



# Cranberrytoday

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2007 FALL EDITION

*Building shape trumps property use*

## Cranberry Considers Form-Based Approach To Land Use Regulation

Property development in Cranberry, as in most U.S. municipalities, is regulated by zoning laws. Each zone designates which particular type of land use – residential, retail, industrial, office space, and so on – is allowed on properties inside that zone. But there's a problem: the widespread use of single-use zoning regulations can encourage sprawl and discourage efficient, walkable development. So a new approach to building regulation, called form-based zoning, is currently under review in Cranberry. If adopted, it could allow a greater mix of uses within a single district and facilitate more compact, more pedestrian-oriented development. Traditional land use controls could become a thing of the past.

Here's how it would work. Instead of segregating different uses of land, a form-based code focuses on regulating the physical shape of new construction. That's because the physical shape of

development is its most enduring characteristic; it's what gives a community its look and feel. But even though a community's architecture remains fairly constant over time, its neighborhoods change, and so do the uses which are in greatest demand.

Consider the many well-established communities that have seen buildings originally constructed for one purpose transition into an entirely different use: industrial areas have morphed into trendy retail districts; warehouse lofts have emerged as art studios; and institutional structures have been remodeled into upscale residential apartments.

A form-based code would regulate those parts of the built environment which stay the same over time – street layouts, building sizes, walkways, open spaces, parking configurations, and so forth – but restrictions on their

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*Form doesn't necessarily follow function. A new approach to development regulation now under review in Cranberry would put the physical form of a construction project ahead of its intended use, leading to more efficient, pedestrian-oriented building patterns suitable for mixed uses. A growing number of communities throughout the country have already adopted such form-based codes.*



*Ashes to ashes*

## Exotic Beetle Threatens Township's Street Trees

A tiny green beetle, no more than half an inch long, is poised to do irrevocable damage to the ash trees in Cranberry Township. And there's not much anyone can do about it.

The insect – the Emerald Ash Borer – is a relatively new species to the U.S., with earliest sightings going back no farther than the late 1990s. But since its arrival in the Great Lakes area, probably as a stowaway in wood imported from Asia, it has flourished unchecked, killing essentially all the ash trees in Michigan and going on to ravage the timberstock of Indiana and Ohio as well.

So it may have seemed inevitable that Pennsylvania would be next. At least that was the theory of a group of specialists from the U.S. Department of Agriculture who began searching

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## Cranberry considers form-based approach to land use regulation

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use would be given a lower priority. The result: more flexibility in managing a community's evolution over the long run.

With The Cranberry Plan – the Township's 25-year planning effort now underway – a form-based code may soon emerge as a tool to help planners guide the Township's development through 2030.

Pressure for a major change in the zoning process has been mounting, according to Cranberry's Strategic Planning Chief John Trant, Jr. "The Township recognized that over the past few years, we spent a lot of effort using our zoning ordinances

to manage growth. But it wasn't flexible enough to do the job. So we had to keep amending our zoning ordinance. A form-based code could give us a tool that's much more flexible – one that will help us guide and manage growth and make best use of Township resources by eliminating the need to write amendment after amendment to our zoning code."

There are other advantages, too, according to Trant. "A form-based code would give us the flexibility to guide growth in a way that's sustainable over the long term. It's simpler to administer because it creates a

sense of predictability among the Township, property owners, and developers. By using graphics and pictures, it gets everybody on the same page, so they have a common understanding of what the development vision is."

But use control wouldn't go away completely, either. "We're not getting so flexible that you'll see a nuisance bar next to the library. It's not that flexible. Our zoning ordinances would still be regulating use in a general way; it's just not overly specific in terms of office versus retail or townhouse versus apartment." ~



## Exotic beetle threatens Township's street trees

*Continued from front cover*

for signs of the invasive bug this summer at

the Cranberry Turnpike exit. Sadly, they were right. And a follow-up survey conducted jointly by the state Department of Agriculture and USDA confirmed that the beetle had established itself in and around Cranberry with signs that the infestation had actually begun as far back as 2000.

Dr. Sven-Erik Spichiger, an entomologist with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, led the team of researchers. "Basically what it means is that eradication is a moot point," he said. "It would be irresponsible for us to waste your money attempting to eradicate it when I don't believe it's possible and nobody else who's on the task force believes it's possible – at least not in this circumstance. I wish we had better news for you."

If it's any comfort things could be worse. "I didn't see it as bad as some places up in Michigan where literally every single street tree was an ash.

Some of those places really hurt," Spichiger said.

"Cranberry will not be denuded of trees – just its ash trees. But you do have quite a few around. What Cranberry residents should know is that at least for the next several years, planting ash trees is a bad idea. When you're looking to plant trees on your property, plant multiple species, and prepare for the fact that something might come along that takes out an entire species."

While there isn't much hope for Cranberry to reverse its infestation, other areas of the state haven't been affected yet. So a strategy to quarantine wood products and limit their spread beyond the affected areas was put into place almost immediately after the beetle sightings were confirmed. And with luck, the science of pest control will catch up with the slower pace of infestation.

In the meantime, transporting wood material out of the area is banned. Those restrictions apply to nursery

stock, firewood, logs, lumber any anything else that could be harboring the pests.

At the same time, Spichiger points out, individual ash trees can actually be protected if they're still relatively healthy. It's a costly affair, and it would need to be done annually. But there are plenty of tree companies willing to provide the service. However, if a tree is past the point of being saved, it's going to come down one way or another. "Either you decide when it comes down or nature will decide, and you might not like that second alternative," he cautioned.

"We're hosting some seminars for professionals to understand what to do with infested material. We believe there are going to be some drop-off sites, but nothing has been firmed up yet," he said. "Help is on the way, but I doubt the science will catch up in time for Cranberry. So if you have a tree that could fall down and cause serious damage, you might think about dealing with it before it becomes a problem." ~



## Shift Happens!

By Bruce Mazzoni, Supervisor, Cranberry Township

Americans love change – as long as it doesn't affect them personally.

And for the past 20 years or so, Cranberry has been experiencing plenty of change. That's been an issue for a lot of our residents. In fact, it's the Number One complaint that we Supervisors hear.

But the fact is that the pace of change is going to pick up even more over the coming decade, and that can be disorienting. It reminds me of a recent presentation I heard. Its title – no doubt inspired by the infamous bumper sticker – was 'Shift Happens.' It included some memorable highlights. One was the claim that 'the number of text messages sent and received in one day exceeds the population of the planet.' Another was that 'the Top 10 jobs that will be in demand in 2020 don't even exist today.' Actually, neither one is hard to believe.

As recently as ten years ago, we had no idea that Cranberry would have a 'GIS Supervisor,' a 'Pretreatment Administrator,' a 'Network Specialist,' or a 'CAD Technician' on staff. But now we do, and they're all filling essential roles. The world is changing, and there isn't much that local government can do to stop it. But what we can do is to guide, direct and prepare ourselves for that change.

***The world is changing, and there isn't much that local government can do to stop it. But what we can do is to guide, direct and prepare ourselves for that change.***



Consider this: the U.S. population is expected to increase to over 400 million in the next 25 years. During that same period, we expect Cranberry's population to increase from 28,000 to as many as 50,000 or more. To put that in perspective, look back at Cranberry 25 years ago, in 1982. There was one traffic light, a library the size of a closet, and our biggest public safety issue was cattle wandering onto the roadway.

Since that time, Cranberry has accommodated shifts in population and technology to the point where we are now recognized as one of Western Pennsylvania's premier communities. That puts us in a strong position to adjust to further changes over the next 25 years. And to better prepare ourselves for that challenge, we have begun to formulate our latest long-range plan – a vision of our community that will span the next quarter century. It's a complicated process, but it is one

I am optimistic about.

Here's why: Cranberry Township is genuinely different from most communities in this region. Our Supervisors have made a concerted effort to eliminate the partisan politics, personal agendas and patronage job appointments that hampers so many other communities. Instead of taking these assignments upon ourselves, we hire

professionals to run the community's day-to-day affairs. Their technical skills give us the tools to effectively manage and control our growth. And when you combine those skills with the vision of the Supervisors and input from the various independent boards, and councils we rely on, Cranberry is able to adjust to shifts as they occur. This unique combination has allowed us to continue improving our quality of life while keeping taxes low.

In an article here last year, I said that Cranberrians paid less taxes, after inflation, than they did '13 years ago.' Today, I am pleased to report we now pay lower taxes than we did 14 years ago. Of course, no one can say whether that will hold true for the next 25 years. But I can tell you this: the next 25 years will see the biggest changes our community has experienced at any time in its history.

