



## KINDRED SPIRIT

Southmont Borough

Volume 33

Fall/Winter 2008

### Message from the Southmont Borough Council

This is the time of year the following items should be reviewed by residents...

#### Sidewalks & Curbs

Current Borough ordinance #'s 39, 397 and 403 provide that all owners (or agent of owner), with property abutting or fronting upon any street, are required to keep the public walkway immediately abutting their property in good repair. The Borough will inspect and the property owner will be notified that repairs are necessary. The property owner should notify the Borough office on their intention to fix the sidewalks. If not notified, the Borough will contract to have the work done at the property owner's expense.

#### Snow Removal

Residents are requested not to plow, shovel or blow snow from their sidewalks or driveways back into the street. When clearing your driveway, push snow to the right of your driveway or "down stream". It is impossible not have snow pushed into your driveways.

Priority is given to streets along bus routes and hills, secondary streets and alleys are done as quickly as possible. Residents have been requested to park in their driveway or off the main streets during heavier snow conditions, to better accommodate snow plows and material spreading vehicles.

#### Establishing Tree Limb and Shrub Clearance at Sidewalks, Roadways and Alleys

Borough Ordinance #420 states the following:

1. It shall be the responsibility if the abutting property owner to trim and maintain all trees and shrubs growing along the sidewalks, roadways and alleys of Southmont Borough
2. No mature tree limbs have a clearance of less than seven (7) feet above the surface of the sidewalk or twelve (12) feet above the surface of a roadway or alley.

3. Shrubs and hedges shall not impinge on the free passage on the full width of the surface of sidewalks, roadways and alleys. If necessary, the Southmont Borough Council should be contacted on proper trimming or interpretation of possible violations.

To view these and other Southmont Borough Ordinances, visit our webpage at :

[www.southmontborough.com](http://www.southmontborough.com).



Council wishes all residents to have a safe and happy holiday season. If you have any suggestions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Borough Office at 255-3104.

#### Special points of interest:

- **FALL BRUSH CLEAN-UP** is canceled this year.
- **TRICK OR TREAT** will be on Friday, October 31st from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.
- **LEAF COLLECTION** at curb side October 13th thru November 30th
- **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME** ends Sunday, November 2—set clocks back one hour.
- **THE BOROUGH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED** Thursday and Friday, November 27th and November 28th for Thanksgiving; Thursday, December 25th for Christmas; Thursday, January 1st for New Years Day.
- **WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE** will run one day behind on the following holiday weeks: Thanksgiving Day November 27, Antlered Deer Season November 24th, Christmas Day December 25th and New Years Day January 1st.

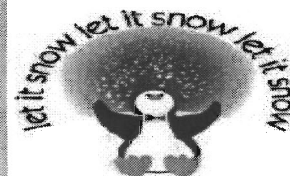
### NOTICE: Property Owners with Rentals

Southmont Borough has passed two Ordinances amending both the Garbage Collection fees and Sewer Maintenance fees. According to Ordinance #473, all garbage fees will now be the property owners responsibility. Ordinance #474, amends and provides that all Sewer Maintenance fees and penalties will also become the property owners responsibility. Beginning with the January 2009 bi-annual billing. This notice is to give property owners ample time to make adjustments with their tenants. These amended Ordinances are necessary due to the high costs of tracking past due account, left by the tenants. Many new residents ignore the Moving Permit Ordinance and by the time we learn who the new tenant is, they have already moved and leave an unpaid balance. Property owners have always been responsible for any unpaid balances for sewer maintenance and garbage fees. These fees, left unpaid, are lienable against the property. The amended Ordinances are available in the Borough office, for review.

### Fall Brush Clean-Up Canceled

The Borough will not be having a Fall Brush Clean-Up this year. But don't give up hope yet, just follow these guidelines and you can kick your brush straight to the curb with your regular garbage pick up.

