



# Harmony

## Penn Estates Youth Group

by Robin Nicholson, Communications Committee Member

The new Penn Estates Youth Group has quickly grown into a very successful, enjoyable and positive opportunity for the youth of our community. The group began when our community manager, Laura Jones, asked Board of Directors Secretary Adrian Martenco if he could help create a youth group for the community given his success in creating a youth group for his church. Adrian, along with Board of Director member David Juliano and Recreation Committee Chair Drina Juliano worked together to create and run the group.



The Youth Group is driven by the mission that our community boys and girls be provided a group atmosphere of friendship without judgment, discrimination or bullying. All the recreational activities, games, and food are provided free of charge. All that is asked of the participants is that they give back in some way to their community.

Future community projects may include building a bridge over the creek near the community center, roadside clean up, helping to teach and engage with younger children through sports and recreation and maybe even working on a community garden. They may also sponsor future community events such as a family camp out at the beach. The attendees enjoy many recreational activities and positive socialization.

The group leaders received many fantastic recreational items that were donated for the kids including ping pong table, pool table, 2 air hockey tables, foose ball table, and karaoke with a large projection video. The group is able to use the new 70-inch flat screen TV in the Oak Room for movies. Board of Director Vice President Jose Padilla made a beanbag toss game the kids are also able to use. The kids also enjoy pizza and drinks from Palumbo's.

The group meets the 4th Friday of every month in the Community Center from 6-8pm. The Penn Estates Youth group has been a resounding success thanks to the dedication of Adrian Martenco, David and Drina Juliano and support of our community manager Laura Jones. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity for positive community involvement and more importantly, of all the FUN it will be for our youth!

## Penn Estates Needs You!

Volunteers are the backbone of a successful community. Penn Estates is fortunate to have the involvement of a group of energetic and dedicated volunteers. We would like to have *you* in that group.

Our committees provide ideas, plans and services for the community, assist management, and make recommendations to the Board. These Committees can always use an additional member or two for fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Shown below are committee missions and meeting schedules.

If you are a member of PEPOA (a deeded homeowner) and are interested in joining one or more of our committees, please stop in the Administration office and fill out an application. You can also download an application at [www.pepoa.org](http://www.pepoa.org) under the tab Community Documents/Volunteer Application.

**Join with your Penn Estates neighbors to keep us in the forefront of being one of the best communities in the Poconos. Get involved and be part of the planning and fun.**

### PEPOA Committees

- **The Architectural Review Board (ARB) Committee** will strive to protect the health, safety and general welfare of all Penn Estates residents. Our mission is to protect the environment, physical and natural resources of this community through the professional administration and reasonable enforcement of all Penn Estates codes, rules, regulations & Bylaws. Meets 3rd Saturday morning of month, at 7:00 AM
- **The Audit Review Committee** ensures that audit findings listed in the annual Independent Auditor's Report and Management Letter are corrected, and that the auditor's recommendations are implemented. Meets at members' convenience.
- The mission of the **Buildings, Grounds and Roadways Committee** is to plan and propose facility and infrastructure improvement projects in accordance with PEPOA's Strategic Plan and as directed by the Board. Meets 2nd Tuesday evening of month at 7:30 PM.

*(continued on page 2)*



White-tailed deer visiting our Lower Twin Lake.

photo by Melissa Penta

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## An Uncommon Feathered Guest

by Melissa Penta, Contributor

On New Year's Eve, I made an exciting find during my daily walk around the community - a Snow Bunting was foraging along Lake Drive. Snow Buntings are birds who spend their breeding season in the rocky arctic tundra.

They travel south during the winter to open grassy fields and along shores of lakes and oceans. Even though we have a few small lakes here in Penn Estates, the overall habitat is not right for this bird.

In our area, wintering Snow Buntings are typically found in farm fields or in open grasslands like the Mount Pocono Airport. They are not a rare find for Northeast Pennsylvania, but seeing one in a wooded residential neighborhood is very unusual.

I re-found the bird on New Year's Day over on Deborah Drive, feeding on the seeds of dried up weeds and grasses along the roadside. This little bunting found a mini habitat for himself within our community!

## Penn Estates Needs You!

(continued from page 1)

- The mission of the **Communications Committee** is to provide information to Penn Estates residents and to recommend improved methods and procedures for internal and external communications. This committee assembles and publishes Penn Estate's newspaper, *Harmony*. Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday morning of month at 10:00AM.
- The **Community Documents Committee** mission is to systematically review and organize documents that present policies, rules and regulations and make recommendations to the Board for modification, creation or deletion where necessary in these documents in order to keep the record of Penn Estates' policies up to date as well be made readily available to the community. Meets at members' convenience.
- The mission of the **Finance Committee** is to ensure that PEPOA's finances are maintained in sound condition, that sufficient funds are kept in reserve to provide for maintenance/replacement of Association common assets, and that proper financial controls/procedures are followed. Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday evening of month at 6:30 PM.
- The mission of the **Government Relations Committee** is a non-partisan Get-Out-The-Vote in local, county, state and municipal and school board elections. Meets at members' convenience, prior to local, state and federal elections.
- The **Nominating and Steering Committee** mission is to recruit volunteers and ensure the needs of committees balance the skills and interest of volunteer applicants. To ensure the creation of a slate of candidates, as outlined in the PEPOA By-laws and Rules and Regulations, for available Board of Directors positions. Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday evening of month at 7:00 PM.
- The mission of the **PEUI Advisory Committee** is to oversee communication between PEPOA and PEUI (Penn Estates Utilities Inc) to insure that: (1) water quality and sewage treatment conform to specified standards, and (2) residents receive prompt and effective response to all service and billing problems. The formation of this committee was mandated in 2004 by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission as part of the settlement of a rate case. Meets with PEUI twice a year at members' convenience.

