



Photo by Ting Qian

## President's Message

By Sean Reilly, PEPOA President

Happy New Year to all and especially to all of our committee and Board volunteers who serve the greater association, year after year. Thank you volunteers!

The year 2017 saw some big association changes, with the hiring of a new, highly experienced Community Manager Phyllis Haase. Phyllis brings to us over a decade in community and municipal management service in the Pocono region. We have hired some new replacement staff and reorganized some duties for a more efficient and cost effective operation. This new administrative team has quickly gotten up to speed and is cheerily taking care of business.

At its January meeting, the Board appointed Director Sandra Bonet as Secretary/Treasurer to fill out the term of our dearly departed Treasurer Ron Gatti. The Board also appointed Association Member Christine Morton as a Director on the Board, to fill out the term of Director Gatti, which will expire in May. Director Morton has lived in Penn Estates for 13 years and has served on several committees.

**ANNUAL DUES** - The Board, after months of discussions and several forums, adopted a \$50 dues increase. This is the first dues increase in eight years. The Board had proposed a \$100 dollar increase, in order to cover the cost increase in the next phase of our significant secondary road resurfacing program. We estimate this \$50 dues increase will raise approximately \$75,000 in additional funds for roads. We may need another \$50 dollar annual increase for the 2019 budget in order to cover this major capital program to restore existing worn out facilities as outlined below.

The total capital expenditures, including roads, for 2017 was \$541,655. The total capital expenditures, including roads, approved for the 2018 budget is \$792,000.

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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 5, 2018 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, other fees, and collect 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

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Photo by Mr Leon



## Christmas House Decorating

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Communication Committee Member

Penn Estates' first (hopefully annual) Christmas House Decorating was judged on this past December 14. There were some very hard decisions to make but a winner was finally determined.

- **First Place - Lisa Di Giovanni & David Santos - 469 Somerset Drive**

Lisa and David moved to Penn Estates about five years ago from Howard Beach Queens post Super Storm Sandy. They love to decorate for all holidays but Halloween and Christmas are the biggies for them.

- **Second Place - Daniel Belfiore - 269 Overlook Drive**

- **Third Place - Joseph & Patricia Virgona - 450 Hyland Drive**

Congratulations to all the winners as well as everyone who entered the contest.

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# Harmony

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## President's Message

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### Major Capital Project Needs and Expenses

#### Road Repair - (age of roads 35-40 years)

The roads and storm water pipes in Penn Estates are 35-40 years old and almost all need significant increased care. These roads were not built to the rigorous Pa. DOT standards. They are private community roads as far as the town or state is concerned. The board has changed the Association's policy of repairing our main roads with a thin layer of tar and stone chips called "tar and chip". Given the weakness of the aging underlying roads, this thin tar and chip top layer begins to crack prematurely wasting this repair investment on our main collector roads. "Tar and Chip" is still a viable method for resealing and re surfacing our lightly trafficked roads.

This past year, 2017, we invested in heavy duty shoulder and pothole repair and re-leveling of 11 roads. The method for prioritizing and selecting roads is based on the level of traffic and/ or the severity of the deteriorated surface condition. This past year we treated the following roads: Woodland, Greenbriar, Pasquin, Spicebush, Lake, Lansdale, Sycamore, Norwood, Linden, Sunbury and Cranapple. This repair also included replacing all storm water pipes under the roads. The cost for this necessary repair work was \$447,956.00 for road resurfacing and \$80,406.00 for pipe replacement, totaling \$ 528,362.

We need to invest a continuing large sum of funds, spread out over several years in order to properly treat the 26 miles in our road network. Quality roads add to the curb appeal of a quality community and effect our property values. The estimated road and pipe repair budget for 2018 is \$575,000.00. This will cover the entire length of the major collector roads and pipes of Kensington, Lakeside, Stonehedge and Somerset.

#### Crawl Space Repair - (age 40 years)

The two crawl spaces underneath the Community Center have sustained significant dry rot damage to the wood joists, due to exposure to the damp bare soils for about 40 years. After an engineering inspection and public bidding, the Board approved the wood repairs, re insulation and vapor barrier covering. The project has begun and will be completed by early February. The cost will be between \$70,000 and \$90,000.

#### Other Minor Capital Repairs

Other minor capital repairs scheduled for 2018: 1) Repair of the Community Center foyer once the crawl space repairs are done (\$6500), 2) Security Gate system (\$10,000), 3) Computers (\$2,200).

The Association is still negotiating the settlement payment of \$100,000 for the Penn Estates Drive paving.

#### Capital Budget Summary

The tally for all the capital expenditures for the 2018 Budget is \$792,000.

#### Available Capital Funds

We paid \$1,300,000 in cash savings in 2016 to engineer and rebuild our main collector road: Penn Estates Drive. This road receives a traffic load of 5,000 cars per day from our 1700 homes and various service providers.

What funds do we have to cover these new projected costs for 2018? We have started the year with \$1,050,846 in all capital funds. We expect to add \$368,000 from dues (including the new \$75,000 raised with the \$50 dues increase), obtain \$111,860 from Capital Improvement Funds based on 94 home sales and transfer an estimated \$100,000 from our estimated \$300,000 2017 surplus. These three sources of new capital funds total up to \$579,860 for 2018.

Since we will have estimated capital revenue of \$579,860 for 2018 but estimated expenditures of \$792,000, we will draw \$322,000 from the current, start of the year, Capital Account balance of \$1,050,846 - yielding an anticipated 2018 year end balance of \$728,000 for the Capital Funds accounts.

#### Planning: Future Capital Projects

A variety of other capital projects are in the planning stages. These include repairing the cracks in the basketball and tennis courts, repairing the damaged fencing, removing the mud and adding sand to the Hyland Lake swimming beach, replacing security cameras and lighting, emergency generators, replacing old snow plow trucks and recreation equipment.

