



# Come Home to Penn Estates Harmony

Penn Estates Property Owners Association

Holiday/New Year 2013-2014

## Your Board at Work

By Maureen Shindle

The following actions were taken at the September and October 2013 Board meetings.

**Resolutions:** The Board approved the following resolutions:

- Confidentiality agreements – Only members of the Standing Committees: Appeals, Architecture Review Finance and Nominating and Steering, as well as the Audit Review Committee are required to sign confidentiality agreements.
- Realtors are allowed to conduct their own open houses during April through September beginning in 2014.
- Fines regarding ATV use in the community have been revised to: 1<sup>st</sup> offense \$100; 2<sup>nd</sup> offense \$250; 3<sup>rd</sup> offense \$400; 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequent offense(s) \$500.
- 2014 Budget resolutions:
  - The Board approved the preliminary budget for 2014 with revenue of \$1,916,385.00 and expenses of \$1,914,842.00 with a surplus of \$1,543.00.
  - The 2014 Maintenance fees are based on a collection rate of 82%.
  - The 2014 Capital budget is approved with revenue of \$28,690.
  - Dues for 2014 will remain at \$1190.00 for improved lots and \$985.00 unimproved lots with \$70.00 being allocated to the Capital Reserve Fund.
  - Members may apply for a payment plan between December 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. A \$35.00 application fee is due at time of the filing. All dues must be paid by July 15, 2014. Additional fees apply for late payments.
  - All dues paid in full by December 31, 2013, will be eligible for a discount of \$50.00 for improved lots and \$30.00 for unimproved. Payment must be made by cash or check.

**Committee changes:** The Board approved the following committee changes:

- Michael and Dorritte Tyrrell appointed to the Community Safety Committee
- Nancy Padilla appointed to the Recreation Committee
- Jolie Sprewell removed from the Recreation Committee

**Note:** Members may review the full approved Board meeting minutes online at [www.pepoa.org](http://www.pepoa.org) or by going to the Administration Office. Copies of the full preliminary budget are also available at the Administration Office.

**The PEPOA Board of Directors and Staff wishes all Penn Estates residents season's greetings and a healthy and prosperous 2014!**



## Our Success is in Your Hands

By Maureen Shindle

According to Webster, a volunteer is one who enters into or offers himself for a service of his own free will. Organizations such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and Stroudsburg Fire Department depend on volunteers to fulfill their missions. Such is the case with Penn Estates. Volunteers contribute to the community by giving freely of a most precious asset: time. Every person on the Board of Directors and all committee members are volunteers. All are working together to make Penn Estates a better place to live through recreational activity, long range planning and monitoring the finances of the treasury, to mention a few. Each person brings different talents, skills and experience to the activity or committee in which he/she is engaged. Any and all contributions are greatly appreciated.

The community model as detailed in the By-Laws is one in which volunteers comprise the committees and board. The committees address the needs and wants of the community and propose projects and changes to the Board, who either approves the proposed recommendation or requests changes to the proposal. And while this process is currently in place, it is greatly diminished by the lack of volunteers. A small group of homeowners fill positions on numerous committees. These homeowners are certainly to be commended for their commitment and dedication and are critical to the success of the community.

For years, many of our volunteers were retired people who were truly dedicated to the community for many years. Most of these long time volunteers, however, have resigned leaving the work to the next generation. In order for us to continue to succeed and grow, we need you to fill the void.

I recognize the challenges involved with so many of you commuting daily; leaving in and coming home in the dark. We all have a million things to do and never enough time to get it all done. Weekends are spent catching up on household chores, shopping and chauffeuring the kids from one event to another. So I'm not saying it will be easy; things worthwhile seldom are. Nevertheless, I ask that you seriously consider becoming a volunteer for the betterment of our community, for an opportunity to interact with neighbors or just because it makes you feel good.

Commitment varies from a few hours a month to assisting for an hour or two once in a while on a specific project or activity. Keep in mind, it is not the size of the commitment that matters; it is the act of committing the time and getting involved that is important.

There are many avenues available to Penn Estates residents who want to volunteer their time. These include a number of committees which are detailed below. In addition, anyone willing to make a more significant commitment is invited to run for the Board of Directors. Or you can get involved simply by attending Board Meetings and/or Workshops. All commitments large and small make Penn Estates a better place. And all commitments are greatly appreciated by your fellow volunteers and community. Please get involved!!!