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# Out About

## Things to Do and See in the Poconos

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee Member

Happy New Year! I hope that 2017 brings us peace and harmony. 2016 was quite the year of upheaval. We had to find new routes out of the community. First, the bridge on Hallet Road fell apart. Then Penn Estates Drive was not available much of the summer. Thanks to the hard work of many, Penn Estates Drive is now smooth sailing. When the one back gate was vandalized, we were given information by email to understand the problems. (Thank you for the much improved communication!) Our local inconvenience paled by comparison to the political upheaval during the election. May our country find some way to repair the difficulties and conflicts of this past year.

Here are some of the other upcoming events around the area. As always, I take my information from internet sites. Please call to confirm dates and times and costs. The costs of some events depend on how early you register, especially the sporting events. So, plan early. Of course, there is a delay between writing this article and the publication of the Harmony. You may want to check the newspapers, and internet for other events. I do not include skiing events. There are too many to include and you can get much more current information by going the websites for each venue. As always, there are numerous live music opportunities throughout our area, but too many to list. There are also many Valentine's Day special events at area resorts and restaurants. Check [www.poconomountains.com](http://www.poconomountains.com) website and the Pocono Record for up to date listings.

Do you love the cold? How about a polar plunge? On 2/18, Camelback hosts "Freezin for a Reason." It is a day of polar fun, with games and music and prizes. If you have a season pass, you can attend for free. Call 570-629-1661 for information. Or you could go to the Sculpted Ice Works in Lakeville daily through 2/26. Their theme this year is "Once upon a time," a fairy tale theme. You can slide down an ice slide, watch ice carvings, see glass blowing, etc.

Of course, PEEC has events for every season. Their offerings are many so you may want to just check their website. This is the season for Eagle Watching and cross country skiings and animal tracking. MCCC also has many events. On 2/25 is the "Who Lives Here" program, about how and where different animals spend the winter months. On 3/4/17, they host the public maple sugaring day at Meesing Sugarbush near Marshall's Creek. You can learn about maple sugaring and then have pancakes with maple syrup. On 4/22, they host Earth Day from 10-3, located at the NCC Monroe campus.

Are you planning some home repairs or up-grades this year? You could go to the Home and Business Expo at Split Rock Lodge on 3/11 and 3/12. Would you like to see something a little different? How about Chinese performing artists. Dynasty will be at Paradise Stream Resort in Mt. Pocono on 3/12 from 8:30 to 10. The cost is \$30. Have fun!

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## Treasurer's Report

by Ronald Gotti, Board Member and Treasurer

From the Treasurer's standpoint, 2016 was a very successful year. At this writing, our books have not been closed out and audited yet, but we are in process of doing so. Based on the preliminary numbers in the Operating Fund, our receipts have exceeded our anticipated revenues, and our expenditures have been held to less than the amounts budgeted. Our 2016 operations are expected to result in a surplus in excess of \$200,000.

Final numbers will be reported in the 2016 annual audit report that will be discussed at the Annual Member's Meeting in May.

Thanks to the foresight of prior and current Boards of Directors, and careful management by staff, the sound financial position developed over the years allowed us to pay off our long-term mortgage debt, which included the cost of rebuilding Penn Estates Drive. Had the mortgage not been paid off, we would have incurred interest expenses of about \$230,000 during the term of the mortgage. By paying off the mortgage, this savings can be dedicated to other uses for the betterment of the community, rather than paying it to the bank.

We anticipate further improvements to our national economy, and with that, we hope it will be reflected in improved property values for our members. We recognize that it costs money to maintain our community and provide services to our members.

It will always be our goal to spend wisely to provide the best service at the least cost. With that as our New Years resolution, I wish you all good health and happiness throughout 2017.

**REMINDER: The speed limit on ALL Penn Estates roads is 25 MPH, except where otherwise posted.**  
**Thank you!**

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# Leaders Wanted

## Board of Directors Election Approaching

By the PEPOA Board of Directors

The Penn Estates Property Owners Association (PEPOA) is a non-profit corporation governed by a nine-person Board of Directors. The Board is elected by PEPOA Members (the deeded property owners in Penn Estates) who are in Good Standing.

In this year's election on May 6, 2017 there will be three Director positions to fill; three positions will serve for three-year terms. Candidates for the Board must be at least 21 years of age, a deeded property owner in Good Standing, and able to carry out the duties of a Director.

What is the mission of the Board? As stated in PEPOA's Bylaws, "The Board of Directors shall determine all matters of Association policy, shall develop the vision and strategic plan for the organization, shall oversee the management and control of the business and property of the Association, and shall exercise all powers of the Association (except for any powers specifically reserved to the Members in the Declaration, the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws)".

What are the Board's responsibilities? The Board of Directors is responsible for governance of PEPOA. Directors have the duty to: (1) act in good faith, in a manner they reasonably believe to be in the best interests of the Association; (2) act in accordance with PEPOA's Articles of Incorporation, Declaration of Covenants, and Bylaws; and (3) act in conformance with the Pennsylvania Community Association and Non-Profit Corporation laws.

A partial list of specific Board responsibilities:

- Enforce PEPOA's Declaration of Covenants, Bylaws, Rules/Regulations, and Policies
- Approve additions and revisions to PEPOA's Rules/Regulations and Policies
- Approve the annual operating and capital budgets
- Levy the annual maintenance fee and other fees, and collect all monies owed to PEPOA
- Maintain an adequate capital reserve fund
- Enter into contracts on PEPOA's behalf
- Maintain and improve PEPOA's buildings, roads, and other property
- Hire and provide oversight of the Community Manager
- Appoint and remove members of PEPOA committees
- Issue final rulings on Members' appeals of decisions made by the Appeals Committee and the Architectural Review Board

### What qualifications and abilities should a Director have?

In order to perform their duties, Directors need to be familiar with, and understand, the various laws and legal documents that apply to community associations in general and to PEPOA in particular.