The Finance Committee and the Board of Directors will keep a close watch on our continuing planning project costs and revenues to fund these programs.

# Condolences to the Heffernan Family

Lovingly submitted by family friend Cathy Lomuscio

John (Heff) was an amazing husband, father, grandfather and a dear friend to many. He was a resident of Penn Estates for many years. Some of Heff's passions were riding his Harley Davidson, breeding his Great Danes and showing them at shows. He also got a great deal of satisfaction working on home projects. Spending time with his family, whom he truly adored, was his greatest pleasure. He leaves behind so many treasured memories that will remain in our hearts forever.

## Become Part of Your Community

By Lucy Jacobsen, Chair Nominating and Steering Committee

Since I have been living in Penn Estates, I have made many new friends, and this is mostly because of volunteering for the many committees we have. I started volunteering within the first year of moving here from New York and have enjoyed many of the events. My family began volunteering also and they to have made many new friends.

It is so important to be an active part of your community, not only for adults, but for the children also. Children are the future of this community. There are many committees that are in need of volunteers. It only takes about 1 hour of your time each month to aid in making this community the best place to be. People have so many great ideas and suggestions, so why not put them to work. Join one of the many committees and be an active member of your community.

Show your children how important it is to be a part of this community. It is your home and theirs. If you are ready to make this commitment, fill out and application and join a committee and help us keep Penn Estates the best place to live. Your voice will matter.

Hope everyone has a wonderful and successful 2018 and become a part of our group of great volunteers.

## Penn Estates Essay Contest

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Chair of Communications Committee and Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

We have some exciting news. March has been designated as National Reading Month and the Communications Committee in conjunction with Penn Estates Administration is sponsoring our first (hopefully annual) essay contest.

The rules are simple. The subject of your essay should be "A book that changed my life." Please keep the word count to about 500 words, maximum 800. Email submissions to [pepoaharmony@gmail.com](mailto:pepoaharmony@gmail.com)

Judging will be done by a select committee of Communication Committee members and Phyllis Haase. Please submit your work by March 31, 2018. The winner will receive a \$50 gift card to Barnes and Noble and have their essay published in the June/July 2018 issue of Harmony.



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# Leaders Wanted

(continued from page 1)

## 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 February 9, 2018. 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 24, 2018.

Whether applying by application or petition, each candidate shall provide a biography of 1200 words or less and a wallet-sized photo in .jpeg format for publication in Harmony. The biography and photo must be emailed to [pepoaharmony@gmail.com](mailto:pepoaharmony@gmail.com) and be received no later than Saturday, February 24, 2018.

Candidates will have the opportunity to deliver a five-minute speech and answer questions at the Meet the Candidates Forum on Saturday, April 28, 2018. The only other opportunity for delivering campaign speeches will be at the PEPOA Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 5, 2018.

## Election of the Board

PEPOA Members in good standing may cast votes 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 5, 2018. 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 3, 2018.
- The other way to vote is to attend the PEPOA Annual Meeting on May 5, 2018 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.

## 2018 Board of Directors Election Timeline

**February 9, 2018** > Application deadline

*All candidate applications must be submitted to Administration*

**February 20, 2018** > Interviews completed

*All candidates must be interviewed by Nominating & Steering by this date.*

**February 22, 2018** > Recommendations to Board

*Nominating & Steering to submit slate of candidates to the Board for approval*

**February 24, 2018** > Harmony article deadline

*Candidate bios to Harmony > All candidates, including those using the petition process should submit bios & photos to [pepoaharmony@gmail.com](mailto:pepoaharmony@gmail.com)*

**March 2, 2018** > Board approves candidates

*Board approves candidates recommended by Nominating & Steering Committee. By-laws require approval at least 60 days prior to election.*

**March 16, 2018** > Harmony to be delivered to PE by publisher

**March 24, 2018** > Deadline for candidates applying via petition

*(6 weeks prior to the Annual Meeting as per bylaws). Candidates will be required to submit bio including picture with petition.*

**April 5, 2018** > 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 28, 2018** > "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 under Board resolution BD2013-04. 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.

### 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 or 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.*

# Penn Estates Seniors Group

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

If your life is feeling a little humdrum and you're ready to do something about, it's time to get out of the house and start meeting new people or getting reacquainted with old friends. Sometimes, that's easier said than done, but the trick is knowing where to go to meet other seniors who share your interests in order to find real compatibility and a sense of community.

Join us the second Wednesday of each month at 12:00 for lunch and some excitement. The cost is \$5 per person. Registration with the Administration Office required by noon the Monday prior to the luncheon (570-421-4265).

Please help us spread the word of our newly-formed group.

## Out About

### Things to Do and See in the Poconos

By Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee

Happy New Year! I hope that 2018 finds you all healthy and loved and (with some change in weather) WARM! Brrrr. January has started with unbelievably cold weather. Even my usually determined dogs refuse to brave the great outdoors for their daily walks. I have great sympathy for all the students having to wait in this arctic weather for the school buses each day. Stay safe. I hope you find some fun ways to enjoy the season.

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 music events as well.

Do you love the cold? How about a polar plunge? On 2/17, 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 2/9 through 2/25 on Saturday, Sunday, Thursday or Friday. You can slide down an ice slide, watch ice carvings, see glass blowing, etc. Call 226-6246 for information.

Kettle Creek Conservation hosts eagle watch field trips guided by an environmental educator on Friday 1/19, 2/9 and 2/16. Call 629-3061 for information on times, cost and place to meet. On 3/3/17 they host a public maple sugaring day at Meesing Sugarbush near Marshall's Creek. You can learn about maple sugaring and then have pancakes with maple syrup. The cost is listed as \$6 for adults and \$4 for children.

