

Winter Bird Irruption

by **Melissa Penta, Contributor and Avid Birder**

This winter, there is a good chance that you can see birds in our area that you typically will not see here. This is known as an irruption. An irruption means that certain species of birds will migrate in large numbers to areas outside of their winter range.

The most common cause of this is lack of food. This year, the cone crop is poor in most of Ontario and the Northeast, where these birds will usually spend their winter. This means that there is a great chance that they can be seen in our own backyards. If you put up bird feeders, be sure to keep them stocked since natural foods are also scarce in our area.

What species should you look out for? The most common birds you will see



Pine Siskins are similar to female House Finches. They have a more slender bill and yellow can be seen on their wings and tail.

are Pine Siskins – in fact, they are already all over Penn Estates. They enjoy both sunflower and thistle seeds and can empty feeders quickly in large numbers.

Common Redpolls also enjoy the same food and can likely be seen in large numbers. You can also find these two species eating birch cones in the trees. One of the most sought-after birds to see is the Evening Grosbeak. They will stay in conifers and dine in more open feeders filled with sunflower seeds.

Red-breasted Nuthatches are already being seen in larger num-

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Red-breasted Nuthatches are smaller than the White-breasted and have a distinct black eyeline.



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

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.

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From Phyllis's Desk

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

Community Association Living

Your Commitment as a Homeowner in Penn Estates

The association is glad you've found a home in Penn Estates. We presume it has all the amenities you were seeking and you're settling in nicely. This is the time the association likes to remind new homeowners that common-interest communities like ours create some unique obligations to the community and to other residents within it:

Read and comply with the community's governing documents. You should have received a package of documents well before you closed on your home. If you didn't, check the association's website or contact administration for copies. Make sure you understand what's included in them, particularly the rules about pets, parking, your home's exterior maintenance, architectural guidelines and when you must pay association assessments.

Treat association leaders honestly and respectfully. Board members are homeowners—just like you—who have volunteered to give their time and energy freely to govern the community. While you should share your concerns about the community with them, do so in a way that's constructive, informative and helpful.

Attend board meetings and vote in community elections. Board meetings are open to unit owners who wish to sit in and keep up with issues under discussion. The meetings are a business meeting of the corporation. Members may attend and speak when called upon. One must remember board meetings are not meetings of the membership but a time for the board to meet and conduct business.

Pay association assessments and other obligations on time. Your regular assessments pay for common-area maintenance, amenities, and other shared expenses. If you don't pay on time, the burden for paying your portion of the association's bills, like water, electricity and trash removal, falls on your neighbors. Contact administration, if you're having problems, to discuss alternative payment arrangements.

Ensure that tenants, visiting relatives, and friends adhere to all rules and regulations. If you are leasing your home, you're liable for maintaining the condition of the home and for the behavior of those who live in it. Make sure to screen tenants thoroughly, and familiarize them with the community's rules.

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Important Notices

Gate Access Changes

As we continue to improve access to our gated community, all residents are now required to provide a password or PIN number associated with their property when calling in a guest. If you have not set this up yet, please visit the Administration Office with proper identification.

NOTE: This change went into effect October 1, 2018.

Amenity Badges

PLEASE KEEP YOUR AMENITY BADGES - they are intended to be used from year to year. Members in good standing receive a sticker annually reflecting the current year. *Residents who misplace their photo ID badges may purchase a replacement at the cost of \$5 upon showing proper identification.*

Rental Registration Fee

Effective January 1, 2019 — An annual Rental Registration Fee of \$150 will be due January 15th of each year. Each additional rental will be charged \$35. This fee is due at the beginning of the year, not when the lease expires. If you have questions, please contact the Administration Office.

Winter Bird Irruption cont.

(continued from page 1)

bers than usual. This small cousin to the White-breasted Nuthatch can be observed on your suet feeders. Other birds that tend to irrupt are White-winged and Red Crossbills, Bohemian Waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks — but they are much rarer for our area.

Remember to closely watch your bird feeders this winter. A visit from any of these bird species can be a special experience!



Evening Grosbeaks are larger and stocky compared to the more common American Goldfinch with much larger bills.

Common Redpolls also look similar to House Finches, but they have a smaller bill, red crown and less streaking on the chest. Males also have red on the chest.



WINTER is Just Around the Corner

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

During snow season comes the challenge of keeping our roads clear. This task requires the cooperative efforts of everyone. Usually, there are two separate snow removal operations. The first is during the storm itself and consists of quick passes with the plows to keep the roads open. Priority is given to the most heavily traveled roads. The second operation begins when the storm abates. It consists of widening the cleared portion of the most heavily traveled roadways and clearing of all roads.

Unfortunately, each operation may result in a berm or windrow of snow across private driveways or encroachments to association roads. The association does not have the resources to keep private driveways clear. This is the responsibility of each individual resident. Reasonable effort is made to plow in a manner that will minimize the size of the berm.

It is important that there are no obstructions such as parked vehicles in the roadway or easement when snow removal is to occur. This hampers operations and prevents the complete clearing of the road. Cars parked in the roadways during snow removal will be towed at the owner's expense.

Other improvements need to be set back far enough from the traveled way to provide sufficient clearance for the snow removal equipment. As per our regulations parking is not permitted on the road or within the 10-foot easement.

