

THE FOREST CITY NEWS

ODDS'N ENDS

by

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&

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If not for COVID and the politically manipulated lockdowns, partial openings, rule changes and data-less social, church, business and school interruptions, this was without a doubt the most beautiful summer we have had in years and years in our area. Though some sections of our country have been plagued by drought, hurricanes, flash floods and wild fires, we have been shined upon by wonderful sunshine, balmy weather and just enough rainfall to grow the grass. We hear that Times Square will be empty on New Years Eve, but we will bet many will be very thankful and hopeful when the ball drops and 2021 lights up.

Met Allan Hornbeck Jr., on Main St. last Friday. He's been doing therapy recovering from past surgery, and enjoying life after his many years as owner of Allan Hornbeck Chevrolet. For years, yours truly, enjoyed pretty much weekly visits with both he and his father, Allan Sr. Miss both of them on our Main Street.

With the first deer season of the year starting Saturday, a friend showed me some bucks on trailcams that are almost unreal for our area. Won't give his name or say where these photos were taken but if there are other spots in Northeast PA like the one he scouts, this could be a banner year for deer.

It does appear this is the year for political signage. Can't go far without seeing one. Besides state and federal candidates there are four very important Constitutional Amendments to be voted on. The complete text is on pages 8-9 and my summary of them in common sense language is on this page. The most important one has to do with declaring states of emergency in Pa. After this year's experiences it might be time for a change.

If you want a great breakfast with some great folks, try East Ararat Methodist Church breakfast this Saturday starting at 7am. You can eat-in or take-out. They're located just off Rte. 17 past Arlo's in Ararat. We'll guarantee you will never get a bigger variety of treats.

The Salvation Army Food Pantry will be today, Thursday, from 9:30am, at Sacred Heart Church parking lot, off Dundaff St. Recipients have to be registered.

Time for flu shots at Red Cross Pharmacy. Now that's the regular winter flu not COVID. You can also pick up your Halloween decorations there.

Historical Soc. Museum Hours

The museum of the Forest City Area Historical Society at 631 Main St., is open every Saturday in October from 11 to 1pm.

Curator Barb Klobucar is available there to answer any questions.

Nov. voting Deadlines

October 27 is the last day to apply for Pennsylvania absentee and mail-in ballots. Nov. 3 (election day) is the last day to submit ballots.

FALL SPORTS NOW OPEN

Bowing to parental pressure Forest City Regional School Board approved opening all Fall Sports effective immediately at its Sept. 21 regular Board meeting. After hearing emails from nine parents and coaches the Board said OK by a 7-1 vote.

Board President Mary Emmett promised last month that the Board would address opening Fall Sports at every meeting. She introduced the discussion at the start of the Sept. 21 zoom meeting and had 11 emails read from parents and coaches. All pleaded for opening Fall Sports.

Pres. Emmett cast the only negative vote saying "The nurse in me says 'no'". The motion was made by Dr. Henry Nebzydoski and second by Dr. Brian Piatak. Also voting "yes" was: Directors Steve Ursich, Bernice Lukus, Chris Albright, Bill Heller and Fred Garm. Director Christina Priebe was absent. Directors Nebzydoski and Piatak had entered a re-opening motion at the last meeting but the motion was voted down.

Later in the meeting Superintendent Dr. Jessica Aquilina announced that volleyball, since it is an indoor sport while the rest of Fall sports are on outdoor venues, will not be able to allow spectators due to restrictions on indoor gatherings.

Among the emails read were:

Amy Zukosky who related how her son, who had dedicated his sports efforts to baseball, lost out in his senior year last year in being able to end his high school career with his teammates. She argued that sports provide much more than physical activity but also emotional and motivating attributes.

Judy Graham, in three emails, asked why other schools are participating but not FCR. School has been open for one week and no incidents. She asked the Board

to answer the parents and provide the data they were using in keeping the sports program closed.

Coach Joe Pleska explained that other schools in the Leagues have had more than 30 games without issues. He said student athletes are following all the health guidelines. He also asked for an explanation of the data on which the Board is making their decision.

Marie Britton said she has observed the soccer practices on the school field from 5:30 to 7:30pm but no league matches. She pleaded with the Board to treat all athletes equally since golfers can play but no soccer.

