

## Item Briefs

### Today's weather



**Forecast:**  
Sunny and warm. High 84.  
**Illustration:**  
Matt Kerber, age 6  
Grade 1  
Penn-Bernville Elementary

### Hamburg grad to join Phillies

Hamburg alumni Nick Evangelista was drafted in the 26th round to play for the Philadelphia Phillies a couple weeks ago.

He left his Shoemakersville home June 14 for Clearwater, Fla., where he will train with Phillies' rookie team, the Gulf Coast League Phillies.

For full story, see page 9.

### School district plans for future

Hamburg Area School District's Board recently heard a presentation on how to best plan for the future use of its elementary schools.

Options for the district include renovating its current buildings or constructing new ones. All choices come with a hefty price tag.

For full story, see page 8.

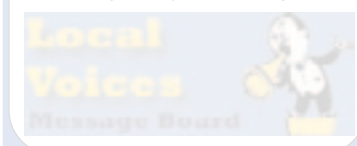
### Free blood test screening

The Pa. Department of Health (PADOH) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are hosting a free blood lead screening for children over six months and up to the age of five years in Hamburg on Aug. 21.

The screens will be held in conjunction with Community Days from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Hamburg Park.

### berksmontnews.com

Log on today to answer the question of the week. You also can post a message about a topic you feel strongly about. Voice your opinion today.



### Local news for local people, on-line.

### Winner of the



Item photo by Mandy Zerr

**UP, DOWN AND ALL AROUND.** Officer Mike Hanik gives student drunk Scott Ferguson the eye test portion of a field sobriety test.

## Drinking for education

By Mandy Zerr  
Item Writer

I'd like to tell you about my day as a volunteer drinker for the Berks County District Attorney's office, but I was too drunk to remember most of it.

I do remember licking some spilled alcohol off the table, but that's only because *Channel 69 News* graciously included that clip of me on their newscast June 10.

My parents were so proud. But it was all done in the name of education. I was only doing my part to help out some Berks County police officers learn how a bunch of drunks would act on the street.

Once a year, the Berks District Attorney's office puts together a

class to teach police officers how to give the field sobriety test and what clues to look for from people who are over the legal alcohol limit of 0.08.

This year, there were 18 police officers from 16 police departments around the county attending, including one from Northern Berks Police Department.

The class is four days long with two days of practical application. But in order to enact a practical application, you need some drunks.

That's where I, along with 10 other volunteer drinkers, came in. The idea was to get drunk and over the legal limit, but not ridiculously drunk. That way, the officers could see first hand how

someone on the lower end of the

intoxication spectrum would act.

That was the idea. Whether it worked is a different story.

"Officers must recognize signs of intoxication on the street," Gary Gardner, one of the class's three instructors, told us before we began drinking. "You guys are gonna be drunk, but not staggering or falling down drunk. Well, some of you might."

And some of us were. One of us got violently ill (it wasn't me) and another took my notebook from me and proceeded to give interviews.

You can see evidence of my increasing intoxication level just by looking at my notebook. My notes start out looking legible, but

See **DRINKING**, page 3.

## Pool proposal is passed

By Mandy Zerr  
Item Writer

Leesport residents may want to check in with the borough before diving into a swimming pool purchase.

At a June 16 meeting, borough council approved a seasonal pool ordinance requiring inflatable, temporary pools to have a 4-foot fence or barrier around them.

Council President Brad Reinert said the fence or barrier is necessary for safety. Council wants to prevent small children from gaining easy access to the pool and drowning.

Building codes already require a fence around residential pools. Resident Michelle Kepley was concerned that because of the ordinance, she will have to pay thousands of dollars to construct a fence for a temporary pool that cost her about \$300.

She said it was impossible for kids to fall into her pool as the sides are high and require a 6-foot ladder to enter.

Solicitor Paul Essig said the construction of the pool could be

considered the required barrier.

Reinert said a code enforcement officer will look at seasonal pools in the borough and decide which have a built-in barrier and which will not require an extra fence.

The ordinance, which only applies to pools with water 24 inches or more deep, also states pools must be in the rear yard and may not have any attached decks or platforms.

Seasonal pools do not have to be placed 10 feet from property lines as the zoning ordinance formerly required, Essig said.