Are you interested in the history of Ice Harvesting in our area? On 3/10 from 10 to noon you can learn about ice harvesting at Lacawac Sanctuary in Lake Ariel. The cost is \$5. Call 689-9494 for information.

Walley Ice Fest on Lake Wallenpaupack is on 1/27 and 1/28 this year. Two of the events that weekend as part of the Ice Fest are a pond hockey tournament and an Ice Tee Golf events. Do you enjoy dressing up? Ski for free if you go in costume to the Costume Carnival Day at Shawnee Mountain Ski area on 3/18. Or forego the costumes and attend the Jim Thorpe 24<sup>th</sup> annual Winterfest on 2/17 and 2/18. There you can enjoy train rides, music and family games.

Have fun! Please let me know of your favorite events so that I can include them in the future.

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# Things to do in the Burgs

by Robin Nicholson, Communications Committee Member

Main Street Stroudsburg is home to a shop that is a legend among music enthusiasts. Located at 606 Main Street, Main Street Jukebox is a music lovers dream. It has become renowned for its vast selection of vinyl records and turntables. The Jukebox also specializes in new and used CD's, DVD's, books, collectibles, and even vintage VHS and cassette tapes. They are always looking to buy collectibles as well.

People from all walks of life, from celebrities to that young person that just discovered that smooth pop and crackle of vinyl, make the pilgrimage to downtown Stroudsburg. The shop attracts people from far and wide who are seeking that rare or hard to find album and want to experience the shops unique vintage atmosphere.



Owner Tom LeFerve opened the shop on Main Street in 1994 and has 23 years of providing music and culture to our area. The shop is a great place to explore and expand a love of music from all genres and for all ages. Stop by and talk with the knowledgeable and friendly staff and enrich your love of music.

Main Street Jukebox is open 10am to 7pm Monday-Friday, 10am-9pm Saturday and 11am-5pm Sunday. You can also check out Main Street Jukebox on Facebook, Twitter and on Instagram at [mainstjukebox](#) or call them at 570-424-2246.

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## Flag Retirement Ceremony

by Bettyanne Nevil, Board Member

Penn Estates sponsored a flag retirement ceremony on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2017, at Highland Lake just before dusk. Cub Scout Pack 100 stepped up to perform this service.

The fire pit here was originally built by Girl Scout Stephanie Moliero, who did it as her Golden Award Project in 2015. The ceremonial fire pit is only used in flag retirement ceremonies. The pit is covered with a boulder once all traces of the flag have turned to ashes.

It was a very special moment for those veterans in attendance. Cookies and hot chocolate were served after the ceremony compliments of our board. This will continue to be an annual event in Penn Estates. Please keep an eye for the announcement next year and join us.



## Help Our Local Cat Rescue

by Melissa Penta, Contributor

Our local cat rescue, Animals Can't Talk Rescue and Adoption, Inc., is in need of volunteers at the residence where most of the cats are housed at 1167 Woodland Drive! Once a week on Sundays, volunteers come to the rescue and clean the entire space. This includes cleaning cages, litter, floors, etc. Throughout the rest of the week we need help with lighter cleaning, litter scooping, changing out water and refilling dry food. Any amount of time, even just an hour, will help. If you are interested, you can either call Naomi Gauntlett at (570) 242-2846 or email her at strictlycats@verizon.net

Help is also needed at PetSmart cleaning cages mornings (around 8a.m.) and evenings (around 6p.m.), at adoption events on Saturday, noon to 4. We would also like to start doing adoptions on Sundays, noon to 4, and any day during the week 5-7p.m. May thru October, the first and third Saturday of the month, we are also outside PetSmart selling our logo items and trying to raise money for the cats.



## Community Safety Committee News- Child Identification Kits

by Ken Nevil, Committee Chair

It is reported that annually 1.6 to 2.8 million children run away from their family homes. These are statistics compiled by the "National Runaway Safeline." The causes are varied from drug and alcohol abuse to emotional, physical and sexual abuse. The most common cause reported to the hotline is "family problems."

Other causes are non-voluntary issues like kidnapping (either spousal or non-custodial). In these types of situations, time is even more important in contacting your local police and providing your child's vital statistics. Nationwide databases are used by law enforcement daily including Nationwide Amber Alerts and "NCIC" (National Crime Information Center) entries. These databases provide nationwide information on your child to all law enforcement agencies.

The Safety Committee of Penn Estates has recently purchased Child Identification Kits that will greatly expedite the information on your child being passed from you to law enforcement and then placed into one of the national databases.

The kit and its information will be kept by you for privacy reasons. The information within this kit includes:

- Vital Statistics: name, age, height, weight, etc.
- Fingerprints
- Dental Chart
- Current Photograph
- DNA collection information via hair samples and inside cheek swabbing.

This kit can be simply handed to law enforcement and will give them all the information that they will need to expedite their alerts and national entries.

Within the next week, these kits will be made available at the Penn Estates Administrative Office near the back gate on Penn Estates Drive and Cricket.

The Child Print kits may also be utilized and completed for those families that have loved ones suffering from Alzheimers and Dementia.

The Penn Estates Safety Committee is committed to the safety of all our community residents and will continue to work close with our Board of Directors and Community Manager Phyllis Haase to insure the safety of all our residents.

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Photos by Lisa Ortiz and David Juliano



# Problem: You Hate Winter Solution: Take up skiing!

by Jennifer Nicholson, Communications Committee Member

The winter months in our region can seem to never end. I see many people who are normally outdoorsy and active that retreat indoors during winter and grumble with animosity until it is over. I offer a possible solution to your winter blues. That solution is to pick up the sport of skiing or snowboarding.