- **Make sure limbs are cut down to no longer than 4 ft.**
- **Bundle and tie together any large pile of brush. (If you do not have a large amount of limbs they do not need to be tied, but please place in an easily gathered pile)**
- **Leaves and yard waste must be placed in bags.**



#### Office Hours:

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m

148 Wonder Street  
Johnstown, PA 15905

Phone: 255-3104

E-Mail:  
[smtboro@atlanticbbn.net](mailto:smtboro@atlanticbbn.net)

Webpage:



## The National Arbor Day Foundation

Planting a tree is the ultimate act of optimism and sharing. It is the one act within reach of nearly every man, woman and child to improve the environment and make this world a better place. It is repayment of our debt to nature for the air we breathe and the joy we know from bird songs, summer shade or the calming beauty of shimmering leaves.

Thank you for your membership and for planting Trees for America.

A message from John Rosenow, President of The National Arbor Day Foundation

*"It is the one act of every man, woman and child to improve the environment and make this world a better place"*

### The Value of Mulch

A young tree's best friend, mulch insulates soil, retains moisture, keeps out weeds, prevents soil compaction, reduces lawn mower damage, and adds an aesthetic touch to a yard or street. Remove any grass within a 3-foot area and pour organic mulch such as wood chips or bark pieces 2 to 4 inches deep within the circle. Keep the mulch from touching the trunk of the tree.



### TREE FACTS

Fall is a good time to plant. Follow planting instructions, making sure the soil is moist so the roots do not dry out. Even through the tops of deciduous trees are dormant, some root growth continues beneath the surface. This will help get your tree established and ready to grow earnestly in the Spring.

## You Can Encourage the Roots of your Trees to Grow Deep and Safely Out of Harm's

### Watering

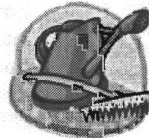
Short, frequent waterings wet only the top few inches of soil and encourage roots to grow near the surface. Water longer and less frequently, letting the soil become moist to a depth of several feet. Drilling can aid deep watering.

One inch of water per week is recommended, applied slowly within the entire drip line (area under the spread of the tree's crown) and just beyond. You may want to water from a gently running gar-

den hose for 4 to 6 hours on a weekly basis.

### Holes

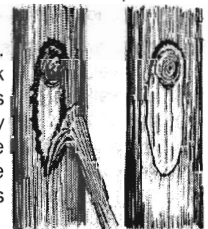
Every 2-3 years, 3 or 4 holes approximately 1-2 inches in diameter may be drilled or water-jetted at an angle down and outward from near the base of the tree. The holes allow penetration of water and oxygen.



### How To Repair Torn Bark

Torn or stripped bark is the result of limbs being violently broken from the tree by wind or branches falling from above. To improve appearance and eliminate hiding places for insects, carefully use a chisel or sharp knife to smooth ragged edges

of dead or dying bark. Removed the bark back to the point at which it is attached to the tree. Try not to expose any more inner bark. Shaping the tear into an ellipse has more aesthetic value



than effect on wound closure. If you do this traditional method, round the ends to prevent dieback of the inner bark at these points. Keep the wound as narrow as you can to hasten wound closing.

## Turn Your Waste into Compost!

Autumn is already here and the leaves will soon be falling. What will you do with all those leaves? Some residents bag the leaves and they end up in a landfill. Others rake them to the curb, where they may get blown or washed into storm sewers. The best alternative is composting. Composting has the ability to provide soil with the key nutrients needed for optimum plant growth. Leaves and grass clipping are great "ingredients" for a compost pile.

It is very easy to get started! All you need is an enclosed area of 3 cubic feet. It can be enclosed with a fence, straw bales, wood or concrete blocks.

Once you have the structure, start adding

the grass and leaf mixture. By turning the pile every week, adding moisture and shredding the "ingredients," you can speed up the decomposition process.