Penn Estates Property Owners Association  
304 Cricket Drive  
East Stroudsburg PA 18301  
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## From Laura's Desk

By Laura Jones, Community Manager

### Happy Holidays!

The holidays are just around the corner, and for many, that means lots of festivities with friends and loved ones. With all of the merriment that's sure to ensue and the wonderful chaos that comes with it; feel free to pre-register your quests early via email at [welcomecenter@ptd.net](mailto:welcomecenter@ptd.net). Include your guest's names; date and duration of visit; your address and password. You will receive a confirmation email from the staff to confirm receipt of your guest list.

Along with the holiday season comes snow season! Yes, I said it...snow! I want to remind all residents to bring in basketball hoops that may be at the end of driveways so they don't get hit by the plows. Please discourage your children from building "snow forts" in the snow piles created by clearing driveways. The staff can't tell from inside a plow truck if children are buried in the snow piles or "snow forts" and it creates a very dangerous situation. Also, on those coveted snow days when children can't wait to play outside, please don't let them play too close to the edges of roads. The plows are big; the trucks are noisy and they don't stop easily. This means if a child slips into the road when the plow is coming it could be a terrible, possibly even fatal, accident. Let's keep those snow days happy and safe!

As long as we're still on the subject of safety; remember to carry a flashlight when you're walking. Flashing a light at the roadside while you're walking increases driver awareness to alert them to a pedestrian in the dark.

We hope you all have plenty of chances to eat, drink and be merry this holiday season. Most of all we hope it is with health and happiness. Please stay safe and best wishes from the staff and management of Penn Estates.

## A request from the Nominating and Steering Committee

By Lucy Jacobsen, Chair

As the end of the year approaches, we are all thinking of the Holiday Season coming up. It's also a time to think about what you can do in your community to help out. We are always looking for volunteers to join the various committees within Penn Estates. We want this to be the best community to live in and have the best volunteers around.

It is also the time to start thinking about what you can do as member of the Board of Directors. There will be three open positions in 2014 and we are always looking for new members to bring new ideas on how to keep our community one of the best around. Being a member of the Board is not an easy task and we are always grateful to our members for all the time and devotion they give to this community. So start thinking about it now and look for the timeframe in Harmony for applying.

As a volunteer and a member of the Board, your voice is heard and you can help make and keep Penn Estates the great community that it is.

The Nominating and Steering Committee wishes all our residence and very happy and health holiday season and look forward to a wonderful 2014 in Penn Estates.

### Holiday Lights Contest



It is that time of year again when members of the Real Estate Committee will be driving around the community looking for the best decorated holiday house. There will be two winners chosen to receive a gift card. You do not need to do anything to participate except to get out there and decorate your home. With owner's permission winning homes will be featured in the next issue of Harmony

### Mah Jongg

Mah Jongg meets every Monday from 11:45 to 4:30 in the back room under the Oak room. You do not need to know how to play we will teach you. Its \$5 a week, and we bring our lunch. It's a fun afternoon with alot of nice ladies. If you need any further information, please call Clarice at 570-421-0391 or email [clarice7@ptd.net](mailto:clarice7@ptd.net)



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## Penn Estates Harmony

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# President's Message

By Jody Perkin, President, PEPOA Board of Directors

I subscribe to several online management and leadership publications; sometimes they strike a chord and sometimes they don't. When I read the item below in July, it resonated with me and I immediately asked the publisher for the right to re-print, which they were happy to grant. It is my hope that there is a takeaway here for everyone.

## The Answers are Easy!

By Dan Oswald

Have you ever faced a problem at work that seemed so overwhelming, so insurmountable that you struggled to even know how to begin to resolve it? And the more you studied the problem, the more convinced you became that the solution must be equally as complex. Your exercise in problem solving became a downward spiral until you were more confused by the answer you came up with than you were with the original problem.

You may think I'm exaggerating here, but I'm not. I see it all the time. People are faced with a difficult problem, and they look for answers that are equally tough. In our world of immense data, they come up with complex algorithms to resolve their complicated question. A very wise man once said, "Sometimes the questions are complicated but the answers are simple." That's advice I think we all should heed.