Those changes will largely be driven by market forces. However the specific shape those changes take will be determined by public policy. And that's what our long-range planning effort is about: it's the tool we use to turn visions into realities. For me, that vision includes a town center and traditional neighborhoods connected by bike paths and public transportation with shorter travel times all around. But it's your vision that really matters. Drop me a line and let me know what you think Cranberry ought to look like in 2030. I promise to respond. ~

***Our Supervisors have made a concerted effort to eliminate the partisan politics, personal agendas and patronage job appointments that hampers so many other communities.***

## In Briefs:



### Public Works Department peppered with salt awards.

For the second time in as many years, The Salt Institute, a national industry association of salt companies, presented Cranberry with its award for Continuing Excellence in salt storage at the American Public Works Association Congress in San Antonio in September. The award recognizes achievement in environmentally sound salt storage practices. Cranberry's Public Works storage facility holds 7,000 tons of road salt.

**Don't fence me in.** The growing popularity of yard fencing in Cranberry has resulted in an unexpected problem: if the remote water meter touch pad mounted on a home's outside wall is inside a locked fence, Township field crews can't read your meter. So if you are planning to fence your yard, contact the Township about possibly relocating your touch pad. And be sure not to block it with shrubbery or other material that would keep the meter reader from accessing the pad.



**WaterPark lifeguards swamp competition.** A competition of life-saving skills among teams of lifeguards from ten different Butler County pools resulted in Cranberry's two three-member teams taking first and second place. First Place was won by Mark McCaffrey, Chelsey Downing, and Tom Weir. Second Place was

claimed by Melissa Morgan, Will Robbins, and Ben Cormier. The



results reflect the more intense pre-season and in-service training required of Cranberry lifeguards, according to Parks & Recreation Director Mike Diehl.



**Preschool is looking for a few good kids.** As of press time, a handful of openings were still available for 3- and 4-year old children in Cranberry's Preschool program. The program's creative curriculum, which is approved by the state's Department of Education, focuses on social, physical, cognitive and language skills. An enrollment fee of \$50 is due at the time of registration. There is also a monthly tuition of \$150 for Cranberry residents, \$175 for non-residents.

**Love a Roadway.** Cranberry's decade-old Adopt-a-Roadway program has been reincarnated as Love-a-Roadway. The twice-yearly cleanup program applies to 22 separate Township-owned collector road segments located throughout Cranberry. This fall, the employees of Wal-Mart became the newest participants, showering their affections on Darlington Road. According to program coordinator Barby Cheetham, any group interested in participating can apply by calling her at 724-776-4806 ext. 1500.



**Community Day moved.** Cranberry's popular Community Day celebration, which has been held for the past 15 years on July 4, will be held the second weekend of July next year.



The decision to move the event was prompted by holiday staffing issues and conflicts with other Independence Day activities. The Township's fireworks display will now be on Saturday, July 12.

### Westinghouse breaks ground.

Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell and other distinguished guests joined Cranberry Board of Supervisors Chairman John Milius, on the left, in marking the start of grading for the company's new world headquarters and engineering campus on August 14. The 800,000 square foot facility is being built on 83 acres in Cranberry Woods. When fully occupied by the end of 2010, it will house about 3,000 employees.



### Halloween terror.

At 8:00 on Friday evening October 12, Cranberry's Parks and Recreation department will host a performance of The Night Mayor – a presentation of terrifying tales for anyone age seven or older. The stories are done in the style of 1930s and '40s radio dramas at the Dan Baker Shelter of North Boundary Park. Then at noon on Saturday, October 27, Spookapalooza – featuring crafts, games, and storytelling for children, will be held in the Senior/Teen Center of the Cranberry Municipal Center. Registration for the events are \$5 and \$10 respectively.



### It's Santa!

Cranberry Township Light Up Night – the official start of its Christmas season –

will begin at 6:00 on Friday evening, November 16. The annual free event will be highlighted by a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus to the Cranberry Township Municipal Center in a specially outfitted fire engine. The couple will then preside over a tree-lighting ceremony. The two-hour celebration also includes an assortment of indoor crafts and activities for children as well as free refreshments, and a benefit toy drive.



### Football goal.

The football campus of Graham Park is starting to come together, according to Cranberry Township Engineer Jason Kratsas. Its construction schedule calls for the irrigation system to be installed and the grass to be planted on the football fields by mid-October. A fall 2008 opening is anticipated. The park's baseball and soccer fields, in a separate area of the park, are expected to be ready for use by spring of 2009.

**Move over, Harry Potter.** During a six-week period this summer, 630 children ages three through eleven participated in the Cranberry Public Library's summer reading program, Get a Clue @ Your Library.



Altogether, library staff members heard more than 3,200 presentations by children reporting on what they read. The reading program,

which included a Doc Dixon Magic Show, a Drum Trail Show, and a rhythm and music program with storytelling, culminated in the presentation of two new bicycles to raffle winners.

**Goodbye, autumn leaves.** Yard waste collection will conclude on Friday, November 30 for customers of Cranberry's Collection Connection service. Leaves will be collected in yard waste craft paper bags as well as in the 96-gallon green-top carts used by many customers. The 30-gallon bags are available at many stores and from the Township's Customer Service desk, which charges \$2 for 5 bags. No leaf drop-off site will be operated in the Township this year, and leaf burning is prohibited.



**Hello, winter.** Fall is the time to apply sealant to concrete or asphalt driveways, according to Cranberry's Public Works Department. Sealing paved surfaces before winter protects them against the tendency to pit as the result of salt use. The reason: by lowering water's freezing point, salt allows water to penetrate more deeply into small pavement fissures. Those cracks expand, causing the material to break apart when the freezing temperature is reached.

Salt picked up and carried on tires



has the same effect as salt directly applied to the surface.

**Death, taxes, and other certainties.** The penalty rate deadline for Butler County/Cranberry Township real estate taxes, which were due at face value by October 1, is December 31. However Seneca Valley School District real estate taxes, which were

mailed August 1, can still be paid at face value through November 30. Contact tax collector P.J. Lynd at 724-776-1103 if you have changed your mortgage company or are no longer using an escrow account to pay your property taxes.



### Odor control.

The installation of a new carbon adsorption odor control unit at Cranberry's Brush Creek wastewater treatment facility is right on schedule for November completion, according to plant manager Mike Sedon. The unit's heat exchanger has been installed, its ductwork installation is in progress, and so are the associated drain lines and electrical conduits. Although some retraining will be required, most staff members are already familiar with the technology, he said. Test results of the unit's effectiveness will be available in early 2008.



### Cranberry CUP.

Over the weekend of August 4-5, more than 860 softball players representing 55 neighborhood and business teams participated in the 2007 Cranberry CUP Softball fund-raising tournament. Seven Fields won for the second year in a row in the neighborhood division while Allstate won against American Eagle Outfitters on the business side. Altogether, the event raised more than \$115,000 for the benefit of a local family. Since it began in 2000, the tournament has raised over \$475,000 in support of its stated mission to promote volunteerism, community spirit, and goodwill toward a person or family in need.

## Miracle In Cranberry

Nobody was expecting miracles when construction began earlier this year on Graham Park. After all, building a public park is mostly a matter of hard work, attention to detail, and following a plan. But this past April – well after the Master Plan had been accepted and its engineering essentially completed, a miracle actually did take place. Michael Sherry, a Cranberry resident and CTAAs coach who relocated here from Alabama several years ago, came to the Township with a proposal: that Cranberry allow one of the two T-Ball fields planned for Graham Park's baseball campus to be developed into a Miracle Field. In return, he would work to make sure that funds to pay for the cost of building and maintaining that special field would come from outside donors.

Earlier, while living in Birmingham, Sherry had been introduced to the Miracle League concept. He had never seen anything like it.

Miracle League, which has grown in the past seven years from a single dirt field in Georgia into a national movement with teams and ballfields in more than 80 locations, is an association devoted to creating opportunities for disabled children to play ball. A Miracle Field – the venue in which League games are played – is similar in size to a T-Ball field. The bases are the same, the outfield is identical. Lines are placed precisely where a T-Ball field would have them. But the entire field is fenced and covered with an obstacle-free rubberized surface which, like a running track, reduces the risk of injury during play. And the bases, pitchers mound, and other ballfield features are all painted on.



Of course, the rules include some important accommodations as well. There are two innings. Everyone on the team has a turn at bat each inning. There are no outs. Everyone scores. Every game ends in a tie. And every player is assigned a buddy – an able-bodied child, teen or adult capable of protecting and assisting them in playing the sport. That buddy stays with them throughout the season. Their assistance could involve pushing a wheelchair, retrieving a ball for the player to throw, even helping them swing the bat.

"It's all about enjoying the sport and getting the experience of running the bases, whether they're in a walker, a wheelchair, or if they can walk," according to Cranberry Parks & Recreation Director Mike Diehl.