"We want to work with people who have smaller yards," Reinert added.

Seasonal pools can only be used from the third week of May to the first week in September.

As written, the adopted ordinance only applies to inflatable, temporary pools. But council will vote to amend the ordinance to include seasonal pools that are not inflatable at next month's meeting.

Residents must pay \$5 each season for a temporary pool permit. Applications are available at

the borough office.

Residents not adhering to the ordinance could be fined up to \$600.

Council also discussed the possibility of a motorized vehicle ordinance prohibiting people on motorized scooters, mini-bikes and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) from using borough streets, sidewalks and community parks.

Reinert would also like to limit use of these vehicles to an age closer to 16-years-old. He said such recreational vehicles are not safe for young children.

"I don't think there's enough information about these scooters when they're sold to parents," he said. "They don't know they (the scooters) can cause problems."

Essig will draft a motorized vehicle ordinance to be reviewed at a future meeting.

In other news, council appointed Ronald Kohler to the borough's sewer authority.

Kohler replaces Charles Moody, who recently resigned.

Contact Mandy Zerr at [mbz\\_err@berksmontnews.com](mailto:mbz_err@berksmontnews.com).

## Area residents question zoning

By Nikki M. Murry  
Item Editor

Hamburg Zoning Officer John Leonforte gave a brief overview of a proposed zoning ordinance for the borough before residents pointed out the plan's flaws during a June 14 public hearing.

Leonforte said the newly suggested map for the borough has been in development for two years now and has been discussed at planning commission meetings, many of which saw poor attendance from citizens.

But residents and business owners alike had something to say

about the plan at the hearing, held during borough council's regularly-scheduled meeting.

It seemed that overall, residents liked the new zoning's overall goal of adapting the plan to how

See **ZONING**, page 8.

## Casings in Hamburg investigated

The Environmental Protection Agency is currently investigating if Hamburg should be put on a National Priority List to clean up lead sites in the borough.

By Nikki M. Murry  
Item Editor

It's been said it will be years before Hamburg residents see the men in white suits pack up and leave the borough.

Meaning, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has its hands full with lead clean-up efforts in the area.

Most recently, in a meeting with borough officials, EPA representatives asked them to consider adopting a "call before you dig ordinance."

Such legislation would require those doing any kind of work on their property involving the moving of soil, from planting a tree to building an addition onto a home, to call a trained borough official to test the site beforehand.

David Sternberg, with EPA's Public Relations Office, said the ordinance would help minimize bringing batteries to the surface unknowingly, minimizing potentially harmful effects on a citizen's health.

Now one may think, if the EPA would propose such an ordinance for Hamburg, there must be a serious lead problem in the borough.

You'd think right.

The EPA has been working on battery clean-up in the area since the mid-1990s, said Gregory Hamm an EPA employee working on-site in Hamburg.

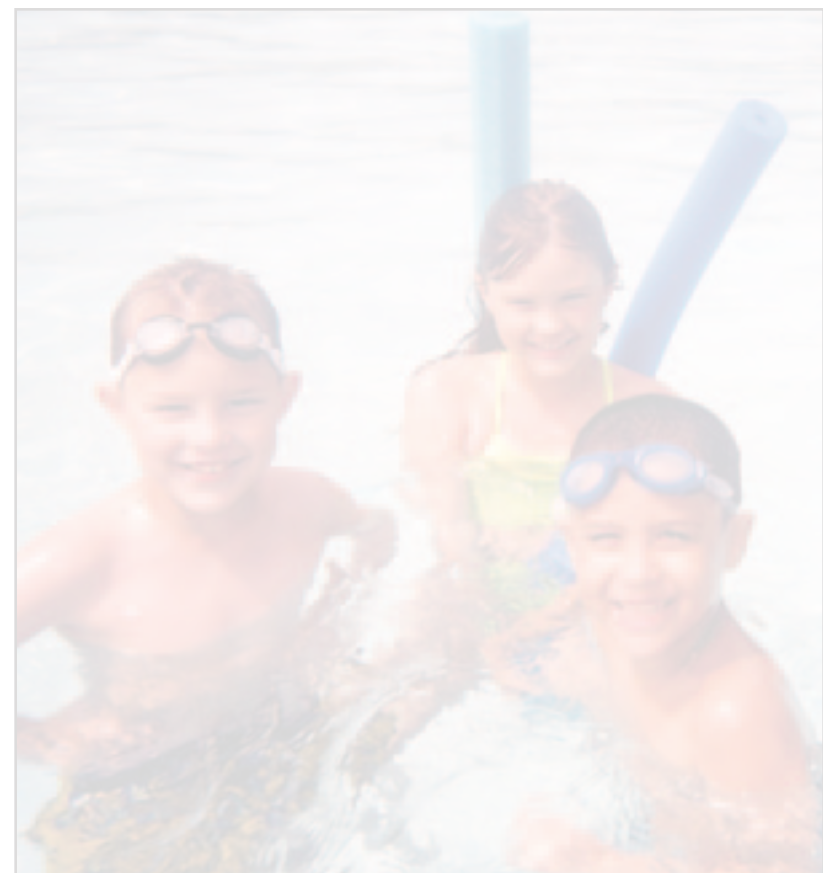
"We just keep finding additional sites," explained Hamm.