Directors need to devote substantial time to their duties... anywhere from 10 to 30 hours a month, and possibly more if serving as an Officer. Attending monthly Board meetings is only the tip of the iceberg. Time will also be spent attending Board workshop meetings as needed; acting as a liaison to several committees; responding to Board and committee emails and phone calls on a daily basis; preparing and presenting resolutions and reports; and attending Annual and Special Association meetings, community forums/workshops, and other community events.

Directors must keep certain information confidential, including from spouses, until such time as the Board takes formal action.

Abilities that a Director should possess include: the ability to commit to projects and see them through, start to finish; the ability to listen, keep an open mind, and not rush to judgment; the ability to put your personal agenda aside and work only in the best interests of the Association; the ability to articulate your viewpoint and respectfully disagree with other viewpoints; and the ability to always support majority decisions of the Board, even in those situations where you voted in the minority.

Prior participation on one or more of PEPOA's committees is very helpful for Directors but it is not a requirement to serve on the Board.

Directors do not receive any compensation.

### How do I get on the Board?

If you are interested in running for the Board you may apply in one of two ways:

- Fill out an application obtained from the Administration Office. Completed applications must be submitted to the Administration Office no later than Friday, February 10, 2017. The Nominating and Steering Committee will then contact qualified applicants and invite them to an interview with the committee.
- The other way is to obtain a Nominating Petition from the Administration Office and get the signature of fifty Members in good standing. Only one signature per lot is permitted pursuant to the Bylaws. Once the requisite number of signatures has been collected the petition must be submitted to the Administration Office, no later than Saturday, March 25, 2017.

Whether applying by application or petition, all candidates shall prepare a biography of 1200 words or less and provide a wallet-sized photo in .jpeg format for publication in Harmony. The biography and photo must be emailed to pepoaharmony@gmail.com and be received no later than Saturday, February 25, 2017.

Candidates will have the opportunity to deliver a five-minute speech and answer questions at the Meet the Candidates Forum on Saturday, April 29, 2017. The only other opportunity for delivering campaign speeches will be at the PEPOA Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 6, 2017.

### Election of the Board

PEPOA Members in good standing may cast votes for Directors in one of two ways:

- Directed Proxy ballots will be included in the Notice and Call to Annual meeting package that will be mailed to each Member on April 6, 2017. You may complete the Directed Proxy ballot and mail it in the enclosed envelope to the Association's CPA. Directed Proxy ballots must be received by the CPA no later than 10:00AM on May 4, 2017.
- The other way to vote is to attend the PEPOA Annual Meeting on May 6, 2017 and cast your ballot in person.

**Are you interested in running?** Serving as an effective Director can be challenging, and it requires a lot of time and work. It can be a thankless job at times. However, being part of the PEPOA leadership team and working to improve Penn Estates and keep it one of the best communities in the Poconos is its own reward. You will derive satisfaction and pride from contributing your talents and leadership skills to your community.

(continued on page 5)

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# Leaders Wanted (continued from page 4)

## 2017 Board of Directors Election Timeline

- February 10, 2017 Application deadline  
*All candidate applications must be submitted to Administration*
- February 21, 2017 Interviews completed  
*All candidates must be interviewed by Nominating and Steering by this date.*
- February 23, 2017 Recommendations to Board  
*Nominating and Steering to submit slate of candidates to the Board for approval*
- February 25, 2017 Harmony article deadline  
*Candidate bios to Harmony > All candidates, including those using the petition process should submit bios & photos to pepoharmony@gmail.com*
- March 3, 2017 Board approves candidates  
*Board approves candidates recommended by Nominating and Steering committee. By-laws require approval at least 60 days prior to election.*
- March 17, 2017 Harmony to be delivered to PE by publisher
- March 25, 2017 Deadline for candidates applying via petition  
*(Per Bylaws, 6 weeks prior to the Annual Meeting). Candidates will be required to submit bio including picture with petition.*
- March 20, 2017 Insert any missing bios in paper  
*\*at candidates time and expense. Candidate to make arrangements with Admin.*
- April 6, 2017 Mailing of election material per by-laws  
*\*Harmony does not get mailed. This should also be the date of record for members in good standing. Board resolution required to establish this date.*
- April 29, 2017 "Meet the Candidates" event  
*The Nominating & Steering committee is recommending that this be the only venue for candidate speeches prior to the election, thereby eliminating candidate speeches from the Volunteer Dinner.*

## Board Adopts CAI Code of Ethics

At its January 4, 2013 meeting, the Board adopted a Code of Ethics for the PEPOA Board of Directors. It is based on the Community Associations Institute (CAI) Model Code of Ethics for Community Association Board Members. The Code formalizes our existing guidelines for Board conduct and incorporates them into one document. It will be provided to all candidates for Board seats as part of the application package.

Code of Ethics for PEPOA Board of Directors - This Code of Ethics for the PEPOA Board of Directors was adopted on January 4, 2013 under Board resolution BD2013-04

# Suggestions to Resolve Penn Estates Mail Issues

by John Baraniuk, 234-C

Have you experienced the following: Missing or delayed bills or important documents? Do you receive other people's mail mixed in with yours? Misplaced packages or received someone else's package?

I've seen your posts regarding the problems with our post office mail delivery. As a resident I have in the past experienced it as well and have taken action.



