

May 2002

**UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Memorial Day Parade, May 27, 9:30 AM The Township's Annual Celebration**

The Civic Association, together with the community and government of Harding Township invites any interested Township group or organization to participate in this year's Harding Township Memorial Day Parade. The parade assembles and takes off from the Harding School at 9 AM, and ends at the square in front of the New Vernon Firehouse. For more information contact the parade Coordinator, Lynne Hughes, 973 605 8929. If you can't be in the parade, please join in as a spectator at the Parade! Come to the square in front of the New Vernon Firehouse at 9:30 AM, for this unique community-wide opportunity to gather together. The ceremonial tribute to remember those who have served their country also includes the announcements of "Citizen of the Year", and the winners of the essay contest.

**HARDING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY** holds its annual community Memorial Day Open House on **Monday, May 27 following the Town parade** and commemoration, between 10AM and noon. The Tunis-Ellicks House, adjacent to the ceremony grounds, is open for the traditional fare of lemonade and cookies. There will be a special exhibit in conjunction with the Harding Township School in commemoration of its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Tunis-Ellicks House closes for the summer after Memorial Day, but can be opened for summer visitors. Just call the Historical Society number (973-292-0161) or the office number (973-292-3661) to make arrangements. The Tunis-Ellicks parlor garden remains open during the summer, as it is maintained as a community project by the New Vernon Garden Club to give pleasure to the entire community.

**The Shade Tree Committee** announces that the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Harding Township **Fat Tree Contest** is accepting entries. Rules are:

1. Find the fattest shade tree on your property.
2. Measure up the trunk 3 feet.
3. Measure the circumference of your tree at that point.
4. Send the measurement, and the type (species) of tree together with your name, address, and telephone, to the Harding Twp. Shade Tree Committee, Box 666, New Vernon NJ 07976, **no later than May 22, 2002**. Winners will be announced during the Memorial Day celebration, but need not be present to win. Previous winners and Historic Designated trees, not eligible.

**THE LIBRARY Election Day Book Sale Coming Up!** Plan to stock up on books for the summer at the Library's Election Day Book Sale on **Tuesday, June 4** in the rotunda of the Municipal Building. The sale will run all day while the polls are open: from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. Remember: *it's the best bargain in town!*

**Storytime Schedule:** May 14 & 17: *Stories About Mom*; May 21 & 24: *Silly Stories*. No sessions on May 28 or 31<sup>st</sup>. June 4 & 7: *Dog Stories*; June 11 & 14: *Eric Carle's Bug Stories*. Preschoolers meet on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m., toddlers meet on Fridays at 9:30 a.m. at Green Village United Methodist Church, Spring Valley Road.

**Children's Book Clubs:** one **Thursday** per month, **5:00 p.m.**, at the Library. June 6: *Summer Reading Is Killing Me!* By Jon Scieszka). **5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grades** meet on **May 16** to talk about *Circle of Three* by Erica Farber and J.R. Sansevere (June 13: *The Austere Academy, Book the Fifth*, by Lemony Snicket). The June meetings will be the final sessions of the Book Clubs until the fall.

Watch for news of the **Summer Reading Program, It's Reading Cats and Dogs!**, in the June issue of the *Thumbnail*.

**The Annual Meeting of the Harding Land Trust will take place on Thursday, May 23, at 8 p.m. at Kirby Hall.** A special program, ***"Fencing Out/Fencing In: How Can we Restore Our Native Forest?"***, will focus on the stresses placed on our woodlands by deer and by ***invasive plant species***. Guest speaker, Emile DeVito, is Manager of Science and Stewardship at the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. During this informal, question/answer session, Dr. DeVito will discuss current research on controlling invasive species and regenerating tree saplings and suggest ways in which Harding residents can encourage greater plant diversity on their own properties. All are invited to attend. Bring your questions and the results of your own experimentation.

**NEW VERNON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT Annual Steak and Lobster Dinner, Friday June 7, Time: 6PM to 10PM, at the Fire House, Village Road.**

Doors open at 5:30 for orders and seating only; In view of the popularity of this event, the NVVFD would appreciate if dinner guests would give up their seats after coffee and dessert to make room for others.

Dinner selection includes salad bar, bread, French fries, beer, wine, soda, coffee and delicious home made dessert. Chicken, steamed clams and corn on the cob, as well as hamburgers for the kids are also available. (Please no strollers in building). Come join your family, friends and neighbors for a great meal and a fun time at a terrific community event. All proceeds go to the New Vernon Volunteer Fire Company and First Aid Squad.