The following rules are provided to assist in the orderly execution of the snow removal process:

1. As the placement of obstructions is particularly important for the safe and efficient clearing of snow from the common area roadways, owners are to refrain from having trees or hedges in the easement, or any other improvements close enough to the roadways so as to be damaged during the normal course of snow plowing. The Association, the contractor, or employee performing snow plow duties shall not be responsible for any damage that occurs to these improvements.
2. Vehicles are prohibited from being parked on any street in the associa-

tion. This helps to improve snowplowing services and keeps roads clear for emergency vehicles. If found on the roadways, vehicles are subject to towing at the owner's expense.

3. Do not park your vehicle at the end of your driveway within 10 feet of the road (easement). The association, its contractors, or employees assume no responsibility for any damage that may occur if this rule is not followed.
4. Do not place snow from driveways on the common areas following a storm. Help keep your neighborhood safe and accessible for you, your family and neighbors.
5. A snow plow creates windrows or banks of snow along the sides of the road and across driveways. Clearing snow from driveways and entrances is the responsibility of the resident; the association cannot provide this service. Plow operators do not have control over the windrow of snow coming off the edge of the blade, and plow angles cannot be adjusted for the sharp turns required to clear driveways. To minimize the frustrating problem of the plow covering your driveway with snow after you have shoveled it, wait until the roads have been plowed. And when shoveling, place as much snow as possible to the right side of your drive as you face the street. This reduces the chance of snow previously removed from the driveway easement being pushed back into your drive.
6. Leave room for maintenance vehicles and plows — stay back at least 200 feet and do not pass on the right.



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Harmony

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Leaders Wanted

(continued from page 1)

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:

1. Fill out an application obtained from the Administration Office. Completed applications must be submitted to the Administration Office no later than February 8, 2019. The Nominating and Steering Committee will then contact qualified applicants and invite them to an interview with the committee.
2. The other way is to obtain a Nominating Petition from the Administration Office and get the signatures of 50 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 23, 2019. To be included in *Harmony*, the petition must be submitted by February 23, 2019.

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 23, 2019.

Candidates will have the opportunity to deliver a five-minute speech and answer questions at the Meet the Candidates Forum on Saturday, March 30, 2019, at 3:00 PM. The candidate will have the chance to speak at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 4, 2019.

Election of the Board

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

1. Directed Proxy ballots will be included in the Notice and Call to Annual meeting package that will be mailed to each Member in good standing not less than 30 days prior to the election. 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 2, 2019.
2. The other way to vote is to attend the PEPOA Annual Meeting on May 4, 2019, 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.

PEPOA Safety Committee Battery Giveaway

by Ken Nevil, Safety Committee Chair

Last year, the residents of Penn Estates benefited from a local Boy Scout Eagle project by being recipients of new smoke detectors. In conjunction with that project, the Penn Estates Safety Committee recently purchased 300 9V batteries to keep these smoke detectors in working order.

We are providing two batteries per household. This coincides with the National Fire Prevention theme every fall to "Change your clocks and change your smoke alarm batteries." As a former police officer for 30 years, Fire Lieutenant for six years and former Emergency Medical Technician, I can tell you that working smoke detectors do save lives!

The Safety Committee will hold another battery giveaway in the near future. Dates and times will be announced on social media outlets.

2019 Board of Directors Election Timeline

February 8, 2019 > Application deadline

All candidate applications must be submitted to Administration

February 13, 2019 > Interviews completed

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

February 14, 2019 > Recommendations to Board

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

February 15, 2019 > Board approves candidates

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

February 23, 2019 > Harmony article deadline

Candidate bios to Harmony > All candidates, including those using the petition process should submit bios & photos to pepoaharmony@gmail.com

March 15, 2019 > Harmony to be delivered to PE by publisher

March 23, 2019 > 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.

Not less than

30 days prior

to the Election

> Mailing of election materials per by-laws

March 30, 2019

> "Meet the Candidates" event

Saturday, March 30 at 3:00 PM in the Oak Room

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.

The View from My Seat on the Board

by Dennis Sira, Penn Estates Board Member

Welcome to the second installment of "The View from My Seat on the Board," the column where I share things from a Board members perspective as well as some general thoughts on how we can be a better community. There are so many things going on in Penn Estates it is an exciting time to be here, but I can't help but be a little sad at times too.

Let's start with the work being done on the infrastructure of Penn Estates. Things went for too long without being addressed but I think we can all see the progress being made. Roads are being repaved, certainly not as fast as any of us would like to see, but given the high cost of doing this we will be working on this for quite some time. And the key is that a greater attention to maintenance of the newly repaved roads will help keep them in good condition for longer. The gate system has seen quite a few issues over the years, but the latest updates seem to have helped quite a bit and the new gate hardware certainly will not have the problems we had the old system.

Additionally, quite a bit of work has been done on the buildings at the Community Center. If you haven't seen the work done on the Community Center itself, you should stop by and check it out. And especially check out the Fitness Center which should be open by the time this column runs. And it's not just the roads and buildings which are being worked on. The Tennis Courts and half Basketball courts are being redone, with the main Basketball court being planned for next year. Let's also not forget the work done on the building next to the Community center which is the Recreation center where the Youth night is held every month.

