This year the New Britain Branch will donate all proceeds to the New Britain Baptist Church Food Larder. "Our philosophy has always been to serve the needs of our community," said Kent Lufkin, president and CEO of 3<sup>rd</sup> Fed Bank. "This year has been tough for a lot of people and this is a great opportunity to help our neighbors who have experienced hardship."

Decorated pumpkins will be displayed at each branch through October 31. To see a list of the local charity partners or to find the branch closest to you, visit <a href="www.3rdfedbank.com">www.3rdfedbank.com</a>.

## Colorful Pansies

**Paul Tiers** of **Paul Tiers Landscaping** again surprised us by planting fall pansies at our war memorial on Tamened Avenue. Thank you, Paul!

## Spotlight on Borough Businesses

We will be highlighting a different borough business in each newsletter to help promote them so they can continue to be viable and prosperous-which benefits us all. We will also inform you of new businesses in the borough. Small business provides goods, services, and employment to the community. Please shop and frequent our borough businesses.

#### **Byrne Sewing Connection**

422 East Butler Avenue New Britain, PA 18901 215-230-9411 www.byrnesewing.com

Byrne Sewing Connection is a place to make you feel "Sew Special." The owners Debbie and Mike Byrne are no strangers to fabrics and the sewing machine business. In fact, Debbie Byrne was born into the retail fabric business in Germantown, PA and began her career dusting thread and sorting buttons when she was only 3 years old!

In 1980, with 4 year-old twins and Debbie 8 months pregnant, Mike and Debbie opened their own retail sewing business in Chestnut Hill. A favorite quote that became their motto is "success is when your dreams put on work clothes." And work they did! Since the beginning their dream grew and grew and a second shop Byrne Sewing Connection was opened in Doylestown in 1992. In 1997 that shop moved to its present location 422 East Butler Avenue in New Britain. With a little over 4,000 square feet and plenty of parking, it is a fun and exciting store to visit.

Most people are simply amazed at the amount of fabric, machines, classes and sewing events the shop has to offer. They have a wonderful mix of Civil War reproduction fabrics to the newest look in quilts, batiks, traditional and the new "modern look" with its simple style. Don't forget the fabulous seasonal fabrics too! People that sew or quilt, and people that want to learn to sew or quilt, will find the shop a welcome spot to visit. Along with lots of colorful fabrics and a few notions, they sell BabyLock, Bernina and Brother Sewing and Embroidery Machines. They also rent and sell BabyLock and HandiQuilter Mid and Long Arm quilting machines to complete the quilting experience. Please come and check them out! Sewing machines start at \$99 and up.

# Support our Local Businesses

## Business Survey Response

The Community and Business Committee sent surveys to 119 business owners in New Britain Borough. We want to know what is important to our business community so we can assist them where we can. We were thrilled to get 46 responses to our surveys, a 39% response rate! The committee is grateful for your participation. We are reviewing the responses and will have some additional results in future issues of the newsletter.

It is interesting that of the 46 respondents, 39 have been in business in the Borough for over five years. This is an important indicator of the stability of our town.

The Borough newsletter was important to 35 businesses. In a related response, in the category of the most important things the Borough could do to improve your businesses ability to operate a successful business, the majority said they want the borough to have enhanced communication with the business community and they would like the borough to promote marketing of borough businesses. We have begun to do just that with the spring newsletter. We have increased the number of pages per newsletter and increased the frequency from two newsletters a year to four a year. Spotlighting local businesses have become a regular part of the newsletter as is advertising for businesses only located in our town.

We will continue to analyze the survey responses to determine areas of opportunity to work more effectively with the business community and will continue to report our findings in future newsletters.

> Marie Esher Coia, Chair Community and Business Committee





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## News from the Borough Police

New Police Officer: NBBPD announced the hiring of Police Officer Jeff Moffett who was sworn in by Mayor David Holewinski in April, 2012. NBBPD, New Britain Borough Council and New Britain Borough residents all welcome the addition of a valued Officer to the Department.



**School is Open**: Pine Run Elementary School is monitored by police during the opening and closing of school each day. Please be cautious and adhere to the 15mph speed limit in order to keep our children safe.

**Be Smart**: Residents are encouraged to secure their vehicles. Theft is a crime of opportunity where entry is gained due to carelessness. Be sure to secure valuable items and remove from vehicle when possible.

<u>Halloween Safety</u> – Halloween is a lot of fun for the entire family; however, some precautions should be taken to ensure a happy and safe day of festivities.