**Residents for A Rural Harding (RRH) Annual Picnic, Sunday, June 2, 2002, 3-6 PM.** This annual event will be held on the Dog Show Grounds at Hartley Farms, on Blue Mill Rd. This year's picnic will be better than ever with pony rides, hayrides, and a petting zoo. In addition, there will be a great collection of antique and classic cars. Music, good food, good company and a silent auction promise a great time. This is a community event and all are welcome! You can bring a picnic or purchase hamburgers, hot dogs and sodas.

**HTRA fall soccer registration for boys and girls** in grades K-6 will be on Saturday, June 8th from 9 to 11 AM at Harding Township School. For additional information visit <http://www.hardingsoccer.com> or contact Bill Wraith (973-425-1015, [bwraith@wraiths.com](mailto:bwraith@wraiths.com)).

**HARDING TOWNSHIP HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Despite recent rains, the **drought emergency** in NJ continues. Harding Township is in the Northeast District and full restrictions apply, even if you have a private well. The restrictions prohibit the washing of vehicles, except at commercial car washes that employ water saving techniques. Also watering of existing lawns is prohibited. Flower and vegetable gardens as well as shrubs and young trees may be watered with a watering can or a hand held hose with a nozzle that shuts off automatically when released. You must not water or wash down any paved areas, this includes paved or clay tennis courts. You may top off pools, hot tubs and spas, but only enough to keep the filtration system working. New pools may be filled once only. Power washing businesses are allowed to keep doing business, but homeowners are not allowed to use a power washer. Residents with drought related questions or for tips on saving water can go to [www.njdrought.org](http://www.njdrought.org) or can call the drought hotline at 1 800 448-7379.

The Atlantic Neuroscience Institute, a division of Morristown Hospital, Atlantic Health System, along with the Harding Township Health Department, is sponsoring a **Stroke screening program on Saturday, May 18, 2002, 9AM to noon** at Christ the King Church. The free clinic is open to all adults. You may register by calling 973 455-7296. There are a limited number of appointments, so residents are encouraged to call as soon as possible.

A **Community Committee** has been formed to **memorialize those in Harding Township who lost their lives on 9/11**. Please notify Lisa Holck, via e-mail at [LisaH@nas-info.com](mailto:LisaH@nas-info.com), or via telephone (973) 898-1310, if you know of anyone other than John Bocchi, Matthew Sellitto, William Tieste, or James Crawford, Jr., that were either residents of Harding Township / New Vernon at any time in the past, or if they have family survivors in town.

## **NEW VERNON VOLUNTEER FIRST AID SQUAD**

This month we would like to tell you more about one of our town's most important volunteer organizations, the New Vernon Volunteer First Aid Squad. We are made up of many volunteers who support our town through their commitment to help their neighbors and we are entirely supported by donations and fundraisers. We respond to emergencies in our community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Unfortunately, we face a severe shortage of members which impacts our ability to ensure a timely response to all our calls.

Our members represent the diversity of our community from high school students to retirees, busy professionals to stay-at-home-mothers. Few of us had any prior medical training before we joined the squad, but what we share is a commitment to serve our friends and neighbors.

We all have busy lives. In fact many of our members work full time. The time commitment to the squad as an EMT requires only one 12 hour shift "on call" a week. Weekends and holiday are rotated and switching or getting coverage is usually not a problem when you have a time conflict. Not a lot of time and the pay off is big, the satisfaction of helping people when they most need it.

There are many ways to help us ranging from becoming an EMT or first-responder to volunteering to help us with one of our annual fundraisers. Please consider giving us a hand in whatever capacity you feel able. Give us a call and leave a message at the squad room at 973-538-7168. A squad member will return you call and let you know how to become part of a great team. You may also call our membership chair Geoff Dobson at 973-326-1996 for more information.

**Safety Tip From the Squad:** By law in N.J., anyone up to the age of 14 years must wear a helmet when they bike or skate on streets. For safety sake, it is a good idea for everyone to wear a helmet when bike riding or skating. You also encourage young riders to wear their helmets by wearing yours and setting a good example.

## **TOWNSHIP NEWS**

### **Township Committee**

The **2002-2003 budget** was adopted recently, which will result in an increase of 1.3 cents per \$100 valuation rising from 18.4 cents/\$100. Increases in expenses such as insurance costs are the reason for the increase, according to Township Administrator Rich Wiedmann. Some of the expenses in the capital budget include money for pond dredging projects, road improvements and improvements to the tennis courts on the grounds of the municipal building.

