



Hightstown Crier

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News From Hightstown Borough Hall

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

THE *REBATE CHECK* ... IS IT REAL TAX RELIEF?

I do appreciate the newly arrived Property Tax Rebate check used to give me tax relief. The amount will pay my fourth quarter property taxes! It is also very close to the amount of my 2007 municipal taxes. That's right—my rebate is just about what I owe to the borough for all the life sustaining and life enhancing services I receive from Hightstown—23% of the total tax bill. While it was gratefully received, I cannot call it real sustained property tax relief. One also has to wonder why this 20% of our tax bill that people are now receiving was not just deducted in the first place, saving the state several million dollars in processing and mailing costs.

When residents ask what I, as mayor, am doing to address our property taxes, my answer is quite simple. Since the six-member council sets policy and the yearly budget, my role is to lead the council members to constantly look for ways to better control our municipal spending without reducing the level of services the town offers its residents. Some budgeted costs are controllable while others are almost impossible to keep from rising, such as first aid and emergency services, liability, property and workmen's compensation insurance, employee group health insurance, senior citizen services and transportation, recycling, electric, natural gas, automotive fuels, debt service, and social security and pension costs. Our uncontrollable costs, not including salaries and wages, have increased by more than \$850,000 since 2004. However, the operational costs of the borough which are under our control have actually been reduced during the same period. The council and myself, the borough administrator and department heads have been working very hard to keep those costs under control. In addition, I have aggressively argued to the state for Extraordinary Aid and the borough has received it each year to help give tax relief.

We all know that what is needed is a better way to fund our schools, and until that happens, we will deal with ever escalating property taxes. We are second in the nation in reliance on property taxes, only New Hampshire exceeds us...but at least, they're operating in the black!

Since 1999 when I became a councilman, I have continued my efforts to have a State Constitutional Convention to pass legislation for permanent property tax relief that would provide a more equitable system to fund public education. The rebate check is only temporary relief. Please contact your state legislators and the governor to lobby for the constitutional convention. With 58% of your property taxes going to our schools, an amendment to our state constitution is the only way to give you real property tax relief.

- Mayor Bob Patten

Recycling - It's The Law



Did you know that recycling is mandatory under New Jersey State Law, Mercer County's Solid Waste Management Plan and Borough ordinances? Failure to recycle properly is a violation of the law, and will subject you to fines and penalties.

Recycling conserves and protects natural resources, saves energy and reduces disposal costs. While the Borough pays a per-ton fee for the garbage we dispose of, there is no such fee for recyclables; in fact, we receive a grant each year based on the number of tons we recycle. Every recyclable you place in your garbage represents an added cost to the Borough that translates into higher taxes.

Residents and business owners alike are responsible for the separation and recycling of mandatory recyclable materials. Yellow and green recycling buckets are available free of charge from the Borough's public works department, and are intended to be used only for the purpose of recycling. Recyclables should be placed in those containers and put at the curb before 7 a.m. on alternate Wednesdays.

IN THE YELLOW BUCKET, you should place: glass food jars & bottles; aluminum & metal food & beverage containers; pet food cans; plastic soda bottles (only those marked with a #1 on the bottom); plastic milk, water, laundry, detergent, bleach, shampoo & fabric softener bottles (only those marked with a #2 on the bottom); juice drink boxes; and milk & juice cartons.

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Healthy Hightstown

- Sharon Lane, RN

IS YOUR FAMILY LEAD-SAFE?

ANYONE CAN BECOME LEAD POISONED ... but children under the age of six and pregnant women are at greatest risk. **Lead poisoning is entirely preventable**, yet thousands of children living in the New Jersey have lead levels in their blood high enough to cause permanent damage to their health. The most important sources of intense exposure of children to lead are lead-based paints, lead contaminated soil and drinking water.