Having the updated facilities is nice, but even more importantly is making sure we utilize the facilities. I wish I could make it to more of the events myself, but there are so many different things going on, there really is something for everyone. For people into fitness and staying healthy, in addition to the Fitness Center there are Classes for Zumba, Tai Chi and Yoga. For the friendly competition side of things, we have Darts and Corn Hole or Horseshoes depending on the season. There is also Mahjong, a book club (Page Turners), and a Crochet/Knitting groups (Hooks and Needles). There is a monthly Seniors group which I hear is quite popular. I personally enjoy the weekly Bingo with cash prizes!

And those were just the regularly scheduled activities. The Recreation Committee frequently has other events planned. Various holiday parties (New Years, St Patrick's day, Latin night, Super Bowl Party, etc.) as well as outdoor activities (Fall Festival, Trunk or Treat, Dive in Movies). All these events are listed on the community calendar available at pepoa.org or you can pick up flyers at the office.

Of course, all of these things cannot happen without the committees and the Board having their meetings and working for Penn Estates. If you're a homeowner it would be great to have you attend one of the monthly Board Meetings (First Friday of the month 7:30pm), and any resident of the community is welcome to come to the Breakfast with the Board events to have some direct time with the Board – let us know what seems to be good, or what needs to be improved. And certainly the different committees could use more volunteers; but even if you can't volunteer

let us know what you are enjoying and what else you'd like to see. Personally, I am pushing to have a soup party sometime in the winter - a great way to meet our neighbors and who doesn't like soup!

But as I mentioned in the beginning of the column, there is a sad side to all of these activities. I continue to hear of people who don't know about what is going on, or who don't realize there are things they might enjoy. I think we can all do things to fix this and make Penn Estates even more of a community. What we can do is attend, not everything, but at least get out and try a couple activities or parties. And once you find things you like, talk to your neighbors, bring them with you. Participate, and communicate. Let us know what it is that can make Penn Estates even more of a community for YOU.



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Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame - A Day's Drive Away

by Debra Celentano, Communications Committee Member

Last spring, I made the eight-plus hour drive to Cleveland, Ohio where I visited the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame. It's been one of those places I've always wanted to see but never took the time to go. It was such a great time! I stayed with a friend, but the hotels are all centrally located so if you decide to go you'll have your choice of places to stay. Also, many of the other attractions are in walking distance.

The Hall of Fame was amazing. If you are a lover of music you really will enjoy this trip. You pay one fee and can stay all day if you'd like. The three floors are jam packed with the history of music. I'm a history buff so I really enjoyed getting to see things like the old-fashioned radio studio, jukeboxes, and the American Bandstand display.

The displays change often but expect to walk through the decades and reminisce often about the things you remember and the items you totally forgot about. At least, that's what I did.

When I was there I saw some amazing memorabilia from rock legends like Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and Stevie Ray Vaughn; and country legends like Bob Willis and Patsy Cline.



We walked through rooms where memorabilia from artists I grew up with were displayed. I tried not to feel old while remembering when Cyndi Lauper wore that famous red dress from her Girls Just Want to Have Fun days [photo left] or how I was transported back to when I was probably ten and Michael Jackson wore his famous sequin glove [photo bottom right].

There are displays from artists of today like Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift and others that will keep your kids entertained for sure. I only touched on a very small sample of the artists that were featured. You will be there for hours just looking around and taking photos and watching movies they have set up in their theatre. It's all included – no extra fees for certain displays, which I really appreciated.

Overall, it was a great trip and there's so much to do in and around the Cleveland area as well.



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EVENING & WEEKEND APPOINTMENTS ALWAYS WELCOME

Penn Estates Annual Fall Festival

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Communications Committee Member



Our annual Fall Festival was held recently on a sunny, crisp Sunday in October. The petting zoo is always the center of attention and there were a larger than usual array of animals this year to play with. Pony rides are available as part of the activities.

Pumpkin painting is also popular and each child is able

to pick a pumpkin from a "Pumpkin Patch" to decorate. Food is offered and Franks and Beans were a new addition to the menu this year. Also new this year was a pie baking contest and cupcake decorating.



Kudos to our Recreation Committee for all their hard work in making fun events like this happen!



photos by David Montalvo



Out & About

Things to Do and See in the Poconos

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee Member

Is it really November? Well, not quite. I am writing this on Halloween evening after enjoying the ghost and goblins and Spiderman and other characters who came trick or treating this evening. Fun! The weather was perfectly balmy for this time of year so the costumes were on full display rather than being covered by coats and boots. Leaves are still holding on. Still, we are barreling toward the winter holiday season. I hope that you are blessed with family and good times.

Here are some of the upcoming events around the area. As always, I take my information from the Internet. Please call to confirm details or check the websites. If you are interested in some of the more active events, you might want to check early; the early registration fees are often lower the sooner you register.

Of course, there's a delay between writing this article and publication of the Harmony. You may want to check the newspapers and Internet for other events.

Jim Thorpe hosts their Olde Time Christmas on 11/30, 12/1, 12/2, 12/8, 12/9, 12/15 and 12/16. Their tree lighting is on 11/30. They have train rides with Santa, wandering musicians and carolers, and family activities.

