Schedule of Events

Check Morristown at www.townofmorristown.org and Morris Township at www.morristwp.com for upcoming municipal meeting schedules.

For information on the Moms & Tots activities, events and get togethers, check: https://www.bigtent.com/groups/motownmomtot

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Burnham Park Association Board of Trustees

TRUSTEES:
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(Vice President, Newsletter Author, Arbor Day Coordinator) 538-7863
Debbie Bruen
(Secretary) 201-919-6105
Sharon Cain
(Newsletter Designer) 539-2039
Christopher Haines
Jennifer Carich
(Moms & Tots) 451-9090
Bill / Kathy Claxton 267-2706
Jonathan Darwell/Suzanne Mutz
Vorolieff
(T-shirt chair, Addler Admiral) 656-0190
Elihu Davison/
Sheira Greenwald 539-9015
Mary Ann Gazzal 538-0822
Kay Kribs 539-9312
John Mahoney Codd
Susan Mellen
(Newsletter Distributor) 401-9244
Buffy O’Brien (Flier Designer) 539-6461
Bill Pezzuti (Webmaster) 644-0421
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(President, Newsletter Editor) 540-1586
Don Siebert
(Treasurer) 540-1586
Edwin Villhauer 539-7128
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ALTERNATES:
Marla Weetall Moster
292-3026
Scott/Deborah Wild
455-1520

All numbers are in the 973 area code unless otherwise noted

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Twenty Five Years, 3,500 plantings and counting: BPA’s 25th Arbor Day!

Nick and Molly, Rosie and Chris, Graydon and Mason, Suzanne and Jon, Paul and Douglas, Don and Lynn and Joe as well as neighbors and visitors who were too busy decorating rain barrels and enjoying the camaraderie of our neighborhood to give their names, made the Burnham Park Association’s 25th annual Arbor Day celebration special!

L-R: Douglas Vorolieff with artist Willie Baez and a set of completed rain barrels; having fun with paint; Pat Rector inspects drain hole in barrel before painting proceeds.

www.burnhampark.org
The morning after a rain is a challenge when planting trees, but not for Graydon and Mason Carcich who scooped water from the waiting holes previously dug by Morristown’s DPW. The trees: a Black Gum, Swamp White Oak and American Hornbeam were then rolled by their root balls and placed in the holes after either adding or removing soil to keep the root ball top exposed, allowing the tree to breathe. Following the planting, each tree was wrapped by Joe Attamante to prevent deer browsing on the tender bark.

Also that morning, BPA’s “addling team,” comprised of Jon Darwell, Buffy O’Brien and Douglas Vorolieff, were inspecting goose nests while Jen Carcich and Douglas Vorolieff (splitting his time) primed the rain barrels for the afternoon’s efforts. And the afternoon was all about building and painting rain barrels. Emerald green fields speckled with white asters; gray-blue fish swimming in seaweed under a white cloud sky; yellow sunflowers in a green field, were some of the especially striking rain barrels beautifully painted by budding artists of all ages!

Partnering with the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee, Pat Rector (agent for Morris and Somerset Counties for the Rutgers Cooperative Extensions’ NJ Agricultural Experiment Station) and Arts By the People, BPA hosted this highly successful Rain Barrel Workshop where over 15 families purchased and built rain barrels and then, guided by professional artist Willie Baez (from Paul Rabinowitz’s Arts By the People), cut their creativity loose in the service of the environment. What better way to celebrate 25 years worth of work in Burnham Park!?

NEUROTOXINS, CARCINOGENS IN PESTICIDES PERSIST AND AFFECT OUR HEALTH:

Most of us know that pesticides can affect us in many negative ways, causing disease and disrupting our fundamental biology as humans. They are insidious and permeate our food supply and environments, often in invisible or unperceived ways until we look closer. There are some steps we can take to minimize their negative impacts.

1. Grow your own food. While this may be a challenge for many, nearly everyone, even those with a studio apartment or a dorm room can easily grow sprouts that can serve as a large percentage of the organic vegetables that you eat.