The compost is ready to use when the pile shrinks down and no longer generates heat. Spread about 1" over your garden each season to provide a fertile, well drained material. The composted material can be placed in the bottom of the holes you dig when planting and also in the pots you use. Yard debris and food wastes make up 35% of all municipal waste. By composting you reduce the price of hauling material, save landfill space and also provide your soil with the nutrients it needs to thrive.



### TRICK OR TREAT

Trick or Treat night will be Friday, October 31st from 6—8 p.m.





## West Hills Regional Police Department



As we celebrate our 30th year of operation, the West Hills Regional Police want to emphasize that we do proudly serve the four municipalities that comprise the West Hills Regional Police Commission and have proudly and conscientiously done so since 1978 when Westmont and Brownstown Boroughs joined together to create the Police Commission. Subsequently, those municipalities were joined by Southmont Borough and Lower Yoder Township. The West Hills Regional Police Commission has operated successfully for these past 30 years because the officials of the four municipalities have worked together in harmony to save tax payer dollars and to provide a safe environment for their residents. Chief Andrew T. Havas, oversees the Department with the assistance of Det. Sgt. George Musulin, III, (Criminal Investigator) and Corporal Michael W. Lose. The Administrative Secretary is Judith A. Fetcko. Police headquarters is located at the rear of the Westmont Borough Municipal Building at 1000 Luzerne Street. The administrative staff is available between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and

4:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday. The Department does provide 24/7 coverage, and an Officer can be contacted at any time by calling either the non-emergency 9-1-1 number or 1-800-281-1680 or the office number of 255-4145 (which will roll over to the 9-1-1 non-emergency number if no one is in the office). However, Police caution residents to immediately dial 9-1-1 if there is an emergency situation.

Now that the 2008-2009 school year is underway, numerous school buses are on the roadways, along with many children walking to and from school. The West Hills Police ask drivers be extra cautious and particularly observant for the safety of the children. Also, the speed limit in school zones in the morning before school begins and in the afternoon when school is over is **15 mph**. For the safety of the children, and the officers who provide traffic control, it is imperative that drivers obey the speed limit and the Officers' directions. In addition, there are

stiff fines for drivers who fail to comply.

Another concern for drivers during the autumn months are wet leaves and black ice on the roadways. These conditions have been the cause of numerous accidents and the Police ask that drivers be particularly cautious when driving on wet roadways at this time of the year. The speed trailer will be set up at various locations in the West Hills area to advise drivers of their speed and to remind them to stay within the speed limit.

We again remind you that gun locks are available, free of charge, at Police Headquarters and it is not necessary to be a resident of the West Hills area to request these safety devices.

The West Hills Regional Police and Secretary would also like to take this opportunity to wish Southmont residents a pleasant upcoming holiday season.



## Southmont Volunteer Fire Company

Greetings from Southmont Volunteer Fire Company! I am writing this article during Fire Prevention Week so I would like to begin with a few fire safety tips. This year, the National Fire Protection Agency's campaign is "prevent home fires." Did you know that over 80% of civilian fire deaths occur in the home? This is an outstanding number and most residential fires are easily preventable if we take the steps to increase our safety. Take a few moments and walk through your home to see if there are any potential dangers that need to be addressed.

These are five common fire safety issues:

1. **Heating:** Winter is fast approaching.

Keep anything that can burn, such as paper, bedding, and draperies at least three feet from heaters. Portable space heaters are nice and economic, but they can be dangerous. Make sure that you keep them away from anything that could catch on fire.

2. **Cooking:** Please remember that it is very important to stay in the kitchen while you cook. If you must leave the kitchen, turn off the stove.

3. **Candles:** Keep them away from furniture, bedding, carpets, paper, books, etc.

4. **Electrical Cords:** Take time to check your cords for any cuts, tears or fraying.

5. **Smoking:** If you smoke, go outside. Also be

sure to use deep ashtrays and make sure everything is out prior to discarding the smoking materials.