- Teach children to stop only at well-lit houses and to never enter a stranger's home.
- Instruct children not to eat any treat until they return home and treats are inspected.
- Provide a flashlight to help children see better and be seen more clearly.
- Only fire-retardant materials in costumes should be used.
- Costumes and treat bags should have some reflective qualities to be seen by motorists.
- Costume length should not be so long that it is a tripping hazard.
- Accessories such as swords or knives should be made from cardboard or flexible materials and made so as not to resemble a real weapon.

<u>Contact Us</u>: "Like" us on Facebook! Visit our website often for updates, upcoming events, useful phone numbers and links. We welcome your feedback, suggestions and comments. **nbbpd.org** 



## Protect our Water Resources

#### **FALL TRIMMING**

While pruning, remember to trim vegetation within the right of way which may obstruct sidewalks or street signs. Dispose of vegetation properly. Do not allow leaves to block storm sewers or drainage ditches. Direct grass clippings back toward your yard; putting them in the street may contaminate streams with residual fertilizer.

#### STREAM PROTECTION

Limit use of herbicides and fertilizers. Dispose of hazardous materials such as oil, paint, medications, etc. to a hazardous waste drop off. Never flush or dump. Maintain your vehicle by checking and repairing oil/antifreeze leaks. Any illegal dumping or drainage activities should be reported immediately to New Britain Borough. If you notice any signs of stream pollution or have any questions notify the Borough at 215-348-4586.

#### RAINWATER RUNOFF

Consider reducing runoff to help your downstream neighbors by installing rain barrels on your downspouts, lowered planting beds (rain garden), connecting roof drains to stone pits, etc. These methods provide ground water infiltration.

#### **POOL WATER DISCHARGE:**

Pool owners are required to dispose of water properly. Waste water containing chemicals such as chlorine and muriatic acid must be neutralized prior to disposal. Chlorinated water may be discharged to lawn areas after 5-7 days. Filter backwash should also be discharged to a grassy area and never to a street, pond or stream. If you have any questions, contact the Borough.

#### **CONSTRUCTION**

Stormwater controls are required for most additions of impervious surfaces. If you have any questions please call the Borough Engineer at 215-348-5962.

#### STORMWATER INFORMATION

Additional information is available at http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/watermgt/wc/npdsms4/ms4cd/Education/RainDrainBrochure.pdf or visit the Borough's website www.newbritainboro.com.



## **Borough Treasures**

## The New Britain School aka The Cabbage Hill School

Located on the south side of West Butler Avenue between Lenape Drive and Tamenend Avenue, the New Britain Township School District purchased land from Charles Mathews on January 2, 1872 and soon after built the New Britain School. The New Britain Township School District owned and operated the school from the time it was built until it was sold to the New Britain Borough School District in 1929.

Cabbage Hill is the colloquial name of the school because, according to legend, the school was built on land where cabbages were grown. However, there was not one reference to a Cabbage Hill School in all of the school board minutes from 1907 to 1929 which are available in the Spruance Library in the Mercer Museum. The correct name for the school was The New Britain School.

According the school board minutes, teachers were required to open the schoolhouse in the morning, build a fire, sweep and keep the room tidy, and close the building at night. In the early part of the 1900's a clause in the Agreement between the New Britain Township School Board and each teacher states: "It is Mutually Agreed, that the ordinary duties of Janitor, (such as sweeping of the floors, and making fires) shall be performed, or caused to be done by the said teacher, the necessary fuel and brooms therefore to be provided by the said Board of Directors." A few of the New Britain School teachers and their monthly pay were Mabel Gulick, \$40 in 1907; Mabel Myers, \$40 in 1912; Alice Worthington, \$100 in 1920; and Helen Royann, \$115 in 1927.

The following are a few tidbits from the New Britain Township School District school board minutes. In June 1910 the school board decided the school term to be eight months. Schools were not closed for a week at Christmas. In March of 1912 there is a reference to a porch on the New Britain School even though it has been reported that it was added later when it was no longer a schoolhouse. In December 1912 the board voted unanimously to instruct teachers to notify pupils that they must not bring any firearms on the school grounds. In 1916 "on account of infantile paralysis" schools were ordered not to open on September 4 until further notice. February 1917 was the next and only reference to this in the minutes when the school board voted to extend schools two weeks in the spring because of the late school start.

Paul Van Toor, who later served as Postmaster of New Britain for 43 years, attended the school. Many years ago I spoke with two former students. One was Dick French who went to the school in 1917 for one year. He lived in the Butler Mill House in Chalfont for a few years and walked to school along Butler Avenue, a dirt road at the time. The other student, Eleanor Barnes (Fretz), attended from about 1921 to 1929.