### Here are my recommendations:

First, call the post office Postmaster Christina Balliro at 570-421-3310 and see if your problem can be resolved. If not you can go online and file a complaint at [www.prc.gov/offices/pagr](http://www.prc.gov/offices/pagr). This is the Office of Public Affairs & Government Relations who is the Liaison for Congress and United States Postal Service.

Second, call Senator Toomey's office at 610-434-1444 and let someone there know of your problem with your mail and the East Stroudsburg Post Office.

As a previous resident recommended: If you get mail that isn't yours, deposit it in the blue mailbox just like you were mailing a letter. Don't throw it in the garbage, don't leave it on top of the mailboxes, and don't try to tuck it in the crack of the person's box. That's how letters get blown away, rained on, or lost.

Since I have done this I have had positive results and if I have another problem I just pick up the phone and call. I hope this helps you.

## Board members should:

- Strive at all times to serve the best interests of the association as a whole regardless of their personal interests.
- Use sound judgment to make the best possible business decisions for the association, taking into consideration all available information, circumstances and resources.
- Act within the boundaries of their authority as defined by law and the governing documents of the association.
- Provide opportunities for residents to comment on decisions facing the association.
- Perform their duties without bias for or against any individual or group of owners or non-owner residents.
- Disclose personal or professional relationships with any company or individual who has or is seeking to have a business relationship with the association.
- Conduct open, fair and well-publicized elections.
- Always speak with one voice, supporting all duly-adopted board decisions even if the board member was in the minority regarding actions that may not have obtained unanimous consent.

## Board members should not:

- Reveal confidential information provided by contractors or share information with those bidding for association contracts unless specifically authorized by the board.
- Make unauthorized promises to a contractor or bidder.
- Advocate/support any action/activity that violates a law or regulatory requirement.
- Use their positions or decision-making authority for personal gain or to seek advantage over another owner or non-owner resident.
- Spend unauthorized association funds for their own personal use or benefit.
- Accept any gifts-directly or indirectly-from owners, residents, contractors or suppliers.
- Misrepresent known facts in any issue involving association business.
- Divulge personal information about any association owner, resident or employee that was obtained in the performance of board duties.
- Make personal attacks on colleagues, staff or residents.
- Harass, threaten or attempt through any means to control or instill fear in any board member, owner, resident, employee or contractor.
- Reveal to any owner, resident or other third party the discussions, decisions and comments made at any meeting of the board properly closed or held in executive session.

By following the Code of Ethics, PEPOA's current and future Boards will conform to the highest standards of conduct consistent with Penn Estate's status as a CAI Gold Star Community.

Michael Mongiello  
(570) 977-9382

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[bkrmge@gmail.com](mailto:bkrmge@gmail.com)

Greg Mongiello  
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# Winter Safety

submitted by John Baraniuk, Community Safety Committee Liaison

Although winter comes as no surprise, many of us are not ready for its arrival. If you are prepared for the hazards of winter, you will be more likely to stay safe and healthy when temperatures start to fall.

**Many people prefer to remain indoors in the winter, but staying inside is no guarantee of safety. Take these steps to keep your home safe and warm during the winter:**

- Winterize your home.
- Install weather stripping, insulation, and storm windows.
- Insulate water lines that run along exterior walls.
- Clean out gutters and repair roof leaks.
- Check your heating systems.
- Have your heating system serviced professionally to make sure that it is clean, working properly, and ventilated to the outside.
- Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys.
- Install a smoke detector. Test batteries monthly and replace them twice a year.
- Have a safe alternate heating source and alternate fuels available.
- Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) emergencies.
- Install a CO detector to alert you of the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas. Check batteries when you change your clocks in the fall and spring.
- Learn symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

**Get your car ready for cold weather use before winter arrives:**

- Service the radiator and maintain antifreeze level; check tire tread or, if necessary, replace tires with all-weather or snow tires.
- Keep gas tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Use a wintertime formula in your windshield washer.
- Prepare a winter emergency kit to keep in your car in case you become stranded. The kit should include:
  - cell phone, portable charger, and extra batteries;
  - blankets;
  - food and water;
  - booster cables, flares, tire pump, and a bag of sand or cat litter (for traction);
  - compass and maps;
  - flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries;
  - first-aid kit; and
  - plastic bags (for sanitation).

**Be prepared for weather-related emergencies, including power outages:**

- Stock food that needs no cooking or refrigeration and water stored in clean containers.
- Ensure that your cell phone is fully charged.
- When planning travel, be aware of current and forecast weather conditions.
- Keep an up-to-date emergency kit, including:
  - battery-operated devices, such as a flashlight, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, and lamps;
  - extra batteries;
  - first-aid kit and extra medicine;
  - baby items; and
  - cat litter or sand for icy walkways.

**Protect your family from carbon monoxide:**

- Keep grills, camp stoves, and generators out of the house, basement and garage.
- Locate generators at least 20 feet from the house.
- Leave your home immediately if the CO detector sounds, and call 911.

**Many people spend time outdoors in the winter working, traveling, or enjoying winter sports. Outdoor activities can expose you to several safety hazards, but you can take these steps to prepare for them:**

- Wear appropriate outdoor clothing: wear a tightly woven, preferably wind-resistant coat or jacket; inner layers of light, warm clothing; mittens; hats; scarves; and waterproof boots.
- Sprinkle cat litter or sand on icy patches.
- Learn safety precautions to follow when outdoors.
- Work slowly when doing outside chores.
- Take a buddy and an emergency kit when you are participating in outdoor recreation.
- Carry a cell phone.