"The whole key is that they belong to a league. They will play games in the same complex as their brothers, sisters and friends. The league provides jerseys, issues equipment, and collects registration fees. Each child takes to the field and has the opportunity to go around the bases every inning. And at the end of the season, just like with CTAAs participants, everyone gets a trophy as a memento of the season."

The co-ed league will also offer scholarships for families who cannot afford registration, so that no child is turned away, no disability is too great, and every child who wants to play will get the chance, he said.

"We can continue to use the field for T-ball and schedule it with the CTAAs because the Miracle League will not play every day of the week," Diehl noted. "Miracle League will become one of the divisions within CTAAs."

When completed, in the spring of 2009, the Miracle League Field of Southwestern Pennsylvania in Graham Park will be the first of its



**Field of Dreams.** One of Graham Park's two T-Ball fields will become a Miracle Field – a standard size field painted onto a flat, cushioned mat surface allowing seriously disabled children to play and minimize the risk of injuries.

kind in western Pennsylvania, a region which is home to an estimated 88,000 disabled children. Another one, which just opened this summer, is in Altoona.

The Cranberry Miracle Field's funding stream is currently being formalized, according to Diehl. It will include soliciting donations at a number of levels ranging from ordinary patrons to full field naming rights. But it won't end with building the field.

"Because it's rubberized, we know we're going to get around eight years of life out of the surface, so we need a fund that can replace it periodically or repair it if it gets damaged," Diehl observed. "They'll need more maintenance, so there's going to be an ongoing effort to build a trust fund to support it in perpetuity. The initial building cost is estimated at \$300,000. But it has to be sustainable, so they're going to continue to grow that fund to support this effort long after they're done."

Any individual or business that wants to contribute to the Miracle League can contact Mike Sherry at 724-831-7392 or by email: [miracleleagueofsouthwesternpa@hotmail.com](mailto:miracleleagueofsouthwesternpa@hotmail.com). ~

*Fois gras, anyone?*

## Cranberry Highlands Goes Wild

Canada geese are gorgeous birds. Their honking V-formation flight patterns are a joy to local residents. Their strict monogamous lifestyle, including shared nesting responsibilities and doting protective parenting practices, have won high praise for their strong family values. And their tremendous success as a species since being introduced into the area several decades ago is a tribute to the birds' great resilience.

But there's a bit of a problem. "Every three or four minutes, they release feces," Cranberry Highlands Superintendent Dave Barber delicately notes. "I went to a seminar where they told us that 30 Canada geese, at four minutes per goose over a month, could accumulate almost a ton of feces. Feces is no good, especially on a golf course. People have actually become sick from contacting feces." And the problem is not unique to Cranberry.

### Sauce for the goose

Earlier this summer, in response to the surging population of geese – each of which can weigh as much as 17 pounds and live as long as 25 years – Allegheny County held a pre-dawn goose roundup. Altogether, 272 geese were killed at North Park Lake – an action which evoked considerable ire among wildlife advocates and local residents alike.

But Cranberry Highlands is different. For several years, the golf course has worked conscientiously to earn its certification as a Cooperative Sanctuary from Audubon International – an organization whose stated mission is to help the environment and foster more sustainable communities. If you are a sanctuary, killing birds is a no-no, so controlling their numbers

requires a lighter touch. That's been a challenge for Barber and his associates at Cranberry Highlands. But it's one they appear to have a handle on.

"Here's how I manage our ponds with the geese," Barber explained. "We plant fescue, a tall grass, all around the pond at Hole 12. There's actually a 3-4 foot wide buffer of tall grass and weeds. We do that deliberately because the geese don't like walking through it. That's because they can't really see through it, so it makes them worry that they're going to get caught by a predator laying in wait."

### The foxes are coming

The geese have a valid point. "Last year we took six foxes off the course," Barber pointed out. "They're out there. We also have coyotes. I have a man here, Kenny, who works the grounds and traps coyote and foxes. We have found goose carcasses that were stripped out; you can see the feet and feathers lying there and you know it was a coyote because they eat just about everything. A full-grown coyote can weigh 45 pounds."

"When Kenny traps up here, he takes some of that danger away, but the coyote also hold down the deer population. For instance this past spring, the coyotes ate four or five fawns," he said. "We don't want to alarm our animal friends, but you shouldn't love a coyote; you don't want one in your backyard." At the same time, there's usually plenty of food available for them – moles,



*Sauce from the gander.* Cranberry Highlands has learned to manage its Canada goose population without jeopardizing its status as an Audubon Sanctuary.

voles and squirrels, are a staple of their diet. – so they wouldn't normally come into somebody's backyard. But when it's a lean year, you never know what can happen, he said.

"We still get a lot of deer in here. I have a feeder up in the wetland area, and in the winter, I fill it with corn so they don't bother our shrubbery. Netting is another way of protecting plants, but they can tear the netting down if they're hungry enough," he said. However feeding isn't a strategy that homeowners should try.

***"Last year we took six foxes off the course, they're out there. We also have coyotes. A full-grown coyote can weigh 45 pounds."***

### Oh, deer

"Feeding deer would be a bad idea for homeowners because the deer would be attracted to them. Here at Cranberry Highlands, I don't want them running all over the greens. We had a lot of that occurring before. But when we put the feeders in; it seems like they come out of the woods, hit that one spot, and go back in."

Of course, there are other forms of wildlife at Cranberry Highlands, too, some more desirable than others. The trick is to find the right balance.

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## Cranberry Highlands goes wild *Continued from page 7*

"We're trying to attract turkey and other wild birds," Barber said.

"We've attracted a coot, which looks like a baby duck. We have herons here. We have baby mallards every year. Sometimes we get loons on Hole 3. We'll get some wood ducks in here, but they don't stay long

because they like to be left alone. And we have finches – little canary-like birds. It's just the geese we don't want. We also try to control the deer a little bit, so the fox and coyote help downsize their population. But, by the same token, we're trying to manage the predators, too."

"For our Audubon certification, we have to monitor all of this," he said. "They send us a sheet every year about our bird boxes, our bat house, and how many are using them. Audubon is about protecting and enhancing the environment, and that's what we're trying to do." ~

## Township Teams With Visiting Nurses To Improve Child Health

The chance encounter of a visiting nurse with a member of Cranberry's Parks & Recreation staff at Cranberry's Senior Center has led to an innovative pilot program that



Internet-based approach to helping young people make better choices about food, exercise, and lifestyle. And at least for now, thanks to sponsors including Highmark, NexTier, United Way and Honeywell, it's free.

"This program grew out of a meeting I had with the Visiting Nurses Association," Cranberry recreational program coordinator Christine Border explained. "They were looking to see how they could be part of our programming and what they could do in partnership with us. So we had a brainstorming session, trying to figure out what would be a good fit for the two organizations, and it turned into a healthy lifestyle program for youth."

"We weren't just worried about children who are overweight, we were worried about children who are making choices that will affect them when they're older. Eating unhealthy now is going to affect you later. Not exercising is going to affect you later in life. So this whole program works

hand-in-hand with the kinds of activities we run in the Parks & Recreation Department. They'll be able to meet their individual goals and keep on track with the VNA and a personal coach," she said.

Unlike self-improvement organizations which feature group meetings and public confessions, kids in the Power Up program maintain discrete contact with their assigned coach and other professionals online. A card-access kiosk in the Municipal Center is their initial point of entry as well as their weekly on-site check-in to the

program. After that, they stay in touch over the Internet from home, reviewing the various modules they have established through the course of the six-week program.

Parents can also log into the site and monitor their child's progress. Each child is given a personal plan which includes weekly monitoring of achievement, lifestyle modification, educational support, and motivational incentives, as well as material rewards.

Power Up also reflects the evolving mission of VNA. "VNA has been operation for over 40 years," VNA New Business Development Director, Margie Walsh points out. "We are a community-based, not for profit

*Kids in the  
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online.*

organization. Our mission has always involved the community, so we're very involved in doing education in senior centers – which is how we met Chris Border. It used to be that VNAs were the only home care agencies. Now there are all kinds of home care agencies.

"We still do home care, but we really try to promote health and independence. Even in the home care setting, our goal is to teach them to become independent and take care of themselves. Ideally, we'd like to create specific wellness programs for everybody. But for this pilot, we've narrowed it down to 12-16 year old girls and boys. The only requirement is that they have Internet access at home and that they be involved in an activity at the Parks & Recreation department. We're not the activity piece of it; we're the education piece of it."

"We're also encouraging people to give us useful feedback: 'this is what I like; this is what I don't like; this didn't work; this is in a bad place'. Whatever they like, I want to know. Whatever they don't like I want to know too, so that I can redesign it to be really good for the kids."

To register, or for more information about Power Up, call VNA at 877-862-6659, ext. 298. ~

## Promoting Emergent Literacy

by John A. Giancola, Jr., Principal, Rowan Elementary School



As a reading specialist and current elementary school principal, I am often asked questions about literacy. *How do children learn to read? Why is my child behind in reading? What can I do as a parent to encourage them to read?* I will answer these

questions beginning with some background in theory, and then address how theory influenced my practice as an extended day kindergarten teacher and parent.

