

Forward Township Newsletter

Issued October 10, 2020

1. Trunk-or-Treat: Cancelled: This Halloween Trunk-or-Treat event for 2020 has been cancelled. We anticipate having Trunk-or-Treat at the Gallatin-Sunnyside Park again in October of 2021.

Trick OR Treat in Forward Township Neighborhoods: Some years ago, Forward Township adopted the following general rule regarding trick or treat activities *in the Township's neighborhoods*:

October 31st is the day designated as the day for children to engage in Trick or Treat activities in local neighborhoods, unless the 31st is on a Sunday. If October 31st is on a Sunday the Township will designate another day.

Based on that general rule (house to house) Trick or Treat activities are scheduled for Saturday, October 31, 2020. To help keep our kids safe, there will be a more than normal police presence in the Township between the hours of 5:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M.

Also: See Article # 9

2. District Court Update: Beth Mills, Esquire, Magisterial District Judge, District Court 05-2-26, has advised as follows:

The local District Court has adopted the rules presented below for the three types of cases listed:

Landlord/Tenant: Cases involving Landlord/Tenant are able to be filed but may be stayed or postponed if a Tenant files a CDC Affidavit. In addition, the Landlord must file two affidavits: An Affidavit of Compliance and an Allegheny County Affidavit. Information and forms are available in the Court's waiting room.

Criminal Cases: Criminal cases are proceeding. The Police Departments may do cases remotely from the Police Stations. This means that you could get a Notice form the Police Dept to report to their Station and Not to the Court.

Civil / Traffic and Non-Traffic: These cases are proceeding as scheduled.

Persons attending the Court must check in with the Constable and are usually asked to wait in their vehicle until called into Court. NO purses or bags are permitted in the Court. These must be left in your vehicle.

For additional information you can call District Court 05-2-26, which is located at 2611 Hayden Blvd, Ste. #3, Elizabeth, PA 15037 at 412-382-3050.

3. Facts about the June 2, 2020 Election: The June 2nd Primary Election saw a number of changes. Some of those are among the following:

1. Lack of Candidate Supporters at Polls: Skrinny (Ron Skrinjorich) and I did not spend all day supporting candidates at the polls. That has not happened since I got involved in Township politics about a dozen years ago. We, of course, stayed away due to the Covid19 problem.

Although I did not stay at the poll all day I did make a few brief visits. Unlike in previous years, when there were handshakes and fun-type greetings, the poll this year was a very somber place.

2. Only One Voting Location: For many Township voters I suspect the biggest change was the elimination of the poll at the Gallatin-Sunnyside VFD; all voting activity for Township residents was conducted at the Forward Township VFD.

Note: As of October 6th my most current information is that both polls (Gallatin-Sunnyside VFD and Forward Township VFD) will be used.

3. Mail-In-Ballots: The June 2nd election was the first election in Pennsylvania that saw the use of Mail-In-Ballots. The “Source of votes” results in Forward Township were all follows:

Provisional Ballot Votes *	19
Mail-In-Votes	304
Votes Cast at the Poll	<u>446</u>
Total Votes Cast ++	769
Registered voters who did not Vote	<u>1,230</u>
Total Registered Voters	<u>1,999</u>

*. included Absentee Ballots.

**. Source: The Voter Registration CD dated September 15, 2020 that was provided by the Allegheny County Elections Division.

An observations related to the above results. According to an unofficial source 395 Township residents were provided with Mail-In-Ballots. If that is true not all were submitted in time to be counted. I am not sure whether or not any of those people went to the Polls and used a Provisional Ballot to vote. I am seeking more information regarding this matter.

4. Letters You May Have Received: In the past several weeks I sent out emails (& Post Office delivered letters) to addresses that affected 156 Township residents who are registered to vote. Those letters specifically asked the recipients of those letters to break their established pattern of voting – meaning they have not voted in quite a while, and I would like them to change that pattern this November 3rd. Additionally, I asked those residents to vote for Senator Jim Brewster.

As those letters, and my other recent mailings, indicate: *this is an especially important election for Forward Township.*

Question: Why in this November 3rd so important?

Answer: There are 130 Municipalities in Allegheny County. When the combined cost of Real Estate Taxes (.0195 mills), plus the cost of garbage collection (no charge to residents), are considered: Forward Township provides its residents with the lowest combined cost in Allegheny County! *And, the Board of Supervisors would like to keep it that way!*

How do we keep it that way! There are many parts to a comprehensive answer to that question. But, without a doubt, having the right Legislator in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives helps. Example: When the old Axelton School building, that served as the Township Municipal building for a number of years, was falling down and needed to be demolished, the lowest bid was \$112,000.