More specifically, noted Hamburg Borough Solicitor John J. Speicher at a council meeting last month, the EPA originally planned to clean three battery casing contamination sites in the borough, and most recently, has reported 28.

And aside from buried batteries, EPA workers are also stripping lead-laden soil on hundreds of properties in Hamburg and are doing clean-ups in a substantial number of homes, caused by fumes given off by a smelter operated by now-defunct Price Battery, which made its home on Grand Street.

All this could be why the EPA is currently conducting an investigation on whether or not certain areas of Hamburg should be put on what's called a National Priorities List for clean-up.

See **CLEAN-UP**, page 3.



**FUN IN THE SUN.** (Clockwise from left) Jacob and Sara Pettit of Lenhartsville take a dip in the pool with Fresh Air Child Marcus Millitrano.

## Visits provide a breath of fresh air

By Eric Veronikis  
Item Writer

Each summer, children living in The Big Apple are afforded a two-week vacation to the country.

The Fresh Air Fund, based out of New York City, places children ages six to 18, with families willing to add another member to their family for 14 days.

Since 1877, over 1.7 million children have enjoyed summer vacations via the fund.

Today, families in over 300 towns throughout the northeastern United States and Canada welcome city youths.

So far this year, eight homes

have signed on to participate in Berks County.

This summer will mark the second time the Pettit family of Lenhartsville will welcome seven-year-old Marcus Millitrano of Manhattan.

The Pettits learned of the program through their church, Zion's United Church of Christ, Hamburg.

Each year, a bus carrying Fresh Air Fund children drops the youngsters off at the church.

From there, their new families take them into their homes and introduce the kids to nature.

See **VISITS**, page 3.

# Fund looking for host families

VISITS, from page 1.

"He was very excited and wanted to see everything," Amy Pettit said of Millitrano, who is now considered part of the family.

During last year's visit, Amy said the family took Millitrano camping, swimming and fishing, all activities the boy rarely, if ever, had a chance to try his hand at back home.

Since his last visit, Amy's daughter Sara has promoted the Fresh Air Fund several times through Girl Scouts.

She spoke to her junior troop of Hamburg once, and she also spread the word to the Hamburg Brownie Troop and their families.

Sara shared her family's experience with both groups.

"The first day we had Marcus he drove me crazy because he kept asking to go to the park," Sara said. "At first, we said we couldn't go. But when we figured out that he meant our backyard instead of the park, it was easy. All we had to do was go outside and play on our swing set."

The visit was a learning experience on both ends.

Millitrano was able to gain a glimpse into life in the country while sharing his experience with the Pettits.

"The best part about having Marcus was that he was so nice. He really wanted to be part of our family," Sara explained. "We also liked learning about his life too."

We thought it was strange that he never ate corn on the cob, and he was so thrilled when he got to help husk the corn and eat it too."

The Fresh Air Fund hopes to acquire 25 host families locally this year, but they need more help.

This is why Sara is spreading the word.

In the beginning, Amy said her husband Matthew was hesitant to participate, but after learning more on the program from Hamburg Area Fresh Air Fund Chairman Betty Atkinson, they agreed. It was a decision Amy and Atkinson said he never regretted.

"It's fun to do something for another child," Atkinson explained. "And it forms a friendship that lasts a lifetime."

