

LS T U P D A T E



Summer 2019

A Note from our Township Manager ...

In mid-May, I finished my first year as Township Manager of Lower Swatara Township.

Over the course of this first year, I realize that I am honored to have become a part of a township that is fiscally sound, with a Board of Commissioners that is sincerely committed to good stewardship of public funds, a staff that is knowledgeable, and a community that is aware.

My goals are to offer continuity and continued service to the community, modernization of those processes that need to be modernized, and a management style that allows the department heads to use their knowledge to run their departments (Public Works, Zoning & Code Enforcement, and Police).

There are major undertakings in the township which include MS4

(municipal separate storm sewer system), resurfacing of roads, recodification of ordinances, and a new community policing philosophy.

I have had the opportunity to meet many of you in person and to speak on the phone with even more. Please know that I welcome input and that I look forward to meeting more of you as this next year unfolds.

Respectfully,
Betsy McBride
Township Manager

REMINDER:

Blowing grass clippings onto the street is not only unsafe for motorcyclists; it is not permitted in LS Township. Grass clippings and other debris clogs our storm drains. If you see a drain that is covered with debris, please remove the debris or contact the township office.

Do's & Don'ts of Your Yard

The best time to fertilize is before a light rainfall;

otherwise wait until after a heavy storm. If you fertilize before a storm, all the materials you used will be washed off your yard and down into the storm drains. Be careful to not apply to impervious surfaces!

Instead of bagging your grass clippings or blowing them into the street, allow them to lie on top of your lawn. It provides extra moisture to the grass along with a natural food source. This also provides you to cut back on expenses for fertilizing.

Photo credits appear on page 5

Photo credits appear on page 5



Lower Swatara Township

1499 Spring Garden Drive • Middletown, PA 17057
P: 717-939-9377 • F: 717-939-5682

<http://lowerswatara.org/>

Administrative Office Hours:

Monday thru Friday ☀ 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

A Note from our Chief of Police ...

In January of this year, after I took the Oath of Office as the Chief of Police for the Lower Swatara Township Police Department, I hit the ground running! My core values of Excellence, Integrity, Service and Professionalism are communicated daily to the officers that serve our community.

We have collectively started to rebuild the department in order to become more efficient and engaged with the citizens. We remain committed to a comprehensive Community Policing Strategy, adopting service to the community as the primary philosophy of the agency. As such, we have dramatically increased our crime prevention and community outreach efforts to provide more ways for the citizens to interact with us than ever before.

As your Chief of Police, I intend to utilize technology to better serve the community. I have set a goal to communicate regularly with practical and timely information through various social media platforms. I invite you to follow us on Facebook, LowerSwataraPD, Twitter, @LSTPolice, and Instagram, @lstpolice to find out about future events and issues that are occurring in Lower Swatara Township.

"Community Policing" is a philosophy for how police departments and communities should work together to address crime and disorder. It is not a single program or a specialized unit. It is a mindset, that when implemented correctly affects



the thinking of police officers and becomes infused in every police function. Our number one priority remains crime prevention and community safety. We need

your participation and willingness to become more involved. We ask that you report suspicious activities in your neighborhoods and keep your valuables secured. As the weather gets nicer, we have already seen an increase in thefts from vehicles. An overwhelming

majority of these thefts occur because the vehicles were left unlocked. Please lock your cars! We invite you to introduce yourself to your neighbors and establish Neighborhood Crime Watch Programs. If you want more information on organizing a Crime Watch Program simply call the police department and ask to speak to an officer. We are more than happy to help get you started.

The Lower Swatara Township Police Department consists of caring and courageous professionals that remain committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect. We appreciate the strong support we receive from the community. I am extremely proud of the Lower Swatara Township Police Officers and I feel fortunate to serve alongside them as we work in partnership with our community members to keep Lower Swatara Township a safe place to live, work and visit.

Respectfully,
Jeffrey M. Vargo
Chief of Police

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1875, Lower Swatara Township had ten working limestone kilns.

Limestone is a secondary rock structure mainly of skeletal fragments of marine organisms. When heated to 1652°F or more, it vents carbon dioxide, leaving behind "quicklime or "unslaked lime". When combined with water the quicklime becomes Calcium Hydroxide and was used for the basis of whitewash (lime, water, milk, and linseed oil) for painting barns and fences. It was mildly alkaline and acted as a disinfectant for the walls of dairy barns.