2. Detoxify your lawn. If you have a lawn care service, make sure they are not using the organophosphate pesticide trichlorfon. Also, avoid using Roundup to control weeds around your home.

3. Clean out your shed. The pesticide diazinon (sold under the brand names Diazinon or Spectracide) has been banned from residential, but there might be some left in your old garden shed. For more information on the topic, visit: http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/06/18/neonicotinoid-pesticide.aspx?e_cid=20130618_DNL_art_1&utm_source=dnl&utm_medium=email&utm_content=art1&utm_campaign=20130618
In Memoriam: Senator Frank Lautenberg

We wanted to acknowledge the enormous contributions of the late Senator Frank Lautenberg. An environmental advocate extraordinaire, Senator Lautenberg was a “stalwart champion of public health and environmental protection” stated Doug O’Malley, interim Director of Environment New Jersey. Multiple laws, including the one creating the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park and his landmark “Toxic Right to Know” act, which allows the public to know what pollutants are being released into their communities, are among his many outstanding legacies. In addition, he was responsible for banning smoking on commercial airlines and public places; he wrote tougher drinking laws (including establishing drinking and driving standards); he strongly advocated for better mass transit and stood in the forefront of stricter gun control laws, attacking those who blocked banning high capacity magazines in the wake of the Sandy Hook tragedy (even as his own health failed). He advocated better aviation safety, and proposed greater security in the nation’s seaports, chemical plants and airports. And, as a WWII veteran, he championed veterans, helping to write the new GI Bill for the 21st century, expanding educational funding for military vets. In his private life, he was a generous philanthropist. In our cynical world, he stood as an example of a true PUBLIC servant– a model well worth emulating. He will be greatly missed.

JCP&L - Keeping us in the dark

For nearly two weeks, Hurricane Sandy left us without power, phones, computers, heat, and for many, hot water. Morris Township officials offered municipal offices to serve as much needed warming stations with coffee and donuts and phone and computer charging stations. On behalf of all of our neighbors, we thank them for this help!

Sadly, JCP&L also kept our communities in the dark by their failure to provide timely or complete updates despite repeated requests from Morris Township Mayor Mancuso and Morristown’s Mayor Dougherty.

Additionally, some local street lighting damaged by Sandy still remains un repaired today, nearly seven months later. Only after repeated calls to the utility, including emails from Township Administrator Quinn, did a repairman finally arrive on Fairmount Ave. to ostensibly replace a light fixture destroyed when its pole was toppled in the storm. However, the repairman’s work order incorrectly directed him to only replace the globe/bulb - not the entire fixture. Fortunately, Joe Attamante, who’d reported the missing light and a downed pole on West Lake to JCP&L, saw the truck arrive and spoke to the lineman. The repairman subsequently drove to a warehouse for the correct part and completed the repair that evening.

Additionally, a replacement utility pole remained by the side of West Lake Blvd.– where a post Sandy crew left it– until it was finally removed a couple of weeks ago!

Note that on each call residents placed to JCP&L reporting these needed repairs, they provided locations as well as details and were given confirmation/work order numbers by JCP&L agents.

It is distressing that JCP&L does not respond more accurately and quickly to reported problems.

“Vice-Admiral” Jon Darwell, supplied the following Addling report:

2013 Addling Season: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

The 2013 Addling season ran from mid-March to the end of May. We owe a huge thanks to Buffy O'Brien without whom it would have been impossible to cover these weeks, and also to Mike and Erick who helped when Buffy was not available. They both have made a significant contribution to the addling team, and with Mike’s help we had three sets of waders so we didn’t have to get the boat out.

The Good…

Nest building and egg-laying didn’t start until the last week of March, probably due to the adverse weather for the weeks before this. By the end of egg-laying we had 16 nests and 96 eggs, significantly down on the previous years (24 to 25 nests and around 160 eggs). There were no nests on the Upper Pond, but the pair of swans built a nest on the Upper Pond about Mid-April. We also had a duck on the island late April with about 8 eggs.