Pocono Manor Resort and Spa hosts a Magical Fireside Christmas on Sunday and Friday through 12/23 with horse drawn carriages, cake decorating, letters to Santa and a life-sized gingerbread house.

Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm host their Old Time Christmas on Saturdays and Sundays December 1st through the 9th from 3-7.

The Stourbridge train line out of Honesdale will be running a variety of special trips, some with Santa and later in the season with winter characters.

Do you feel crafty? PEEC has a number of winter activities, such as Holiday Bows and Boughs on 12/1. Make your own holiday wreaths and other items while enjoying music and drinks. The cost is \$20 per wreath and materials are supplied.

Blue Mountain Resort is having a Gingerbread workshop on 12/9. The cost is \$5 per person plus a fee for the gingerbread house.

Maybe you are not so crafty but you enjoy group activities. You might enjoy the Open MIC on Thursdays at the Shawnee Tap Room through 12/27 or Trivia Tuesdays at Blue Mountain Resort.

There are many tree lighting ceremonies throughout the area. For example, East Stroudsburg hosts a Winterfest and tree lighting at Dansbury Depot on 12/15. Enjoy arts, crafts and vendors at that event. The Stroudsmoor Inn has a tree lighting with fireworks and family activities on 12/2.

Are you interested in plays and readings? You can enjoy dramatic readings of the Christmas Carol at Grey Towers National Historic Landmark in Milford on Friday at 7, Saturday at 11 and 2, or Sunday at 2 (11/30 to 12/2).

Shawnee Playhouse will present a number of productions: Winnie the Pooh Christmas Tail, Tiny Tim's Christmas Carol, the Nutcracker, and Kids Kabaret. Call 421-5093 for dates and times or check their website.

There are Christmas and New Year's brunches and dinners galore and, of course, many ski events. There are too many to list. There is an unusual family New Year's Eve event at Blue Mountain resort. The whole family can enjoy celebrating by tubing down the mountain in addition to inside celebration activities.

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

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TRUNK OR TREAT

photos by Bettyanne Nevil & David Montalvo



HALLOWEEN FAMILY SOCIAL

by Lucy Jacobsen, Recreation Committee Co-Chair

The Recreation Committee held its first annual Halloween Family Social on 11/3/18. It was a free event to members in good standing and over 100 guests showed up. Every family brought a covered dish to share and the amount of food and deserts was unbelievable.

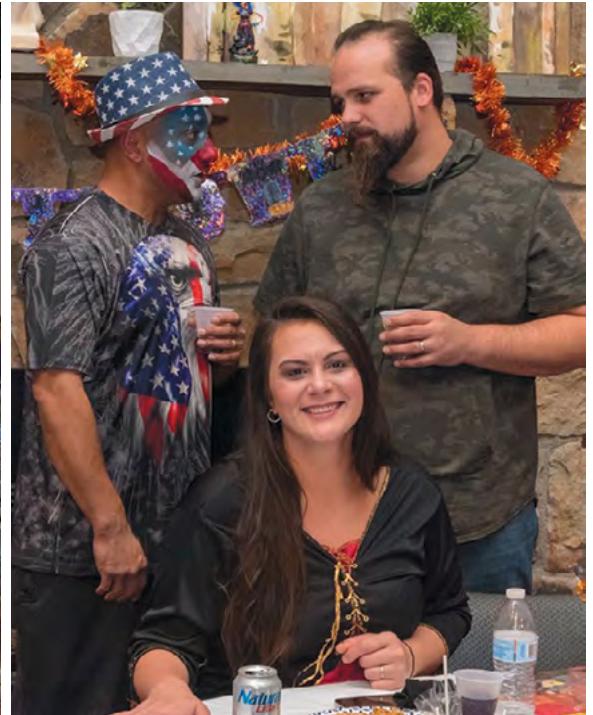
The costumes were amazing and prizes were awarded to the best child and adult and the winners were chosen by members of the Community Safety Committee who were there giving out free 9v batteries.

We played Family Feud and had a karaoke time. It



photos by David Montalvo

was just amazing to see the amount of people who attended and how everyone even helped in cleaning up before they left. This is the first of many events like this.



Nina's Corner

by Nina Hernandez, Contributor

Wreaths and garlands are beautiful decorative pieces that complements any mantel, window, especially the front entrance to your home. Whether it's a living, artificial or a DIY wreath, it's one of the easiest ways to decorate. Anyone can hang a wreath or a garland. They're also a great way to welcome guests into your home with holiday flair, as the Christmas wreath gives your friends and loved ones a sneak peek of what's to come as they walk in. You can decorate your wreath and garland with flowers, ribbons, ornaments, and lights.

What's great about garlands is that it can be used practically anywhere in your home. They are flexible so you can wrap them around balcony and stair rails. You can hang over large mirrors, light fixtures, kitchen windows and even around your garage doors. I personally use artificial wreaths as they are significantly less expensive than real ones. With proper care and storage, your Christmas wreath and garlands can retain its beauty year after year.

So put on some Ella Fitzgerald, Burls Ives or any of your favorite Christmas album and start decorating. Use your imagination and you can transform your home inside and out into a Christmas wonderland. And always remember to enjoy and have fun decorating.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all my friends and neighbors a safe and wonderful Holiday.