Just because the question is perplexing doesn't mean it requires a complicated answer. Often, in our pursuit of an answer that matches the difficulty of the question, we chase complex solutions and overlook the easy and obvious. We buy into the idea that the answer can't be that easy—the problem is too difficult! All of our solutions begin to resemble the Rube Goldberg machines we had to build for science class as kids. And everyone knows how reliable they were.

So who is this genius who encourages us to look for the easy answer? Einstein? Edison? No, it isn't either. The quote came from Theodor Seuss Geisel. You may know him as a man who made a living keeping it simple, the famed author of children's books such as *The Cat in the Hat*, Dr. Seuss. And that, I believe, is quite appropriate. The advice comes from a man who spent a lifetime providing great counsel to the youth of the world through his simple, rhyming books.

What if I told you that Dr. Seuss' books are full of wonderfully simplistic advice that all of us—even adults—can use in our daily lives? They are. Take a look at his books. You'll find lessons everyone can use—even at work—all from a man who once said about writing for adults, "Adults are just obsolete children."

Here are a few lessons from Dr. Seuss' books that you can put in play at work.

- On doing what you say you'll do: "I meant what I said, and I said what I meant. An elephant's faithful—one hundred percent." *Horton Hatches the Egg*
- The importance of everyone no matter their role or position: "A person's a person, no matter how small." *Horton Hears a Who!*
- On perseverance and the benefits of a group coming together for a common purpose: "Don't give up! I believe in you all. A person's a person, no matter how small! And you very small persons will not have to die if you make yourselves heard! So come on, now, and TRY!" *Horton Hears a Who!*
- Remembering where you came from and the importance of everyone in the organization: "I know up on top you are seeing great sights, but down here on the bottom we, too, should have rights." *Yertle the Turtle*
- On enjoying your work: "If you never did, you should. These things are fun and fun is good." *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*
- On effecting change: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." *The Lorax*
- Appreciating who you are and what you have:

"You oughta be thankful, a whole heaping lot, for the people and places you're lucky you're not." *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?*

- On career advancement: "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!*
- On choices and achievement: "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*

You see, Dr. Seuss isn't just for kids. There are many lessons in his books that can guide us each and every day at work. So when he says, "Sometimes the questions are complicated but the answers are simple," maybe we ought to listen. How about today we look for the easy answers and not make things so complicated?

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## Committee Meeting Schedule

Appeals.....	1st Saturday .....	10:00 am
ARB.....	3rd Saturday.....	7:00 am
Board of Directors Meeting.....	1st Friday.....	7:30 pm
Buildings, Grounds & Roadways.....	3rd Saturday.....	8:30 am
Communications.....	3rd Saturday.....	10:00 am
Community Documents.....	TBA	
Community Safety.....	1st Saturday .....	9:00 am
Finance .....	4th Saturday.....	9:00 am
Government Relations.....	TBA	
Long Range Planning .....	4th Thursday .....	7:30 pm
Nominating and Steering.....	1st Thursday.....	7:00 pm
Real Estate .....	2nd Thursday.....	6:00 pm
Recreation .....	2nd Thursday.....	7:00 pm
Wildlife and Forestry .....	3rd Tuesday .....	7:00 pm

## Weekly Activities

### Monday

Mah-Jongg.....	12:30 pm
Darts.....	7:30 pm

### Tuesday

Bookmobile .....	4:00 pm
Bingo .....	7:00 pm

### Thursday

Understanding the Bible .....	7:30 pm
Women's Bible Study .....	7:30 pm



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**Cub Reporter Matthew Jacobsen**  
*“Until the next big article, stay in harmony with your community. Get out, volunteer and get involved!”*

## October Happenings

October may have been one of the busiest months for our community year to date. Events included the annual Fall festival, Home Expo, community-wide yard sale, two Halloween parties and even a Zumbathon.

Saturday October 19<sup>th</sup> was the busiest day starting with the Home Expo at 11 am.

One exhibitor, Sean Debree has been a Pampered Chef for 17 years. He told me that he prefers to do shows with the products to let people see exactly how well they work. In his words “We’re the kitchen store that comes to your door.” Also in attendance was Sal DePalma who does all forms of home contracting. Sal donated a lovely area rug that will be used for one of our future tricky tray benefits. The expo was set up on the tennis courts to take advantage of the people attending the yard sale right outside the court area.