The amount of lead in paints has been regulated since 1978. However, many children are exposed to lead from older, leaded paint used on toys, cribs, household walls, woodwork and window sills. Children can be exposed to lead when paint or painted plaster begins to crack, chip and peel, or when they chew on wood surfaces such as window sills. Even when there is no visible chipping or peeling, the normal wear-and-tear of lead painted surfaces can release lead dust that can settle on toys, bottles, pacifiers and other surfaces that children touch.

Children often have NO SYMPTOMS of lead poisoning until serious physical damage has already occurred. In the early stages, a child may not appear sick, or the symptoms may be mistaken for another illness, like a cold or stomach virus. Signs of lead poisoning include loss of appetite, stomach pains or vomiting, persistent constipation, unusual irritability or change in behavior.

Lead poisoning can produce severe illness, learning disabilities and brain damage. The effects are cumulative - the more a child eats, the more serious the damage. If not discovered and treated in time, it can lead to death. Lead poisoning is a chronic disease which requires long-term follow-up and care.

All children under six years old should have an initial blood lead screening. If your child has a lead level above 10 micrograms per deciliter (10 ug/dl), it is already high enough to cause health problems. Most children are lead poisoned by lead dust that they eat.

The following guidelines will help keep your child from being exposed to lead:

- If your house or apartment was built or painted before 1978, find out if your house has any lead paint.
- Keep your house clean. Wet wash floors and window sills and use a damp cloth when dusting.
- Wash toys and pacifiers every day.
- Wash your child's hands and face often, especially before they eat or drink.
- Wash your hands before preparing food.
- Do not give children traditional folk remedies, or ethnic candy and foods sent from your home country, as they may be contaminated with lead.
- Don't let children play in the dirt.
- Always use cold water for drinking, cooking or making infant formula. Run the cold water for a minute before using it since lead is sometimes found in older pipes or in the solder used to connect the pipes.
- Feed your child often throughout the day as lead is absorbed more quickly on an empty stomach. Low-fat foods that contain plenty of iron, calcium and vitamin C can help prevent the damaging effects of lead exposure.
- Do not use glazed pottery to hold food, especially items that were made outside the United States. Do not store liquor in leaded crystal decanters.
- Make sure you do not bring lead home from your job or hobby. Remove your work clothes before entering the house and wash your work clothes separately. Take your shoes off at the door.
- If your home has lead paint, do not attempt a large lead paint removal job (by scraping, sanding or treating with heat) by yourself. When you hire professional contractors, be sure they are trained and have the proper equipment to contain the lead dust.

HOMETOWN HARVEST FAIR

Hightstown's 5th annual **Hometown Harvest Fair** will be held at the Main Street parking lot on **Saturday, October 6, 2007** (rain date Sunday, October 7) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This year there are many exciting new activities planned.

Craft vendors will be selling a variety of handmade items, and there will be plenty of live musical entertainment. All kinds of food, including hot dogs, hamburgers, sausages, and cotton candy, will be sold by local organizations, including chili at the annual chili cook-off contest. This year's Fair will also feature a Scarecrow Contest! Design your own scarecrow and bring it in that day for display!

Special activities for the children include pony rides, a petting zoo, a "Duckie Derby," face painting, and paddle boats on Peddie Lake. Children will also be allowed to visit the firehouse and sit in the fire engines. Mark your calendars and save the date! For more information, visit the Borough's website or call (609) 443-6536.



AT THE LIBRARY...

The Hightstown Library is now offering computer classes in both English and Spanish. Classes for six students are offered in the daytime, evening and on occasional Saturdays. Visit www.mcl.org for more information.

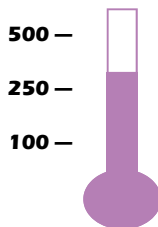
Monthly meetings of the Book Club are ongoing. The club meets on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Library. Upcoming discussions include:

- Oct. 10 THE LOST PAINTING Jonathan Harr
- Nov. 14 MAYFLOWER Nathaniel Philbrick
- Dec. 12 ONE MAN'S CASTLE Phyllis Vine

For more information, call (609) 448-1474.