Editor's Note: As a bonus, Nina has agreed to share her wonderful flan recipe which is a holiday must-have in her house during the holidays!

Traditional Caramel Flan

2 cans (12 ounces each) Evaporated Milk

2 cans (14 ounces each) Sweetened Condensed Milk

5 Eggs

1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract

1 cup of sugar

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- In a heavy-bottomed pot, add 1 cup of sugar and cook on medium-low heat until sugar is completely melted and has a deep golden-brown color. Swirl the pan around to ensure the sugar is evenly melted. Pour immediately into a cake pan and allow the caramel to cool down until it's hardened.
- In a large mixing bowl, combine the remaining ingredients, then pour the batter on top of the hardened caramel.
- Place the pan on a larger rimmed baking sheet or roasting pan. Place in oven and carefully add hot water to reach at least 1-2 inches on the sides.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.
- Carefully remove the flan from the oven and let cool at room temperature for at least 1 hour. Refrigerate the flan for at least 2 hours allowing it to set.
- When ready to serve, take a knife and run along sides of the pan. Take a large plate or platter and place it on top of the pan. Flip it over and the flan will release so the caramel will be on top.
- Can be served with whipped cream, fresh fruit or any topping of your choice.

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Color Your World

by Jane Harris, Communications Committee Member

In a past issue, I shared my secret to staying sane...slowing down...setting the pace for the day. Then I became intrigued with the "coloring book" phenomenon. I'm an artist and at another day with my daily ritual of writing a page in a diary or simply a legal pad. One page of random writing...set up with a cup of coffee and "Soundscapes" music on my Direct TV.



It was very successful. I was diligent. Never missed a beat, place and time would have thought this to be blasphemy!

But that was then...and this is now. It has little to do with art making as a vocation, but rather a soothing activity catering to the mind (and actually stirring up your creative juices!)

Obstacles abound in our world... obstacles that challenge our sense of sanity and safety, obscuring our ability to find our way...to simply get through the day.

How we begin the day is pivotal...indeed crucial.

Thus the "Morning Pages."

Add in the coloring...almost mindless...pencils and markers and an image waiting for your hand.

I color in the lines! But quickly change up my technique! Using Sharpies, high-



lighters, paint markers and colored pencils I start out with a basic approach but then quickly deviate...as is my artist nature!

Do it your way...do it daily...anytime...anyplace.

Carry a simple coloring book and pencils. Dollar store is a good source. Jump in if tension surfaces. You'll be amazed and your everyday life will be transformed.

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Michael's Kitchen

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Communications Committee

I love fall fruit in desserts. Think apples, pears, cranberries. Pumpkin is also a great choice. Here are some favorite recipes of mine that will help you take advantage of the season's bounty. These desserts will wow your family or guests. Everyone has their traditional Thanksgiving desserts which family and friends expect. Shake up your menu and try one of these desserts for a change. Pumpkin Cheesecake anyone? Wishing everyone a happy and healthy fall.

Sour Cream Streusel Topped Apple Pie (serves 10)

- 1 ready to roll piecrust
 - 2 tbsp butter
 - 3 lbs Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cut into eighths
 - 1 cup granulated sugar
 - 1 cup chopped pecans
 - ¾ cup packed brown sugar
 - ¾ cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp cinnamon
 - ¼ tsp salt
 - 1 egg, lightly beaten
 - 1/8 tsp nutmeg
 - 6 tbsp cold unsalted butter
 - ¾ cup sour cream
 - 1 tsp vanilla extract
1. Heat oven to 375°
 2. Gently roll out crust on a floured surface to a 12-inch round. Fit into a 9-inch deep dish pie plate and crimp edge. Refrigerate until ready to fill.
 3. Melt 2 tbsp butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add apples and ½ cup of the granulated sugar. Cook, stirring frequently, 12 to 15 minutes until barely tender. Let cool on rack.
 4. Make streusel. Combine pecans, brown sugar, ½ cup of the flour, cinnamon and 1/8 tsp of the salt. Cut up the 6 tbsp butter into small pieces; rub into mixture until crumbly. Set side.
 5. Mix remaining ½ cup granulated sugar, ¼ cup flour and 1/8 tsp salt in a large bowl. Stir in sour cream, vanilla, egg and nutmeg. Fold into apples. Pour into prepared crust. Top with streusel and place on baking sheet.
 6. Bake at 375° for 60 minutes until apples are tender; Tent with foil after 30 minutes. Cool 4 hours and serve.

Pear & Cranberry Crostata (serves 8)

- Pastry* 1 cup all-purpose flour
3 tbsp sugar
1/8 tsp salt
¼ cup cream cheese, chilled
2 tbsp solid vegetable shortening, chilled
- Filling* 1/3 cup sweetened dried cranberries
3 tbsp apple or orange juice
3 Bartlett pears (about 1½ lbs)
3 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp cornstarch
½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 egg yolk, lightly beaten
1. PASTRY: In a bowl, whisk flour, sugar, salt. With pastry blender, cut in cream cheese and shortening until coarse crumbs form. Sprinkle with 3 tbsp cold water, 1 tbsp at a time, until dough just hold together. Shape into a 6-inch disk. Wrap well; refrigerate 30 minutes.
 2. FILLING: In a small microwave bowl, combine cranberries and juice. Microwave 30 seconds and set aside.
 3. Heat oven to 400°.
 4. Peel and core pears, halve and cut into thin slices. In a large bowl, combine pears, 2 tbsps of the sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon. Stir in cranberries and any liquid.