We are such a good location in many ways. We have the beautiful mountains and Delaware Water Gap in our backyard. We are relatively close to arguably the greatest city in the world (that would be NYC). We are in arms reach to both nature and metropolis. People flock to the Poconos during the summer and fall to see the beauty of the mountains and changing leaves. But



they also flock to the Poconos during the winter for winter sports. If you have avoided the slopes then you don't know what you are missing.

I am not a particularly outdoorsy person. I am not sporty AT ALL. I do roughly ONE sport, and that is skiing. I learned to ski in high school (Pocono Mountain) through the school ski club. I am so glad that I had this opportunity. It is a knowledge that sticks with you like riding a bike.

I took a 22 year break from skiing when I got distracted with life in general and recently took it back up again. I was looking for a way to get my kids to love the winter. I do not want them to spend all winter trapped indoors and grumbling about how awful it is.

My kids were more interested in snowboarding so they began lessons through the school. Stroudsburg School District offers fantastic discounts to Camelback for both lessons and season passes for students. I got

back on skis after a more than 2 decade hiatus and it was like I never stopped. I was instantly hooked again.



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My kids now LOVE winter and await it anxiously. In autumn they complain about how long it is taking winter to get here! They can't wait to hit the slopes. And neither can I. There is something addictive about swishing down the hills. When dressed correctly you do not get cold at all. It is fantastic exercise and loads of fun.

I will be honest and say that for an adult, learning to ski/snowboard for the first time it can be very challenging. Many get frustrated and give up after one day. But if you have patience enough to learn and stick with it then you will love winter also. It will take multiple attempts to get the feel of it and even be able to stand up for any length of time. Because of this I highly recommend a season pass. It will become too costly to get individual lift tickets each time you go.

We have a variety of slopes to choose from here. I prefer Camelback and I get the cheapest adult pass they have. Kids tend to catch on quicker. If you have kids I highly recommend enrolling them in the school ski/snowboard program. Learning young can cultivate a lifelong sport. So consider getting the "fam" into skiing/snowboarding next season. Right now, in the frigid days of early January, I am not thinking about the cold or spring or summer...Right now the only thing I can think about is when I can next hit the slopes.

# Shock & Awe - from Miami to PE

By Jane Harris, Communications Committee Member

Planning...packing...preparing for our trip to PE with eight cats, two dogs and two fish. This was not our first 24-hour road trip. Multiple summers...winters...autumn or spring.

We always hope to see some snow...and we did. It was cold and a previous snowfall remained. Then temps dropped and dropped altering some of our plans. Louie and Minnie were not happy to walk...even for a quick out and back in!

Different scenario in Miami for sure starting with the obvious difference in terrain and the green is gone on the mountain...in Miami it is still part of the picture. The thermometer reflects relief from the smothering summer numbers.

PE - Leafless trees reveal delicate branches that sway with the wind. The spaces between trees and these branches provide another view and awareness of the "soul" of nature. A harmony in which we participate willingly or not!

Miami has its own appeal. Visually stunning with it's lushness, beaches and of course, the magnificent ocean. Spectacular views and vistas are everywhere. Culturally diverse to the nth degree it's an enriching experience.

Our backyard in PE is ever changing...season by season. In PE we don't have a lawn. We have leaves, leaves and more leaves! We have critters large and small. Definitely living in harmony with nature whether by choice or by circumstance.

Our backyard in Miami appears to never change... although it does. The changes are subtle...late spring and summer days are unbearably humid, hot and often



rainy. The greens are greener. Winter greens appear darker. Plant growth is slower.

The upside to winter in addition to the more comfortable temps is that you don't have to mow the lawn as often.

Enjoy summers on your deck...the warmth of a fire-place...skiing, hiking, building a snowman.

Or swimming in the ocean...building sandcastles on the beach while catching some rays.

Bottom line... wherever you are offers opportunities to "just be where you are." It's all good.



# Real Estate Update

by Maureen P. Shindle, Contributor

I am happy to present you with the Real Estate statistics pertaining to PEPOA properties. The statistics below refer to the activity in 2017 and current Active Listings. The very good news is that **135** properties were sold in 2017, one more than in 2016. The sales price is up 14.5% with properties selling at 97% of list price. This represents the continued buyer interest in the community. Foreclosures in 2017 were down 12% in 2017 with 32% of all overall sales. (There were 62 foreclosures in 2016 vs. 44 in 2017.) Additionally, the sales price of these foreclosures increased by 8%.

There are currently 15 sales pending which gets the community off to a good start for 2018. As of January 7, 2018, there are 31 properties for sale in the community. This represents a 2.75 month inventory, indicative of a seller's market. And despite popular belief, the real estate market does not slow down in the winter. Penn Estates' location and amenities continue to be very attractive to buyers. If you are considering selling your property, now is a great time to do so.

*Information has been gathered from the Pocono Mountains Association of REALTORS' Multiple Listing Service on January 7, 2018.*

Category	Active Listings	Pending Sales	2017 Sales
Total	31	15	135
Foreclosures	3	3	44
Short Sales	0	3	1
Lowest List/Sold Price	65,000	49,900	25,000
Highest List/Sold Price	339,000	189,900	230,000
Average List/Sold Price	162,755	121,473	104,801

2017 Sales to Date include sales from 1/3/2017 to 12/30/2017. Average Sale Price of these sales is \$104,801 which is 97% of the Average List Price. Of the 31 Active Listings, 3 are foreclosures and 0 are short sales. Foreclosures represent 32 % of the sales for Penn Estates. On average, 11.25 properties were sold per month. Based on this rate, there is currently a three-month supply of active listings. This is typical for this time of year when many sellers take their houses off the market until spring. This means fewer choices for buyers. Despite conventional wisdom, people do buy homes in the winter. And with such a low inventory, the properties currently on the market stand a better chance of being sold. If you are waiting until spring to list your house, you may want to think again.