The Bad…

As in previous years, we missed one nest somewhere which produced 7 goslings, first sighted in the Upper Pond. They may have been laid in private property so we would not be able to do anything with the nest. I have not seen any ducklings lately so maybe the duck met the same fates as the geese, or the eggs were just taken out for food when there are baby geese but I am not sure about a swan. They will be especially on the lookout for food when there are baby raccoons in the nest. Any suggestions on what would have done this would be most welcome; my first instinct is a coyote. Raccoons can and do kill geese but I am not sure about a swan. It could well have been a raccoon. Unfortunately, there will be no means of protecting a swan’s nest from predators on the Upper Pond. The up side of this is that the island is no longer safe for the geese, which may explain the lower number of nests on the island, and the lack of nests in the Upper Pond where access to any nests is easier. Jon Darwell, “Vice Admiral” of the Addling forces.
General Henry Knox (of Fort Knox fame) historic site update:

You might recall that in 2005 we learned that the Revolutionary War eleventh artillery brigade encampment once occupied by 1,000 men in 1779, 1780 was slated for imminent development.

However, subsequent research and discussions with the former curator of Morristown National Historical Park as well as the archelogist who’d uncovered artifacts on portions of the site, revealed that most of the site, originally extending for 1/3 of a mile along either side of Mendham Ave. (Rt. 124), including part of Burnham Park, had been quarried and/or developed in the intervening 200+ years. Yet, a significant portion of the original site - not far from the intersection of Kahdena Rd and Mendham Ave. (Rt. 124) - was never developed. The numerous Revolutionary War artifacts found on this site confirm the need to acquire and preserve this last unprotected Continental Army Brigade of the Artillery encampment.

What makes preservation pressing is that the rectangular site area delineated by archeologist E.R. Bower is owned by several residents, and thus liable to development (and loss) at any time. To forestall this threat, BPA Vice-President Joe Attamante supplied probative documentation to numerous federal, state, county and private historic preservation agencies, organizations and elected officials urging them to immediately preserve this historic site.

Sadly, even though Morristown National Historical Park, for one, had earmarked the site for acquisition, that plan had been tabled and no funds were available, while other state, local and private organizations, while acknowledging its significance, were likewise unwilling or unable to act. Finally, the Morris County Park Commission said they would work to negotiate purchase, and we recently learned they’d acquired a 1 acre portion but could not, at present, consider additional purchases.

Undeterred, BPA’s Vice-President Joe Attamante advocated purchase of a larger contiguous site (several acres) in order to preserve some semblance of the original encampment. Happily, after sharing documents and current developments with Morris Township Historic Preservation Chair Carol Barkin, her committee voted unanimously to work to preserve the site and have submitted an application to the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office asking that it become part of the Washington Valley Historic District. In addition, they have sent letters to the property owners to discuss acquisition of portions of their land through purchase, conservation easement or bequest.

We are hopeful that these efforts will finally result in preservation of land that was so integral a part of our Revolutionary War history.

Update II: Morris Township’s Historic Preservation Commission has received a “Certification of Eligibility” from the N.J. Office of Historic Preservation for the Knox encampment site making it eligible for listing in both the New Jersey and National Historic Registers of Historic Places! Since the site is eligible for listing individually or as a boundary increase of the Washington Valley Historic District, it remains for our Township’s Historic Preservation Committee to pursue registration. We’ll keep you posted when we learn additional details.

We congratulate and thank everyone who helped to verify the encampment’s historical importance and move it significantly closer to acquisition and preservation!
Post-storm Green Strip Clean-up with trail to follow!

B ill Foelsch, Morris Township’s Director of Parks & Recreation and past Trails Committee Chair, supervised volunteers from Jersey Cares in removing and repositioning trees ravaged by Hurricane Sandy...along with DPW Supervisor Tom Eschmann whose crews worked many hours to cut and chip fallen trees. The Township now plans to construct a trail through the Green Strip area which will connect Burnham Park with Jones Woods.

Here is Bill Foelsch’s description of the Green Strip plans:

**Background on the Green Strip:** The Morris Township Department of Parks and Recreation is charged with management of parcels of Open Space that have been purchased with funding from the Morris Township’s Open Space Trust Fund. This includes the Burnham Park “Green Strip” of forested lands and wetlands located between East Lake Boulevard and West Lake Boulevard, a tract of undeveloped land totaling 6.0 acres.