**TAX APPEALS** With the township's revaluation completed, 98 residents have filed appeals with the Morris County Board of Taxation, according to Tax Assessor Pat Aceto. Hearings before the board have been scheduled for Tuesday, June 18. Aceto said that originally 104 Harding homeowners filed appeals, but that two were withdrawn and another two settled. The tax rate will come out after the county rate is determined which could be by early summer. The rate is currently \$1.84 per \$100 of assessed value or \$1,840 per \$100,000 of value. Aceto said the new rate would probably be between 75 cents and 80 cents per \$100 of assessed value. As the overall value of the town will change it is not possible now to determine individual property taxes.

The county Board of Taxation is a quasi-judicial body where homeowners who appeal are treated informally and are allowed to give presentations. However, the assessor is presumed to be correct by law so the petitioner has to demonstrate clearly the market value of their property.

**The Township Committee recently extended the tree protection ordinance to R-2 and R-3 zones**, in addition to the R-1 zone as passed last year. The tree Conservation area applies to: In the R-1 zone, 25 feet along most property lines and 50 feet from portions of lot bordering roads. In the R-2 zone, 10 feet along most property lines and 25 feet from portions of lot bordering roads. In the R-3 zone, 5 feet along most property lines and 17.5 feet from portions of lot bordering roads. In the R-4 zone, 4 feet along most property lines and 12.5 feet from portions of

lot bordering roads. For all zones, a homeowner will need a permit to cut down a tree 8" or more in diameter, measured 4-1/2 feet above ground. The exemptions to the ordinance include: trees with a forest or agricultural plan, Federal, state, county property, public utilities; trees too close to waste disposal, or private wells and driveway or site plans. In addition, commercial orchards or nurseries and diseased or hazardous trees are exempt. There is a Tree Protection Officer, a member of Shade Tree, with the Township Administrator, Rich Wiedmann, as the alternate, to facilitate issuance of the permit.

An **revised accessory building ordinance , 6-02** will be considered for final passage at the meeting June 5, 2002. This ordinance was discussed in the April Thumbnail, please check that issue or the Civic Association website for more details, <http://www.hardingcivic.org>.

### **Report on the PLANNING BOARD MEETING, April 22, 2002**

There were two new application discussed. One to **Bank of New York**, which is seeking approval for variances as to signage and lighting. The building , formerly Talbot's, more recently Waverly, on Rt. 202, is proposed to be renovated for private banking purposes. It will not be a full service retail branch, but will have a 24-hour ATM, for which lighting is required on a 24-hour basis, according to NJ state law. There will be no increase in the floor area coverage of the existing building, but the front door canopy will be changed.

The other application was by Lynne Jayson **Kurdzialek**, Pleasant Plains Rd, for a subdivision, for which variances for existing structures are needed. The property has 50 acres, and 3 lots of 6, 15 and 27 acres are requested.

Two follow-up items were discussed, one is the **change for the Township review of notification of applications for a State EPA "letter of intent", or "LOI"**. Applications for LOI's typically are filed with the state before any particular request for Township action, such as subdivision. The proceeding at the state level is normally ex parte. The Township receives notification, but has not intervened in the past. Henceforth, the Environmental Commission will be reviewing applications in the future and will step up its LOI monitoring with an eye toward the potential for sensitive issues. Environmental Commission, an advisory board only, will pass its recommendations and comments onto the Planning Board.

The Board also discussed the ongoing discussion about the possibility of a separate zoning ordinance for the Mt Kemble Lake subdivision, but no conclusions were reached.

A draft of a **potential new ordinance, the "Public Land Holding Ordinance"**, has been drafted and sent to the Township Committee. This ordinance will show public landholdings and define what is a public zone. Lands proposed to be included are those of the National Park, the DOT (Rt. 287), the Land Trust, The Great Swamp Watershed Association, as well as similar conservation land holdings. No mention was made as to whether the zone would include easements as well as lands held by deed title.

### **HARDING OF TOWNSHIP BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

The following items were scheduled for discussion at the April 18 meeting.

New Appln #5-02, Michael and Maryanne Janson, Spring Valley Rd, BI 3, Lot 4.02. Originally requested variance in 1999, which had been approved for 2-car garage with breezeway. This application is an adjustment for a 3-car garage.

New Appln #7-02, George and Cynthia Kuchler, Primrose Tr., BI 36, Lot 16. Plan is 50% bigger than zoning ordinance allows. Kuchlers started construction unaware of new ordinance.

On **May 16**, application by Martin and Jane O'Connor, Blue Mill Rd, BI 8, lot 9, for variances relating to building area of 3.13% and a side yard set back of 95", in a zone where a maximum of 3% and 100' respectively, will be heard.