Without a State Grant the Township would have been required to increase Real Estate Taxes to raise the money to demolish that building. How much would the Real Estate Taxes have needed to be raised to pay for demolition? Well, we typically get about \$340,000. a year from Real Estate taxes. As you can see, the tax increase needed would have been significant! Well, in a year when *the Township was told no State Grant money was available for that type of expense*, Jim got us a State Grant of \$100,000. for the demolition. That is example (of many) of the ways Jim has helped keep your Forward Township Real Estate taxes as low as they are.

I guess the message is: **Senator Jim Brewster** is an asset to Forward Township, and we all need to help ourselves and go vote to keep him in the Senate.

5. Home Insurance in Bunola: I understand that some residents of the Bunola area have recently had Insurance companies question whether their area is covered by a fire department. If that happens to you, give me a call and I will help you deal with the issue.

6. Permit-to-Carry Event: Allegheny County Sheriff Bill Mullen's staff conducted a Permit-To-Carry event at the Forward Township Municipal Building on August 29, 2020. This year's event, due to concerns about Covid19, was conducted differently than the way our Permit-To-Carry events were conducted in any previous year. The more significant changes were as follows:

- 1.. Masks were required.
- 2.. Pre-Registration Required: In all prior years, applicants could come at any time during the day. They were reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. There was no pre-registering required, or permitted. This year all Applicants for a Permit were required to pre-register on the Sheriff's website. Part of the registration process was for the Applicant to select one of the *available* time slots. This type of registration eliminated the long lines of people waiting to have their Application reviewed.

This type of registration which required the Applicant to select an available time slot made the whole affair very orderly. I would hope that future Permit-To-Carry events use this same methodology.

3. Number of Applicants were limited: The total number of time slots available for the day, and thus the total number of Applicants that could processed was 80. Compared to prior years when as many as 350 Applicant were processed in a day, this (obviously) represented a significant reduction.

I suspect that in the future, even if Covid19 is no longer a factor, and even with a pre-registration that requires the Applicant to select an available time slot, we will again be able to process as many as was processed in previous years.

Many people disappointed: The 80 time slots that were available for the day were completely taken in about 20 minutes after the first person pre-registered. That left many people very unhappy, but with all of the Covid19 issues the Sheriff's people had to deal with, we were lucky to even have an event.

As usual, the Sheriff's staff did an outstanding job. I want to give a big **THANK YOU** to the following: Sheriff William Mullen, Chief Deputy Kevin Kraus, Deputy Ryan Foster (who this year, like all previous years, supervises the Permit-To-Carry event), and all of the Sheriff's staff who come and conduct our Permit-To-Carry Event.

When they were here on August 29th, I advised both Chief Deputy Kevin Kraus and Deputy Ryan Foster that we want to another Permit-To-Carry event as soon as it can be arranged.

7. The "River Bank" at Gallatin-Sunnyside Park: The Road Crew remarked the other day that the river bank at Gallatin-Sunnyside Park was 20+ feet wider than earlier this year. They expressed a concern that boat owners might get their boat trailers stuck if attempted to use the boat launch there.

I went down to the Park to take a look. The river's edge had receded (toward the center of the river) by 20+ feet. And, the Road Crew was right: anyone trying to launch a boat there could get their trailer stuck. The water had dropped so far the drop-off at the end of the launch might "catch" the trailer wheels, and make it difficult to pull the trailer out of the water. The boat launch approach is blocked with concrete barriers and will remain so until the drop-off hazard is eliminated. The hazard should be eliminated when the water level rises – if it does rise.

Why would the water level not rise? One Possible answer: One side effect of the current Army Corps of Engineers project that will include the elimination of Lock 3 (near Elizabeth) will be the permanent lowering of the water level at the Gallatin-Sunnyside Park site by approximately 3.2 feet. Part of that permanent drop may have already occurred. I am currently trying to find out more about this possibility from the Army Corps of Engineers.

Notice in the above paragraph that I said *One Possible Answer*. Another possible lowering of the water level in the river may be the extra dry weather we have experienced this year. After visiting the Park I took a look at four creeks in the Township. The water-flow was drastically less than in previous years at this time. Less water in the creeks would, like the dredging, have the effect of lowering the water level in the river. Who knows? I suspect we will find out a little later in the year when enough rain cause produces enough water to raise the water level in the local creeks, which will inevitably raise the water in the river.