Local farmers rubbed it on their livestock's feet as an antiseptic. They used it to paint fruit trees to prevent fungal diseases. Some would mix a bit of lime into the wells to disinfect water. Lime was known to preserve eggs for months without spoiling. Tanners used it to remove hair from hides. Gardeners used it to repel slugs and snails. Printers used lime to bleach paper. Farmers used it to neutralize acidic soil and help prevent weeds.

The kilns were usually built close to the limestone quarries, into hillsides, with an open top for lime and fuel and then tapered to the bottom where the quicklime could be loaded easily onto horse-drawn wagons.



Courtesy of the Lower Swatara Township Historic Preservation Society



What Are Your Children Doing This Summer?

JR. FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

Contact: John Weikle Fire Chief for your personal tour and interview. 717-877-0281

1. Open to ages 14 to 17
2. Must maintain a C average or higher in school or will be suspended from activities
3. Permitted to ride the fire apparatus after proper monitored orientation.
4. Keeps kids active, productive and respectful.
5. Specific training for their age level as permitted by the State child labor laws.
6. Gives them a purpose and keeps them on the right path and out of trouble.
7. They get to know the Police officers and EMS personnel in the township.
8. They meet the township officials responsible for the community.
9. Gives them a place to "hang out" where you know they will be supervised.
10. Gives them a sense of purpose while helping others.
11. All adult members have required child abuse and back ground checks
12. They become part of a brotherhood that can last a lifetime.
13. School working papers are required.
14. Build a work ethic that they will use for a lifetime.
15. HAVE FUN!
16. Learn skills such as building and repairing items, and yes lifesaving.
17. FULL Support of the parents. If they are grounded at home they are grounded from activities at the station.
18. Not permitted to be at the station without adult supervision.
19. Program works best with parent involvement.
20. They can make a difference in their community no matter their age.

License Your Dog in PA (PA Dept. of Agriculture)

All dogs three months or older must be licensed by Jan. 1 of each year. Violators can be cited with a maximum fine of \$300 per violation plus court costs.

An annual license is \$8.50 and a lifetime license is \$51.50. If the animal is spayed or neutered, the annual fee is \$6.50 and lifetime is \$31.50. Discounts are available to older adults and people with disabilities. The small license fee helps the millions of dogs in the state by funding the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement. For detailed information, visit www.Agriculture.PA.gov and look for Dog Law Enforcement.

Dog Licenses are available for purchase at the township building.



Time for A Change

The Lower Swatara Sewer Billing department has been busy converting its records to a new computerized system. It is hoped that in the very near future, many of you will opt for online billing and payment. More information will be distributed on that at a later time.

For now, please be on the lookout for the new billing format. We are changing from a postcard to an envelope. The envelope you receive will have "Invoice Enclosed" above your name and address and will also show the Lower Swatara Township Authority in the return address section.

You may notice that your account numbers have changed slightly. There will no longer be 'dashes', there will be 'decimal points' and the last digit may change to '01'. For those who already use online payment, first, a big thank you, and secondly, please change the account numbers you have entered. The needed information will appear on your invoice.

LOWER SWATARA TOWNSHIP AUTHORITY
1499 SPRING GARDEN DRIVE
MIDDLETOWN, PA 17057

LOWER SWATARA TOWNSHIP AUTHORITY
UTILITY BILL

(717) 936-7633 M-F 8:00AM - 4:00PM

BILL DATE: XX
SERVICE ADDRESS: XX
ACCOUNT NUMBER: XX
BILLING PERIOD: XX

INVOICE ENCLOSED
XX
XX
XX
XX
XX

SERVICES		USAGE	TOTAL DUE NOW
PREVIOUS BALANCE	XX	ACCOUNT NUMBER	
SEWER			
PENALTY			
NSF			
OTHER			
DUE DATE: XX		TOTAL DUE: TOTAL DUE AFTER DUE DATE:	XX

MAIL PAYMENT TO:
Lower Swatara Township Authority
1499 Spring Garden Drive
Middletown, PA 17057

PAYMENT METHODS

IN PERSON:
After hours dropbox available
Lower Swatara Township
1499 Spring Garden Dr
Middletown, PA 17057
M-F 8:00AM TO 4:00PM

ON LINE:
Please visit our website at
www.lowerawatara.org

Please Make Checks Payable to: Lower Swatara Township Municipal Authority

Message: A 10% penalty will be assessed on any unpaid bill amount not paid before Due Date. Failure to receive bill does not relinquish responsibility for Payment nor waive customers of paying penalty.