Also scheduled for **May 16** is the application of Leon and Evelyn Desbrow, Miller Rd, BI 13, lot 3.01 for variances relating to building area of 3.1% and a rear yard set back of 97.2" and in a zone where a maximum of 3% and 100' respectively; this property 2.63 acres instead of the 3 acres minimum in the zoning district. This application is to construct a new garage, convert the existing garage into a bedroom, and to expand the kitchen.

### **Harding Township Historic Preservation Comm April 4 and May 2, 2002**

#### **April 4, 2002, Old Business**

1. The Weichert Realtor sign does meet the provisions of the sign ordinance, but continues to cause concern among Commission members, who may appeal this signage to the Township Planning Board.
2. Lot 3, Block 33.03, Kurdzialek (Jayson) Property, Pleasant Plains Road. Commission members reviewed the draft of a letter to be sent to the Planning Board recommending that Historic Preservation Easements on the existing structures be in place before any sub-divisions are approved.

#### **New Business**

1. Lot 8, Block 33.03, Mount Kemble Avenue, Bank of New York (formerly the Talbot's building). Streetscape issues were discussed.

#### **May 2, 2002, Old Business**

1. A letter was sent to Justine Kovacs regarding the 9/11 memorial stating that the Historic Preservation Commission will review both the sites under consideration since they are in the Historic District.

#### **New Business**

1. Block 13, Lot 3.01, Leon and Evelyn Desbrow. Streetscape issues are the primary concern and the owners will be invited to attend the next meeting.
2. Block 15, Lots 23.01 and 23.02, Deborah and Steven Adler, Pleasantville District. Streetscape and potential for clear-cutting the lot were discussed.

### **Environmental Commission, May 7, 2002**

Present-Dietz, Kovacs, Gannon, Brown, McCormick and Allyn[by conf.call]

Reports were made on-Well Survey, Model EIS and on the Planning Board Events  
Old Business- Fencing Subcommittee showed pictures of solid fencing along streets causing problems of sight lines and deer trapping on roadways

New Business: O'Loughlin, Shalebrook Dr.—No Comment

Adler/Kurz, Pleasantville Rd.- Site Visit to be scheduled

Desbrow, Miller Rd.- Site visit needed

Bistis/Niketakis Jenks Rd.-No comments

Premier International subdivision: to Planning Board.- will be followed. Great

Swamp Watershed Authority- Request for \$ 75 renewal of membership approved.

### **Harding Township Board Of Education News**

The **School Board budget of \$6.6 million was rejected** by the voters at the school election on April 16, 2002. The budget would have resulted in an increase of 2.2 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation or \$22 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation.

A recent letter to the School Board by local resident James Mueller outlined his concerns and difficulties with the budget:

"Our township citizens have just voted on the proposed school budget.

"The clear message, sent to the board and committee, was the same message heard throughout the public and private sectors-be realistic and tighten the belts. When being realistic, one can seldom dispute that it is possible to find some savings in a \$7 million budget.

"We also are at the tail end of a long, long struggle to expand our school facilities. Over the past several years we have had a revolving door of architects and school administrators.

'What has it cost us to pay off the architects? What has it cost us to pay off the administrators? Do we benefit by the constant change and having short-term personnel?

"Are these reasons that our students are behind acceptable levels of performance? Are we managing as leaders or simply reacting on the basis of 'anything anyone wants is OK?'

"We received, by mail, the school district's 'Connections' 'Special Budget Issue' on April 12, only four short days before the April 16 budget vote. This gave time for only a very brief review and discussion of the various aspects of the presentation. This review included phone comments from

school personnel.

"Some areas of concern and comments are:

1. The Budget Summary used percentages that are not only confusing but I believe basically wrong. Also, there were numerous other clear errors in the presentation.
2. Regular Instruction - \$1,764,367 - a 1 percent increase over fiscal year 2001-2002. This is the heart of our school. It covers those who teach our students. The written explanation states '...also includes our tuition to Madison High School as well as our extracurricular and athletic programs.'
3. Capital Outlay - \$238,200 - 39 percent of fiscal year 2001-2002 (not a 155% reduction). These funds include costs for 'remodeling our school.' Why do we need to add additional funds for remodeling? Wasn't the bond issue enough?

Suggesting a 155 percent reduction in funding is to say that we will have no cost and will receive back 55 percent of 2001-2002 expenses.

4. Business Services - \$196,917 - 23.6 percent increase over fiscal year 2001-2002. How many administrators do we really need?