A little information about the Army Corp of Engineers (hereinafter "Corp") project: The Corp is part way through a \$1.2 **billion** project that will include demolition of Locks # 3. The project is expected to be completed in late 2023 or early 2024. Part of the project that you probably have seen this summer is the large dredging rigs operating in the river. They are working to clear the channel of the river so that it is nine-foot deep and 300-foot-wide, which is what is required for commercial navigation.

The Park is Growing: The bank adjacent to the river at the park is approximately 700 feet long. The lower water level made the riverbank 20 feet wider. Result: The Park size was increased by 14,000. (700 x 20) square feet. An acre of land is 43,560 square feet. Therefore,

the Park increased in size by almost 1/3 of an acre. *My wife said this paragraph is proof positive that I have far too much free time on my hands.*

See the first picture below the body of the Newsletter that shows how much the river bank has “grown”.

8. New Hunting Rules: There are some new laws governing the sport of hunting that Township hunters and Township landowners should be aware of. Senator Jim **Brewster (Democrat – 45 Senatorial District)**, along with **Senator Dan Laughlin (Republican – 49 Senatorial District - Erie.)**, were co-prime sponsors of Senate Bill 147, which became law in Pennsylvania.

** My comment: Nice to see that a Democrat and a Republican can work together to promote and co-sponsor legislation they both believe in.

This bill provided for hunting on three Sundays: one during rifle deer season, one in statewide archery deer season and a third to be determined by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The following was extracted from The June / July 2020 Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest --- found on Pennsylvania Game Commission website.

Three new Sunday-hunting opportunities have been approved for the 2020 season: Sunday, Nov. 15 for archery deer hunting; Sunday, Nov. 22 for bear hunting; and Sunday, Nov. 29 for deer hunting. Only those species can be hunted on the designated Sundays, plus foxes, coyotes and crows.

Although not a part of the Bill that provided for Sunday hunting, the first day of antlered deer season will again be on a Saturday (November 28, 2020).

The bill also makes trespassing while hunting a primary offense and increases the penalties for trespassing. *It also requires **written permission*** from a landowner to hunt on any of the Sundays.*

* The presumption here is that the hunter must carry the written permission with him (or her) while hunting. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time written permission from the landowner was required – in the past verbal permission was deemed adequate.

Getting Written Permission: Given the need to have written permission to hunt on the days designated above, it is obvious you need to know who owns the land you wish to hunt on. If you do not know, and asking around does not help, if you have an actual (or nearby) address the Allegheny County Real Estate website may be of some help.

To get to that website you can Google “Allegheny County Real Estate”.

The website can provide the landowner’s names and mailing address as well as providing a rough map of the property boundaries.

If you have difficulty finding what you want to find, call Tina (412-384-2321) at the Municipal Building – she can probably help you.

A repeat of last year: Although **not** a part of the Legislative Bill that provided for Sunday hunting, the first day of antlered deer season (Buck Season) will again be on a *Saturday*. This year that *Saturday* has been designated as November 28, 2020

If you have questions, or require additional information, either go to the Pennsylvania Game Commission website (<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/>) or call their local office at 724-238-9523.

9. Free Flu Shot Clinic: It is now official. There will be a **FREE** flu shot clinic in Forward Township this year. The shots will be administered at the Forward Township Fire Department building located on Roberts Hollow Road between 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM on Saturday, October 17, 2020.

If the person who gets the shot has insurance: That person's insurance company will be billed. Regardless of how much the insurance company pays, there will be no out-of-pocket cost to the shot recipient. Whatever the insurance company pays will be accepted as full payment.

If the person who gets the shot does NOT have insurance: There be no charge for the shot.

Who is Providing this Program? This entire program was developed and administered by the **SouthEast Regional EMS** (aka SEREMS) – SEREMS is the company that provides ambulance services in Forward Township.

Mask or No Mask: The person getting the shot **must** wear a mask. In the event the person getting the shot forgets their mask there may be a few available on site. There is only one exception to the mask requirement: A person who has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask can have the shot administered while they sit in their car.

Special Situations: SEREMS will do in-home Flu shot visits for anyone that is bed bound, wheelchair bound, or has any illness or disability that makes it difficult for them to go to the clinic or their doctor. You can call 412-384-0114 to schedule the in-home shot.

10. Multiple Email Addresses: Often a husband and a wife will have different email addresses. It also is not uncommon for an individual to have more than one email address – for example one at home and a different one on your phone. Ok, what's the point?