First, it is important to realize that reading is an emergent process. Children do not wake up one day and read. It is a process which starts at birth when an infant first learns about the uses of language. They hear language, and then they replicate it, developing closer approximations as they grow as language learners. As supportive adults, we facilitate this process by encouraging them and listening to them as their speech becomes more conventional.

Second, reading is best learned as a naturalistic process. Praise and encourage every attempt at literacy, much like we do with speech. As adults, we tend to over correct children when they are making these early attempts, thus discouraging them. Third, it is important to understand that the four-language processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are interrelated. If a child is a little behind in one of these areas, it will likely affect the other processes. The most prevalent example is that of a child who has hearing problems due to ear infections.

The child does not hear language properly for several months at critical developmental stages, which typically affects their speaking, reading, and their writing.

As a teacher, I worked with kindergarten students who

were identified as at-risk for literacy learning. Most of these children did not have the early experiences that are so critical for emerging literacy. My goal was to replicate those kinds of practices in my classroom. I read aloud to students, so they could hear language and become familiar with concepts of print, (title, author, problem/solution in the story.) I read the stories with much enthusiasm, so that they could see that reading is fun and engaging! We did a lot of repeated readings, so that students could see words and letters in context and remember them and retrieve them more efficiently.

Many of my students did not know the alphabet. At-risk students often learn letters better if you teach them words first, because they have something to connect with the letter, instead of showing them an "a" in isolation over and over again. I also encouraged writing from the first day of school. Students wrote daily journals, and I helped them to see their writing emerge on a daily basis. All children need to see themselves as "real" writers and understand that writing has a purpose. I used to tell my reluctant readers that writing is just talk written down. I taught the children to think of how they would say something, and then write it.

As a parent, I really worked to practice what I preached, which was difficult at times! I read nursery rhymes over and over again, until my children could recite them. They help me write the grocery list, so they can see that writing has a purpose. They each have a room full of books, and enjoy reading and being read to often. My kids also observe my wife and me reading regularly for a variety of purposes.



*The author can be reached at [giancolaja@svsd.net](mailto:giancolaja@svsd.net)*

## OCTOBER

MON 1	Book Discussion <i>The Price of a Child</i> by Lorene Cary, Library, 7 pm			TUES 2	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm			WED 3	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm			THURS 4	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm			FRI 5	Farmer's Market Municipal Ctr parking lot, 3:30 - 6 pm		SAT 6	Computer Class* <i>Internet II</i> , Library, 9 am		
SAT 6	Farmer's Market Mashuda Dr entrance to Community Park, 10 am - 1 pm		SUN 7	MON 8	COLUMBUS DAY Township Offices Open			TUES 9	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm			WED 10	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm			THURS 11	Senior Center Monthly Birthday Party Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 9:30 am			Seneca Valley Homecoming Parade Secondary Campus, 6 pm		
FRI 12	The Night Mayor† North Boundary Park, Dan Baker Shelter, 8 - 9 pm			MON 13	Farmer's Market Municipal Ctr parking lot, 3:30 - 6 pm			SAT 13	Farmer's Market Mashuda Dr entrance to Community Park, 10 am - 1 pm			WED 14	Computer Class* <i>Troubleshooting</i> , Library, 9 am			MON 15	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm			WED 17	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm	
WED 17	Book Discussion <i>Bonesetter's Daughter</i> by Amy Tan, Library, 10 am			THURS 18	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm			FRI 19	Farmer's Market Municipal Ctr parking lot, 3:30 - 6 pm			SAT 20	Computer Class* Power Library, Library, 9 am			Butler County Residential Electronics Recycling ~ Public Works, 9 am						
SUN 21	MON 22	TUES 23	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm			WED 24	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm			THURS 25	Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			FRI 26	Farmer's Market Municipal Ctr parking lot, 3:30 - 6 pm			SAT 27	Computer Class* <i>Subscription Services</i> , Library, 9 am			
SAT 27	Spookapalooza† Municipal Ctr, Teen Ctr, 12 - 2 pm		SUN 28	MON 29	Planning Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 5:30 pm		TUES 30	4 and 5 Year Old Storytime* Library, 11 am or 1 pm		WED 31	Halloween Trick or Treat in Cranberry Twp 6 - 8 pm		THURS 1	Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			FRI 2	Computer Class* <i>MS Word I</i> , Library, 9 am				
SUN 4	Pitt Bulls 101, Learn about this breed of dogs, Library, 1:30 pm			Daylight Savings Time Ends set clocks back one hour after 2 am			MON 5	Planning Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 6	ELECTION DAY Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			WED 7	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm						
THURS 8	Senior Center Monthly Birthday Party Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 9:30 am			FRI 9	SVSD No School		SAT 10	Computer Class* <i>MS Word II</i> , Library, 9 am		SUN 11	VETERAN'S DAY		MON 12	Zoning Hearing Board Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 13	Cranberry Senior Citizen Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 1 pm		WED 14	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm	
THURS 15	FRI 16	Cranberry Twp Ligh Up Night - Santa arrives via fire truck, Municipal Ctr, 6 pm			SAT 17	Computer Class* <i>Identity Theft</i> , Library, 9 am		SUN 18	MON 19	TUES 20	Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm		WED 21	SVSD Holiday Vacation through 11/26 Book Discussion <i>When The Emperor Was Divine</i> by Julia Otsuka, Library, 10 am			UPMC Wellness Series ~ <i>Living With Diabetes</i> , Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 12:30 pm					
THURS 22	THANKSGIVING DAY Township Offices Closed		FRI 23	SVSD Holiday Vacation		Waste Collection - 1 day delay according to holiday schedule through 11/24 Municipal Center/Public Library Open. Administrative Offices Closed.			SAT 24	SUN 25	MON 26	Planning Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm		TUES 27	Tough Toddlers Bellevue Pediatrics, Library, 7 pm		WED 28	THURS 29	FRI 30	Friday Night Flicks <i>The Polar Express</i> , Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 - 9 pm		

## NOVEMBER

SUN 4	Pitt Bulls 101, Learn about this breed of dogs, Library, 1:30 pm			Daylight Savings Time Ends set clocks back one hour after 2 am			MON 5	Planning Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 6	ELECTION DAY Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			WED 7	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm						
THURS 8	Senior Center Monthly Birthday Party Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 9:30 am			FRI 9	SVSD No School		SAT 10	Computer Class* <i>MS Word II</i> , Library, 9 am		SUN 11	VETERAN'S DAY		MON 12	Zoning Hearing Board Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 13	Cranberry Senior Citizen Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 1 pm		WED 14	Family Pajama Time Library, 7 pm	
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## DECEMBER

SAT 1	Computer Class* <i>Email</i> , Library, 9 am			SUN 2	MON 3	Planning Commission Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			TUES 4	Parks & Recreation Advisory Brd Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			WED 5	HANUKKAH begins		THURS 6	Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm			
FRI 7	SAT 8	Computer Class* <i>MS Excel I</i> , Library, 9 am			SUN 9	Cranberry Women's Club Christmas House Tour Advanced sales only, 4 pm - 8 pm			MON 10	TUES 11	Cranberry Senior Citizen Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 1 pm			WED 12	THURS 13	Senior Center Monthly Birthday Party Municipal Ctr, Senior Ctr, 9:30 am		Board of Supervisors Mtg Municipal Ctr, Council Chambers, 7 pm		
FRI 14	SAT 15	Computer Class* <i>MS Excel II</i> , Library, 9 am			SUN 16	MON 17	TUES 18	WED 19	THURS 20	FRI 21	SAT 22	SUN 23	MON 24	CHRISTMAS EVE SVSD Holiday Vacation through 1/1/08			TUES 25	CHRISTMAS DAY Township Offices Closed		SVSD Holiday Vacation
WED 26	Waste Collection - 1 day delay according to holiday schedule through 12/29 SVSD Holiday Vacation			THURS 27	SVSD Holiday Vacation		FRI 28	SVSD Holiday Vacation		SAT 29	SUN 30	MON 31	NEW YEAR'S EVE SVSD Holiday Vacation			COMMUNITY CALENDAR				

*Profile of a firefighter:*



in high-speed dashes with flashing lights and wailing sirens on his way to rescue trapped victims from blazing buildings. After all, that was the way it looked on TV. But while excitement sometimes touches his life, more often than not, Clutter – now a First Captain in charge of Cranberry's Rt. 19 fire station – finds himself thinking about safety, training, managing, and simply doing his job well.

Even so, life as a volunteer firefighter in Cranberry is never routine.