Kelly Williams stressed that other schools are open for their Fall sports with no issues. She noted that the FCR teams are still practicing.

Brady Hentschel reasoned that not having Fall Sports was doing more harm than good. He noted that sports are one way for students to relieve stress, and that it contributes greatly to school spirit. He said he wants to compete.

Vincent Thomas added his voice to those who want soccer league play to begin.

Kate Bronson, in two emails, contended that growth in sports helps growth in education, and maintained that for some students this may be their last year in sports. She also stressed that we are a small community which has been very low in infections, deaths and transmissions and that all students and athletes know what is required to be safe.

Athletic Director Brian Durkin announced that he had contacted athletic directors with the goal to have Forest City fill bye weeks that were built into the fall sports schedule. He said he hoped to work on an exhibition schedule.

ALMOST \$1 MILLION TO BE SAVED AT FCR IN BOND REFINANCE

It was like a gift from heaven as Forest City Regional School Board learned Sept. 21 that refinancing the school's 2015 school building reconstruction bond will save the District almost \$1 million over the 10-year life of the Bond.

At its July 27 meeting, the District voted unanimously to take the advice of Business Manager Michelle Gogolski to refinance the \$10 million bond issue due to the massive drop in bond rates caused by the pandemic.

On a zoom call July 27, Investment Advisor Henry Saluski, of RBC Capital Markets, explained that the bond's 2015 interest rate was 2.83% and had a five year call which would allow

it to be refinanced in 2020. He projected that by the time refinancing was completed October 22, 2020 the interest rate could be 1.89% for a savings of over \$600,000.

The very good news, announced by Mr. Saluski by zoom at the Sept. 21 meeting, was that the actual rate, which can be locked in that night, would be 1.37% for a savings of over \$900,000.

It also appeared that the refinancing costs have also been reduced by almost half. Saluski had given a \$132,000 cost estimate July 27 but, in response to a question from Director Dr. Henry Nebzydoski, said the cost will be \$63,680. He noted that the \$900,000 savings is the net of all costs.

FC Council recognizes Durmiaki



Mayor Chris Grinton recently recognized Mariyah Durmiaki, Forest City, who responded to an emergency in her neighborhood. She smelled smoke and using tips learned at "Fire Safety Week" in the school she made a call to 911 and the fire dept. responded and quickly contained the fire. Pictured left to right are Michelle Durmiaki, Police Chief Lee Rowan, Mariyah, Mayor Grinton, and Tania Durmiaki.

Dehaven Family Farm ready for Fall



Stop in to the Dehaven Family Farm, Rte. 171 in Herrick Center, for all your Fall decorating needs. They have fresh produce, mums, apples, pumpkins, corn stalks, hay bales, gourds and more!

Nov. 3rd voters will have very important Constitutional Amendments to consider

Voters on Nov. 3 will not only be voting for federal and state officials but will be asked to approve four constitutional amendments. If you have been reading newspapers in 2020 you will probably have seen full page ads, both in the Primary Election and now for the General Election, as required by law, listing the minute details of the four changes to the Pennsylvania Constitution.

These amendments will be on the Nov. 3rd ballot either on the front of the ballot or on an extra sheet of the ballot.

(The full listing is in this week's edition of The Forest City News on pages 8-9)

The most important of the four amendments, and the one receiving the most attention, is Joint Resolution No. 4 which takes away the authority of a governor to impose a disaster emergency declaration for an unlimited period of time.

If the amendment is approved, a governor may declare a disaster emergency for no more than 21 days

Trunk or Treat in FC Wed., Oct. 28

As autumn and winter approach, the Greater Forest City Business Alliance is looking to decorate the town, particularly on Main Street on October 28 from 5 PM to 8 PM. The GFCBA will be hosting a Trunk-or-Treat, along with a headless horseman, pumpkin painting and some good old-fashioned fun.

This event is planned to bring more people to patronize the businesses and organizations in Forest City. For this event, your business or group will have the opportunity to sponsor and carve a jack o'lantern. The pumpkins, with your name prominently shown, will be displayed on the 500 block of Main Street. Pumpkins will be donated by Frugal Living.

Furthermore, in a two-for-one decorating opportunity, all proceeds from the pumpkin sponsorship will go towards the Christmas Light Fund. The current Main Street lights are in desperate need of replacement, so new ones are needed across the town to create an inviting atmosphere for the December 5th tree lighting.