Amy shared the same sentiments. As she looked through a Fresh Air Fund pamphlet describing the program, she agreed with one quote found inside that read, "It's been wonderful. We thought it would be fun, but we didn't know how much fun."

Millitrano and others will arrive on July 19 and leave August 2.

Other trip dates are from June 29 to July 13 and August 9-13.

Anyone interested in hosting a Fresh Air Fund child this summer can contact Atkinson at 610-562-9639 or 1-800-367-0003 ext. 8966.

Contact Eric Veronikis at [ericv@berksmontnews.com](mailto:ericv@berksmontnews.com).

OBITS, from page 2.

## Verna G. Greenawalt, 98

Services were held in the Burkey & Driscoll Funeral Home, Hamburg, for Verna G. Greenawalt, formerly of Hamburg, who died June 12 in Laurel Center Genesis Elder Care, Tilden Township, where she was a resident since February 2003. Burial was in St. John's Cemetery, Hamburg.

She was predeceased by her husband, Irwin W. Greenawalt, on Dec. 16, 1963.

Born in Tilden Township, she was a daughter of the late George S. and Lillie J. (Ketner) Wagner.

Until her retirement in 1977, she was employed as a machine operator by Windsor Knitting Mill, Hamburg, for 49 years.

She was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church, Hamburg. Surviving are several nieces and nephews.

## Laura L. Yessler, 84

Private services were held for Laura L. Yessler, formerly of Reading, who died June 8 in Laurel Center Genesis Elder Care, Tilden Township. Private burial was in Berks County Memorial Gardens, Maiden Creek Township.

She was predeceased by her husband, Celious M. Yessler, on Feb. 12, 2002.

Born in Bernville, she was a daughter of the late Milton and Sadie (Burns) Troutman.

Surviving are a daughter, Fern (Yessler) Baker, Bethel, and seven grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Also surviving are a brother, Harvey Troutman, Kenhorst; and three sisters: Mary (Troutman) Bender, Wernersville; Elsie (Troutman) Fisher, Womelsdorf; and Kathryn (Troutman) Johnson, Shillington.

Sanders Funeral Home and Cremation Services Inc. was in charge of arrangements.

To contact our office, call 610-562-7515

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WHERE:	Sheraton Reading Hotel 1741 Papermill Road, Wyomissing
INFO:	Admission is FREE. Seating is limited. Registration required. Call 610-988-HELP (4357).



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# Meet the drinkers

By Mandy Zerr  
Item Writer

Eleven people, including myself, volunteered to be drunks on June 10 to help Berks County police officers taking a class on the field sobriety test. Student officers saw first hand how someone over the legal limit of 0.08 would act during the test.

But it takes a dedicated person to drink hard liquor in the morning hours.

Volunteers all had their own reasons for volunteering, but oddly enough, free alcohol and an excuse to get drunk had nothing to do with it.

Scott Ferguson, 21, of Kutztown was volunteering as a favor to his big brother, who was a student in the class.

"My brother is going to drill me hard core," he said before taking the test. "I won't make it harder on him though because I know I'll get it 10 times worse later!"

Nancy Bubbenmoyer, 33, of West Lawn, works as a dispatcher for Wyomissing Police Department. She volunteered "partly to help the guys out, partly to see my alcoholic tolerance level," she said.

She doesn't drink much she said, but when she does, it's definitely not at 9 a.m.

"But it's all right," Bubbenmoyer said, all smiles with a rum and Coke in hand. "It's for educational purposes."

By 10 a.m., Bubbenmoyer's co-worker, Eric Kohl, 28, of Reading, was asking, "Is anybody else buzzing?"

It's safe to assume we all were.

To be a volunteer drinker for next year's field sobriety testing class, contact Lt. Dave Brickel in the Berks County District Attorney's office at 610-478-3477. The class is held once a year, usually in the spring.

Contact Mandy Zerr at [mbzerr@berksmontnews.com](mailto:mbzerr@berksmontnews.com).



The aftermath of a day of drinking for this volunteer.

# Drunk for good reason

DRINKING, from page 1.

by the end, they are atrocious. One of the volunteers said they look like I wrote them with an Etch-a-Sketch.

