

**December 2001**

**UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CAROL SINGING:** The entire community is invited to gather for Christmas Carol singing on Sunday, December 23, at 5 PM to 6 PM at the lighted tree in Bayne Park. Songbooks will be available for everyone. Please dress warmly and bring a flashlight.

**THE LIBRARY**

**! New ! →** The Library is pleased to announce the start-up of **two Children's Book Clubs**—one for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders, one for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders—with a mission *to foster lively discussions of books and to instill a lifelong love of reading*. Library staff will direct discussions of books that young people love to read. Titles will be available at Thoughts & Discovery Bookstore in Chatham or, upon request, through interlibrary loan. **Registration is required** as space is limited. Call the Library at 267-8000 (ask for the Library).

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Graders</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Graders</b>
Thursday, December 13 at 5:30-6:30 p.m.	Thursday, December 20 at 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Book: <i>Your Mother Was a Neanderthal</i> by Jon Scieszka	Book: <i>The Bad Beginning</i> by Lemony Snicket
Thursday, January 10 at 5:30-6:30 p.m.	Thursday, January 17 at 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Book: <i>See You Later, Gladiator</i> by Jon Scieszka	Book: <i>The Reptile Room</i> by Lemony Snicket

**Meet at the Library.**

**Storytime** dates for December are: December 11 and 14; 18 and 21. Then Storytime resumes on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Themes for January include *Bears, Feelings, Snow, and Tall Tales*. Pick up a schedule at the Library.

<b>Preschooler Time</b>	<b>Toddler Time</b>
<i>Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m.</i>	<i>Fridays at 9:30 a.m.</i>
<b>For ages 3-5</b>	<b>For ages 18 months up to 3 years</b>

Check the top of the center bookcases for children's holiday books. Gift books are always available on the sale cart, and Library totes @ \$10 are bound to please someone on your list!

*Happy holiday greetings from your friends at the Library and warm wishes for a New Year of Good Reading!*

**Harding Township Municipal Alliance for a Drug Safe Community**

The Municipal Alliance is invites Township residents to attend a "Positive Parenting Program", 6 classes to be held on consecutive Tuesdays, January 15, 22, 29 and February 5, 12 and 19, 2002, 7- 8:30 PM. The subjects include "Stop the Yelling", "Manage Daily Stress", "Improve Sibling Relationships", "Get Co-operation", "Improve School Grade", and "Share your Knowledge". Each class will cover one complete subject. Questions, Call Sue Nobelman 973 301 9104. The registration is Free to Harding Residents, and the registration deadline is January 7, 2002.

The Harding Municipal Alliance obtains fund awards from state drug awareness programs, with the obligation to provide a 25% match. At the meeting November 27, they discussed the "Red Ribbons" drive, the event generated allot of interest and raised \$658. Funds have also been contributed by the Church of Christ the King and the First Presbyterian Church. Having met their obligation of raising \$2500 in order to get cost sharing, they have been able to present various community events geared primarily to the Harding community school-age population, both students and parents. During the year, the Alliance has presented programs about the negative aspects of teasing, to upper grade students, and on peer pressure to the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at the Harding School, as well as supporting a Senior Luncheon.

**Correction:** The Civic Association has been asked by the Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA) to print the following correction. "A correction is noted to an article which appeared in the most recent issue of the Thumbnail which concerned the proposed expansion to the Morris Animal Inn and the opposition to it filed by the GSWA. It was erroneously reported that the GSWA had requested 'a criminal summons' be issued against Walter Morris. The document filed by GSWA was an affidavit stating that probable cause existed by virtue of the sworn testimony of Walter Morris before the Board of Adjustment, to provide grounds for the issuance of a municipal summons for past violations of a Harding Township ordinance and permits by the Morris Animal Inn".