5. On a lightly floured surface with floured rolling pin, roll pastry to a 13-inch circle. Roll up pastry onto large ungreased baking sheet. Mound pear filling into center, leaving a 1/2-inch border. Fold border up and part way over filling. (crostata should measure 8 inches across). Brush edge with egg; sprinkle with remaining tablespoon of sugar.
6. Bake at 400° for 40 to 45 minutes or until pears are tender.

Pumpkin Swirl Cheesecake (serves 16)

- Crust* 9 oz Nabisco Famous Chocolate Wafers, finely crushed
2 tbsp sugar
6 tbsp butter, melted
- Filling* 1½ lbs cream cheese, softened
½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup packed brown sugar
2 tbsp cornstarch
1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
1 cup pumpkin pie mix
4 eggs
1 tsp vanilla
½ cup milk chocolate baking chips
1. Heat oven to 350°. Wrap bottom and side of a 9-inch springform pan with foil.
 2. CRUST: Mix together cookie crumbs, sugar and butter. Press over bottom and partially up sides of prepared pan. Refrigerate while making filling.
 3. FILLING: In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Beat in sugars, cornstarch, and pumpkin pie spice until combined. Beat in pumpkin pie mix, and eggs one at a time; add vanilla and beat until smooth. Reserve 1 cup batter.
 4. Microwave chocolate chips for 30 seconds, stir and microwave another 15 seconds. Stir again and mix into reserved batter; microwave an additional 15 seconds.
 5. Pour batter into prepared pan. Dollop heaping tablespoons of the chocolate mixture over top of cake and swirl with a small knife or spatula. Place in roasting pan, adding enough hot water to come halfway up side of foil.
 6. Bake at 350° for 70 to 80 minutes, until just set. Run a knife around edge of pan. Cool in pan on rack. Cover; refrigerate overnight. Remove side of pan to serve.

Mixed Fruit Strudel (serves 8)

- ½ cup chopped mixed dried fruit
¼ cup brandy or apple juice
2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and chopped
1 Bartlett pear, peeled, cored and chopped
¼ cup all-purpose flour
2 tsp lemon zest
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
10 sheets phyllo dough
6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
1 tbsp confectioners' sugar
1. Heat oven to 375°. In a small bowl, combine mixed fruit and brandy or juice; microwave 30 seconds. Let stand 10 minutes.
 2. In a large bowl, combine apples, pears, flour, lemon zest, cinnamon and dried fruit with any remaining liquid.
 3. Unroll phyllo; cover with damp towel. Lay out one sheet and brush lightly with some of the butter. Place another sheet on top; brush with butter. Repeat layering eight more times.
 4. Spoon fruit mixture on long side of phyllo, 3 inches from edge, leaving 1 inch at either end. Fold both short ends over filling. Fold 3-inch wide long strip over filling; roll up to enclose filling. Place, seam side down, on rimmed baking sheet. Make 8 slits in top. Brush strudel with butter.
 5. Bake at 375° for 40 minutes, until nicely browned. Let cool on wire rack. Dust with confectioners' sugar.

Personalized Learning: Good News for Students/Workforce

by Katherine Mills Hernandez, Communications Committee Member

A decade ago, educators talked about “differentiating” their instruction to meet all learners’ needs. Today, that language and practice has evolved, and we focus on “personalized learning,” which is good news for you and the young learners in your life, as well as the employers who will eventually hire them.

The personalized learning approach to classroom instruction allows each student to learn in a way, and at a pace, that is appropriate for him or her. For example, while one student may be able to read a complex text about the Industrial Revolution and internalize its message, another student may better understand that same message by watching a digital presentation and pausing to take notes.

The teacher’s job, then, is to help students figure out which methods and tools lead to the greatest level of understanding for them, and then to provide the learning materials, experiences, and conditions that will allow that learning to happen. In addition, one student may learn quickly and be ready to move on to another task while others need to spend more time on the first task. Teachers who use a personalized approach need to create an environment in which students can linger or move on as needed, while creating enough urgency to ensure that all students progress in their learning in a timely fashion.

When you dig deeper, you’ll find that personalized learning is about more than just method and pace, but those are two tangible elements that are easy to observe at a glance. One thing to note is that “personalized” does not mean “isolated.” Students in a personalized setting have a greater frequency of collaborating with peers and working with a variety of partners in a variety of partial group settings than students in a more standardized classroom (in which all students are expected to learn in the same way and at the same pace as all others—these tend to look like the traditional “teacher-at-the-front, students-in-rows-facing-teacher” setting).

The biggest effect of personalized learning is that kids report a greater sense of understanding and respect from their teachers, relevance between classroom learning and their life goals, as well as a decrease in academic dissatisfaction and stress. In the personalized learning classroom, the culture is focused on learning, rather than on completing tasks and earning points for participation.