The annual Fall Festival commenced on the ball field at noon. There was a petting zoo, pony rides, face painting, a pumpkin patch and pumpkin painting and carving stations. Cider and salty snacks were offered for sale. Admission was \$5.00 per child and entitled each to pick a pumpkin and paint or carve it. Resident face painting artist Kathy Ranne couldn’t keep up with the demand and said “ I really needed four more hands but it was worth it since I enjoyed it as much as the kids.” Resident Michael Tyrrell attended with his niece. He told me that they were on their way to Gould’s Farm in Brodheadsville but stopped into the Fall Festival first and are glad they did. It was much better than the experience they would have had at Gould’s and saved an hour in the car. With close to 100 kids in attendance it was one of best Fall Festivals we have ever had according to one of the organizers, Lucy Jacobsen.

On the following weekend, October 26<sup>th</sup> the Oak Room had its share of ghosts and ghouls coming out to play. The childrens’ Halloween party started at 2 PM and at 8PM that evening the adults had their party. The childrens’ party had a fantastic turnout; games galore and costume contests for best costume, most creative and even most sexy. The adult party had a good turnout as well with plenty of music and dancing. Costume contests were also held.

Once again October proved to be a fun and exciting month. With winter slowly setting in, Penn Estates has plenty more events to look forward to such as the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony, Breakfast with Santa and of course our New Years Eve Party. Hope you all had a safe and fun Halloween. This is your ace cub reporter saying, get out there and volunteer, attend our events and live in harmony with your community. Who knows, you may be the next person I interview for an article.

# Have You Heard?

Have any news or stories you’d like to tell?  
 Is there something on your mind you’d like to share?  
 Birthdays? New babies? Other personal announcements?  
 If so, send your information to [pepoaharmony@gmail.com](mailto:pepoaharmony@gmail.com)  
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 Remember, Harmony is YOUR paper!



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## Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer Trivia (1964)

- 1 In the 1964 classic Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer, what was the name of the elf that wanted to be a dentist?
  - 2 What was the snowman narrator of the show's name?
  - 3 What was Rudolph's father's name?
  - 4 What was the name of the coach of the Reindeer Games?
  - 5 Yukon Cornelius referred to the fog being "As thick as \_\_\_\_\_"?
  - 6 What is the name of the Lion King on the Island of Misfit Toys?
  - 7 On the Island of Misfit Toys, what did the water pistol shoot instead of water?
  - 8 On the Island of Misfit Toys, why was the cowboy a misfit toy?
  - 9 On the Island of Misfit Toys, why was the train a misfit toy?
  - 10 On the Island of Misfit Toys, what was the name of the Jack-In-The-Box?
  - 11 What was the name of the young doe (girl reindeer) that told Rudolf he was cute?
  - 12 When Bumble had Rudolf and his family trapped in the cave, what animal noises did Hermie make to lure Bumble out?
  - 13 After Yukon Cornelius knocked him unconscious with a rock, what did Hermie do to Bumble to render him harmless?
  - 14 After rescuing Rudolf and his family from Bumble, an accident causes Yukon Cornelius and Bumble to fall off a cliff. Neither was hurt in the incident. Why?
  - 15 Near the end of the show, Bumble is looking for a job and displays a special skill. What is it?
- Did you get them all correct? See page 11 for the answers...

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# Community Safety Report

By John Baraniuk, Safety Committee Chairman

## Your GPS is Not Fool Proof

The problem currently is that when your guests enter your address, it brings them to the back gate instead of the front gate where your guests are required to register at the welcome center. So to help you out, ask your guests to enter into their GPS: 550 Hallet Road - which is actually just past the entrance of Penn Estates, but at least will direct them in the right direction.



## Home Security Self-Evaluation

Although we can't reduce a burglar's desire and ability, we can reduce their opportunities, so we are sometimes forced to think like burglars do in order to accomplish this goal. So take the time and look around and evaluate your home's security. Are you providing an easy way in? Are there open vents or crawl spaces, Dog doors, or unsecured screened or deck doors? Take the test below to see where you stand.

## What is your Security Quotient?

The following test will help you evaluate your "Security Quotient" or the degree to which you have reduced a criminal's opportunity to gain access to your home. Naturally, we expect a score of 100%

and we do hope this questionnaire will serve as a guide for you to make your home and your neighborhood a safer place to live! Put a check mark next to each question you answered yes to and discover your "Security Quotient".