This parcel of green space has been preserved to protect the sensitive forest and wetlands environment and has served as a small wildlife refuge in the midst of the long-established Burnham Park neighborhood. The land protects and filters seasonal stream flows from the upper ridge areas heading downhill to the Town of Morristown’s Burnham Park recreational and open space lands.

**Trails Plan:** In 2008, led by a Subcommittee of the Morris Township Open Space Committee, the Township began planning for a community-wide Trails and Pathway Plan seeking to identify recreational pathway opportunities to link the neighborhoods of the Township with some of the busy trails and pathways already crossing the Township, such as Patriots Path and the Loantaka Brook Trail. The Trails and Pathways Plan included a linkage through the Burnham Park Green Strip and ultimately connecting Burnham Park to the open space lands collectively known as “Jones Woods.”

The Trails and Pathway Plan has received all necessary Board approvals and a new Morris Township Trails Committee has been appointed to work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to implement the Plan. Informal planning discussion with the Board members of the Burnham Park Association about both the Green Strip and Jones Woods started in 2011. The plan envisions a hiking-only footpath using the perimeter forested areas through the Green Strip, connected by the existing footpath crossing the center of the green strip. The Jones Woods trails system would be reached by a spur trail along the service road off of Hillcrest Avenue. Both trails were discussed in detail at a recent meeting of the Burnham Park Association.

**Post Sandy Cleanup:** Superstorm Sandy unfortunately hit the Burnham Park neighborhood and the Green Strip quite hard, resulting in the loss of many mature trees. Quite a few of the downed or leaning trees in the Green Strip were assessed to be potentially dangerous to the public at large. With crews furnished by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Public Works, the Township has been trimming and sometimes clearing trees that were dangerous or creating obstacles. The Township’s crews made a point to keep all work out of the northern wetlands section of the Green Strip and here, only roadside clearing occurred around the wetlands.

The large numbers of downed trees and branches also were a concern for potential dry-season wildfires. The Township was fortunate to solicit volunteer clearing assistance from Jersey Cares, a not-for-profit group that assists in marshaling volunteers for specific community projects from the corporate and educational communities. On May 5th, Jersey Cares provided more than 30 volunteers who came to the Burnham Park Green Strip to drag downed branches and logs to the roadsides. (See photos) Following that big workday, the Department of Public Works assisted with chipping the woody materials back onto the forest floor where they should serve to replenish the natural decay and regeneration process of the forest. In agreement with the request of the Burnham Park Association, most of the downed trees and branches will remain in place to add to available wildlife cover in the park.

**The next steps for the Department of Parks and Recreation:** working with the Trails Committee to physically locate the new footpath, clearing the bed of the footpath for safe and smooth travel, and trimming the trail pathway of branches and prickly invasive Japanese Barberry. We are seeking additional volunteer help to reduce the existing stands of Japanese Barberry on the upland (south) portion of the tract. We also would like to correct some minor erosion problems from runoff from local roads, and we are planning for the eventual replanting of native shrub and plant species in the Green Strip to restore the natural landscape.
Bravo! X-Govs speak up for the Palisades

On June 22, 2013, The Star-Ledger reported Brendan Byrne, Tom Kean, Jim Florio and Christie Whitman spoke out against the threat of new construction by LG Electronics USA which wants to build its new corporate headquarters breaking through the treeline of the Palisades and marring the pristine and landmark vista. The 4 governors wrote a letter to the company objecting to the plan: “We are concerned that this tower would not only interrupt the historic, natural vista enjoyed by millions, but would also set a precedent for great building heights stretching northward along these iconic cliffs, eroding the unique American landmark of the Palisades,” they wrote. The Star-Ledger continued: “Last week, the Environmental Protection Agency withdrew its support for the project, specifically citing concerns about the loss of the pristine beauty of the Palisades.” No one disputes the economic benefits of having LG’s business but surely there is a better place to locate its headquarters...Bravo to the former governors for taking such a strong stance and helping to push back on this ill-conceived plan.