In other news, the department is looking to purchase a new fire engine to replace our current 25-year-old engine. The overall cost of this endeavor will exceed \$300,000. We recently held a boot drive and raised money to kick off the campaign. We will also be hosting our annual Holiday Cash raffle in December. Please help out the department by selling or purchasing tickets. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Have a safe and Happy Holiday Season!

Michael Leckey, Fire Chief

## From the desk of Borough Manager Richard Wargo

At this time I would like to thank you, the residents of Southmont Borough, for your cooperation throughout the past few months. Property maintenance is one of the many things Southmont Borough residents can take pride in and I would like to thank all of you for doing your part in beautifying the Borough. I would also like to thank the residents who have worked with us to resolve any property maintenance issues we have had.

Also, throughout the next few months the Borough of Southmont will be conducting inspections of storm water discharge systems in accordance with a directive from the Department of Environmental Protection. The Borough has been directed by DEP to eliminate surface water from entering the sanitary sewer system. A Borough Official will be inspecting the downspouts and drains and he or she will have proper identification and may be making inquiries about your storm water outlets.

## Moving Permits—Why?

Partly so we get to meet you. Partly so we know when you leave us. Mostly so we know to charge you for garbage collection and sewer maintenance. So we need to know when you move into and, of course, when you move out because you don't want to continue to pay for garbage and sewer maintenance if you no longer own the property. Of course, if you move out and still own an empty property, you still need to pay for their garbage and sewer maintenance fees.

Mayor Gerry Sloat





148 Wonder Street  
Johnstown, PA 15905  
Phone: 814-255-3104  
Fax: 814-255-4150  
Email: smtboro@tdanetcbn.net

Southmont Borough

Johnstown, PA

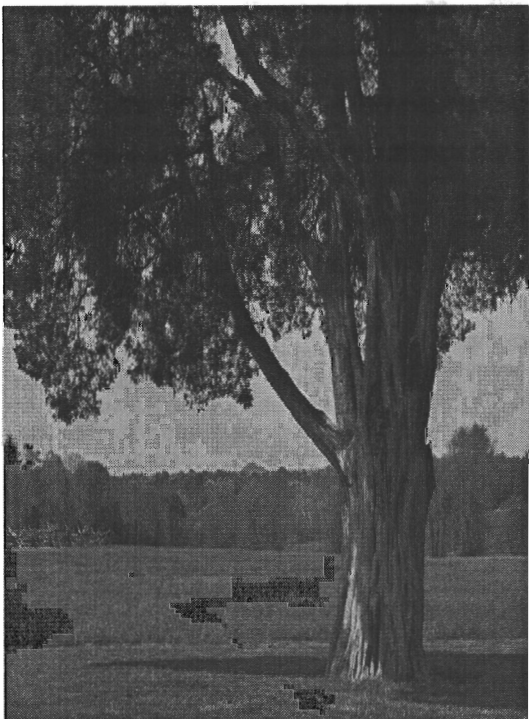
Permit No. 468

PAID

U.S. Postage

Presorted Standard

## SHADE TREE COMMISSION



The Shade Tree Commission was instituted by Council with Ordinance #69 in 1927, and amended by Ordinance #420, dated June 2002, as envisioned by Council, and is primarily advisory.

**MEMBERS:** William Krupa, Chairman & Herb Ewald

**Advisory Committee:** Mary Ann Kory, Jennifer Drummey, Judy Kelly, Ellen Singleton, Betsy Seifert and Elizabeth Mayer

**Yes,** I want to sponsor a tree and help Southmont Borough renew its Urban Forest. Enclosed is a check for \$100.00 or more.

Name of Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of whom the tree is planted \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes,** I would like to contribute to Southmont Borough's Urban Forest Project, in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions are tax deductible and very much appreciated by all who enjoy, daily, the beauty and tranquility of Southmont Borough Urban Forest

The Shade Tree Committee would like to thank Robert Pasternack, Lizzie Hammer and the Buchen family for their contributions.