Pending Sale information reflects only list prices as sold information is not available until the sale is final. **DISTRESS SALES:** Defined as 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 32% of the transactions for 2017 year to date. This number impacts our market because of the reduced prices they allow.



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# Michael's Kitchen

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Communications Committee Member

When the wintry doldrums set in, we crave stick-to-your-ribs, easy comfort food. Recipes with an Italian flair always seem to be a good fit. Here are some rather basic recipes we make often. The lasagna may look a little more labor intensive but the payoff is big. Numerous meals and the leftovers freeze well. It is also a very nice do-ahead dish to fix for company. Any pasta shape works for the Carbonara but the rigatoni catches the sauce, bacon and peas; you get a bit of all the components in each bite. Stay warm and safe everyone.

## Mini Rigatoni Carbonara (serves 6)

4 egg yolks  
2 whole eggs  
dash ground nutmeg  
dash cayenne pepper  
1/8 tsp each salt and black pepper  
2 tbsp olive oil  
6 slices thick cut bacon or 8 slices regular cut, cut into strips about 1/2-inch thick  
1 lb mini rigatoni cooked following package directions  
1/2 to 1 cup frozen peas, thawed  
1/2 stick unsalted butter  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
additional salt, pepper, cheese, olive oil to taste

1. In a small bowl, whisk together egg yolks, whole eggs, nutmeg, cayenne, salt and pepper. Set aside. Do this a little ahead of time so it's not cold.
2. Cook bacon strips in 2 tbsp of olive oil over medium heat. You want it somewhat crispy but not well done. Set aside and cool a little. If too hot it could scramble the eggs.
3. Cook pasta al dente; add peas last minute. Drain. Return pasta and peas to pot and stir in bacon and any drippings in skillet. Add butter in pieces and stir to melt. Stir in egg mixture and 1/4 cup of cheese.
4. Spoon into large serving bowl and sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup cheese.
5. Taste. Add salt, pepper and a drizzle of olive oil to taste.

## Zucchini & Summer Squash Parmesan with Spicy Grape Tomato Sauce

(8 servings)

### Sauce

3 tbsp olive oil  
6 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped  
2 Italian frying peppers, seeded and chopped  
2 hot Italian peppers, seeded and chopped  
2 containers grape tomatoes, halved  
4 tbsp tomato paste  
1/2 tsp each dried oregano, dried basil, salt  
1 cup good quality marinara sauce or Italian seasoned crushed tomatoes

1. Saute garlic in oil until golden; add peppers and cook a few minutes. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, oregano, basil and salt. Simmer, covered, 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in marinara sauce or crushed tomatoes. FULL DISCLOSURE: I often don't make the sauce and use 1 large jar Rao's marinara or arabiatta sauce.

### Zucchini and Squash

2 large zucchini  
1 large summer squash (if they are not as large as the zucchini use 2)  
3 eggs, lightly beaten  
2 cups unseasoned bread crumbs  
vegetable oil (about 1/2 cup)  
1 lb fresh mozzarella, sliced  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

2. Trim ends of zucchini and squash; slice lengthwise into 1/4-inch planks. Dip in egg and dredge in bread crumbs.
3. Heat oil in a large skillet until shimmering. Saute vegetables about 2 minutes per side until nicely browned, in batches. Add more oil if skillet gets too dry.
4. In a 13 by 9 by 2-inch glass baking dish layer as follows. Cover bottom with some sauce, 1/2 vegetables overlapping if necessary, 1/2 of the sauce, 1/2 of the mozzarella. Repeat layering. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan.
5. Preheat oven to 350°. Cover dish loosely with foil and bake 40 minutes.

Remove foil and bake additional 15 minutes. Let this rest at least 15 to 20 minutes before serving.

Note: The veggies release water so there will be a lot of liquid in dish. Ladle out (about 3/4 to 1 cup) liquid from the corners of the dish and save. I serve with spaghetti that I toss with the reserved liquid.

## Easy One Dish Chicken Scarpiello (Serves 4 to 6)

6 large chicken thighs, bone-in, skin intact  
2 tbsp olive oil, plus more for drizzling  
2 tsp dried Italian seasoning  
salt and pepper to taste  
2 sweet Italian sausages, cut into 1-inch pieces  
4 medium potatoes, unpeeled, cut into 1 1/2 inch pieces  
2 medium onion, peeled and cut into 1-inch wedges  
6 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed  
red pepper flakes or hot cherry peppers  
1 large red sweet pepper, cored, seeded and cut into 1-inch dice

1. Heat oven to 400°. Lightly coat a 13 by 9 baking dish with olive oil.
2. Rub chicken with olive oil and season with Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Place in prepared baking dish and tuck in the sausage. Bake 15 minutes.
3. Add potatoes, onions, garlic and red pepper flakes or cherry peppers. Try and keep everything in single layer. Season vegetables with additional salt and pepper and drizzle with a small amount of olive oil. Bake for 30 minutes. Add sweet red pepper and bake an additional 15 minutes.

We often just have a tossed salad and crusty bread with this meal. Cacio e Pepe is a nice accompaniment as well. This can easily be doubled using two baking dishes and upping the cooking time a bit.