Her family lived next door to the school from 1914 to 1938. Both former students confirmed the location of the boys and girls outhouses. The foundations of the outhouses are still in the yard today. Additional recollections were that the seats and desks were attached to floor, the teacher used a hand bell because there wasn't a steeple type bell, no cloak room just pegs on the western wall for coats, the blackboard was on the eastern wall, and the big round coal stove was in either the western corner or in the center of the room based on two different recollections. However, they both agreed the school had a bobsled and the backyard had a great hill for sledding.

Because the ceiling on the first floor is not as high as some old schoolhouses and there is plenty of standing room in the basement, we always speculated there had been a fire in the building because there is a relatively new floor and floor joists. After finding the following article we no longer had to speculate. The following article appeared in *The Doylestown Daily Intelligencer* on October 14, 1886.

"On Tuesday last two tramps, a man and woman, presented themselves at the house of Mr. Pearson, who lives near the New Britain school house. The tramps came from the direction of the village. Mrs. Pearson was the only person about the house when they arrived. They asked her for something to eat. She gave them some bread without butter. They demanded butter, but this Mrs. Pearson refused. The tramps said they knew there were no men about and they were determined to have butter. They made some attempts to enter the house against Mrs. Pearson's protest. She finally went in and came back with a revolver which she exhibited to the vagabonds. This discouraged any further attempts to enter Mrs. Pearson's house and the tramps transferred their operation to the school house. They smashed in the door, and piled the door mat and a lot of school books on the teacher's desk, set fire to these combustibles, and left the building. The desk was entirely consumed with the books, which had been recently furnished to the school. Several other desks were burned and the school house itself would have been consumed if help had not arrived speedily. Joseph Matthews saw the flames coming from the school house and with his son hastened to the building. They succeeded in putting out the fire."

Since most of the schools were in rural out-lying areas, the school board would close a school for a year if it determined (continued on page 6)

## Cabbage Hill School (continued from p.5)

there were not a sufficient number of children eligible to attend a particular school.

The New Britain School did not have that problem. In fact for many years in the 1920s parents complained about over crowding at the school. The school board held a special meeting with parents in September 1923 to discuss this issue. A parent threatened "if you do not give us better schools we are going to cooperate with the surrounding county and will get an Independent District." In June 1926 a number of special meetings were held to discuss plans to purchase more ground in New Britain, tear down the current school and build a bigger school. They determined a two-room school building would cost \$18,000 which the school board could not finance at that time so they decided not it build it.

This over crowding in the school was one reason a group of residents who lived in the "village" section of the township wanted a separate municipality and school district. In February 1927 a group of residents filed a petition for the Incorporation of New Britain Borough. The New Britain Township School Board was against losing the "village" tax receipts and the schoolhouse so they instructed their solicitor, Oscar Bean, to prepare and file exceptions against Incorporation. The legal maneuver didn't work. New Britain Borough became a separate municipality in 1928.

The New Britain Borough School District purchased the land and schoolhouse for \$600 from the New Britain Township School District on May 29, 1929. The new school board addressed the overcrowding by putting grades 1-4 in the New Britain School and grades 5-8 in the newly acquired Shady Retreat School. The school board then decided to build a larger school which eventually was named the Detwiler School. Consequently, the last class held in the New Britain/Cabbage Hill School was the fall semester of 1930.

Sophie Stover purchased the building from the New Britain Borough School District on February 2, 1931 but she never lived there. Edward and Dorothy Alles bought it from Miss Stover on January 17, 1933 and lived in the house until they died. The Alles changed the inside from a one-room school to a livable home. They removed the black board, added windows where the blackboard had been, installed wallboard on all the walls, framed the windows with wood, and installed walls so that the one room became five rooms.

The current residents, Anthony and Marie Esher Coia, who purchased the property from the Estate of Edward Alles in November 1977, have made extensive renovations over the years. Interior walls on the first floor were moved, dormers were built on both sides of an unfinished attic, a winding staircase was added, the stucco was removed from exterior walls and the stone repointed, a sun room was added, the kitchen has undergone several renovations and the existing garage was renovated. "We love this old schoolhouse that we call home," said Marie, "and we hope to spend many more happy years here."

Marie Esher Coia

## Proper Leaf Disposal

Autumn is here and leaves are falling. The best method of disposal for the environment is to keep the leaves on your property. Leaves make a great winter-over mulch for flower beds, gardens and shrubbery. Or try shredding the leaves with your lawn mower.

If you wish to bag your leaves for pick up, please contact your trash haulers for special pick up dates and instructions.