CITIZENS’ LAWSUIT AGAINST HONEYWELL PLANS ADVANCES IN COURT

update provided by Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township...

It is encouraging that Superior Court has acknowledged the merit in the lawsuit filed by Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township arguing that there was “spot zoning” to benefit a particular interest (i.e. Honeywell) rather than the collective interest of the community when the zoning and Master Plan were changed to accommodate the general development plan put forth by Honeywell. The case will now be heard in court, starting March of 2014. Here are the latest details from the press release provided by CBPMT:

On Friday, June 7, at a pre-trial hearing at the Superior Court of New Jersey at the Morristown Court House, CBPMT presented arguments about Ordinance 13-12C. Ordinance 13-12C was adopted by the Morris Township Committee this past October to allow development of the Honeywell property from strictly Office/Lab zoning to Mixed Use zoning, including 235 townhouses plus multiple office buildings. The CBPMT complaint - that this ordinance is a clear cut case of spot zoning, i.e., the use of the zoning power to benefit a particular interest rather than the collective interest of the community - was found by the Hon Stephen C. Hansbury to be meritorious and warranting proceeding to trial.

Ordinance 13-12C was initiated at the request of Honeywell International. The proposed Master Plan amendment and ordinance sparked significant public concern and discussion over a two year period. Although CBPMT identified the shortcomings of the process and provided possible use alternatives, the ordinance was passed without any revision at 1:30 AM on October 2, 2012. With the passage of the Master Plan amendment and Ordinance 13-12C, the 147-acre Honeywell tract can now be densely developed in a mixed use fashion with only a general development plan over a period of 20 years.

By changing the zoning from commercial to high density residential, the Township Committee has incentivized Honeywell’s now planned move to Morris Plains, permitted Honeywell to escape current commercial market conditions, converted a large portion of the otherwise open space to cash for Honeywell, and shifted the tax burden for new high density property to the Township residents. As stated by NJ Superior Court in 2011, “spot zoning occurs when a municipality seeks to relieve a particular property of the burden imposed by its zoning classification so as to benefit the lot owner or permit an incompatible use”. By passing this ordinance, the Township Committee made the situation a “win-win” for Honeywell and ignored the more significant disadvantages to the Township and its residents.

A donation to the Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township enables the group to hire the best legal advocates and experts to help us all maintain the quality of our neighborhoods and the value of our properties. You can donate online, visit http://c4bpmt.org/donate/ or mail a check made out to “Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township” to:
Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township
PO Box 533
Convent Station, NJ 07961
BP Aerator Update:
Aerator point person Susan Mellen reports that there was an electrical problem with the aerator motor controllers, probably resulting from Superstorm Sandy and related wiring issues. The situation and its solution have been checked out thoroughly by the company through which the aerators were acquired. Necessary parts have been ordered and everything should be working on or about July 4th!!

COMMUNITY CONSCIENCE:

Mystery Dog Poop purveyor: The neighborhood respectfully requests that the person who dutifully bags his/her dog’s droppings but then tosses the filled bag into the Green Strip (!) please instead take home the bag and dispose of it properly - in the trash.

Clean Drains: Yes, it’s true, NJ has had the wettest spring/early summer on record this year. To keep our roadways from flooding, please help by cleaning out debris from nearby storm drains. Thank you!

Membership/Dues Payment I/We enclose our 2013 Burnham Park Association dues of:

$10 Basic/Pine $25 Sponsor/Maple $50 Patron/Beech $100 Benefactor/Oak $250 Thomas Paine Club

Name:__________________________________________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________________
Telephone: ___________________________ Email:______________________________________

If making additional contribution, please indicate amount and purpose (e.g. plantings for Arbor Day, etc.)

Amount:_ ___________________________ Purpose:_____________________________________

Fill in your name, address and telephone number on this stub. Make checks payable to the Burnham Park Association. Send to our Treasurer, Don Siebert, 178 Hillcrest Ave., Morristown, NJ 07960. Thanks to those neighbors who have supported BPA so generously. DUES PAID IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS OF 2012 GOT CREDITED TO CALENDAR YEAR 2013