When planning travel, be aware of current and forecast weather conditions. Avoid traveling when the weather service has issued advisories. If you must travel, inform a friend or relative of your proposed route and expected time of arrival.

**Follow these safety rules if you become stranded in your car:**

- Stay with your car unless safety is no more than 100 yards away, but continue to move arms and legs.
- Stay visible by putting bright cloth on the antenna, turning on the inside overhead light (when engine is running), and raising the hood when snow stops falling.
- Run the engine and heater only 10 minutes every hour.
- Keep a downwind window open.
- Make sure the tailpipe is not blocked.

Above all, be ready to check on family and neighbors who are especially at risk from cold weather hazards: young children, older adults, and the chronically ill. If you have pets, bring them inside. If you cannot bring them inside, provide adequate, warm shelter and unfrozen water to drink.

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## Warm Hands

By Sean Reilly, Penn Estates Poet  
To: Jodie

Warming, sun-drenched  
Hands.

*I was poised to step out the door  
Into the bright morning  
Sunlight,*

*I wished I were with you,  
Looking into your eyes,  
Caressing you*

*The winter sunbeams streamed  
Through the glass storm door,  
Bathing me in a soothing,  
Comforting, winter sun warmth*

*Pressing my warm strength  
And affection into  
Your openly receptive  
Body and soul.*

*I stopped in the pleasing  
Glow,  
It was quiet,  
It was still,*

*I smile,  
And dreamed  
Of days to come -*

*I raised my open hands  
In front of me,  
And let the sun rays  
Fill my palms.*

*This thought came back to me  
All day,  
Even as snow clouds  
Muted the sun,  
Flurries flitted,  
And night fell.*

*The thought of you came to me,  
As I gazed into my*

*Love, Sean*

# Real Estate Update

by **Maureen P. Shindle, Contributor**

The Penn Estates real estate market ended the year on a high note with 134 homes sold between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2016. This is excellent news for the community as each sale adds money to the Capital Improvement Fund. And with 43 transactions pending, 2017 is off to a good start.

Additional good news is that 53.7% of these sales were NOT foreclosures. The percentage of foreclosure deals has been declining throughout the year. As of January 5<sup>th</sup>, only 9 of the 43 Active listings are foreclosures. The Closed and pending transactions represents a monthly sales rate of 12.58; up from the 2015 rate of 9 sales per month. Average days on market are 110 for year-to-date sales.

The 43 active listings is a 3.4 month inventory based on the current sales rates. Of these listings only nine are foreclosures and there are no short sales. Foreclosures were 46% of sales for the deals closed in 2016.

Information has been gathered from the Pocono Mountains Association of REALTORS' Multiple Listing Service for the period of January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016.

Category	Active Listings	Pending Sales	Total Sales
Total	43	17	134
Foreclosures	9	7	62
Short Sales	0	0	4
Low List/Sold Price	\$38,000	\$31,800	\$22,000
High List/Sold Price	\$299,900	\$164,900	\$224,999
Avg. List/Sold Price	\$121,462	\$99,385	\$89,375
Avg. Days on Market	208	119	110

2016 Sales to Date include sales from 1/1/2016 to 12/31/2016. Average Sale Price of these sales is \$89,375 which is 96% of the Average List Price. Foreclosures represent 46% of the 2016 sales for Penn Estates.

Pending Sales information reflects only list prices; sold information is not available until the sale is final. Distress Sales are sales of properties that are bank-owned (foreclosure), or short sales (where sellers sell for less than what they owe their mortgage lenders). Distress sales made up 46% of the transactions for 2016. This number has a huge impact on our market because of the drastically reduced prices they allow.

*Maureen Shindle is a 15-year resident of Penn Estates and Past President of PEPOA Board of Directors and a REALTOR® with Keller Williams Real Estate in Stroudsburg. Comments and questions welcome at [mpshindle@kw.com](mailto:mpshindle@kw.com) or [mpsbalancedliving@kwrealty.com](mailto:mpsbalancedliving@kwrealty.com)*

# Chill Grill Update

by **Michael J. Tyrrell, Communications Committee Chair**

There is tremendous excitement over the impending reopening of the Country Store, to be know as The Chill Grill. Jennifer Penna is working at a feverish pace for a grand opening sometime this month.



In case you weren't aware, Jennifer is an accomplished baker as well as savory chef. Custom cakes are a specialty. This cake is one of her creations that she made for our community New Years Party. Look for a feature article covering the grand opening in the next Harmony.

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# Breakfast with Santa

Photos by Lisa Ortiz



# Breakfast with Santa

Photos by Lisa Ortiz





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Our Annual  
**St. Patrick's Day  
Party**

March 18, 2017

Doors Open at 7:00pm

Dinner at 8:00pm

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# Tricky Tray / Bingo Fundraiser

by **Bettyanne Nevil, Communications Committee Board Liaison**

A tricky tray and cash bingo fundraiser was held on December 3rd at the Penn Estates Community Center. The event was held to benefit Animals Can't Talk (ACT), an all-volunteer 501c-3 nonprofit cat shelter inside Penn Estates. ACT has been in existence since 2008.



From donations for the tricky tray to participation in the bingo, the residents of Penn Estates rallied around this fundraiser. Five dollars from each participant in the cash bingo, as well as the proceeds from the tricky tray were donated directly to Barton Heights Veterinary Hospital to cover vet services. Over \$700 was raised. Thanks to all who helped in making this such a successful event.

This is a wonderful organization that helps control the cat population by spaying/neutering before adoption of the cats. There is information about this organization available at [www.animalscantalk.com](http://www.animalscanttalk.com). If you would like to volunteer, adopt or donate you can contact them at 570-242-2846.