## Lasagna For a Crowd (makes 12 servings)

1 tbsp olive oil  
1 large onion, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, chopped  
2 1/4 lbs meat loaf mix (beef, pork and veal)  
1 can (28 1/2 oz) crushed tomatoes  
1 can (15 1/2 oz) crushed tomatoes  
2 tbsp tomato paste  
1 tsp dried Italian seasoning  
1 tsp sugar  
1 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp black pepper  
5 tbsp chopped fresh basil  
12 traditional lasagna noodles (from a 16 oz pkg)  
1 container (15 oz) ricotta cheese  
2 eggs  
1/2 cup shredded Parmesan cheese  
3 cups shredded mozzarella cheese  
2 cups shredded Italian cheese blend

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. Cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Crumble in ground meat and cook for 8 minutes, breaking up with a wooden spoon. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, Italian seasoning, sugar, salt and black pepper. Simmer, covered, for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Uncover and simmer for 15 additional minutes. Stir in 3 tbsp of the basil.
3. Meanwhile, cook lasagna noodles following package directions. Drain and rinse briefly under cold water. Heat oven to 350°. Coat a 13 by 9 by 2-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
4. In a medium bowl, combine ricotta, eggs, Parmesan cheese and remaining 2 tbsp basil.
5. Spread 1 cup of sauce over the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Place 3 cooked noodles over the sauce. Evenly spoon ricotta mixture over the noodles. Top with 3 more noodles and 3 cups of the meat sauce. Layer 3 noodles over sauce, then sprinkle on shredded mozzarella. Top with remaining noodles and 2 cups of the meat sauce.
6. Sprinkle shredded Italian cheese blend evenly over the last meat sauce layer and loosely cover with foil. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake for 30 additional minutes until bubbly.
7. Cool 10 minutes before serving. Reheat extra sauce and serve on the side.

# How To Write a Winning Essay

**Katherine Mills Hernandez, English Teacher, Author, Communications Committee Member**

Impressive essays make readers feel as though they are connecting directly to the writer's heart and mind. They flow naturally, and develop a singular idea gracefully. The best essays are easy to read and seemingly simple. Writing them is another story.

Writers labor over their work with the goal of crafting something readers don't have to work to understand or appreciate. Just like a great athlete makes his sport look easy, a great writer makes writing seem simple.

While not all of us will labor at our work the way professional writers do, there are some techniques that can make our writing appear as though we did.



- **Write in an honest voice:** Use words and phrases that reflect a slightly polished version of your everyday language. If you break out a thesaurus and style guide and let those direct your word choice and sentences, your reader will be put off by the false tone of your prose and feel the opposite of connecting with you.
- **Present ONE idea:** One of the biggest mistakes in essay writing is attempting to cram too much into one essay. When you focus on one idea and develop it through description, examples, and reasons why you believe in that idea, your work is persuasive.
- **Let logic guide you:** As you shape your sentences and paragraphs, frequently ask yourself about the order of words, phrases, and ideas. The question, *Does this make sense?* is an excellent guide.
- **Consider flow:** A winning essay will state the main idea up front (usually in the first paragraph) and then develop that idea over the course of a few paragraphs, devoting each to one or more of the following: description (to clarify the author's interpretation of the idea); example (demonstrating how the author might apply the idea or how others have applied it); reason (offering an explanation for why the idea is valid and worth the reader's consideration).
- **Close with conviction:** The final statements of a winning essay drive home the point of the essay. The greatest common mistake is to use the last paragraph of an essay to repeat something previously stated. That causes the reader to feel cheated out of the time it takes to read that paragraph. Avoid repetition and use this opportunity to convince your reader that your idea is strong and worth adopting.
- **Engage in Process:** Lay out your ideas in a plan or outline, where you can organize them into a logical sequence. When your first draft is written, lay it aside for a day or two. Next, read over your draft, noting the organization of ideas and ask yourself: *Is my message clear? Have I stated the main idea early on? Have I included enough description? Does the essay need any more examples or reasons? Is my point convincing?* When you're satisfied with the ideas, read through again and notice whether your paragraphs and sentences are well-constructed. Ask, *Does each paragraph have ONE main focus? Does each sentence clearly state its point?* With a third reading, attend to the finer points of your work, like word choice and punctuation. Then, consider your title: *Does it hint at the main idea or state it outright? Is it catchy but not obscure?* Finally, edit your work for spelling, capital letters, and so forth. Lay the work aside for another day and then give it another read. Address any lingering details. Have someone else read the work to you (that way, you can hear issues you may not have been able to see on your own). When you are fully satisfied, send it off to your publisher and be open to any feedback he or she provides for revision or editing.
- **Celebrate:** Creating a written work and sending it out into the world is an accomplishment worth celebrating. Give yourself a hug or take yourself out for a special treat and enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done!

Wondering where to publish your essay? How about submitting it to *Harmony*? Also, keep an eye out for an essay contest we'll be running. Our team looks forward to reading your work. Happy writing!

# Dancing: A Passion

**By Ariana Hernandez, Young Voices in Harmony Contributor**

*"Great dancers are not great because of their technique. They are great because of their passion."* —Martha Graham

*"We dance for laughter, we dance for tears, we dance for madness, we dance for fears, we dance for hopes, we dance for screams, we are the dancers. We make the dreams."* —Albert Einstein

I started dancing at the young age of six. When I was so new to dancing, all I would do is pick a song, do a couple moves, and then I was ready to perform. No choreographing, no preparation, just pick and go.

As I got older, I progressed in the art of dancing. My technique was getting better, and I was moving toward the more complicated realm of dancing. But still I had no one to teach me. I was on my own for three years. I taught myself by watching other dancers on Youtube and making up my own moves. I didn't care how hard it was going to be, or how painful, or how stressful. All I knew was that I wanted to be good, and being good was going to take some time. That was when I got the idea of taking dance classes.

When I told my mom, it took a while to convince her, but in time, she was up to it. We looked for a while at all the local dance schools, and eventually we found one that seemed a good fit for us: Diamond Academy of Dance in Tannersville. We were lucky to find that they were having an open house the next day. I was so excited, because I knew that for the first time ever, I was going to have a real teacher, not Youtube, to guide and lead me to being a better dancer.