In addition, Mayor Chris Grinton will hold a Covid-19 mask contest with the two best masks awarded gift certificates to the Pierogi Cafe.

In the coming months, please help the GFCBA help you and help the town draw more people in. Donations, no matter how small they may seem, are important and your donation of any amount will sponsor your pumpkin.

For more information or to donate contact Paul Daugevelo at 570-785-5960 or email rosall@nep.net.

without it being extended by a concurrent resolution of the General Assembly (House and Senate).

This amendment was proposed when the General Assembly, both House and Senate, passed resolutions to limit, or end, Governor Wolf's disaster declaration of COVID-19 and some of its onerous lockdown regulations. It was vetoed.

The General Assembly stated that the States' two elected bodies of legislature are more representative of the state's citizens than a single person.

Resolution No. 1 would change the voting law so that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor will be chosen by a single ballot not voted on in-

dividually.

Resolution No. 2 has two sections. The first section requires judges and justices to file a declaration of candidacy for retention (re-election) on the 1st Monday of January of the year in which their term expires or a vacancy will be declared for that position.

The second section of Resolution No. 2 says absentee voting will be allowed even if voter is not ill or disabled or not absent from the voting district for other reasons.

Resolution No. 3 establishes seven judicial districts in the state and sets the number and qualifications of the judges and justices in those districts.

Vandling Council approves Joining Lack. Co. Land Bank

There were many items discussed at the monthly meeting of Vandling Borough Council on Monday, September 21 including the Lackawanna County Land Bank, bidding, the engineering contractor, fire relief payments and many more.

Councilman John Carachilo and Mayor Joe Brady attended a meeting with individuals involved in the Lackawanna County Land Bank. The purpose of the Lackawanna County Land Bank is to use available resources to facilitate the return of vacant, blighted, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties to productive use, thereby combating community deterioration, creating an economic growth and stabilizing the housing and job market.

The Land Bank acquires, holds, and transfers interest in real property for the following purposes: to deter the spread of blight; to promote redevelopment and reuse of vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties; to support targeted efforts to stabilize neighborhoods; to stimulate residential, commercial and industrial development.

Carachilo asked that the borough join the program. He also said the Forest City Regional School would also have to join. Both would benefit with tax money going to both Vandling Borough and the School from the sale of property in the borough. Council agreed to join the program.

SOLICITOR

Atty. Jeff Levine discussed the statute regarding bidding. Purchases and contracts below \$10,000 require no formal bidding or written/telephone quotes. Purchases and contracts over \$18,500 require three written/telephone bids.

With regard to bidding, President Fran Pantzar asked that a committee be set up consisting of Bill Boyle and Bill Matos to come up with new procedures for the bidding process. When they come up with a plan, Council will vote on a set system for bidding.

WATER PROBLEMS

Councilman Bill Matos said the tree removal issue in the park is going to have to be put on hold because the borough needs to take care of a water problem on Peterlin Drive. He said whenever it rains two houses are being flooded in the 300 block of Peterlin Drive. He is not sure what can be done but suggested an engineer, someone other than KBA Engineering, needs to come out and look at the problem. Matos said there are currently no catch basins and they can't put one in.

Mayor Brady asked if curbing might solve the problem and Matos said no.

President Pantzar asked Matos why he did not want KBA to look at it and Matos said that he did not trust them and would like to find another engineering firm.

Councilman Bill Boyle questioned Matos as to who they would pick and who would be asked. He said they need procedures in place for these kinds of things. Atty. Levine asked if the borough had a contract with KBA and they do not so he said they were free to get another engineer if they wanted.

Pres. Pantzar suggested looking into getting information from different engineering firms, not soliciting bids, and see if one is better than the other. He hopes to remedy the problem before winter.

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Coming Events at East Ararat U.M. Church

The following is a list of upcoming events at the East Ararat United Methodist Church.

Pancake Breakfast, Sat., Oct. 3-eat in or take out; Harvest Dinner, Sat., Oct. 17 - Take outs 3:30 to 4:30, Eat in 4:30 to 6:30; Sat., Nov. 7, Pancake Breakfast; Sat., Nov. 21 Soup Sale 3 to 6 p.m.

Come out and support a good cause. Social distancing will be practiced.