**TOWNSHIP NEWS**  
**REVALUATION UPDATE**

The first Township revaluation since 1985 is now completed. Morris County mandated this because Township assessments had dropped to 54% of the market value. The average house value went up 125 to 135% between 1985 and October 2001, according to the recent revaluation results. Out of the nearly 1,900 revaluations, meetings have been held with 465 residents to discuss the figures. If residents provided additional information at these meetings, following verification, adjustments will be made if necessary. The homeowner will get the final valuation in February, and any appeal must be filed by April 1, 2002. Certified Valuation, the company conducting the assessment, will be providing a map of all properties sold in the Township during the past several years indicating the date sold and the selling price. This map will be available for viewing in January at the Township hall. The final figures will be provided to the County by January 10, 2002. However, the big question, will your taxes go up or down, can't be answered yet, according to Tax Assessor Pat Aceto. Tax rates will not be known until spring 2002, and several components including the school county and township budget figures, go into the rates. Although the Township has no control over either school or county figures, Township officials are not expecting any surprises, according to Mayor Dinsmore.

**Accessory Structure News**

A draft ordinance was submitted to the Township Committee on November 28, relating to "accessory structures", meaning smaller detached buildings subordinate to the principal house on a single lot. The impetus for this proposal came from the Planning Board Advisory Committee, in response to the growing concern by Township officials about the issue. The current ordinance requires occupancy be limited to immediate family members, domestic employees, and temporary guests, but there is general knowledge that some violations of these permitted uses have occurred. The ordinance has always prohibited renting out accessory dwellings to the public. The Township Committee is sensitive to the fact that the issue may involve long-standing arrangements which, while prohibited, have not been enforced by the Township. However, past violations and the increase in size and amenities in some of the accessory structures in the Town in recent years have prompted the examination of the issue. Current provisions that would remain unchanged would require a minimum lot size of 6 acres in the R-1 zone, a 25-foot limitation in height, and the requirement that the accessory structure be located behind the principal building.

The proposed ordinance would require conditional use approval and includes a site plan review and site inspection by the Planning Board. This proposal is the start of process which will involve the public over the coming months.

### **DARCY SCHOOL NEWS**

The Darcy School recently withdrew its application to relocate to Sand Spring Road, ending a two-year controversy. In a December 4 letter to the Board of Adjustment, the attorney for Darcy School informed officials of the Applicant's withdrawal. The school had been seeking a conditional use variance to build a K-6 school on a 20-acre tract off Sand Spring Rd to serve 200 students. The school is presently located in leased space in Livingston NJ. The school had also considered a 14-acre site on James St at the corner of Harter Rd, but the school rejected the location due to wetlands on the property with consequent building limitations.

**Other Township News** In another matter before the Township Committee, it was voted to continue the Town's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, and the local ordinance and map were brought up to date in this regard.

The Township is considering buying a 63 acre piece of environmentally sensitive land on Long Hill Road next to the Great Swamp. Last month, the Township voted to issue \$1.6 million in bonds if the decision is made to acquire the property. The wooded property borders Long Hill Rd on the east and is surrounded by R-7 zones permitting 7-acre lots. The current owner, Wildlife Preserves, acquired the property for \$1 in 1957, and it is currently zoned for "farm, recreational, and conservation use", so it could not be developed without variances from the Board of Adjustment. The current owner paid taxes for nearly 20 years as the property was originally zoned for residential use, and then the Township rezoned the tract. Several years ago, the owner began looking for a buyer because of the high cost of patrolling the property during hunting season. The owner currently prohibits hunting on the property, and reportedly has insisted that hunting be prohibited even after it is sold, thereby preventing purchase by the Federal Wildlife Refuge.

The 28<sup>th</sup> annual deer hunt held in the Federal Wildlife Refuge that ended 12/1 yielded a record 100 adult females, with an eye toward controlling the herd population. The total number of deer harvested declined from 215 last year to 190 this year, probably due to the warm temperatures. Hunters left the field early

to get the deer to the butcher promptly. The objective of the hunt is not to eliminate deer, but to afford some control over the population.

### **HARDING TOWNSHIP HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

No report this month

### **HARDING TOWNSHIP Board of Education, November 12, 2001**

Turner Construction representatives gave an update on the status of the building project. In their report they noted the following:

- The gym floor is being installed and is targeted for completion the week of November 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Site work in and around the school and the athletic fields continues
- Occupancy of the renovated science lab should occur the week of November 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Flooring in the band room, cafeteria, locker rooms, and new gym hallway is installed.
- The ADA chair lift has been installed in the elementary building.