The point is: I have no problem sending a Forward Township Newsletter to more than one email address for a given individual. You can get the Newsletter sent to as many email addresses as you like.

If you would like future Newsletters to be sent to more than one email address, just send me the second (or third) email address where you would like the Newsletter sent.

More than a few people have told me they print out the Newsletter and give it to someone (parent, Aunt, Uncle, son, daughter, etc.) who had lived in Forward Township at one time. If you will send me their email address I would be happy to send the Newsletter directly to them.

I should probably mention that when a Township resident does NOT use email I will forward a Newsletter to them via the U.S. Post Office.

11. Need Help Paying For College: Having trouble paying for college for you or a member of your family? Want some help? If you are a resident of Allegheny County you can get a lot of help!! There is

a program available to Township residents where two years of classes at Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) and the necessary books can be paid for: 100 percent. This is not a loan. You do not have to repay whatever you receive for books and tuition. Anyone interested can give me a call.

10. Special Note: If you receive the Forward Township Newsletter via email you may be wondering why this Newsletter contains information already provided to you. Reason: The Forward Township Newsletter mailing list is divided into two parts described as follows:

- (1) Email Part: this part includes those people who receive the Newsletter via email, and
- (2) Post Office Part: includes those people who have the Newsletter delivered to them by the U.S. Post Office.

The information in Articles #1 and #9 was previously emailed to all of the Forward Township Newsletter readers on the Email Part of the Newsletter mailing list. That information in Article #1 and #9 was NOT sent to people who are on the Post Office Part of the Newsletter mailing list.

Why was the information in Article # 1 and Article # 2 sent to one group and not the other: the cost of sending any message to all of people on the Email Part is zero, while the cost of sending any message to all of the people on the Post Office Part costs about \$120. It is a budget / cost issue (see the Disclaimer at the end of this Newsletter regarding: who pays for this Newsletter).

This type of situation occurs every so often. I send out an average of four emails to the Email Part of the Newsletter every month, and some of the information in those emails, like the cancellation of the Trunk-or-Treat event, I think should be given to all Newsletter readers. When that happens, I also insert that information in the standard Newsletter.

11. A Personal Comment About the Upcoming General Election, and just as importantly,

Elections in General: I am a registered Democrat. I have been a registered Democrat my entire life. And, in local and State elections, I will admit, there is somewhat of a tendency for me to favor another Democrat when he or she is on the ballot. I think all men and women of both political parties have that tendency - to favor a candidate from their own Political Party. Having said that,

Do I believe: Only Democrats have good ideas? Answer: **No.**

Do I believe; Only Republicans have good ideas? Answer: **No.**

To believe either of those statements would be the height of stupidity!

Do I always vote for Democrats in every election? Answer: **No.** I have voted for Republicans when I thought the Republican candidate was the best person for the job. Not only have I voted for Republicans, but in the case of Rick Saccone's (a Republican) last campaign, I not only voted for him, I strongly and actively supported him as a candidate. Rick would attest to that fact.

I guess this is leading up to these two questions: How do I pick a candidate to support? How do I pick a candidate to vote for? Answer: I *vote* for and *support* the candidate who I believe is the best person for the job – the person who can, and who I believe will, take actions that will benefit Forward Township. Along those lines: I am asking every Forward Township resident who is a registered Democrat and every Forward Township resident who is a registered Republican to vote for **Senator Jim Brewster**, because he is, hands down, the best candidate for the job of continuing to do good things for Forward Township.

12. The First Time EVER: I was getting ready to send this Newsletter when something that has been developing for a week or so suddenly became ready to present. About a week ago I became aware that **ALL Seven** Commissioners comprising the Board of Commissioner of Elizabeth Township authorized a poster announcing their support for Senator Jim Brewster! Of those **Seven** Commissioners **Four** are Democrats and **Three** are Republicans!

Well, the following Forward Township individuals have authorized a poster announcing their support for the re-election of Senator Brewster**:

Tom DeRosa, Chairman, Forward Township Board of Supervisors, Democrat
Travis Stoffer, Chairman, Forward Township Republican Committee, Republican
Ron Skrinjorich, Township Supervisor, Vice-Chair, Forward Township Democratic Committee
Dave Magiske, Vice-Chair Forward Township Board of Supervisors, Chair Forward Township Democratic Committee.

** You will be getting a post card showing this poster in the U.S. Mail.

Yes, in Forward Township, Democrats have joined Republicans to support the re-election of **Senator Jim Brewster**. As noted above, the entire Board of Commissioners in Elizabeth Township did the same thing.

Must be something to this Jim Brewster guy!

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