Clutter – a seven-year veteran of the Company – finds 911 calls involving children especially gut-wrenching. And wrecks along I-79 and the Turnpike are also nerve-wracking because they require dodging high-speed traffic while extricating victims from mangled vehicles.

In both instances, Clutter credits extensive training for his ability to keep his emotions in check – something which may explain why he has emerged as one of the most qualified officers in the Cranberry Township Volunteer Fire Company, with state certificates in firefighting Levels I and II.

As a result, Clutter is one of 13 members in the 50-member

## Friendship, Training Bond Cranberry's Volunteer Firefighters

As a child, Larry Clutter imagined taking part

Company to hold the title of Apprentice State Instructor – a certification that permits him to teach state firefighting courses to fellow Cranberry firefighters at the Township's Public Safety Training Center. His advanced status also helps the fire Company secure state grants for its operation and maintenance.

In addition, Clutter holds certifications in aerial truck operation and Rapid Intervention Team work, or RIT. Members of the RIT squad answer alarms in neighboring communities and stand by at the scene to look after the responding firefighters in case anyone gets into trouble – a mishap which has already

occurred at least once during his watch.

But Clutter is far from alone in that effort.

Altogether, Cranberry's volunteer firefighters logged more than 5,500 hours of training during 2006. Two-thirds of them are currently certified at the Firefighter I level and qualified to operate the aerial tower truck; a quarter of the members are certified as Firefighter II; half are certified to participate in the RIT unit alongside Clutter. And two

Fire Company members are licensed state instructors, qualified to teach a range of firefighting tactics and to certify firefighters from anywhere in the Commonwealth.

***Clutter finds 911 calls involving children especially gut-wrenching. And wrecks along I-79 and the Turnpike are also nerve-wracking because they require dodging high-speed traffic while extricating victims from mangled vehicles.***



For Clutter, as for most members of the Fire Company, the camaraderie among Cranberry's firefighters makes his job particularly rewarding. But the greatest satisfaction he derives from participating in the Fire Company comes from honing his firefighting skills and giving station tours to wide-eyed youngsters.

A husband, father, and full-time employee of Pennsylvania Electric Coil in Glassport, Clutter now finds it hard to imagine life without firefighting, even though it forces him to balance firefighting and family life.

Of course it helps that his wife Carrie – a strong supporter of his volunteer work – is herself a member of the Fire Company's Women's Auxiliary. And his day job can force him to make tough calls, too; as one of only two engineers at his plant, when an early morning fire call comes in, he has to quickly decide what impact his late arrival will have on his employer.

In the end, however, the power of brotherhood usually wins out. "We trust each other with our lives so we become friends, our wives become friends, our kids become friends. We all hang out together. I just told the guys, 'If it weren't for this fire company, there would definitely be a void in my life'." ~

*Cranberry welcomes new Fire Company volunteers throughout the year. To learn more, call 724-776-1196.*

## Township Rescue Truck Prepares For Drive Into Sunset



After 16 years of continuous service and thousands of responses to emergency calls of every sort, the Volunteer Fire Company's Tactical Rescue Truck is approaching the twilight of its long and distinguished run in Cranberry Township.

As the first, and frequently the only fire company vehicle sent to the scene of highway crashes and building fires, the rescue truck can deliver as many as ten firefighters to the scene along with an extensive assortment of equipment including tools to cut apart wrecked cars and extract their injured passengers. The workhorse fire engine also includes a generator to produce electricity, a compressor to run hydraulic tools, and a system used to refill the oxygen tanks firefighters carry when fighting interior blazes.

The truck is still in daily use, but after 16 years of service, it has already exceeded its normal life expectancy. So in January, Fire Chief Bill Spiegel decided to appoint a committee of firefighters to begin the process of designing a replacement. "Our truck is just wearing out," Spiegel observed. "At this point it's starting to nickel-dime us to death. The heart of our truck is the generator, and the generator has been giving us lots of problems. Everything on that truck, apart from just driving

down the road, operates with the generator."

There's also an issue of housekeeping; a rescue truck, unlike some of the more specialized fire engines in service, is essentially a rolling warehouse. It comes outfitted with compartments for every sort of tool that emergency workers would likely need including cutters, spreaders, rams, air bags, and shoring, as well as all sorts of hand tools. But as the technology of firefighting has improved, so has the range of equipment that firefighters need to carry.

"In the truck we're building to replace this one, there's going to be more compartmentation," Spiegel said. "With this truck there's stuff stacked everywhere because there's not enough compartment room – we ran out of space." But don't expect a totally different look.

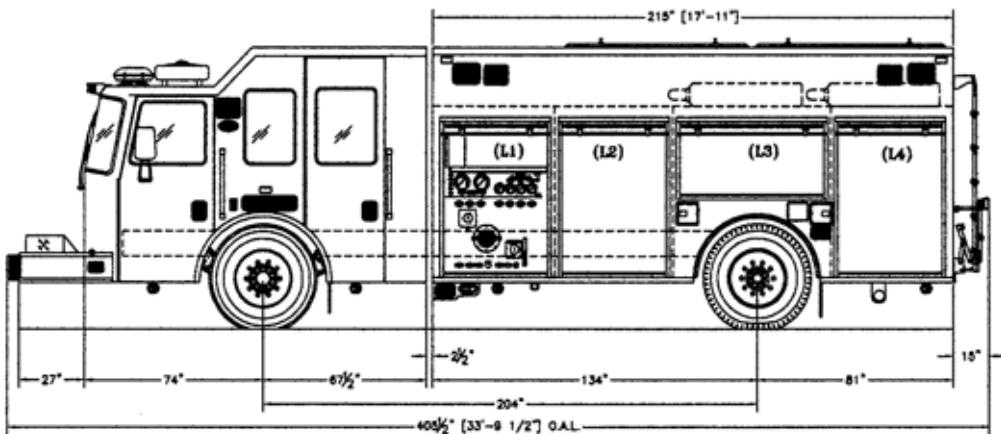
"We want the trucks enough alike so that the equipment kept on one truck is similar to where it's kept on another," Fire Company Administrative Assistant Mark Nanna added. Uniform standards also apply to the vehicles' drive train. "The engines are the same, the transmissions are the same, the pumps and tanks and rear ends are the same. We put the equipment in the same compartment in each truck so that no matter what truck you're

in, as long as you know the standard, you'll know where it's at." Those detailed standards also help in training new recruits.

"We don't put a lot of miles on a truck; it's the hours," Nanna said. "The rescue truck has only 30,000 miles on it, but it has thousands of hours because it sits there at the fire scene with the engine running. It looks great, but it's been around for a long time."

Three different fire truck makers have expressed interest in building the Fire Company's new vehicle, which will follow specifications set out by the committee chaired by veteran firefighter Joe Traficante whose professional background, conveniently enough, focuses on truck maintenance. Other members of the committee include Dave and Jeff Berneberg, Steve Dancisin, Betsy Tedesco, Tim Barch and Brian Greenawalt.

The committee's proposal, including a cost estimate of \$525,000, was presented to Cranberry's Board of Supervisors on October 4. The Board then authorized the Fire Company to post its specifications for bids from interested suppliers. With a normal build time of six to eight months, delivery could take place as soon as mid-year 2008. ~





National Fire Prevention Week Tip:

## Shake Up Your Home Fire Extinguisher

Home fire extinguishers are a good idea and lots of people have them. But what they may not know is that even if they're never used, fire extinguishers lose their oomph over time.

"Most people buy a fire extinguisher which sits on the kitchen counter for years and they never touch it," reports Fire Company Administrative Assistant Mark Nanna. "The problem is when they sit for a long time, the powder inside them compacts. So when you need them, they don't work. All you get is the psssst because the powder is compacted in them."

However there's an easy way of keeping that from happening, at least for a few years. "Every six or eight months, you should turn it upside down and shake it to keep the powder loose," Nanna advises.

"You might feel a weight shift as the powder moves inside, but you probably won't hear it."

Fire safety professionals recommend

***Fire safety professionals recommend replacing home extinguishers every five years, even though most manufacturers give them a ten year life expectancy.***

replacing home extinguishers every five years, even though most manufacturers give them a ten year life expectancy. But that's nothing to count on. "Even if you let it sit for five years, you're probably going to have problems with it," Nanna said. "And if it does work, you probably won't get the full capacity out of it because it will be packed in there from sitting. If the powder is moving when you shake it after ten years, it's probably still okay. But if you hear a big, solid clunking sound, it probably isn't."

However even an old, ineffective fire extinguisher can have some value. "If you're not happy with it and you plan on throwing it away and getting a new one, you should take the old one outside and try it – just so you know what it feels like to discharge one," he said.

There are lots of different fire extinguishers, rated by their capacity, by the types of fire they are best suited to fight, by their contents, and by their ability to take a recharge. Most homeowners buy the one-shot type of extinguisher because it's usually

a nuisance for consumers to get them recharged. "You can call one of the major service companies, but they usually won't come to your house because they're business-oriented," Nanna notes. "So you're going to have to take it to them to get it recharged."