The Superintendent reported that the Staff in-service day on November 8<sup>th</sup> focused on: revising the district's report cards, examining and discussing the school crisis plan, and a grief and trauma workshop.

#### Finance Items

Bids for the elementary school lighting retrofit project were rejected because they were over budget. The project will be re-bid.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION, Dec 4, 2001**

- ✓ Work on the Well survey is continuing. There have been problems with some of the data collection sources, however the Environmental Commission will be receiving a CD from the NJDEP with scanned well data sheets.
- ✓ The Recycling Information brochure for 2002 will be sent out shortly.
- ✓ THE E.C. is considering hiring an environmental consultant to assist in drafting the Model EIS. An EIS (Environmental Impact Study) is required when an application for work (building/renovations, etc.) is submitted. Any environmental effects of the project must be addressed in the EIS. As there is no set format – the Commission is in the process of making a model so there is a standard for all to follow.

- ✓ A subcommittee has been formed to do a study on the issue of fences in town. Many roads have “wood tunnels” that, in effect, corral wildlife into roadways. This may be a contributing factor in deer/motor vehicle accidents. The initial study will be on Spring Valley Road, Village Road, Glen Alpin Road, Blue Mill Road and Lee’s Hill Road. The Environmental Commission is asking residents with ideas, comments on this issue to call subcommittee chairperson Justine Kovacs at 973-540-8953.
- ✓ Conservation Easement Enforcement – A Conservation Easement is a portion of one’s property that must be left undisturbed, in its native state. No buildings or changes to the natural setting are allowed. Many of the violations to easements occur when property changes hands. The new owners either don’t know about the easement or they do not understand the nature of the easement. As such, educating new residents is very important. The Environmental Commission is in the process of drafting a recommendation to the Township Committee that will address notification of conservation easements to new residents, funding of inspections and the possibility of making all stream buffers conservation easements.
- ✓ GrassRoots – a publication of the Environmental Commission for township residents will resume periodic publication in the spring. Articles on such topics as trees, wells, easements, recycling and wildlife are planned.
- ✓ The following applications were discussed:
  - Doggett – Glen Alpin Road
  - Weil – Pleasantville Road
  - Jacobson – Millbrook Road
- ✓ Susan Deeks is leaving the Environmental Commission. The E.C. unanimously passed a resolution of appreciation for her many years of service.

**BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**, November 15:

Resolutions memorialized:

#4-01, Wentz, Miller Rd, Block 13, lot 5, to enlarge existing master bedroom and add bath over garage, variance need to modify a non-conforming structure.

Approved, permitting minimum setback from the south side line of 75’ and resulting in a building area ratio of 3.24%

#11-01, O’Connor, Blue Mill Rd, Block 9, lot 10, request for variance to enlarge a non-conforming structure by construction additions having minimum setbacks of

37' from the east side line and 30' from the west side line resulting in a building area of 8.3% and resulting in a lot coverage ratio of 13.8%.

Pending Applications:

New Application #26-01, Terry and James Dwyer, 56 Lake Trail W, BI 42, Lot 1, Variances granted for altering and enlarging non-conforming residence. New front porch entry and rear and side addition will be added to give minimum front set back of 18'.

#27-01, David Weil, Pleasantville Rd, Block 15, lot 20, Request for variances to reconstruct historic barn on property. Front set back to 40' and increase lot coverage to 12.1%

Old matters:

# 20-01, Frederick and Janice Ganning, Tall Pine Rd, BI 26, lot 6.02, approved for 3 variances on non-conforming improvements to expanded pool patio, maximum lot coverage to ratio of 11.6, and 91' setback for the pool patio.

#25-01, Greenbaum Interiors, Mt Kemble Ave, Rt 202, BI 18, lot 33.03, there was a quick overview of the proposed addition. The existing building would be reconfigured as well as parking and building egress and ingress. Request for use variance and for floor area ratio to increase to 12.21%. The permitted floor area in the business zone is 8.5%.