HELP US REACH OUR GOAL!

Don't miss your chance to purchase a commemorative brick paver to be put into place near the new fountain at "The Point." To date we have sold 295 pavers. We need to sell 500 in order to pay for the foundation work at the fountain. There will be a table at the October 6th Harvest Fair with order forms, and the form is also available on our website. We will continue to take orders until all 500 are sold. Please send in your requests as soon as possible.





COMING CHANGES TO YOUR GARBAGE COLLECTION

The Borough of Hightstown is embarking on a new program for the collection of trash. The program is significantly more cost effective and will provide a cleaner, more attractive community.

Under the new system, collection will be changed in two ways. The first change standardizes the containers in which trash is collected. The Borough has purchased and will distribute carts to each household which can be emptied by the borough using automated equipment. The carts are Borough property and will be assigned by address using a serial number, which is hot stamped on each cart. Cart distribution will begin in December and will be complete before the end of the year. Included with the cart will be information about the new system. **DO NOT USE THE NEW CART UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2008.**

The carts come in two sizes – 95 gallons and 65 gallons. Each household and business, with the exception of downtown businesses and residences covered under a prior agreement, will be issued one 95-gallon container at no cost. Where there are two or more system users in one building, we will issue one container for each use. An example of this would be a two-family residence. If you generate a small amount of trash, you may need only a 65-gallon cart. This can be arranged by contacting the Public Works department. Additional carts will be available; however, there will be an added cost for their use.

The second change is the collection schedule. Garbage will continue to be collected once a week; however, the day of your collection may change. Information about your collection day and holiday collection will be provided at the time your new cart is delivered.

Currently, trash collection begins at 7:00 a.m. and that will not change. You may put out your waste as early as 5:00 p.m. on the evening prior to your collection day. Carts should be placed at the edge of the roadway, just as trash is now. We ask that you bring carts back in within 48 hours of collection.

The new carts are on display at Borough Hall, located at 148 North Main Street. If you have questions about this change, if you would like a cart smaller than 95 gallons, or if you wish to acquire one or more additional carts, please contact my office at 609-490-5115. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

- Lawrence L. Blake, Superintendent of Public Works

Moisture Can Damage Your Foundation

Keeping your house properly maintained will help protect your investment. Gutters should be kept clean of all debris and leaves. Debris will clog the gutters and dump water against the foundation wall. On older houses this will deteriorate the foundation. Constant moisture will cause old mortar to become soft and fall apart. Soft mortar can be seen in old brick or stone foundations — just look for missing mortar. In extreme cases, the foundation will be falling outward on the exterior or leaning inward on the interior. The bricks or stones may be missing or falling out.

To test for soft mortar, run your finger along the mortar joint. If it is soft, you can actually push the soft mortar out of the joints with your fingers. Check all of the foundation walls and note the locations where the mortar is soft. Then look outside at each location and try to determine where the water is coming from. Usually, the downspout is dumping water in the area or the water is overflowing from the gutter above. If you catch the soft mortar early, the repairs are easy. If the damage is too great, however, then a licensed professional is needed, so it is best to catch the problem before it gets too bad. In all cases, the source of the water must be corrected.

If you find that you have soft mortar, give us a call at the Construction Office, 490-5100 Ext 617, and we will come out to help you locate the source of the water and assess the damage.

- George Chin, Construction Official

RECYCLING

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IN THE GREEN BUCKET, you should place: newspapers & inserts (these may be put in the bucket or tied & placed at the curb); magazines & junk mail; paper (stationery, computer & copier); boxes (cereal, cookie, cracker, detergent, shoe & gift boxes, with liner removed); telephone directories; paper bags; greeting cards and wrapping paper (no foil paper). Corrugated cardboard should be placed next to the bucket.