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**Intercom Button** - please press this button to speak with the guard at the Welcome Center

**Driver's License Scanner** - please insert your license in this slot.

**Pass Scanner** - please make sure to insert your pass with the barcode facing the kiosk inside this slot where the red beam is located.

## Wrapping it Up

### Life After the Holidays

by Jane Harris, Communications Committee Member

It's over.

Santa has left the building.

Frenzy has transitioned into exhaustion.

The fresh pine tree has been tossed into the woods.

Now what?

Ornaments.

Wreaths.

Garland.

...and those lights!

How you approach this dilemma will affect next year's set up with or without mulled cider.

Make an effort to call up the festive spirit that propelled you through the holidays. Brew some tea or hot chocolate...draft a quick list...separate tasks. Don't plan to do it all in one fell swoop unless that works for you.

Organize gift wrap, bags, ribbon etc. then pack it up later. In the next level of packing it in!

Wrap lights around pieces of cardboard and mark the location for easy layout next year. One thing at a time...keep the stress level low. Same goes for getting your life back on track...lay out priorities...deal with one thing at a time...forget multitasking.

I'm writing this one week after the new year. So how did the planning work in my life? Me...I'm leaving our holiday decor as a happy reminder for at least another month!

Have a happy and organized New Year and begin to plan your spring cleaning...one task at a time...divided into steps...inch by inch...will keeps you sane, efficient and feeling competent!



## Christmas Cookie Exchange

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Communications Committee

Penn Estates resident April Maresca Yaeger loves cookies and to get in the holiday spirit, suggested a community cookie exchange. Just about the entire exchange was organized on the *Living in Penn Estates* Facebook page.

There was a nice response and the final exchange was comprised of six avid cookie bakers, Lauren Bjerklie, Vivi Rivera, Diana Stanukenas, Carmen Pretell, Jennifer Penna and of course April.

In case you are not familiar with how a cookie exchange works, everyone bakes a dozen cookies for each participant. Ideally each person bakes a different cookie. So in this case everyone went home with 6 dozen different types of cookies. The exchange was hosted by April this past December 15 in her home.

Often, everyone bakes an extra dozen for sampling with coffee at the "hand-off." Sometimes wine is involved but this group kept that part a secret!

Everyone really enjoyed this experience and April hopes to run another exchange next season and have even a larger group. Stay tuned!

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# Why I Wish Every High School Could be a Technical School

by Jennifer Nicholson, Communications Committee Member

This is my 16th year teaching at a Technical High School. When I first started, I didn't know much about it. I went to regular high school (Pocono Mountain) and really only knew the ever-persistent rumors that technical schools have had for decades. Back then people used to say that technical schools were for people who wanted to work right out of high school. They said that technical schools were for people who had no intention of going to college.

That rumor may have been closer to fact back in the 70's and 80's but in 2017 the story has changed significantly. I think it's time that those outdated rumors are put to rest.

In New Jersey, the technical schools are and always have been, full-fledged high schools. In some states this is not the case. I remember that when I was in high school, the students that went to the vo-tech went for part of the day then took their academic classes at the regular high school. So these students were bussed back and forth. They took their technical courses ("shops") at the Vo-Tech and academics (like math, science English etc) at the high school.

In New Jersey it is all in one. Students take all of their classes in this one technical high school. I teach Chemistry, Physics and Biology. Our students take the same level of instruction of any other high school including Advanced Placement (AP) courses and Honors courses. Our students take and must fulfill the same requirements on the same standardized tests of any NJ high school student. The main difference is that our students must take two class periods per day of a shop. So basically, students in a technical high school have to do everything a regular high school student would do... and much more!

A sampling of some shops include welding, engineering, architecture, culinary, graphic design, theater, agriculture, shops geared toward healthcare/pre-med and E-commerce. Our students attend college in ever increasing numbers. We have graduates going to Ivy League Universities. Graduates working as doctors, chemists and nuclear engineers. We have students earning credits toward certifications that allow them to work in industry while they pursue higher education. Some students start working in their field immediately after high school and eventually start up their own businesses. Students in technical schools learn an extremely useful skill while they are going to high school. They are employable with 4 years of training in a field as soon as they graduate high school. How could that ever be frowned upon?

My son wants to be an engineer when he grows up. I took him to see the engineering shop at my school. The teacher was going over some calculus problems and the students were using it to work out a design on the computers they each had in front of them. They would later input the details for their designs into the huge machinery in the shop which would then construct parts of a submarine. They would then use that fully-functional submarine in a statewide competition. The next day my son whined that he couldn't come to work with me and take engineering with the big kids.

I know that it would take massive amounts of money to upgrade every high school to have the type of specialized machinery and equipment that our shops use. I guess it won't happen in my lifetime but my hope is that eventually every school will teach a trade along with academics. If in the very least, students are more enthusiastic about going to school when they have some choice and control over the shop course that they will study. Everyone has an outlet to express and develop their budding interests. I ask that you think twice about your preconceived notions concerning technical schools. I bet they are outdated.

## Stay in Touch with Penn Estates

**Website:** [www.pepoa.org](http://www.pepoa.org)

### Facebook

**Official Page:** Penn Estates Property Owners Association

**Resident Group:** Living in Penn Estates

**Other:** Penn Estates Online Yard Sale

**Instagram:** [penn\\_estates\\_wildlife](https://www.instagram.com/penn_estates_wildlife)

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### Email:

**Harmony Editor:** [pepoaharmony@gmail.com](mailto:pepoaharmony@gmail.com)

**Board of Directors:** [board@pepoa.org](mailto:board@pepoa.org)

**Community Manager:** [laurajones@pepoa.org](mailto:laurajones@pepoa.org)

# New School, First in Poconos

by Katherine Mills Hernandez, Communications Committee Member

In the fall of 2016, Summit School of the Poconos welcomed its first students and families into a brand new educational experience. Setting its sights on 21st century skills, like innovation, collaboration, and project management, the school offers a project-based program with a STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Math) focus. At the heart, though, is the school's balanced approach to the student experience.