1. I have trimmed all shrubbery that would conceal entrances to my house, especially basement and garage windows.
2. My house number is clearly marked on my residence and illuminated by my entrance light for quick recognition by emergency personnel.
3. The exterior doors to my home are constructed of solid wood or metal and have strike plates and hinges installed with 3-inch screws.
4. I leave exterior lights ON, front and back, during the hours of darkness, whether I am home or not.
5. I have deadbolt locks or other recommended secure locks on all exterior doors, and I use them!
6. All windows in my home are locked (not just latched) while I am away, especially basement windows.
7. When I leave my home unoccupied, I leave a radio on and lights on timers. In other words, my home has that lived-in look while I am gone.
8. I keep shed or garage doors securely locked when I'm gone.
9. When I'm away overnight or longer, I alert neighbors to watch my house and ask a trusted neighbor or friend to pick up mail, change lights, mow lawn, etc.
10. Did you leave a ladder outside? Burglars could use it, or climb a nearby tree, to get in an upstairs window.

Give yourself 10 points for each point checked

- 0 - 50: attention is necessary
- 50 - 70: consider improvements
- 70 - 90: you're doing a good job
- 90 - 100: excellent, way to go!



# Public Safety

## Snow Removal: Watch Your Back

Lower back strain is one of the most common injuries related to shoveling snow. The following measures can help you prevent injuries and keep your back healthy while shoveling:

- Before the first snowfall is predicted, make sure you have a proper shovel. The best shovel is one that is light weight, ergonomic and has a curved handle. Your shovel should also be long enough so that you can avoid bending over while shoveling and short enough so that the load on the blade when you lift it is close to your body.
- Make sure that you have other essential equipment, like warm, waterproof and skid-proof boots, as well as gloves, a hat, a coat and sunglasses to protect against glare.
- Warm up before you start shoveling by walking around for five or 10 minutes, then stretch your arms, legs and back.
- If possible, shovel when the snow is fresh rather than after it has been packed down and is heavier.
- If the area you need to clear is large, shovel in stages starting with the most critical path first.
- Switch hands often, and keep your hands separated with one hand closer to the blade.
- Keep the loads light, rather than piling large amounts of snow on your shovel blade. If the snow is deep, shovel in layers.
- Avoid bending and twisting as you lift, and empty each shovel full of snow. When possible, push the snow to one side as you clear the path.
- Avoid throwing snow off the shovel blade, especially over your shoulder.
- Take a break every 15 or 20 minutes to straighten and stretch your back.
- Stay hydrated.
- Stretch again when you are finished shoveling. If you do experience any back strain, apply ice packs for the first 24 hours, then apply heat to loosen the muscles.

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## Christmas Crafts in the Palm of Your Hand

By Jane Harris

Bring everyone in the family together for this easy project to brighten up your holiday decor. You can make this using simple supplies or using felt or other fabrics to create a tree that can be used year after year.

Trace the hands of everyone in the family, and maybe a few friends, on green construction paper. Cut out the hands and begin to assemble the shapes starting with the largest for the bottom branches. Use a baby foot to trace the trunk...or just a basic rectangle rounded at the corners. Use school glue or a stapler to attach the components.

Add a length of ribbon as a hanger and you're good to go! The kids can use cut paper or stickers as ornaments. Simple family fun to get everyone into the spirit of the season!



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# Michael's Kitchen

By Michael Tyrrell, Communications Committee

Potlucks, office parties, church suppers, tailgates, impromptu gatherings with friends, family and neighbors - yep, it's that time of the year again. There never seems to be time enough to accomplish everything that needs to be done. We do everything possible to fit in all the social doings but contributing a food offering is often what can send us "over the cliff." Your beloved slow cooker can come to the rescue.

Here are three recipes I developed that are very easy, inexpensive and somewhat healthful. As a bonus, all are vegetarian, but will please us meat eaters as well. They also make simple and satisfying weeknight dinners for your family. Enjoy this time of year and let your slow cooker do its part!

## Eggplant Caponata

(20 servings)

- 2 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 1 small eggplant (about 12 ounces), cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 medium-size zucchini, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- ¾ cup tomato puree
- 3 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp dried parsley
- 1½ tsp dried basil
- 1/3 cup chopped pitted green olives
- 1 tbsp capers, rinsed and drained
- 1 large loaf Italian bread, cut into ½-inch slices (about 20) and lightly toasted

Coat a slow cooker bowl with nonstick cooking spray. Add tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini, celery, onion, tomato puree, vinegar, sugar, parsley and basil. Stir to combine. Cover and cook on HIGH for 4 hours or LOW for 6 hours.