This is a key distinction from classrooms where students can earn points just for finishing a task/assignment. In those classroom models, the emphasis on completion detracts from the goal of learning. For example, as a student in the “earn points” classroom, I can pass all my courses if I just make sure to do every assignment and hand it in on time, even if I fail to understand or apply the course content accurately. In a classroom like that, it’s possible to fail the tests, but still earn enough points to “pass” (depending on how the grading structure is designed). But in a classroom that emphasizes “learning,” as the personalized approach does, I wouldn’t earn points for completing tasks. Instead, I would earn points when my work demonstrates understanding and accurate application of concepts and content learned, even if it takes me three or four tries, multiple study sessions, and repeated instruction to do so.

Our country has been riddled with news about underperforming high school graduates. Educators have worked diligently, and continue to do so, to ensure that students are acquiring valuable skills and knowledge that will empower them to successfully enter the workforce and/or higher education after graduating high school. One way we are addressing this is by building our own skills, knowledge, and techniques to make every classroom a place of personalized learning. As with all change, this movement is taking some time and has not yet reached all classrooms or schools.

If you are wondering whether your child is in a personalized learning environment, reach out to his or her teachers and/or school administrator (or read all communications they send out to families) to learn about their classroom methods and grading policy. You can also attend an open house or request a visit to see how the classrooms are set up (this offers a clue into the instruction model preferred in each class). Note that while a classroom may appear to be “traditional,” it is always a good idea to talk to your child’s teacher about how she or he personalizes instruction, as many of us change the classroom furniture to meet different needs on a daily basis.

Ongoing Mail Issues

by John and Toni Baraniuk

Having postal issues such as receiving someone else’s mail, not receiving your bills, missing checks to name a few examples? Well, we have and when we complained to our local postmaster our postmaster has been rude, lied to us or just hung up the phone. So, we did the following and will continue to do so each time there is an issue. There is no reason for our community to be treated this way.

For any problems with our post office:

- Go online and file a complaint at www.prc.gov/offices/pagr. This is for The Office of Public Affairs & Government Relations who is the Liaison for Congress and United States Postal Service.
- At the same time call Senator Toomey’s office at 610-434-1444.

Since we have done this we have had positive results. If we have another problem we will just pick up the phone and call again. We hope this helps!

Team Penn Estates

Penn Estates is a Relay for Life, American Cancer Community. Through Team Penn Estates, we raise funds all year round that go directly to the cause. We are looking for volunteers who are willing to give some of their valuable time to help accomplish this goal. We need fresh thoughts. Excited volunteers! Team spirit! Please join us. But more importantly, the money we raise helps fund breakthrough cancer research, free rides to chemo, free places to stay near hospitals, and a live 24/7 helpline for answers and support. Please Contact Bettyanne Nevil on Facebook to find out more.

Real Estate Update

by Lisa M. Sanderson, Contributor

How’s the Market? Overall, the Monroe County housing market is very strong, with inventory levels remaining low and helping to inch up prices. Our biggest challenge remains mortgage appraisals, as the lower number of listings (and, therefore, sales) means fewer comparable properties to work with in analyzing value.

The same holds true in Penn Estates. While buyers overall are amenable to the higher prices, it is the appraisals that are holding the \$\$ line more than we’d like and slowing price appreciation. That’s not to say prices aren’t going up – they are – but not nearly at the rate we’ve seen in past rising markets (i.e. 2004/5). Perhaps this is good news. Experts predict another downturn within the next few years and maybe this slower growth means we will not feel the impact as badly this time. That being said, if a move is in your future, now through 2019 should be a great time to maximize your price before a slowdown affects things too much.

The Statistics. Currently Penn Estates is closing about 8.5 sales per month and we have a less than six-month supply of inventory, which indicates a seller’s market. Homes, on average, are selling in 88 days and for 97% of their asking prices. Distress sales (foreclosures and short sales) account for 17% of the transactions in the past 12 months

Information has been gathered from the Pocono Mountains Association of REALTORS’ Multiple Listing Service on November 1, 2018.

Category	Active Listings	Pending Sales	Sales Last 12 mos.
Total	34	14	102
Foreclosures	2	3	15
Short Sales	1	0	2
Low List/Sold Price	99,000	40,400	44,900
High List/Sold Price	239,900	219,900	312,500
Avg. List/Sold Price	159,511	132,928	134,319

NOTE: Pending Sales information reflects only list prices as sold information is not available until the sale is final.

About the Author: Lisa Sanderson is a Past President of the PEPOA Board of Directors, founder of the ‘unofficial’ Living in Penn Estates Facebook Group, and a 26-year veteran of the real estate industry. She is a full-time Associate Broker with Keller Williams Real Estate in Stroudsburg. Comments and questions are welcome at poconolisa@gmail.com

A Weekend of Basket-Weaving

by Ting Qian and Janine Wang, Contributors

In an age of distraction when screen time can eat up a big chunk of our daily lives, human hands seem to be mainly made for operating digital devices. Have you tried making things by hand lately? It can create such amazing fulfillment. In our case, we found it through basket-making!

As a mother-and-daughter activity, we participated in a two-day basket-making workshop in the beautiful Peters Valley School of Craft, located in Layton, NJ in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. It was a one hour and 15 minute drive from Penn Estates, nestled deep in the woods down a narrow, rugged path, and embraced by picturesque views of lakes and swamps. The wilderness along the narrow path can feel like a place lost in time. So is the basket-weaving experience!