#27-00, Church of Christ the King, Blue Mill Rd, BI 16, lot 27, continuation of discussion with the engineer and architect as to the design of the proposed Parish Life Center and parking areas.

#### **THE PLANNING BOARD**, November 26

#5-01, DeCarlo, Tempe Wicke and Rt 202, BI 34, lots 1 and 1.01, for adjustment of a lot line, was heard. Applicants had requested that the pool and garden area currently owned by lot 1.01 be attached to the main house lot 1. This adjustment produced set back deficiencies, for instance the pool, now within the 100' setback of lot 1.01, would be 10' off the lot line after this adjustment is made. There was testimony that the pool would be used as a water garden and not a swimming pool, as the applicant does not want to remove the structure altogether, despite its' being in poor condition. Apparently both the pool and the garden visually belong to the main house on lot 1, and the owner of lot 1 has an exclusive easement to use this part of the property, while the owner of lot 1.01 pays taxes on the land in question. Both lots have variances for lot coverage. During the hearing, Town engineer Fox raised questions about requiring the applicants to make improvements in the lot 1.01 driveway onto Tempe Wicke Rd. The case will be continued at the next meeting.

Building Area limitations in the R-3 and R-4 zones were proposed, and will be sent to the Township Committee. Generally, the new limits would impose a 3% limitation to a maximum of 3000 sq ft on lots of between 2 and 3 acres. Lots greater than 3 acres would have to comply with the R-1 zone standard. Lots smaller than 2 acres would have 2100 sq ft limits.

**Civic Association News**  
**Appeal for Annual Dues**

Thank you for your generous response to our appeal for annual dues, as well as your appreciative notes about our efforts to continue with high quality reporting of civic events. ***You help us achieve our goals by joining as a dues-paying member.*** One of our immediate goals is improvements to the Harding Twp Civic Assn WEB SITE, and more current updates. Check it out at <http://www/hardingcivic.org/>

**Remember to update the Harding Township Directory**

If you have responsibility for a listed service or organization, please take a moment to review and update your listing. Send it along to the Civic Association, either at the postal address -[**PO Box 72, New Vernon, 07976**]. Or **faxed to Thumbnail editor at 973-605-1127. If you want an electronic copy of your organization's current listing in the directory in order to update, please send an EM requesting it to the editor, hesnaj@aol.com.** Please get updates to us by December 31st. Remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that your organization's listing is correct.

**The deadlines for the next 2 issues of the Thumbnail are December 28 and January 30, 2002.** Call the editor if you have any transmission questions or ideas for articles, 973 540 8911. You should EM or fax articles (typewritten preferred, please) to the Editor, Hesna Pfeiffer, **973 605 1127, email hesnaj@aol.com.** *The Thumbnail is copyrighted and published by the Harding Township Civic Association, and is mailed to every home in Harding Township.* RECYCLING: Commingled recycling of plastics, aluminum and tin cans, glass bottles and jars, mixed paper at Municipal Garage every Wednesday, 7AM-Noon; and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays 12/15, 1/5, 1/19 from 9-12 AM. Residents are requested NOT to leave recyclable materials if the center is closed.



DATES TO REMEMBER, meetings at 8PM, unless as noted; special events in italic

Municipal Court (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)	6 PM	
Environmental Commission (1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday)	7:30 PM	1/8
Seniors (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday)	11 AM .....	12/20
Planning Board (4 <sup>th</sup> Monday)	8 PM .....	12/17, 1/28
Hist Preservation Comm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday)	8 PM	12/13
Board of Health (2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday)	8 PM	12/13, 1/10
Board of Education (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday)	7:30 PM ..	12/17, 1/14, 1/29
Board of Adjustment (3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday)	7:30 PM ..	12/20, 1/17
Township Committee (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed)	8 PM .....	12/26
Shade Tree (2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday)	3 PM	12/10
Harding Municipal Alliance	8:45AM	
Harding Twp Civic Association	7:30 PM	1/7