Stir in olives and capers. Serve warm or at room temperature. Spoon about ¼ cup onto each bread slice.

Per Serving - Calories: 46 Fat: 1g Sodium 151mg

Serving Tip: Hamilton Beach "Stay or Go" slow cooker is a great investment if you often take slow cooker offerings to a pot luck, tailgate or party. It has a big clip that keeps the cover secure for traveling. I just saw a 5 quart model on sale at Loews for \$25.

Try This: Also can be used to dress pasta or over rice as a light meal. Freezes well.

## Sweet Potato Chili

(6 servings)

- 3 large sweet potatoes, about 2 pounds, peeled and cut into ¾-inch pieces
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 can (15 oz) pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (14.5 oz) jalapeno-seasoned petite diced tomatoes
- 2 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ½ cup cilantro leaves, chopped
- 4 cups cooked brown rice

Coat slow cooker bowl with nonstick cooking spray.

Layer sweet potatoes, onion, green pepper, garlic and pinto beans in slow cooker. Combine tomatoes, chili powder, cocoa, cumin, salt, cayenne and 2 cups water in a bowl. Pour over vegetables.

Cover and cook on HIGH for 6 hours or LOW for 8 hours.

Stir cilantro into chili. Serve over brown rice.

Per Serving - Calories: 261 Fat: 2g Sodium: 651

Kick It Up: For a spicier, smoky flavor, substitute 1 tbsp of the chili powder with chipotle chili powder. Don't use all chipotle chili powder or it will be too spicy, especially for kids.

Double Duty: Fill corn tortillas for easy soft tacos. Parse out leftovers and freeze for future lunches.

## Mac & Cheese

(8 servings)

- 10 ounce (2¼ cups) dry elbow macaroni
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup shredded Gruyere cheese
- 8 ounces sliced American cheese, roughly chopped
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 can (12 oz) evaporated milk
- 1½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
- ¾ tsp dry mustard
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- ½ cup panko bread crumbs

Coat slow cooker bowl with nonstick cooking spray.

Combine macaroni, cheddar, Gruyere, American cheeses, milk and evaporated milk in slow cooker bowl. Stir well and cover; cook on HIGH 3 hours or Low 4 hours.

During last 30 minutes, stir in Worcestershire, mustard, salt and pepper.

Melt butter in small nonstick skillet and stir in bread crumbs. Cook 2 minutes, stirring frequently, until golden. Sprinkle over mac and cheese and serve.

Per Serving - Calories: 452 Fat: 25g Sodium: 646mg

Serving Tip: If transporting, keep crumbs in ziplock until ready to serve. Instead of the crumbs, a sprinkling of bacon bits would work well.

Make It More Healthful: Reduced-fat cheeses and low fat milk can be substituted to cut fat. They will work fine but the end result will not be as rich tasting.

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# Winding Through PA Wine Country - Best of the Best

By Michael Tyrrell, Communications Committee Member

Instead of visiting a new winery for this issue, I decided a review of the best aspects of each of the five wineries I have visited over the last year or so would be more informative.

Pennsylvania wines from local wineries make terrific, somewhat inexpensive Christmas gifts. They also provide an interesting angle for holiday gatherings. Think, a fun local wine tasting get-together with friends or neighbors around a nice fire. Sounds good to me!

Hopefully I'll be writing about a new winery in the next Harmony, so stay tuned. In the meantime, happy everything!

**Best Overall Setting - Franklin Hill Vineyards, Bangor PA**

The drive down to Bangor is scenic and once you get off the main roads, a drive through a farm is necessary to reach the tasting room and store. All the wines we tasted were good but we were very impressed with the Trio (\$12) which was a very complex and interesting red blend. There is a small outdoor seating area, light snacks in the tasting room and wine is sold by the glass, if desired. The tastings are free.

**Most Intimate - Big Creek Vineyards, Kresgeville PA**

Mom and son operation, with Mom conducting tastings and son doing the heavy lifting in the winery. We loved the view of the vineyards from outside the front door of the building which housed the tasting room and bottling plant. Their unique rose blend, Vin Di Pasqualina (\$8) named after a beloved aunt is a fave wine of ours when we make pizza or Mexican food. Tastings are free.