Timeless Skills

For as long as there has been mankind, there have been baskets. The original materials were all natural, gathered from vines, trees, reeds, and other plants. The basket is an object that originated from nature, but has an endless future ahead of it, with no end to its potential form or materials. A basket can be made out of anything these days! It is as timeless as is the human hand.

During the two days of the workshop, we not only gained new skills and techniques in making a basket, but new terminologies as well. In the basket-weaving world, the word “packing” means pushing your weavers down the spokes or stakes so they are tightly together; “stepping up” means making a change in the new row so the pattern stays consistent moving forward. “Upsetting the Basket” is to intentionally break your spokes or stakes, whenever they need to round a sharp bend.

Rethinking about Value

Our teacher Pamela Wilson joined us for dinner after the first day at a local tavern. Our bread came to the table, in a previously-invisible-to-our-eyes basket.



“This,” Pamela said, picking the small yellow basket up and looking at its underside, “was made by hand. All baskets are made by hand.” As she continued to handle the lowly bread basket, she described the way the maker’s hand was left behind in the organic unevenness of the spokes, how it likely was from Vietnam, and how the maker was actually pretty good, executing some complicated twining details.

We later dove deeper and realized that because of how complex and dexterously demanding a basket is to make, the best machine to make a basket is the human machine. One could make a machine to make baskets, but that would cost millions of dollars— much more than hiring a person. It never occurred to us, in this day and age, that something could not be made by machine, but baskets have prevailed. It is one of the oldest crafts, and oldest tools humans are known to make.

Learning, Appreciation, A Sense of Accomplishment and More

It took us two full days to each make two baskets. The whole experience was holistic and exhilarating. It takes patience, technique, problem solving skills and creativity combined. A careless mistake can carry through all the way before it

gets realized. To locate and fix the mistake also takes some expertise. As our instructor advised: Don’t let the basket control you. You control the basket from the very beginning.

If focus, patience, and care are the key to basket making, relaxation and satisfaction accompanied us along the way as we created our own “babies” from start to finish. Knowing that we were in the process of making something tangible, useful and beautiful gave us a brand new appreciation of the handmade.

Everyone in our workshop was full of excitement and expectations, eager to see the finished baskets. Learning together with others in the workshop created an inspiring environment. In the end, we all held our beautifully finished baskets, admiring the creations evolved from our own hands.

Behind each basket are materials directly from nature, and two hands that brought these baskets to life. It made us wonder how many other valuable things in our lives we take for granted. What this basket-making weekend brought us was a little pleasant surprise of what amazing things our hands can bring into even today’s digital world.

If anyone is interested in basket-making or countless incredible other things that you can learn to make by hand, you can check Peters Valley School of Craft’s website at <http://www.petersvalley.org>.



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Things to do in the Burgs

by Robin Nicholson, Communications Committee Member

Lavender and Lemon

Do you enjoy tea? Relaxing in a cozy atmosphere? Pastries? Gift shopping? There is a new and lovely shop in downtown Stroudsburg you won't want to miss!

Teetotalers far and wide are going to want to flock to Lavender and Lemon. This new shop is located at 22 N 7th Street right by Courthouse Square.

Lavender and Lemon boasts a cozy and comfortable atmosphere. The owner went through some effort to restore the beautiful historic details of the space

from the tin ceilings to plank hardwood floors. The shop offers a wide array of tea in unique blends, and also scrumptious pastries and unique gifts.

One very popular item is the "Goats Milk Lotion." This rich all-natural lotion comes in decadent scents from Peppermint, Cherry Vanilla, Georgia Peach, Honysuckle to Holiday Berry.

There is a cozy seating area in the back where you can sit, chat, and enjoy some tea in a beautiful atmosphere. As a side note, the owner mentioned that the table and chairs in the seating area are from Penn Estates as she had just picked it up



from a resident in our community and the furniture added to the eclectic charm!

Although Lavender and Lemon is first and foremost a tea shop, you can also enjoy a cup of fantastic hand-pressed coffee if you prefer, in some amazing flavors such as "Apple Cider Donut!" But let's get to the tea! Lavender and Lemon gets new teas in regularly and some vary per season but you will be hard pressed to find a more delicious and varied selection. Some current blends include Crimson Berry, Hibiscus Blend, Immortalitea and Winter Blend to name just a few.



Lavender and Lemon also hosts "High Tea Service" regularly for adults and also "Mommy and Me Tea" for children. If you join High Tea you will enjoy a beautiful spread of finger sandwiches, scones with homemade clotted cream and jam, seasonal salad, fresh fruit, pastries and of course - TEA! During High Tea Service you also benefit from 15% off merchandise and get a Lavender and Lemon mug to take home.



Lavender and Lemon is open 7 days a week 8am to 5pm. Stop in sit back and relax with a nice cup of delicious tea!

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Did you know:

- 26 homes are presently for sale in Penn Estates.
- 86 homes sold in Penn Estates year to date.
- The highest-priced home sold for \$293,000 year to date.
(Information provided through Pocono Mountain Assoc. of Realtors MLS Service)
- 93% of buyers start their search on the Internet.
- The average age of today's buyer is 33 years old.

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