But what do you expect when two police officers are systematically dosing you with alcohol for four hours?

They meticulously measured out the amount of alcohol in each mixed drink (there was no wine or beer). My drink of choice was vodka with cranberry juice.

If a drink was spilled, we had to tell our dosing officers so they could measure how much was left in the cup (which is what led to me licking my bit of spilled alcohol off the table).

We were given a certain amount of time to drink our mixer, anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes, and 20 minutes after we finished it, we were given eye and breathalyzer tests.

In the meantime, the volunteers played a drinking card game, the name of which is a "bad word." We also listened to music and just generally laughed it up. We might have started out shy and quiet, but we quickly became the best of

buds.

At about 1:30 p.m., we went into another room and were given the same field sobriety test by all 18 officers.

The hardest part was the eye test. We followed their pen around in all directions with only our eyes. The student cops showed no mercy, putting the pen far out to the left or right or high above our heads. I was ready to fall over backwards more than once.

Then there was the walk on a line and turn around test, not to mention the stand on one leg test. You'd think it would get easier after doing it over a dozen times, but it didn't.

It turns out that very few of us would have gotten away with drunk driving. All 18 officers would have arrested me.

It was that stupid eye test.

After three drinks and eight ounces of vodka, I had the third highest blood alcohol level at .149. The highest was .151.

Gardner told me I was an efficient drinker. In other words, I'm a cheap date.

Contact Mandy Zerr at [mbzerr@berksmontnews.com](mailto:mbzerr@berksmontnews.com).

# Contamination could make Hamburg a priority

CLEAN-UP, from page 1.

Whether or not the borough will make the list will be based on results from the testing which will reveal the potential for people to be exposed to contaminants and what those substances are, said Sternberg.

More specifically, EPA officials will test the level of toxins in the borough, their level of harmfulness and the possibility of them spreading throughout the municipi-

pality.

If Hamburg is put on the list, more federal money could be designated for clean-up, or the company responsible for the contamination may be required to foot the bill.

Sternberg said a decision on if Hamburg will be named a National Priority should be made by fall.

Contact Nikki M. Murry at [nmurry@berksmontnews.com](mailto:nmurry@berksmontnews.com).

# What's Happening



## Wednesday, June 23

- Blue Mtn. Senior Center, Hamburg: Picnic at Hamburg Fish and Game at 10:30 a.m.; entertainment by Chuck Barr; Penny Pound Action at 11:30 a.m.; Intro. to the Internet at 12:30 p.m.

## Thursday, June 24

- Blue Mtn. Senior Center, Hamburg: Strength Training at 10:30 a.m.; Nutrition Program "Food to keep you cool in the summertime" at 10:30 p.m.

## Friday, June 25

- Blue Mtn. Senior Center, Hamburg: Basket Bingo at 10:15 a.m.

## Saturday, June 26

- Kauffman's Chicken BBQ at St. Thomas UCC from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- Warm Fuzzy Ferrets Presents Ferret Fun and Information Day for your ferrets at The Leesport Farmers Market.

## Sunday, June 27

- Brass in Praise Concert at Haag's Pavilion at 3 p.m.

## Monday, June 28

- Blue Mtn. Senior Center, Hamburg: Walking Club at 9 a.m.; Bake Sale at 10:15 a.m.; Bingo at 10:15 p.m.

- Penn Township Supervisors at 7 p.m.

- Hamburg Borough Council at 7:30 p.m.

- Schuylkill Valley School Board at 7:30 p.m.

- Upper Bern Township Planning Commission Meeting at 7 p.m.

- Leesport Area Historical Society Group Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in Schoolhouse

## Tuesday, June 29

- Blue Mtn. Senior Center, Hamburg: Creating summer time gifts for Meals on Wheels Recipients at 10:30 a.m.; Pokeno at 11:15 a.m.

- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting to be held at Zion's Lutheran Church at 7 p.m.

## Wednesday, June 30

- Blue Mtn. Senior Center, Hamburg: Understanding the mysteries of palm reading at 10:30 a.m.; Shuffleboard Tournament at 12:30 p.m.; Intro. to the Internet at 12:30 p.m.

- Blue Mtn. Senior Center, Hamburg: Picnic with Topton and Muhlenberg at the Hamburg Fish & Game at 10:30 a.m.

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