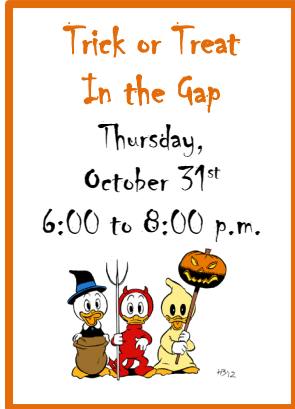


THE WATER GAP TIMES

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue Number 57 - Fall 2024



Tuesday,
November 5, 2024
Polls are open from
7:00AM to 8:00PM

Immense Store of Honey.
John Linn, of this place, informs us that he visited the Water Gap on Wednesday last, and that the workmen on the Gap Railroad when blasting rocks from the side of the mountain came upon a lot of honey, which *he* supposes the bees have been depositing there for hundreds of years. After a large blast, made some time ago, a stream of honey commenced running at about the rate of 50 barrels a day. Everything was brought in requisition to catch the precious article, but failing in obtaining a sufficient supply, the stream turned itself into the Delaware, which accounts for the sudden rise in the river recently. He does not know but it may dam up the water so that they will form an immense lake or overflow the mountains on either side. *Mr. L.*, supposes it possible that honey enough may be caught if advantageously disposed of, to build the Delaware valley Railroad.
We do not think it worth while to give all the details; and will only say, that *Mr. Linn* has one old hat.--*Belvidere Intel.*

The Jeffersonian
Thursday, November 10, 1853

Borough Office

49 Main Street
PO Box 218
Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327
Phone: 570-476-0331 Fax: 570-476-0380

boro@dwgpa.gov
www.dwgpa.gov

Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
After 1:00 p.m., by appointment.

Borough Secretary/Treasurer – Allisen Trotter
Municipal Authority Secretary – Lauren Hogle
Borough Superintendent - Harry Darlington

Delaware Water Gap Police Department
570-476-4674
police@dwgpa.gov

Chief of Police, Jim Fisher
State Police – 570-619-6800

Dial 911 for emergencies only

Borough Council

Lisa Paulette, President
Charles Bickart, Vice President
Derek Anspach
William Buzzard
Ian Foster
Wayne MacWilliams
Jeff Plotnik
Larry Freshcorn, Mayor

Council meetings are held on the 1st Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
Council work sessions are held on 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

Municipal Authority

Harry Darlington, Chair
Steve Simister, Vice Chair
Marty Wilson, Secretary
Jeff Higbee
Jim Reynolds

Municipal Authority meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

Derek Anspach, Chair
Ann Biffen
Gary Schubert

Planning Commission meetings are held as needed.

Zoning Hearing Board

Carol Penna, Chair
Nefertiti Campbell
Frank Davis

Zoning Hearing Board meetings are held as needed.

Zoning Officer Building Inspector/Code Enforcement

Michael Manter

Floodplain Administrator

Walter Conway



Shade Tree News

The Borough of Delaware Water Gap Shade Tree Committee has been reformed. The members consist of Ian Foster-Chair, Sally Foster, Charlie Bickart, Tim Snow, and Marty Bartholomew. It is our mission to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees within the guidelines of the Municipal Tree Ordinance.

We are currently working under the initial Ordinance that was passed by Borough Council in 1991. The Committee and the Borough Council have gotten a new Ordinance into draft form for our solicitor to review. Both the new and old ordinances have to comply with Pennsylvania Borough Code, so they are similar in many ways. Both Ordinances require Borough permission to plant or remove trees in the right of way.

The Committee is interested in helping Borough residents with any questions concerning their trees. We have developed a Tree Planting Request Form for those residents that would like to add a tree to their property within the Borough right of way. These forms are available at Borough Hall. Anybody interested in planting a tree in the right of way should contact the Shade Tree Committee.

Our first planting is planned for early November. We were able to get a Grant to plant 10 trees in the Borough. Please keep your eyes open for information about the planting as we will need volunteers to help accomplish the task.

The Committee is also working on developing a Commemorative Tree Program. More information will be made available as it develops.



**The Antoine Dutot Museum &
Gallery presents:**

*Sights and Scenes
along the Delaware*

September 27- October 13, 2024

**Gallery hours:
Saturdays & Sundays
1:00 to 5:00 p.m.**

**This is a juried group show of *plein* air
and studio paintings and drawings of
townscapes of the borough of Delaware
Water Gap, landscapes of the
surrounding DWG Recreation Area, and
portraits and depictions of the local jazz
scene which is centered on COTA and
the Deer Head Inn.**

dutotmuseum.org

Mayor's Corner
Fall 2024

Greetings fellow Water Gap residents! Cooler nights and milder days can only mean that Autumn is just around the corner and what a great time of year it is for the Borough. There are a few things happening in the coming months but I'd like to start with one of our most important issues, 611. I'm sure you've heard the news that 611 could be open by mid-October which is wonderful! I've attended numerous scheduled meetings with our Congressmen, Senators, State Representatives from both sides of the closure along with PennDot and the Park Service, to find a solution and get the road open even if it's partially. When it was proposed that a single lane opening may be possible, Mayor Fischer from Portland and myself, pushed hard to get not just a lane open but both lanes so that travel can be in both directions. Thankfully PennDot found a way to make that happen with one sticking point. About halfway between our Borough and the point of the Gap there is a section that PennDot feels is just too dangerous and so they wanted to install a traffic light and switch to a single lane to avoid that section, and then back to two lanes. To power that light they would need to trench a cable in the side of the road. The Park Service had concerns that while digging the trench they could run into some historical artifacts. So it was decided that monitors from PennDot, the Park Service and the Tribes would be onsite as the digging was taking place to ensure nothing of historical or of any significance would be damaged or disturbed. So, as long as nothing is found the project will continue. In my conversations with PennDot representatives last week we are on track and making good time to the mid October opening. Fingers crossed!!