When I dance, I am filled with empowerment and freedom. I feel most alive and very connected to myself and my emotions when dancing. As my body moves to the music, I imagine my emotions spilling to the surface of me, controlling my movements in ways that express how strong or weak the emotion is.

Dancing is therapeutic. It's a time that you can just be yourself, with no one watching. It's only you and the music. You can be or do anything you want when dancing.

Through the four years that I have been dancing, I have progressed to the point in which I go on stage to perform for audiences. When I'm in the wing, waiting for my chance to go on the lit up stage... well, it can be very nerve racking.

When on the cold stage with the lights blinding me, so many thoughts course through my mind, such as *"Are people judging me?"* or *"Am I doing this right?"* and those thoughts can sometimes be very distracting from the dance I'm trying to perform. Soon, my mind loses focus on that, I become lost in the dance, loving it.

As the curtains slowly close, I feel a sense of accomplishment and happiness. Walking through the wing, and back to the dressing room, I feel the need to do it again, and again, just because it was so much fun to be in front of so many people, dancing my heart out.

I hope that in the future, I will continue to dance, and love it. If I do go forward in my dance career, I hope to be a well known dancer, or choreographer, maybe even a soloist! But still, I am young, and on a long journey to being a great dancer!

Just a reminder to follow your dreams by feeding your passion and doing what you love, no matter what!



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## The Reading Corner

by Debra Presley - Communications Committee Member, Avid Reader, Author

### *Without Merit* by Colleen Hoover

Colleen Hoover has stole my heart with this book. This is only my second book by the amazing Colleen Hoover and I'm wondering why I've not read more by her. I'll have to get on that because her stories move me to tears.

*Without Merit* revolves around Merit Voss. She's a 17-year-old girl who seems to know the secrets of all her family members—and not because she wants to know them. What she wants more than anything is to be 'normal' and really for her entire family to be the same.

She lives in a small Texas town and her father bought the church—which considering he's an atheist—went over well in town. You'd think living in a former church would be enough to send any teenager into hiding but it doesn't end there for Merit.

Her Dad divorced her Mom for the nurse that was taking care of her and her Mom still lives with them! Plus there's a ton more strange things that are going on in her house.

Basically they are the gossip of the town and it all just gets to be too much for Merit and so one day she skips school. That's where things really change for her. She meets Sagen and although I'd not categorize him as weird he has a story and in somehow mingles with Merit.

I was engrossed in this story and spent most of last night and this morning finishing it. Colleen Hoover wrote a story that touches on so many issues that teens this day and age deal with all the time. I love the overall message in the story. It's one every older teen should read. I'd probably categories this book as mature young adult because of the topics covered.

No surprise here that I highly recommend this book.

### *The Forbidden* by Jodi Ellen Malpas

Okay, I finished this book about 48 hours ago and I'm still struggling to write a review that will express all the emotions I went through while reading. I wish I could include my voice recordings to my fellow book nerd and friend Stephanie of Stephanie's Book Reports because they are hilarious. Her evil laugh is also quite funny as well.

Okay, let's see how this goes.

Annie and Jack meet one night in a bar and BOOM - the chemistry between them is off the charts. Right from the start, I knew this book was going to cause me anxiety. It just had that "thing" about it before I even realized why Jack was *forbidden*.

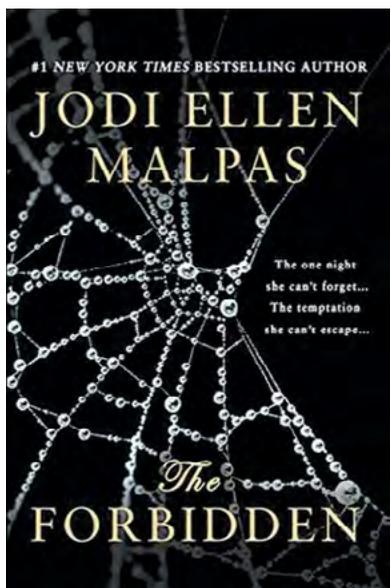
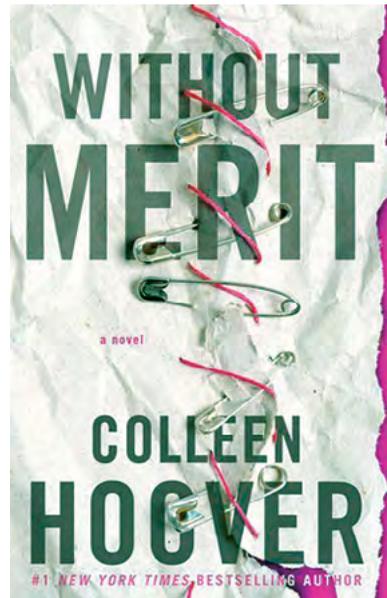
It became a book I wanted to consume but needed to walk away often because it was too stressful - in the best way possible. Although, often I found myself right back at it - after of course shouting at the Kindle or typing furiously to my friend going "What the hell is going on here!?"

Jodi's writing is flawless and she has that talent that keeps you wanting to read a book even though you know it is going to be the death of you! Ha ha.

I can't say much about the plot without giving it away and I'm so not about that but know it's good. Like really good but know there's angst. So if you don't like a book like that this isn't for you. However, if causing yourself loss of sleep, endless hours of talking to yourself and the urge to hop on a plane and go find Jodi so you can go yell at her for driving you nuts then get this book now!

I actually did tag her several times on social media and she was so sympathetic - not! Anyway, if you haven't guessed it, this book is a five star read for me. I love a book that drives me batty!