Every extinguisher is classified according to the type of fire it can fight: ordinary combustibles like wood and paper; flammable liquids like gasoline; and fires that are electrical in nature. In the past, these classifications were designated as A, B, and C, respectively. But most home extinguishers today are considered multi-class instruments – capable of being used on all three types of fires.

The majority of single-use extinguishers are rated at 2.5; rechargeable units are usually 5. That number refers the amount of powder inside. So, the 5s last longer when they're discharged. But once you discharge it, no matter how much or how little you use, it will need to be recharged. "It can be a 20 pounder, but once you pull the pin and squeeze it, it's going to have to be recharged," Nanna said. "But a 20 pounder will fight a bigger fire than a 2.5, and most truckers carry a 5 pounder, just in case." ~

## And Just So You Won't Need To Use It...

These safety measures from the Home Safety Council can reduce the chance of fire in your home:

- Keep things that can burn, such as dishtowels, paper or plastic bags, and curtains at least three feet from the range top.
- Before cooking, roll up sleeves and use oven mitts. Loose-fitting clothes can touch a hot burner and catch on fire.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from things that can burn, such as curtains or stacks of newspaper. Always turn them off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Have a service person inspect chimneys, fireplaces, wood and coal stoves and central furnaces once a year. Have them cleaned when necessary.
- Make a fire escape plan for your family. Find two exits out of every room. Pick a meeting place outside. Hold a family fire drill at least twice each year.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Put in new batteries once a year.

*Collapse of confidence*

## Bridge Inspections Peak Following Minnesota Bridge Failure

Although Cranberry Township owns three bridges, only one of them is designed for automotive traffic. But in the wake of the stunning collapse of an Interstate highway bridge over the Mississippi River this summer, it may be comforting to know that the Executive Drive Bridge over Coal Creek received the highest possible rating from the state.

That shouldn't come as a surprise for a structure that's just seven years old. But what worries motorists is that many bridges, like the I-35 W span before its catastrophic failure, seem perfectly normal. And western Pennsylvania – a region which includes the nation's highest concentration of traffic bridges – is especially vulnerable to problems affecting those spans.

Traffic bridge conditions are not secret, even though for a short time after the Minnesota tragedy PennDOT declined to release data on its 25,000 bridges or the 7,000 others owned by county and municipal governments, claiming that their ratings were 'internal documents.' But that position was quickly reversed and within days, a flood of data mandated by the FHA was posted on the agency's Web site.

The Federal Highway Administration requires states to inspect every span

20 feet or longer at least once every two years – more often if it's been rated as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. But the numbers used to characterize bridge sufficiency can be confusing. Out of a possible 100 points, bridges with scores as low as 2 can still remain open, although under weight restriction.

"Our bridge engineers use these numbers to manage our system and help us decide on prioritizing bridge needs," according to PennDOT Secretary Allen D. Biehler. "The numbers should not be viewed as a measure of whether a bridge is safe or not. If a bridge is open, it is safe for travel."

While the high score of the Coal Creek bridge may be reassuring, Cranberry residents are just as exposed as anyone else in the region to the deteriorating condition of bridges owned and maintained by other government entities, including some in and around the Township. Altogether, about a quarter of the state's bridges are considered structurally deficient, according to published reports.

"We inspect our bridges every two years, as recommended, and they're all in good shape," Township Assistant Manager Duane McKee



reports. "There are three bridge owners: state, municipal, and county. And there are various types of bridges, but the basic definition is any span over 20 feet long. It could be a culvert pipe, and while we don't have any that wide, other communities do. But they're structures that need to be inspected. The state inspects its own bridges, and Butler county contracts with an engineering firm to inspect county and local bridges."

But that only applies to automotive bridges. "For our golf cart bridge over Freshcorn Road and the wooden bridge at Hole 15 in Cranberry Highlands, we contract separately with an engineering firm because it's not something where you can just look at the deck and assume it's good," he said. "You need someone who knows what to look for." ~



**Fore.** Two of Cranberry's three bridges are part of Cranberry Highlands Golf Course and inspected by contract engineers.

*Good roads, bad choices*

## State Funds For Local Road Resurfacing Decline While Costs Increase

For decades, Pennsylvania's gasoline tax paid for Cranberry's road paving projects. But over the last few years, two things changed. One is the state's formula for distributing the so-called Liquid Fuels funds, which also pays for nearly all of PennDOT projects. The other is the cost of paving materials. And for Pennsylvania's 2,500-plus municipalities, the two trends are moving in the wrong direction.

The state formula, which for years provided a predictable funding stream for local road resurfacing, has eroded. Back in the 1950s, local governments received about 20 percent of the gasoline tax. But since then, the scope of activities covered by those funds has expanded. As a result, instead of local governments receiving a 20 percent share, they now receive approximately 14 percent. That was bad enough.

But then the price of asphalt started to skyrocket – up a whopping 42 percent in just one year. In 2006, the liquid component of the asphalt cost \$267 a ton in western Pennsylvania; today it's \$330.

In 2002 it was \$163 and just 15 years ago, a mere \$76.

Together, they represent a crisis for local government. As a result, Cranberry's 10-year plan for resurfacing its 107 miles of local roads has begun to suffer. "We're spending more and doing less than we need to," Township Manager Jerry Andree explained. "We need to be spending \$800-850,000. But we're getting just \$485,000 a year in liquid fuel taxes. So we've been tapping into a reserve we'd built over the last ten years, and by next year it will all be gone."

None of the options for correcting that imbalance are very attractive. "We can scale back on resurfacing and let our roads deteriorate, which will lead to a financial crisis sometime in the future. We can cut back essential programs like parks and public safety to use the money for paving our roads. We can raise property taxes, or we can do a combination of all three. And those are three lousy choices," he said.



**Cracking up.** After ten or twelve years, the combination of wear and weather will start to fracture a road's pavement. If it is not re-surfaced at that point, the damage will extend to its sub-surface, where repairs can be much costlier.

"Of course, we would very much like to see the state step up and meet its obligations to local government," Andree said. "We could even support an increase in the state's gasoline tax if those funds were to come back to local government as road improvement money. But Harrisburg may not have the stomach to take that step. And if they don't, it would throw the whole responsibility back on local government – a form of buck-passing which has been happening more and more with state mandates." ~

## Where Do Roads Come From, Mommy?

Roads come about in different ways, with different owners, and in a variety of designs. Most serve as corridors for various utilities in addition to motor vehicles. Collectively, Cranberry's 107 miles of municipally-owned roads are the lifelines of the Township and represent one of its most valuable assets.

Every road pavement has an expected service life. In most western countries, the standard design life is 40 years, although some major roadways are built for 60 or even 100-year lifespans. But virtually all roads require some form of maintenance during their service lives. Periodic resurfacing preserves, protects and improves the functional condition of the road, extending its service life. The cross-section shown here includes some of the typical surface and subterranean features of modern roadways. What it does not show are the various layers of surface and foundation materials which are normally used to build the roadway – materials which can deteriorate without regular maintenance.

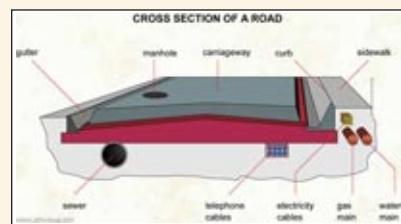


Image courtesy of [infovisual.info](http://infovisual.info)

# Cranberry On Guard Against Underground Infiltration

*Township uses smoke and dye to flush out illegal connections to its sewer lines*

Forget about border guards, security fences, and nighttime surveillance for undocumented aliens. Cranberry has its own infiltration concerns.

They center around rainwater sneaking into sewer lines that feed the Township's Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant and potentially forcing it beyond its treatment capacity. When that occurs, bad things can happen. So Cranberry's Public Works Department is on high alert to deal with the matter.

Cranberry's sanitary sewer system sole purpose is to transport water from sinks, showers, bathtubs, washing machines and toilets over to the Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant. However, during heavy rains, a lot of unwanted stormwater can also enter the sewer system, increasing the flow to the wastewater treatment plant as much as threefold.

Public Works plant and field crews work hard to manage the higher flows during heavy rain events. But over time, the situation could escalate. Excess stormwater can cause sewers to overflow and even overload treatment plants – something Cranberry very much wants to avoid. Beyond that, treating stormwater adds to operating costs and could require costly plant expansions sooner than otherwise needed.

As a result, Cranberry is taking a proactive approach to address the issue and repair the problem before state or federal agencies

mandate an even more costly fix, as they have already done in some other communities.