**Best Food Pairing - Mountain View Vineyard, Neola PA**

We enjoyed the wine and the labeling was designed by the owner's son and is very unusual. They charge \$5 for a tasting but match each with a small bite of food that they feel pairs well and demonstrates how food-friendly their wines are.

**Most Convenient - Sorrenti Cherry Valley Vineyards, Saylorsburg PA**

Located right off the Saylorsburg exit on Route 33, this winery is less than a 30-minute drive from the back gate of Penn Estates. They have the widest selection of wine, the largest tasting room and store of any of the other wineries and a somewhat new pizza restaurant in a separate building on the premises. We haven't tried Pizzeria Mamma Lucia yet but will in the near future and include out take in a future column. We also are fans of their Chambourcin (\$14.49) which is very food friendly and pairs particularly well with gutsy cheeses. Sangria is sold by the glass on weekends. There is a small charge for the tasting but is deducted from any purchase.

**Sweet Wine Champ - Amore Vineyards and Winery- Bath, Pa.**

Dry wines are usually our thing, but we had a house guest in tow when we visited this winery who prefers sweet wine so we tried more sweet wines than usual. The Blackberry Bliss (\$10.99) was very complex and the flavors burst when paired with a small piece of dark chocolate that was offered. This would make an easy, inexpensive gift or a unique dessert to bring along to a dinner party. Their Red Rapture (\$12.99) is a chambourcin blend on the sweet side, which is a good match for pizza. Tastings are free. A produce and flower market across the road is run by this same family which makes the trip even more worthwhile.

**Overall Fav Winery and Wine - Franklin Hill Vineyards, Bangor PA**

The setting was unique and all the wines were good. The Trio (\$12) red blend of Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chambourcin grapes is the wine we keep thinking about and hope to get back there before the holiday to stock up.



# Out & About

## Things to Do and See in the Poconos

By Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee

Brrrrr! It is already cold here and the leaves are down. Weren't they lovely this year?!? I thought that the reds and golds were particularly brilliant this year. Fall activities are beginning and ski season is just around the corner. What are your favorite fall and winter activities? I invite you all to contribute any stories or recommendations, especially about skiing and snowboarding.

I haven't been skiing in two decades so I don't have the inside scoop on which of the many local ski areas are the most fun. Please write in your recommendations for the next issue.

If you do go skiing before the next issue, don't pay full price. Look for discounts via AAA membership, search online for discount coupons, and look for special discount days (i.e., for college students, government employees, etc.)

Here is a summary of just a few of the local events that will be happening in coming months. As always, I have drawn from a variety of sources. Please call or check the websites to confirm dates, times and cost.



In early December, Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm hosts their Old Time Christmas. This year it is on Saturdays and Sundays, December 7th through the 15th. Go to [www.quietvalley.org](http://www.quietvalley.org) or call 570-992-6161 for more information.

Hawley's Winterfest is on 12/6 - 12/8. Call 570-226-4064. Jim Thorpe's Olde Time Christmas Celebration runs on Saturdays and Sundays from 12/7 to 12/22.

Call 888-JIM THORPE. The Christmas Tree Lighting on 12/6. That phone number is 570-325-8566.

Closer to home, the Stroudsmoor Tree Lighting celebration is from 12 to 7 on 12/8. Call 800-955-8663. Eastburg Winterfest and Tree Lighting is at Miller Park on 12/14. Call 570-424-7540