Friends of DWG has a couple of events planned through the end of the year and I hope everyone can come out and enjoy them. We are in the preliminary planning stages of an event for the 611 road opening including a parade. More details to follow as we approach the date in October. DWG Cemetery is planning Cinema in the cemetery for the month of October where they host outdoor movies leading up to Halloween along with the annual Lantern Walk where you can learn about the history of the people buried in our cemetery. Dates to be announced! December 14th at noon will be the Wreaths Across America ceremony where we honor the Veterans buried in our Cemetery and you can help lay a wreath at their grave. I'm told that there may be a few more events in our Borough but they are in the planning stages right now so please stay tuned to our social media page, or my page along with Savvy Citizen or the Boroughs web page for updates. If you are considering volunteering to help plan these events, please reach out to myself or the Borough office for info. We can certainly use the help! I hope everyone had a great summer and has a wonderful Fall. See you at the events!

Larry Freshcorn



Wreaths Across America
Saturday, December 14th at Noon

Forms are available at
the borough office if you
would like to purchase a wreath.

Local History Spot

By Marty Wilson

Route 611 (Main Street)

Over the last couple of years, denizens of Water Gap have experienced a profound change in the borough caused by the prolonged closing of Pennsylvania Rt. 611 between the Resort Point Overlook and the point of the Gap. Before the closing of Rt. 611 cars could enter the borough from both north and south of Mount Minsi; the closing cut off the southern approach completely. As a result, there was no through traffic in the borough. Main Street got quiet, businesses suffered, and the borough took on the feeling of a small country village. Recently officials have announced that the road will partially reopen in the beginning of November—a short section near the point of the Gap will be one lane controlled by traffic lights. Once more the borough can expect lines of cars on Main Street headed west on Friday nights and east on Sunday nights.

Present-day Rt. 611, which serves as Water Gap's Main Street, got its start back in 1800 when Abraham Giles hacked out a wagon road through the narrowest part of the Water Gap. It was a crude, rough road that was rerouted slightly uphill when the train came through in the 1850s. The original route diverted from today's at the Resort Point Overlook where, as one travelled north, the road turned slightly to the left, went over the hill, and came out somewhere on present-day Mountain Road. In the early spring one can still trace the path of that early road.

Early roads were crude by today's standards. With the advent of the train in the middle of the nineteenth century, the condition of roads deteriorated. Long distance travel was the domain of the railroads. The bicycle craze of the 1890s and the invention of the automobile led to a call for better roads. Pennsylvania formed its Department of Public Highways in 1903 and the state road system in 1911 and began to widen and improve roads across the state, including Rt. 611. The section between Water Gap and Portland was upgraded in 1930 and dubbed "The Million Dollar Highway." Pennsylvania governor John S. Fisher presided over the official reopening of the road with great fanfare on August 29, 1930, in front of the Kittatinny Hotel.

The newly improved road facilitated increased traffic between the Poconos and the population centers in New Jersey and New York. That traffic passed through the borough of Delaware Water Gap, resulting in regular traffic jams. Residents called upon borough council to ease congestion. One possible solution was to widen Main Street to three or four lanes. Another was to put a traffic circle at the Cherry Creek bridge. After World War II traffic congestion only became worse in the borough as the popularity of the automobile skyrocketed.

As bad as traffic was in Water Gap in those years, it was worse in Stroudsburg. Rt. 611 entered Stroudsburg from the south at Seventh Street and a block later, at Main Street, it intersected the county's other main traffic artery, Rt. 209. Traffic backed up from that intersection in all four directions as out-of-town travelers competed with residents going about their daily business. The business community, realizing that their customers were avoiding downtown, called upon the government to reduce the bottleneck.

The first part of the solution was to build a bridge across the Delaware River. Opened in 1953, the bridge over which Rt. 80 crosses the Delaware River today was the first bridge across the river to be built in Monroe County. Two earlier bridges that served Monroe County, the ones at Dingman's Ferry and Portland, were built in neighboring counties. The bridge diverted traffic around Water Gap's business center and onto four-lane Rt. 611. Today part of that road serves as an exit and entrance ramp for Rt. 80. The other part runs between Water Gap and Stroudsburg over Fox Town Hill.

While the new bridge succeeded in reducing congestion in Water Gap, it did nothing to address the ever-growing traffic jams in Stroudsburg. A solution was needed to direct traffic away from the intersection of Routes 611 and 209 at Seventh and Main. That solution (if that is the right word) was Rt. 80. Completed through the Stroudsburgs in 1961, it was part of the Keystone Shortway that traversed the state. By 1970 the road was completed to New York City and became part of Route 80 that runs all the way to San Francisco. After that, of course, life in the Poconos and in Delaware Water Gap changed dramatically.

When Rt. 611 partially reopens in November, Main Street in the borough will once again be one of the transportation arteries between population centers to the east and points west. Perhaps we should enjoy the quiet while we can.