***Cranberry concerns center around rainwater sneaking into sewer lines that feed the Township's Brush Creek wastewater treatment plant.***

There are several ways that stormwater enters a sanitary sewer system. One is through groundwater seeping into the cracks of buried sewer lines. That is known in the trade as infiltration. Unauthorized connections of storm drains, area drains and downspouts to the sanitary lines are

known as inflow. To combat these incursions, the Township has taken a two-pronged strategy. The first, dealing with infiltration, involves rehabilitating its main sewer lines. Damaged sewer pipes have been replaced or re-lined to regain their structural integrity, and inflow protectors have been installed on manhole openings, especially those in roadways and low-lying areas.

The other is to ask home and building owners in the Township to check the drainage systems around their property for inflow connections. If any of them discharge directly into the sanitary lines, they should be removed and re-directed into a proper storm drain.

In addition, Public Works crews have begun using smoke and dye tests in different parts of the Township to trace direct stormwater connections. Smoke testing involves blowing non-toxic smoke into an isolated section of sewer line and then watching where that smoke comes out. If smoke is seen billowing out of a stormwater or area drain in a yard or parking lot, that drain is connected to the sanitary sewer line and is a source of inflow.

In dye testing, a red or green dye is poured into driveway drains and downspouts. If colored water shows up in nearby sanitary sewer manholes, there's inflow. Whenever inflow sources are found, the property owner is asked to correct the problem.

Both parts of the Township strategy are designed to prolong the life of its sewage treatment system and combat the insidious foe of rainwater infiltration that threatens the life of its Brush Creek plant. ~



*Pumping Iron*

## Cranberry Bulks Up Water System For Future Demand

If Cranberry's water system enhancement plans work out, you won't notice a thing. But if they don't, you will – and you may not like what you see. It's a result of the aging process coupled with expectations of increased demand from a fast-growing community. Here's how it came about:

Before the early 1950s, if you wanted water in Cranberry you dug a well. There was no public water service. Period.

But starting in the 1950s with the Fernway plan of homes, Cranberry saw the beginnings of a true municipal water service. Piece by piece, as the Township grew, developers extended that service. And today, more than 90 percent of Cranberry's residents are served by the municipal water system.

Now, more than 50 years after parts of it were built, pieces of the system have grown fragile, unable to meet current demands and in need of attention.

As a result, Township officials have been searching for affordable ways to keep the system in good repair and assure ample water supplies for a rapidly growing community. Over the next few years, the results of that planning will start falling into place.

One of the first steps will be to replace and expand the pumping station that connects West View Water Authority's supply line – Cranberry's sole source of water – to the Township's own distribution system. That station, which is currently housed in an underground vault along Commonwealth Drive, will be replaced by a larger station with significantly greater capacity, on Township-owned land across the street.

Another is to upsize the Township's main supply lines. Right now, there is a 16-inch trunk line that loops the heart of Cranberry Township. But it is fed by 10- and 12-inch pipes. That needs to change in order to fully realize the system's flow capacity.

And then there is the replacement of the aging cast iron lines with ductile iron – a more flexible material which is now the industry standard.

Historically, Cranberry's water and sewer lines were built by developers in connection with their own projects. That still happens, and whenever a developer's project coincides with a main line needing replacement, that replacement can take place at the developer's expense, as it did this summer along 900 feet of Freedom Road in connection with the construction of Freedom Village. But while the Township will still cultivate opportunities for developer-financed improvements, other parts of the system are likely to be replaced at ratepayer expense through a capital fund which is constantly replenished as customers pay their bills.

Down the road, West View Water is planning to build a sophisticated new satellite water plant along the Ohio River in Beaver County. As Cranberry's thirst grows, its additional water needs will be supplied from that new plant along a pipeline coming from the west. That should be good for Cranberry, according to Environmental Programs Coordinator Lorin Meeder. "It would give us a sizable additional connection, it would provide redundancy of water supply sources, and it would ease our distribution challenges. We could increase

flows throughout our system to get water where we need it without forcing it through small pipes."

Even further ahead is finding an appropriate response to requests from neighboring communities for water through the Cranberry system. "What's happening now with these improvements is preparing for the future," Township Manager Jerry Andree noted. "We have no crisis now, it's just that we know in two or three years we'll need to have that additional capacity, so we're building it now.

"But we're always hearing from our neighbors that they need water. And our board's attitude has always been that we want to be good neighbors, but first we've got to be sure we can keep up with our own demand and that the capital costs of supplying our neighbors wouldn't force us to raise the rates for our own customers. We're always willing to help, but first we've got to be sure our system can handle it, and with the growth we're having, we're running just to keep up." ~



*Fair Warning*

## Needless Traffic Signs Promote Clutter, Not Safety

Some communities post 'Watch Children' or 'Children Playing' signs along the streets of every residential neighborhood. But not in Cranberry. And that's no accident.

"Children Playing signs don't contribute to safety," Township Public Safety Director Steve Mannell asserts. "Children play everywhere. If you identify a specific area as one to watch for children, does that imply you shouldn't watch out in those places that don't have a sign up? Where do you stop posting them?"

For Cranberry, however, the concern goes beyond a driver's presumed expectation that children play in residential neighborhoods. "What is the purpose of a street?" he asks. "Is it for kids to play on? Or is it for vehicular traffic? We don't want to encourage them to use the street for a playground. We already get a lot of complaints about kids in the street. People usually want us to come and chase them off. The problem is when they put their hockey nets down and won't move when the cars get there. And posting signs only legitimizes it more."

There are some exceptions, however, according to Assistant Township Manager Duane McKee. For example, the Township posts signs

for certain unique situations, such as Deaf Child or Blind Child areas.

"Those families usually have the courtesy to tell the Township when they're moving so the sign can come down," McKee noted. "But in some of our older neighborhoods where Watch Children signs were posted years ago, those children are now in their late-30s."

The posting of warning signs is not entirely haphazard however; there are official guidelines contained in a federal document which has now been adopted by every state. Those guidelines have standardized warning signs to a significant extent all over the country. But they're not regulatory signs – laws that can be enforced by police. They're merely advisory. They're there to give drivers advance warning and to suggest they act accordingly.

"We follow the warrants set forth by the state publication and we've accepted those as our way of doing business," McKee points out. "If someone feels they need a sign, we'll do an engineering study to determine if it's warranted and

let them know whether we can put it up for them. We pay for all the signs. There's no cost to an individual who points out that we need a sign somewhere."

Interestingly, most warning signs – Curves Ahead, School Crossing, Railroad Crossing, Slippery When Wet, and all the other yellow signs that alert drivers to upcoming hazards – were created to remedy deficiencies in the road itself.

"A new design road, in theory, shouldn't have warning signs because it's been designed to ASHTO standards, which means you don't need to warn anybody," McKee said. "If it's posted at 25 and you do 25, you should be able to make all the curves at that rate of speed with no difficulty. But we don't have that. We have old roads – the cow paths that were tar and chipped and are now

the roads we have to live with.

The warning signs are a way to correct their deficiencies, to adequately alert people. "Cranberry's policy is not to post unnecessary signs," he said. "We don't want to give our residents a false sense of security." ~

## 10-23: We're Clear In Cranberry. On patrol with Cranberry's finest

Just before beginning his 9-hour shift on a sunny weekend afternoon, Cranberry Patrolman William Och inspects his vehicle – a Ford Explorer outfitted to deal with practically any sort of emergency.

"Before leaving the lot, I check to make sure the siren works," he tells a visitor. "I don't want to take a car out on the road that's not worthy of

being in service." He quickly runs down a baffling assortment of the light, siren, and radio settings available to patrol officers. Among them: flashers, strobes, yelps, wails, take-down lights, alley lights, map lights, channel settings, gun locks, and more. Everything checks out.

### Zoned out

There are two police zones in

Cranberry, demarcated by Rt. 19. A normal shift would include one patrol assigned to the east zone, another to the west zone, and a third detailed to traffic. In theory, patrol officers deal with service calls of every sort in their home zone, while the traffic unit remains focused on speeders, crashes, and

*Continued on page 20.*

## 10-23: We're clear in Cranberry.

*Continued from page 19*

complaints of reckless driving anywhere in the Township. But in practice, those lines are often blurred as officers respond in force to any calls which might require backup. That's usually more a matter of judgment than of policy. However even in routine traffic situations, when a driver is pulled over, the risk of unpleasant surprise is always there.

"It's not required for another guy to come along on our traffic stops," Och pointed out, "but we try to – just to make sure there's not a problem. If somebody was thinking about doing something bad to one of us, they'd reconsider when they realize we've got more people showing up." Bullet-resistant vests, routinely worn under the officers' duty shirts, provide another, more immediate way, that Cranberry's police guard against nasty surprises.