5. Employee Benefits - \$598,800 - 25.0 percent increase over fiscal year 2001-2002. This large \$119,927 increase includes the payment of medical, dental and prescription for all employees. From the explanations received, it is understood that this includes even part-timers. The written explanation stated that the board has 'been able to stabilize health costs....' (This reminds me of a board meeting a few years ago when the discussion was whether or not to give tenure to a part-time employee who had been with the school only a brief period.)

6. Tuition - \$1,354,649 - 20.8 percent increase over fiscal year 2001-2002. There was no explanation of this item in the 'Step-by-Step Review' of the Special Budget Issue.

"Since this huge slice of our budget had no explanation and it was clearly stated that the Madison High School tuition was included in the 'Regular Instruction' category, there was confusion.

"It was finally explained that this item had been overlooked in the budget review and included Madison High tuition (not the regular instruction category).

"There were far too many errors and oversights in the 'Special Budget Issue.'

Being told that the numbers had been prepared but we citizens did not receive the 'Special Budget Issue' until the last minute was for political reasons suggests that we are expected to pay whatever is requested but are not really part of the cycle.

"This is disturbing.

"Considering the errors, the confusion and the huge increases requested, it seems that more care should have been given to the budget preparation, to our economic climate and to the needs of both students and citizens.

"Clearly the citizens rejected the budget for good reasons."

**New Principal Selected: Dee Klikier**, who has been a teacher at Harding School for many years, was approved as School Principal effective July 1, 2002, at a salary of \$84,000, upon recommendation of the superintendent. This is Ms Klikier's first appointment as principal, but she has held the necessary state certification for such a position for some years. She has been a candidate for principal at Harding School in the past.

**Could you spare a few minutes to help enrich local children?** The Harding Township School is looking for volunteers to share their experiences with our children to enrich their education. We are looking for a broad range of educational opportunities including, but not limited to:

- Sharing your experience living or traveling to a foreign land
- Explaining the inner workings of a business and how it affects them (e.g. a bank, recycling center, retail store)
- Explaining what you do and how it impacts their lives (e.g. a police officer, an engineer, a lawyer)
- Sharing an area of expertise or hobby (e.g. bird watching)

Your involvement can be as simple as responding to a phone call from a student, to as comprehensive as a presentation to the entire student body. It all depends on what you have to contribute, both in experience and time, and how it best matches our education plan. If you can

help, please call Dr. Dennis Pallozzi, Superintendent of Schools, at 973-267-6398, ext. 101. Here's your chance to do something for your community and spend enjoyable quality time with our students.

A refurbished science lab at the Harding Township Middle School was recently dedicated in memory of Jim Stamey, a science teacher popular among staff and students.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: THE DEADLINES FOR THE NEXT TWO ISSUES OF THE THUMBNAIL ARE June 3 and August 30**, respectively. *The June issue will be out by mid- June, and then the next issue will be sent in early September.* If you have events or announcements for the summer, please send them in for inclusion in the June Thumbnail. Reportorial coverage of Town meetings continues throughout the summer, and you can continue to send in articles or announcements for publication in September. If you have any information to be included, please send to the editor, Hesna Pfeiffer. Most preferred format is by E-mail, **email hesnaj@aol.com**, as we don't have to re-type, but fax is also acceptable, to the editor's fax, 973 605 1127,. You can send items early! Call the editor if you have any transmission questions, 973 540 8911.

*The Thumbnail is copyrighted and published by the Harding Township Civic Association, and is mailed to every home in Harding Township.* Current and past issues of Thumbnail, as well as the Directory are posted on our Website- check it out: <http://www.hardingcivic.org>.

**RECYCLING:** Commingled recycling of plastics, aluminum and tin cans, glass bottles and jars, mixed paper, corrugated cardboard and household batteries at Municipal Garage every Wed, AM-Noon; and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays 5/18, 6/8, 6/22, 7/13 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.

Municipal Court (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)	6 PM	5/21, 6/4, 6/18
Environmental Commission (1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday)	7:30 PM	6/4, 7/2
Seniors (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday)	11 AM .....	5/23, 6/13, 6/27
Planning Board (4 <sup>th</sup> Monday)	8 PM .....	5/20, 6/24, 7/22
Hist Preservation Comm (1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday)	8 PM	6/6, 7/11, 8/1
Board of Health (2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday)	8 PM .....	6/13, 7/11, 8/8
Board of Education (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday)	7:30 PM ....	5/13, 6/10
Board of Adjustment (3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday)	7:30 PM ....	5/16, 6/20, 7/18
Township Committee (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed)	8 PM .....	5/15, 6/5, 6/19, 7/10
Shade Tree (2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday) 3 PM		5/13, 6/10