

S U M M E R 2 0 1 4

the

Swann Keys

Newsletter, August 2014



America the Beautiful in Swann Keys

Join the **PICNIC IN THE PARK** on Saturday, August 9th from 4-7 at the Community Center. It's a free event hosted by the Ladies' Auxiliary and the Sports Club. Residents and their guests are welcome to participate in activities like horseshoes, Putt-Putt, shuffleboard, basketball, volleyball, corn hole toss and 50/50. There will be a fire engine from 5-6 and an exhibition of classic cars. Food is free and prizes are offered for children. Come meet your neighbors for some great fun!

Community News!

Pool Hours (10 A.M to 8 P.M)

Mem-Labor Day;
Clubhouse too;
must be 18 or
supervised by adult

New Pool Passes

Put your name,
address and phone
on the blank side
of your pool pass in
permanent marker.

Address Signs (ongoing orders)

Interested in a
house sign? See
Beverly in the
office to order.

Who to Call? Two County Reps!

Sussex County has hired Michael Costello as County Constable. Mr. Costello, has 25 years of experience in criminal code enforcement and environmental law. Costello's previous job was with DNREC.

The constable is responsible for County Code enforcement and researching public complaints about zoning problems. In response to a BOD member's question, Mr. Costello promptly toured Swann Keys to investigate what can be done about abandoned properties. Mr. Costello is reviewing actions that can be taken by the County and working with Mr. Vance Phillips, County Councilman, to identify changes in County laws.

If you have concerns about a privately owned Swann Keys property, contact Mr. Phillips at watermelons@msn.com or Dan Verrette in the Swann Keys Office to prioritize concerns for Mr. Costello.



Boat Ramp 2 Renovation

Security cameras have been added to our entrance sign, 4-way stop, the clubhouse, playground, pool, and office. Security and office personnel can monitor activity. The cameras discourage vandalism and theft among other crimes.

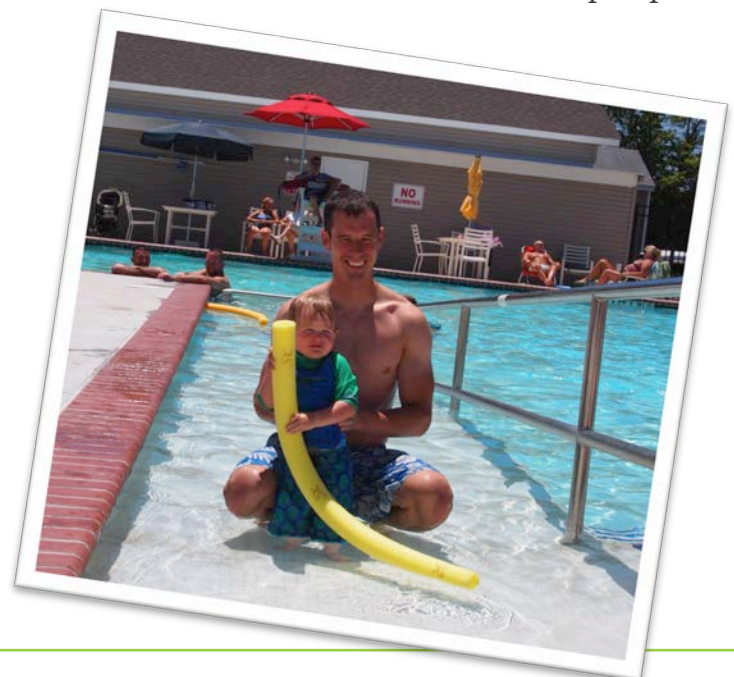
The new electronic pool swipe cards are a success! Each property owner was mailed the cards to allow them entry to the pool and clubhouse and eventually the boat ramps. Hopefully, this system will limit the amount of outside people who attempt to use our community amenities. Please do not give your pool cards to non-residents.

Optimistic Signs of Change

In the last year, two streets were paved, Swann Drive and Pintail. The BOD asks that when paving/concreting your property, leave a band of five feet unpaved adjoining the road to drain runoff in storms. Maintenance also suggests that homeowners whose properties suffer frequent flooding add their own underground drainage the length of your property emptying through the bulkhead into the canal.

When hard surface is applied to public or private properties, the potential for flooding increases for everyone in storms. Loose stone and grass are the most absorbent surfaces to deal with runoff.

Water valves are being installed on streets in a 5-year plan to inconvenience fewer residents when water has to be shut off for repairs. Valves on Laws Point and Bluebill are being replaced now. Our central water system was replaced two years ago at a cost of \$80,000.00 and is serving the community well. Please notify the office 48 hours in advance of a request to turn on/off water at your property. Do not put mop heads, diapers, wipes, or other solid products down your toilets as this damages the pumps.





Mercy, Mercy Me (The Ecology)

Marvin Gaye sang that sweet song about how “things ain’t what they used to be” in 1971. Who knew that the Grammy Hall of Fame ecology song would have modern applications about environmental disasters?

In early January this year a resident on Canvasback Road looked out the window one evening and in the cold light of winter, noticed a purple-red slick glinting on the dark water of the canal. It was concentrated in one area beside a neighbor’s house and didn’t seem to have a source. Upon closer inspection, it appeared that it was accompanied by a sweet-sour smell. It was found to be an oil slick from a

home heating oil tank, above ground, that had been leaking for some time.