*Butler 911 Breaks In Over The Police Radio: 4350. We have a lockout. 20430 Rt. 19. Gymboree is the name of the business. They'll be waiting for you in front of the store. A third party called; we don't have any other information.*

Och shrugged. "We do a bunch of lockouts," he told his visitor. "It's a service-type call. A lot of departments don't do them anymore, for liability reasons. But we still provide the service. We can't get into every car – a lot of the new cars are harder to get into. But some of our guys are pretty good with the Slim Jim at getting into cars for people."

### Bad shot

On his way to the lockout, Butler 911 breaks in again: *4350. Possible drug overdose. A female reports a male who has become unresponsive. 20377 Rt. 19, Apartment 1A. EMS and police required.*

Immediately, the lockout call takes lower priority. Patrolman Och executes a sharp U-turn to approach

the reported address. It is a small building, set back from the highway, behind several stores. As he arrives, so does another police officer, followed seconds later by an ambulance carrying three medical technicians. A woman in her twenties stands at the door, sobbing, pointing the way into the apartment where a man, also in his twenties, lies on a bed, his skin a pale blue, the pupils of his eyes contracted to pinpoints, his pulse unstable.

With scarcely a word between them, each emergency responder knows what to do. A quick injection of Narcan – an antidote to narcotics – yields almost immediate results. Although visibly sickened, the man abruptly attempts to stand, prompting officers and EMS workers to restrain him until his intentions become clear. A call to a UPMC emergency physician determines that the man needs to be examined. At first, he is reluctant. But eventually, he climbs aboard a gurney for the short trip to Cranberry Passavant.

Officer Och has emerged as the contact officer. He interviews the woman, recording details of the incident for the official report and to document likely follow-up criminal charges. "What we collected in the evidence bag was a syringe, a spoon, and empty stamp bags – which are the bags that heroin is packaged in. The needle is in a Sharps container so that nobody gets poked," he said. "Each bag has a 'Superman' stamp on it; it was stronger than usual.

That's why the guy believes he overdosed. He said it was from the city. Pittsburgh is where most of the heroin in our area originates. But he didn't narrow it down to a specific street, or location, or person. So there's not much to follow up. But what I do have is possession of drug paraphernalia, and that's illegal.



*OD. Cranberry police and EMS technicians responded quickly to a 911 call from the girlfriend of a man who had become unresponsive following a drug overdose.*

This time, though, the victim is lucky. His girlfriend had called 911. The antidote was administered just in time. And a preliminary inspection of items easily visible in his apartment revealed no evidence of drug dealing – which would have been a serious felony. Instead, a charge of ungraded misdemeanor will be mailed to him. Only if he fails to respond would an arrest warrant be issued.

### Lockout

After just 19 minutes at the scene, it was time to resume patrol. By now, help had arrived for the man who was locked out of his car. Just to be sure, Och punches the man's license plate number into the Explorer's onboard laptop computer. It is linked to a statewide database of stolen vehicles, title numbers, vehicle types, registrations and suspensions, as well as other information, such as whether the owner has a Protection From Abuse order against him. But the silver Chevy Trailblazer checks out, and its driver is back on his way.

"We don't see a lot of stolen cars in Cranberry," Och noted. "Occasionally we will get some cars going through the auto auction. When there's a check done on their VIN tags, they'll

find something that was reported stolen from another state. We get a lot of calls about cars being stolen at the malls from people who simply can't remember where they parked. We'll put them in the back of our police cars and drive around the lots until they find their cars. And we have a lot of calls about unauthorized use of vehicles where kids will take their parents' cars without permission. But we don't get a lot of calls about people going into driveways in Cranberry and smashing windows to steal their cars."

### Sticker shock

At the same time, however, irregularities in a car's plates, registration tags, or inspection stickers can be telltale signs of trouble. So Och and his fellow officers keep an eye out for them. "When cars come into the lane in front of me, I'm checking their registration stickers, he said. The color designates the year; you know that a white sticker is an '08. I also try to check the inspection stickers on everything that's passing me. So I try to drive in the left lane to see traffic that's passing me." And when something isn't right, it can trigger a traffic stop.

"A lot of people treat a license plate like it's a bingo card and put their registration stickers on all four corners, or alternate them left and right," he said. "If our guys are getting real picky about it, they probably could write them for improper display of the registration because the sticker's not in the right place."

But along 228 things quickly pick up. Och slides into traffic behind an Accura bearing a large, decorative license plate frame that hides the name of the state as well as some of the other essential information posted there. "That guy's plate is too obstructed for my liking," Och told his visitor. "I want to talk to him

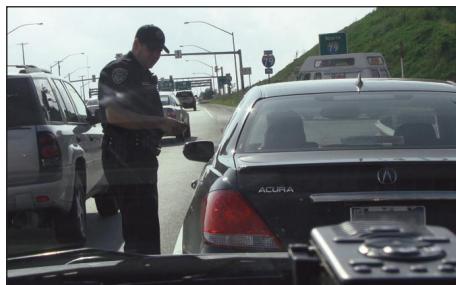
about it. I can't see the state. I can't see anything because of that metal frame around there."

Och notifies Butler Control. "I'm going to be out with traffic on 228 westbound at Mars Road," he says, and reads off the license plate number of the car he's just pulled over.

### Pullover

There's a certain science to stopping cars on the highway. "I'll leave eight to ten feet between me and that car," he said, signaling its driver to pull over to the guiderail in front of the patrol car, while leaving the Explorer about three feet closer to the roadway. "I'm offset a little bit which gives me a safety zone so I don't get hit by passing traffic. Traffic isn't going to come around my car and then swerve back in. That's why we offset the car like that."

Och punches the motorist's license plate number into the Explorer's laptop. Soon, the computer rings like a telephone, signaling him that the state has an answer. "The vehicle checked ok," he noted. "It's not expired or suspended. And his driver's license checks okay. So I'm just going to give him a written warning and he's going to be on his way. It gives him five days to get the problem taken care of before we send out a subsequent ticket. But I'm sure he'll remove his license plate frame."



**Fair warning.** A motorist along Rt. 228 whose license plate information was largely obscured by an oversize frame is issued a warning to fix the problem within five days to avoid a citation.



**Ten-Four.** Like the officers in dozens of police departments directed by Butler 911, Patrolman William Och reports each service call and location to the dispatcher at both the start and conclusion of every incident.

### No rules

Another quick check with Butler Dispatch – an 'all-clear' code 10-23 – and Och is back on patrol, this time slowly cruising through several residential neighborhoods. "A lot of people from Cranberry associate where they live with the name of their plan," he observed. "But as a patrol officer, Butler dispatch gives me a street address. So there's a much better chance of my knowing where that street address is instead of what plan it's in. That's how I have to write reports."

However on this hot summer afternoon, everything is quiet in Clearbrook and in nearby Cranberry West, giving Och a chance to reflect on the day's events and the teamwork that made it all work out. "Just from our experience of working together, if that man on drugs had become combative, or the ambulance personnel weren't able to restrict his movements, we would have certainly have helped. We've all been here for a while and we have a good working relationship. I didn't have to give them orders; they all knew what I needed. And if one of the other officers was doing what I was doing – copying down the information – I would have been the one looking to collect evidence of drugs. That's just the way it works" ~

# How Do You Get To The Cranberry Dog Park?

*First, you wait until the road gets built*

Cranberry dog owners were hoping to have a special place available this year where their pets could run off leash. But it didn't happen. Thorny issues involving vehicle access to the place where the dog park is planned held the project back. Now, however, the Township has been given a green light to proceed with an application to the state DEP and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for permission to build a new access road. It would cross the wetland between Community Park and the adjacent farm which Cranberry bought in 2006. If the application is approved anytime during the next eight months, it will be built and completed in time for summer 2008.

"A very complete, in-depth analysis report is required for that application," according to Cranberry Parks & Recreation Director Mike Diehl. "It wasn't our first choice, but ultimately, this became the best

method of gaining access to the site for the long term. In the application, you have to demonstrate that this is your best option. And once you disturb wetlands, you have to mitigate and replace them. So if we disturb an acre of wetlands, we have to create another acre of wetlands someplace nearby."

"The approval process will take approximately six to eight months," Diehl noted. "It's not that it's terribly complicated. I don't think construction will be a difficult process. It's something we plan to do with our own in-house crew."

Once approved, park construction would begin with the award of a fencing contract to build the enclosure. The rest involves items such as picnic benches, trash receptacles, and drinking fountain connections for dogs and people.

The effort to create a Cranberry dog park has been led by the Rotary



**Doggie downer.** Although Cranberry Dog Park couldn't be built this year, as expected, an application is in the works for a DEP permit to build a permanent road connecting Community Park to the site of the new dog park.

Club of Cranberry Township and supported by a large number of individuals, organizations and businesses. "Our supporters are disappointed that we couldn't build it this year," Diehl acknowledged. "But they understand we have to follow the letter of the law and they're still waiting eagerly for us to move forward." ~



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