Should you choose to burn leaves, the Borough ordinance sets forth the following rules:

- ✓ Public roads cannot be used for burning leaves.
- ✓ Leaves should not be burned when atmospheric conditions make fires hazardous. Choose a cool day with low atmospheric pressure (the smoke will dissipate more rapidly). Burn leaves when the wind is calm.
- ✓ Fires must be continuously monitored until extinguished. Extinguising equipment (hoses, buckets of water, etc.) is required.
- ✓ No fires are permitted after sunset.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are not permitted to blow or rake leaves or grass clippings into the street. That practice can clog stormdrains.



## Byrne Sewing Connection LLC

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Calendar of Community Events	
Saturday, October 20; 9 a.m 3 p.m.	Annual Craft Fair. Lenape Valley Presbyterian Church
Saturday, October 20; 8 p.m.	Fall Concert - Bucks County Symphony Orchestra. Central Bucks West High School
Sunday, October 21; 3 p.m.	Delaware Valley College Symphonic Band and Jazz Band Concert. Student Center, Delaware Valley College. Free
Monday, October 22; 7 p.m.	"No Good Deed Goes Unrewarded." Hosted by the New Britain Borough Preservation Committee. Borough Hall
Tuesday, October 30; 5-7 p.m.	Chalfont - New Britain Business Alliance Card Exchange at Club Metro, Town Center
Tuesday, November 20; 1 p.m.	Cameos and Antique Jewelry hosted by J.U.L.I.E.T. New Britain Baptist Church Fellowship Hall
Saturday, December 1; 5-8 p.m.	Santa House at Genuardi's Shopping Center, Rt. 202 and County Line Road
Sunday, December 2; 3 p.m.	Youth Concert – Bucks County Symphony Orchestra Central Bucks West High School
Wednesday, December 5; 7 p.m.	New Britain Civic's Christmas Tree Lighting Town Center Shopping Center
Saturday, December 8; 5-8 p.m.	Santa House at Genuardi's Shopping Center, Rt. 202 and County Line Road
Saturday, December 15; 12 noon	Wreaths Across America Ceremony War Memorial and New Britain Baptist Church Cemetery
Tuesday, December 18; 1 p.m.	J.U.L.I.E.T Christmas Luncheon New Britain Baptist Church Fellowship Hall

## Can You Help (continued from front page)

We will highlight the various groups in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

Submit a CV, resume, letter or email expressing your interest in a particular position with your qualifications and/or experiences (45 Keeley Ave., New Britain, 18901) (nbboro@comcast.net).

Please consider participating in your local government. You can have an impact on the future of our borough and get to know your neighbors at the same time.

Marie Esher Coia, Chair



## J.U.L.I.E.T

J.U.L.I.E.T. – "Just Us Ladies In Entertaining Times" sponsor monthly programs for fun, education and good fellowship. J.U.L.I.E.T. is gracious in extending a welcome to women of the community to join them. The programs are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in the Church Fellowship Hall. The programs are approximately one hour and include refreshments. While admission is free, donations to defray the cost of the programs is greatly appreciated. For more information regarding J.U.L.I.E.T programs or the Women's Fellowship group, contact Kathy Seymour at 215-345-1535 or newbritainbaptistchurch@verizon.net.



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## New Britain Borough Officials

Mayor: David Holewinski

Council: Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month in Borough Hall, 7:30 PM

Robert Belchic, President; Margaret Remmey, Vice-President; Mary Pat Holewinski; Peter LaMontagne;

Joseph Cangelosi; Jeffrey Gilmore; Craig Sturza

Planning Meets 3<sup>rd</sup>Tuesday of each month in the Borough Office, 7:30 PM

**Commission:** David Holewinski, *Chairman*; Karl Dieterichs, *Vice Chair*; Denise Spence, *Secretary*;

Jack Brady; Joseph Cangelosi; Paul Land; Michael T. Parke; John Remmey

Zoning Meets, as needed, 3<sup>rd</sup>Thursday of the month in Borough Hall, 7:30 PM

**Hearing Board:** Robert Bair, *Chairman*; Andrea Antell; Tony Coia; John Wolff, Jr.; David Ziegfried;

Alternates: William Schaefer and Jackie D'Agostino; Solicitor, Christen Pionzio

**Tax Collector:** Richard Sabol, 215-489-8658 (Hours: Tuesday, 6 - 9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - noon)

Solicitor: Michael Goodwin Police Chief: James Donnelly, Office 215-345-1080

Newsletter Contributor & Coordinator: Marie Esher Coia

The following Borough personnel are located at the Borough Building, 45 Keeley Avenue. Phone 215-348-4586. The office is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Website: www.newbritainboro.com Email: NBBORO@comcast.net

Roadmaster ..... Edward Deschamps

Building Inspector and Fire Marshal: ...... Dan Jenkins, Keystone Municipal Services