Utilizing a mixed-age grouping model, Summit School's classes span up to three grades. Students learn to collaborate with a diverse group of peers and to recognize that age and grade level are only one set of factors influencing what each person brings to the table. This model aims to reflect the workforce and prepare students for effective teamwork. Currently, the classes—called "Home Bases"—include kindergarten, grades 1-3, grades 4-6, and grades 7-8, though the breakdown will shift slightly in the second year. Year two also intends to see the addition of 9th grade. Thereafter, the school plans to add another grade each year until it serves K-12.

Class sizes are small, too, with just fifteen students in each of the three home-bases serving grades 1-8 and only ten in the kindergarten home base. This allows each child to thrive at his or her unique skill level, learning style, and pace of progress. Teachers and students learn how best to work with one another to maximize achievement for each child as well as the collective.



Summit School of the Poconos utilizes a "Progress & Growth" plan for each child, rather than a traditional report card. While academic curricula is standards-aligned and competency-based, grades and testing are minimized to make room for authentic feedback and reflective assessment, involving the child in tracking his or her own progress. Students will sit for one standardized test each year to meet state requirements.

Academics aside, the school respects the body-mind connection of each individual and incorporates movement and meditation/mindfulness throughout the day—both scheduled and as needed. Every day, all students have one hour for combined lunch and recess. Movement and recess are done outdoors in nearly all weather conditions. During work time, students have the opportunity to spread out, enjoying a variety of floor and table seating options, as well as standing stations.

Civics play a big role at the school, too. A democratic school model affords students the responsibility of having a voice in their school community. Students and staff engage in school meetings during which they discuss and vote on school-based issues. Meetings are led by student officers with adults providing support as needed. Every student and staff member also rotates through service on a Justice Committee that handles mild grievances with hearings, votes, and outcomes served. In these ways, students learn how to practice their democratic rights, strive for fairness in all situations, peacefully resolve conflicts, and carefully consider differing arguments on a variety of issues.

Summit School of the Poconos is a private school located at the beautiful Trout Lake Retreat center, home of the International Sports Training Camp.

As one of the school's teachers and a parent with two children attending, I can attest to the refreshing alternative Summit School provides for our community. If you and your child or children have been looking for something different, then this could be your answer.

To learn more about the Poconos' newest school experience, visit the website ([www.summitschoolpoconos.org](http://www.summitschoolpoconos.org)). For information on enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year, call 570-664-1229.

# Eats Around Town

by Julie Harter, Communications Committee Member

## Mulberry Street Italian Eatery

The Mulberry Street Italian Eatery on Route 611, across from the Home Depot Shopping area, is a definite must go!! My family and I have already visited this new restaurant a half dozen times. It is an adorable Italian bistro which also includes an Italian bakery and deli.

We love the appetizers and here are a few of our favorites. Their stuffed ricotta bread is simple but very delicious and cheesy. The Mulberry Street garlic bread with roasted artichoke hearts and prosciutto is extremely comforting. They have a giant meatball appetizer served with hot marinara sauce and a dollop of ricotta cheese, YES PLEASE!!

I would also like to say that on the menu there is calamari served four differ-



ent ways; yes four!

The Caesar salad is the only salad that I have tried so far, and it is amazing. The dressing absolutely tastes like it is made from scratch. If you are a pasta person, definitely give the Penne Vodka a try. It is decadently creamy and my daughter's favorite.

We are very big fans of their sandwiches. My hubby likes the "That's Life" sandwich which is made of crisp fried eggplant, prosciutto, provolone, roasted peppers and an aioli mayo. My younger daughter loves the "Mulberry Street Italian" which is made traditionally as an Italian hoagie. She says it is the



best she has ever tasted. The Ruben Panini is everything I love about a Ruben sandwich then put in a panini press and grilled to perfection.

The restaurant is BYO so make sure to bring a nice Chianti if you want, or "Fugget about It!" Don't forget to bring home some great Italian pastries on your way out.

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# Michael's Kitchen

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Communications Committee

Your slow cooker is a good friend 12 months a year but especially in the colder months when soups and stews are on the menu. Here are 3 soups and 2 stews I think you will enjoy. I have developed loads of slow cooker recipes over the years and have a few basic tips to share:

1. For easy cleanup, line the slow cooker with a disposable slow cooker liner. Add ingredients as directed in the recipe. When finished cooking, spoon the food out of your slow cooker; dispose of bag. Do not lift or transport the liner with food inside.

2. Some recipes call for browning ingredients first. It is more work, but does add more depth of flavor. Most recipes will be successful whether you brown first or do not brown first.

3. Often a recipe calls for holding back some of the seasoning until the end of the cooking time. The seasoning can get cooked out a bit with long cooking time. Reinforcing the seasoning at the end gives a hit of freshness.

4. A great trick for slow cooker recipes, especially soups and stews if they seem a little flat, is to toss in a few drops of hot sauce and a squeeze of lemon juice at the end of cooking.

## Slow-Cooker Italian Wedding Soup (makes 8 servings)

- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ¼ lb ground beef
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 3 tbsp bread crumbs
- 3 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- ¾ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 8 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 large carrots
- 1 small head escarole, washed, trimmed and cut into ½-inch strips
- 1½ tsps dried oregano
- 1¾ cups ditalini pasta

1. In a large bowl, stir together egg, beef, onion, bread crumbs, 1 tbsp Parmesan, 1 tbsp parsley and ¼ tsp each salt and pepper. Form into 1-inch meatballs (about 45) and place on baking sheet. Refrigerate while preparing soup.