DO NOT PLACE RECYCLABLE MATERIAL IN PLASTIC BAGS!

Other mandatory recyclable materials include scrap metal, white goods (appliances), motor oil, construction/demolition waste (asphalt, concrete and cleaned, untreated wood waste), yard waste (leaves, brush, logs and tree parts), grass trimmings, tires, vehicle batteries, consumer electronics and fluorescent light bulbs. For disposal of these items, contact the Borough's Public Works department at 490-5115.

The following materials should not be recycled: pie tins & aluminum foil; window glass; drinking glasses; yogurt, margarine, sour cream & cottage cheese containers; books (hard or soft cover); aerosol cans marked with #'s 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7; carbon paper; waxed paper; thermal fax paper; window envelopes; tissue paper, napkins or paper towels; pizza, soda or beer boxes; frozen food boxes; paper plates; packing paper; paper in plastic or coated with plastic; and Styrofoam.

For more information, call Public Works at 490-5115.



Community Cultural Calendar

AT THE PEDDIE SCHOOL:
(for information or tickets, call 490-7550)

October 5-October 31 CAPPS *Mariboe Gallery Exhibition*
Martha Madigan, Photographer

October 6 CAPPS *Signature Saturdays Series*
8 p.m. **Proteus 7**

October 12 CAPPS *Jazz Fridays Series*
8 p.m. **Hiroimi's Sonic Bloom**

November 11 CAPPS *Light Sundays Series*
2 p.m. **Maude Maggart Sings Irving Berlin**

November 30 CAPPS *Jazz Fridays Series*
8 p.m. **Stanley Jordan**



WANNA SK8 AT EXIT 8?
Visit Hightstown-Skatepark.org
for information!

Borough Hall will be **CLOSED** on the following dates:

Monday, October 8 **Tuesday, December 25**
(Columbus Day observed) *(Christmas Day)*

Monday, November 12 **Tuesday, January 1, 2008**
(Veterans' Day observed) *(New Year's Day)*

Thursday and Friday,
November 22 and 23
(Thanksgiving)



* GARBAGE *

will not be picked up on Thanksgiving Day.
That pickup will be made on Friday, Nov. 23.

The Borough will be conducting the autumn fire hydrant flushing program on weekdays between October 22 and November 9, 2007. This procedure is necessary to remove sediment build-up from the water mains and fire hydrants for proper operation. During this time, you may experience some temporary discoloration. If you have any questions, contact the Water Department at 490-5117.



FLU SHOTS

are expected to be available once again this year at no cost to our residents age 60 and over, but details were not available at press time. Watch our website for more information, or call the East Windsor Township Health Department at 443-4000.



Autumn Events



Saturday, October 6

5th Annual HOMETOWN HARVEST FAIR

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. *Come to Memorial Park on Peddie Lake and join us in celebrating our community! See article in this CRIER for details!*

Saturday, October 13

AUTUMN BOROUGH-WIDE GARAGE SALE



8 a.m.—4 p.m. *The Hightstown Masons are sponsoring an autumn Borough-wide garage sale this year! Visit www.hightstownborough.com for participating addresses or to register.*



Tuesday, November 6

GENERAL ELECTION

Exercise your right to VOTE! Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more information, call the Borough Clerk's office at 490-5100, Ext. 772.

Friday, November 23

ANNUAL SANTA PARADE
Sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary of Hightstown Engine Co. No. 1
6:30—7:00 p.m. *Once again, Santa will ride a fire truck through town and turn on our holiday lighting!*



Upcoming Council Meetings

- Monday, October 1
- Tuesday, October 16
- Monday, November 5
- Monday, November 19
- Monday, December 3
- Monday, December 17
- Tuesday, January 1, 2008
(Reorganization Meeting - 12 noon)

All meetings begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Meeting agendas and packets are posted on the Borough's website and at Borough Hall on the Friday before each meeting.