Check out all my reviews at: <http://thebookenthusiast.net>



## Christmas in the City

by Sandy Bonet, Board Member

Like all maiden voyages, the first PEPOA Christmas Bus Trip to New York was not without a few wrinkles. First, the bus arrived 30 minutes late. Then the driver took us out the back gate to 611, to Main street, to Fifth Street, all the way back to 447 and finally onto 80 East. He must have listened only to his GPS and ignored the comments, suggestions and directions provided by the passengers who were eager to get on the way to the city.

Munching on snacks provided by PEPOA, travelers shared their plans for the day. Some were going to visit friends and family in Brooklyn. Another group wanted to see Madame Tussauds Wax Museum. One couple planned to use a Groupon coupon for a restaurant on the upper West Side. Rockefeller Center and Fifth Avenue were also favored destinations.



And then there were the shoppers. They were headed for Times Square's family-oriented specialty stores (Disney, M&M, etc.), Macy's, the American Girl Store and the HBO Shop (Game of Thrones goodies).

One traveler wanted the full "Christmas in the City" experience without walking miles in the cold. She headed for The Winter Village at Bryant Park to watch the ice skaters and Christmas lights, graze on the wonderful variety of comfort foods and browse for unique gifts in the many great pop-up shops. All within the city block that is Bryant Park.

The bus dropped everyone off by Rockefeller Center where the group split up and headed for their destinations.

By 8pm everyone had found their way back to the bus and settled in for the trip home. Some took the time to sort through their purchases and congratulate themselves on the treasures they found. Others chatted



with friends. And several closed their eyes in New York and woke up at the PE Welcome Center. The trip back went smoothly and in the end, a good time was had by all!

Just one question: What's the date for next year's Christmas in the City Trip?



## Eats Around Town

by Julie Harter, Communications Committee Member

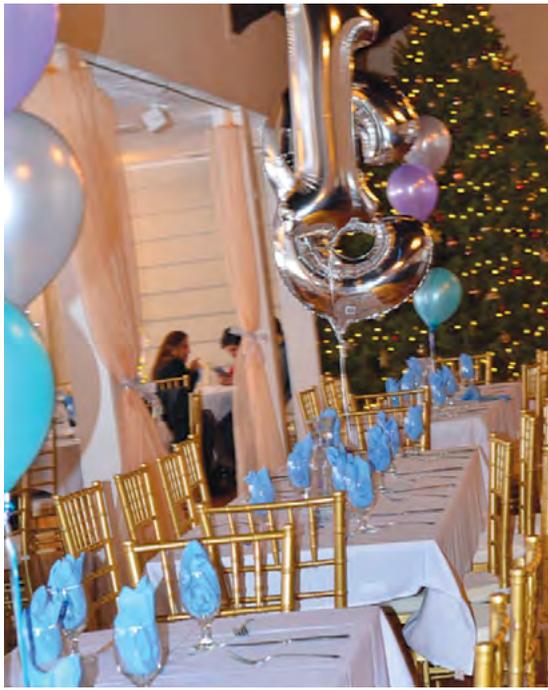
### Water Gap Country Club & Kitchen Chemistry

This is a different kind of review. Recently my 13-year-old daughter had her Bat Mitzvah and we were so happy with the reception venue, food and cake, that I felt it worth recommending here. So, let's start with the reception.

We were very delighted to have The Water Gap Country Club, in the lovely village of Delaware Water Gap, host the party for our daughter's coming of age. When driving up to the property, you are welcomed by the beautiful scenery of the golf course and the mountains as a backdrop. All our party guests that stayed overnight were delighted with the very quaint rooms, filled with antique furniture and the crisp white down comforters on the beds.

Our celebration was in the upstairs grand room. The hardwood floors, duel fireplaces, and picturesque views out the large windows really helped fit our theme of a winter setting. But, what is important at a party is always the FOOD! We had chosen the Brunch Buffet package which included the following:

- Assorted Cut Up Cheeses and Crackers
- New York style bagels with cream cheese, lox, red onions and capers
- Blueberry, corn and bran muffins
- Grilled French toast with blueberry compote



- Farm Fresh Scrambled Eggs
- Bacon strips and Sausage links
- Home Fried Potatoes
- Creamy Chicken Ala King over Pastry Shells
- Tender Filet Mignon Tips in a Burgundy and Mushroom Sauce
- Traditional Rice Pilaf
- Chilled Orange and Cranberry Juices
- Coffee Bar

Of course, my favorite was the bagels and lox but the filet mignon was a close second. Jill, the events director, was amazing to work with. She was always available to answer any questions and do everything she could to make sure the day was fabulous. I think I actually miss talking to her now.

Now on to the cake! Lisa Diemer, owner of Kitchen Chemistry on Main Street Stroudsburg, and her crew made us two cakes that were better than we could have imagined. We provided them with the themed colors and they created crowd-pleasing masterpieces. One was a three-tiered red velvet cake with butter cream filling. The other was a sheet cake for the candle ceremony with chocolate and vanilla cake, and Belgium Chocolate custard as filling.

People were gushing over the deliciousness of the cakes. They were adorned with snowflakes and a string of lights to match the wintery theme.

I have known the owner of Kitchen Chemistry for quite a while and she and her family are wonderful folks who are very active in our community.



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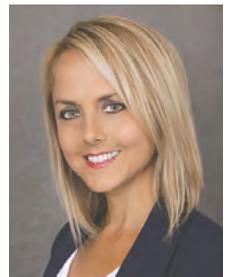
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- 139 homes sold in Penn Estates during 2017.
- The highest-priced home sold for \$230,000 year to date.  
(Information provided through Pocono Mountain Assoc. of Realtors MLS Service)
- 93% of buyers start their search on the Internet.
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