2. Combine broth, carrots, escarole and oregano in slow cooker. Gently add meatballs. Cover and cook on LOW for 6 hours. Stir in pasta for last 20 minutes of cooking time. Stir in remaining ½ tsp salt and ¼ tsp black pepper. Sprinkle each serving with remaining parsley and Parmesan cheese and serve.

## Irish Lamb Stew ( makes 6 servings)

- 2 lbs boneless lamb shoulder or lamb steak, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 tbsp flour
- 1 lb potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- ½ lb turnip, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 2 ribs celery, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 cup dry red wine
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 pkg (10 oz) frozen peas, thawed
- Biscuits, optional

1. Coat slow cooker bowl with nonstick cooking spray. Toss lamb with flour and place in bottom of slow cooker. Add potatoes, turnips, onion, carrots and celery, in that order.

2. Combine broth, wine, tomato paste, ½ tsp salt, ¼ tsp pepper and thyme. Pour over contents of slow cooker.

3. Cover and cook on HIGH for 6 hours or LOW for 8 hours. Stir in peas and remaining ½ tsp salt and ¼ tsp pepper during last 15 minutes of cooking time. Serve with warm biscuits if desired.

## Indian-Style Tomato and Lentil Soup (makes 6 servings)

- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 4 plum tomatoes
- 1 cup brown lentils
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 4 tsp garam masala
- 1¼ tsp salt
- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 bag (5 oz) baby spinach
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- lemon wedges, for squeezing

1. Coat slow cooker bowl with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Stir in broth, 1 cup water, tomatoes, lentils, onion, celery, carrot, garlic, garam masala and 1 tsp of the salt.
3. Cover and cook on HIGH for 5 hours. During last 30 minutes, stir in remaining ¼ tsp salt, chickpeas and spinach.
4. Just before serving, stir in yogurt. Squeeze lemon over each serving.

## Smoky Navy Bean Soup ( makes 8 servings)

- 1 lb navy beans, soaked overnight
- 2 cups chopped smoked ham, about 8 oz
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 ribs celery, thinly sliced
- 3 carrots, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 can (14 1/2 oz) petite diced tomatoes with chipotle or jalapeno pepper
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 bag (5 oz) baby spinach

1. Coat slow-cooker with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Drain beans and add to slow cooker bowl. Stir in 6 cups water, ham, onion, celery, carrots, tomatoes and thyme. Cover and cook on LOW for 10 hours.
3. Remove 2 cups of the soup, puree and return to slow cooker. Add salt and pepper; gradually add spinach and stir until wilted.

## Pork Posole and Corn Bread Stew ( makes 8 servings)

- 3 lbs boneless pork shoulder, well trimmed and cut into 1-inch chunks
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 4 large carrots, cut into ¼-inch pieces
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 tbsp flour
- 3 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1½ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 box (8.5 oz) corn muffin mix
- 2 eggs
- zest of 1 lime
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tbsp plus 1 tsp chopped cilantro
- 1 can (15 oz) white hominy, rinsed and drained

1. Season pork with ¼ tsp each salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook pork for 5 minutes, stirring often, in batches, until browned. Remove pork to slow cooker.

2. Add carrots and onions to skillet and season with ¼ tsp each salt and pepper; cook for 5 minutes, stirring often. Stir in flour, chili powder, oregano and garlic; cook 1 minute and remove to slow cooker. Add broth to skillet and bring to a boil and pour into slow cooker. Cover; cook HIGH for 4½ hours or LOW for 6½ hours.

3. One hour before end of cooking time, stir together corn muffin mix, eggs, lime zest, 1 tsp cilantro and ¼ cup water. Remove cover; stir in hominy, lime juice, and 2 tbsp cilantro. Dollop corn muffin mixture on top. Place cotton dish towel over slow cooker then top with cover. Cook for remaining time or until top is firm.

# Urban Hiking

by Michele Valerio, Contributing Writer

Every year in December, I participate in a NY Holiday Hike hosted by Metrotrails. Hiking and the word urban do not normally fit together but you would be surprised how many miles you can walk on what is considered greenway or park in NYC. Much of the walkways or greenways that pretty much run along the entire length on both the east and west side of Manhattan are lined with native plants and gardens.

The High Line, which is an old elevated track located on 34th Street between 10th and 12th Avenue is considered a public landscape. I often forgot that I am even in the city when following these greenways.

For the holiday hike, we walk a different route throughout the city and the



boroughs each year, but we usually start at Penn Station and then head over to Macy's to check out the wonderful window displays. This year, we headed over to the East Side walkway and went south to the Williamsburg Bridge and into Brooklyn. It was very interesting going through the different boroughs and walking over bridges that I normally drive over.

I love walking along the river and seeing all the different bridges. We passed a co-op garden, odd sculptures and a cool wall mural. We then crossed the Pulaski Bridge to Long Island City and then over the 59th Street Bridge back into Manhattan to see all the Christmas lights and decorations in Rockefeller Center.

The city hike is always a really fun day and puts me into the holiday spirit as well as giving me a new perspective of NYC.

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### Did you know...

- 43 homes are presently for sale in Penn Estates.
- 134 homes sold in Penn Estates year to date.
- The highest-priced home sold for \$225,000 in 2016.  
(Information provided through Pocono Mountain Assoc. of Realtors MLS Service)
- 90% of buyers start their search on the Internet.
- The average age of today's buyer is 25 years old.



**Linda Miller**



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