The neighbor called the Roxanna Fire Department who in turn called the Millsboro Rapid Response oil spill recovery truck. When the fire department is called on an oil spill the Department of Natural Resource and Environmental Control (DNREC) is automatically alerted. “First responders from Millsboro Fire deployed absorbents and corralled quite a bit of the oil,” stated Matt Higgins, an Environmental Scientist IV with DNREC. By the same evening, four “on-call” responders, including Mr. Higgins, arrived from Dover and added more absorbents in the canal. However, the morning of January 6th brought further evaluation. 75 gallons of No.2 heating oil had seeped into the ground below the home.

Soil excavation procedures began. On the second day of cleanup, a Vactor truck, similar to a giant Shop-Vac, arrived to vacuum up the contaminated soil. The property owners were responsive and helpful, said Mr. Higgins. When there is limited space between residences, as there is in Swann Keys, heavy digging equipment can’t be used. Therefore, much of the soil digging and hauling was also done by hand. Clean fill dirt was then brought in. Weather hampered the work. (cont. p. 4)

The Current Board of Directors

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SKNL Editor: Barbara Shamp

Oil Spill (cont.)

Mr. Higgins stated that this cleanup was expensive due to ongoing snowfall. He warned that homeowner insurance policies do not pay, as they have an oil spill exclusion policy. Donna Donovan, administrative specialist for the Emergency Response Branch of DNREC stated the first two invoices totaled \$49,000.00 and the final costs of cleanup have not yet been determined. Because of extenuating circumstances, DNREC picked up the bill.

However, Mr. Higgins said the “homeowner is

always considered responsible.” He went on to speculate that when “times are hard (financially), people defer maintenance” on their properties. Go to www.dnrec.delaware.gov/tanks for more information.

The BOD decided to install an electric heat pump for the Swann Keys office and abandon the 1970’s oil tank that has been used to heat the office. Mr. Verrette, Chairperson of Maintenance Committee, expects conversion to electric energy will be complete once the tank is emptied.



Sports Club

The Sports Club meets the third Saturday of the month at 10 A.M. A social club dedicated to providing financial support to our civic association, they hold activities for both the community and members only.

They often have dessert or dinner-bingo on the 3rd Saturday of the month. Dues are \$25. Come join the fun!

Eleanor Bruce, President

Ladies' Auxiliary

This women's only club meets the second Saturday of the month at 10 A.M. They conduct social events and benefits for the community and the public to help our Civic Association financially. The Ladies' Auxiliary is known for their excellent cooking and warm, friendly atmosphere! Membership is a mere \$15/year!

Barbara Stockard, President

Letter from the President

It is an honor and privilege to have been elected by the Board of Directors to serve as your President for 2014-2015. It is our goal, as board members, to have open and honest communication so that collectively we can make Swann Keys a place where everyone wants to live.

Questions, comments, suggestions and complaints should be sent via email to the appropriate Chairperson or to me. All email addresses are listed on the Swann Keys web site and copies are available in the office. If you do not have access to email, you may drop off something in writing to the office to be put in our folders.

Accomplishments since May include but are not limited to: renovating and opening boat ramp # 2; implementing the electronic access to the pool, clubhouse and community center; obtaining bids and signing a contract to install monitoring equipment in the community center/clubhouse, office, pool area, playground and at the entrance of our community; and purchasing forty (40) new chairs for the pool.

Volunteers have always been the backbone of our community. The BOD is composed of fifteen volunteers, almost all of whom act as a chairperson of a committee, devoting many hours of their time to the betterment of our community. Pearl S. Buck, writer, Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winner, wrote, "To serve is beautiful, but only if it is done with joy and a whole heart and free mind." Please help us extend that heart and mind of volunteerism by offering your help with a cheerful and supportive smile.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Nancy Flacco

Swann Keys BOD President

Community Events

The Ladies Auxiliary sponsored a free Easter Egg Hunt and the Flea Market this spring. About 65 youngsters attended the egg hunt and each child took home a prize. Plastic eggs were hidden all around and inside the clubhouse before a swarm of laughing children searched high and low for them. The Flea Market was held Memorial Day weekend with tables lining the big hall. It was one of many stops along Rt. 54 for families looking for good deals. At this fundraiser, the Ladies sold food, held a bake sale that sold out early and had a 50/50 and raffle. The \$1000.00 that they made at this event and others was contributed to our Civic Association to help run Swann Keys.

The SK Civic Association held the Preakness Party with free food after the annual meeting.

The Sports Club has held a fundraising Belmont Stakes Party and Happy Hour recently in the Community Center for Swann Keys residents. In Belmont tradition, many of the ladies wore colorful hats decorated with flowers and ribbons. A homemade dinner was served for all at a low cost. On the 5th of July, the club also held a fundraiser midday for residents, selling food and sponsoring games for children and a wheel of fortune for adults.

Both clubs jointly sponsored a Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre in which members of the community were star actors. See the website for pictures of events!

The SK Civic Association sponsors Water aerobics on Monday and Wednesday at 7pm at the pool. Residents 18 years of age and older, both women and men, can participate. Bring a towel and come get your exercise!



Remembering

Swann Keys began in the 70's as a trailer park, zoned by Sussex for residential properties, and envisioned as a summer park for visitors mostly from Delaware, Baltimore, Washington and Pennsylvania. Residents banded together in the mid 80's to challenge the developer in court, purchasing the common areas as a civic association. Swann Keys was created by a 1985 Court Order. Many residents devoted hours of their time and much money to the community. Some are passing on now but we remember them and their commitment to our community in a plaque at the Clubhouse door.



Sizzling Summer!



Swann Keys Newsletter

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