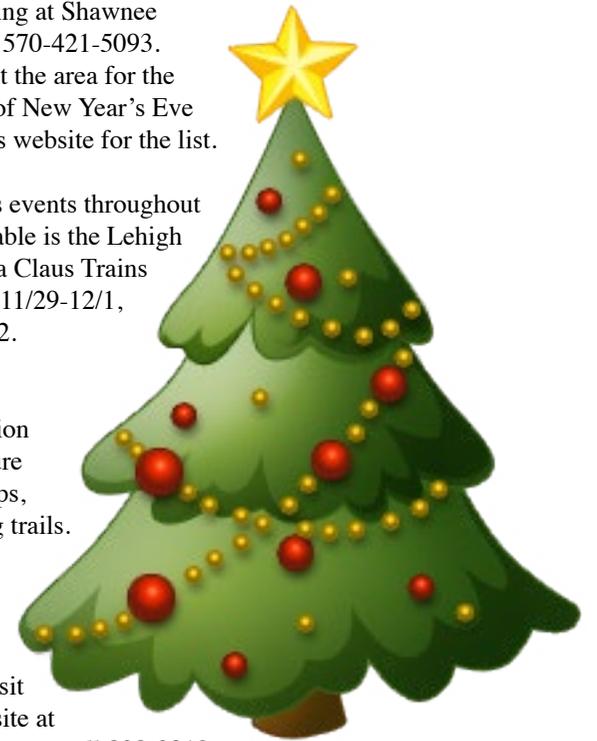
A Christmas Peter Pan will be playing at Shawnee Playhouse from 12/6 to 12/21. Call 570-421-5093. There are many concerts throughout the area for the Holidays, and an amazing number of New Year's Eve celebrations. Check the 800poconos website for the list.

There are always many Santa Claus events throughout the area. One that might be memorable is the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway special Santa Claus Trains that run out of Jim Thorpe from on 11/29-12/1, 12/8, 12/14, 12/15, 12/21, and 12/22. Call 570-325-8485.

The Pocono Environmental Education Center has many nature walks, nature tours and various types of workshops, in addition to clearly marked hiking trails. They also have a new hands-on discovery room. On 12/8 from 1-4, they have ECOZONE Afternoon where you can tour the discovery room, experience the bat cave, and sit in an eagle's nest. Check their website at [www.peec.org](http://www.peec.org) for current information or call 828-2319.

Monroe County Conservation organization also has a number of events throughout the year. Check it out at [www.mcconservation.org](http://www.mcconservation.org) or call (570) 629-3061.

Have fun. And, I am still waiting for input from the Penn Estates community!



**ANSWERS:**  
**Rudolph**  
**The Red**  
**Nosed**  
**Reindeer**  
**Trivia -**  
**page 6**

- 15 He can put the stars on the top of Christmas trees
- 14 Bumbles Bounce!
- 13 He removed his teeth
- 12 A pig! Oink! Oink!
- 11 Clarice
- 10 Charlie
- 9 He had square wheels on his caboose
- 8 He rode an ostrich
- 7 Jelly
- 6 King Moonraiser
- 5 Peanut Butter
- 4 Comet
- 3 Donner
- 2 Sam The Snowman
- 1 Hermie

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# Maintenance

## Chimney Safety

There's nothing as serene as a warm, crackling fire on a cold, winter night. There's also nothing more dangerous if your chimney is damaged.

Broken or cracked chimneys can let heat, smoke and toxic gasses, such as carbon monoxide, into your home. Your home could even catch fire. Chimney damage is often obvious, but sometimes it can be hidden. Use the following checklist, provided by Ready Virginia!, to help ensure that you can enjoy your fireplace and avoid problems—or even a disaster:

- Check to see if bricks have fallen or the chimney is leaning.
- Look for shiny areas on your exterior metal chimney pipe. This could mean the chimney has shifted—during the recent East Coast earthquake, for instance.
- Look for cracks at joints where the chimney connects to the firebox, at the roofline and in the attic.
- Check for debris that may have fallen into the fireplace.
- Use a screwdriver to check the mortar between the bricks or stones. If it crumbles when you pick at it, the chimney may be a hazard and probably needs work.
- When in doubt, consult a licensed engineer or contractor. For the name of an inspector, call your insurance or mortgage company.

Remember, disasters can happen even in the best of homes. That's why every home should be equipped with carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Here are a few tips:

- Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors in sleeping areas and on every level of your home and away from air vents. Interconnected smoke alarms are best, because if one sounds, they all sound.
- Test smoke alarms monthly, and change alkaline batteries at least once a year. Use a familiar date, such as your birthday or when you change your clocks, as a reminder.
- Prepare and practice a fire escape route with everyone in your home, including children.

For more information, visit [www.usfa.dhs.gov/smokealarms](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/smokealarms)  
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- 65 homes have sold in Penn Estates year to date.
- The highest-priced home sold in Penn Estates for \$157,500 year to date.  
(Information provided through Pocono Mountain Assoc. of Realtors MLS Service)
- 90% of buyers start their search on the Internet.
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