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN BOTTOM PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT. DO NOT FOLD OR STAPLE

SERVICE ADDRESS: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
CUSTOMER NAME: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
ACCOUNT NUMBER: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

BILL DATE: XX
TOTAL DUE: XX
DUE DATE: XX

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

LOWER SWATARA TOWNSHIP AUTHORITY
1499 SPRING GARDEN DRIVE
MIDDLETOWN, PA 17057

Stoner Cemetery

The original Stoner farmhouse and cemetery is located along Route 230 in Lower Swatara Township.

Heinrich Steiner (Stoner) emigrated prior to 1780 from the Tulpehocken Settlement in Berks County and purchased land and built the stone farmhouse. The property stayed in the Stoner family until the early 1900's. Sometime after that the farm was sold to Evendale and then the Youngs, and the Shopes. The farmhouse had been converted to three different restaurants in the past and now sits abandoned.

The cemetery that sits closer to Highspire to the left of the stone farmhouse was the burial ground of the Stoner family and friends, including four civil war soldiers.

Mary Stoner, in her will (and the last person buried in 1910) left the upkeep of the cemetery to the First Church of God in Highspire, PA. She provided \$800 for its continual care.



Over 100 years has passed and time, along with road construction, vandalism, several vehicle collisions, and nature have taken a huge toll on the cemetery walls and foundation.

After discussions with the PA State Historic Museum Commission and PennDot, the Lower Swatara Historic Preservation Society is collaborating with the First Church of God to raise funds to rebuild the stone wall that surrounds the cemetery and place an historic plaque listing the names of those who are buried within its arms.

Anyone wishing to donate to help rebuild the wall and honor those who are laid to rest, may send a check to: Stoner Cemetery, c/o First Church of God, 115 2nd Street, Highspire, PA, 17034.

Courtesy of the Lower Swatara Township Historic Preservation Society

LOWER SWATARA TOWNSHIP CODES DEPARTMENT

When do I need a building permit for residential work?

- ✱ Additions to existing structures
- ✱ Alterations to an uncertified home (house/addition previously done without permit)
- ✱ Structural alterations to existing homes
- ✱ Uncovered decks 30 inches or more in height above grade
- ✱ Covered decks regardless of height
- ✱ Framing of new porch/deck roofs
- ✱ Attached garages regardless of size
- ✱ Hot tubs/saunas
- ✱ Above ground pools with side walls greater than 24 inches
- ✱ Storable/removable pools greater than 24 inches
- ✱ In-ground pools
- ✱ Retaining walls over 4' in height or regardless of size support a surcharge. Retaining walls per section 404.4 of the 2015 IRC are required to be designed by an engineer.
- ✱ Grading, electrical and alterations in the flood plain require a flood plain permit. Contact the codes office to discuss work in flood plain.

- ✱ **The above may also require a zoning permit and approval, please check with the codes/zoning office**

Work exempt from a residential building permit

- ✱ Plumbing, mechanical and electrical alterations to a certified structure
- ✱ Removal or alterations to nonstructural walls
- ✱ Adding nonstructural walls in basement
- ✱ Uncovered decks less than 30 inches in height above grade
- ✱ Detached garages and carports less than 1000 square feet.
- ✱ Agricultural buildings meeting the definition in the Pennsylvania

Uniform Construction Code

- ✱ Propane tanks and the equipment they serve
- ✱ **The above may require a zoning permit and approval, please check with the codes/zoning office**

Septic Alterations

- ✱ New septic systems and alterations to septic systems

require on lot septic permit which can be obtained at the codes office. Septic inspections and plan reviews are completed by a township third party.

Donald A. Fure

Building Code Official

Ann M. Hursh

Planning & Zoning

Charles "Rick" Jenakovich

Construction Code

Tonya K. Condran

Permit Technician

1499 Spring Garden Drive

Middletown, PA 17057

Phone: (717) 939-9377

Official Fax: (717) 939-5682

Web: lowerswatara.org



WOODY WASTE

What is 'Woody Waste' that Waste Industries will pick up?

Woody Waste - recycling of natural wood ... Leaves, twigs, branches, brush, bushes, shrubbery, vines, kindling, driftwood, ...

The bundles of Woody Waste and Kraft Bags, shall not weigh more than 30 pounds. The materials should be no more than 30 inches in length and shall consist of yard waste only and not grass clippings.

Photo Credits for Do's and Don'ts of Your Yard

Photo "A1": https://www.kcbd.com/resizer/I15tOlxoHg6tHGx_eSyzr14hrg=/1200x900/arc-anglerfish-arc2-prod-raycom.s3.amazonaws.com/public/JQJNPJNQWFFKFEFPBIZFK6PJ4.jpg

Photo "A2": https://www.wsfa.com/resizer/A_ccCIIlNdoHUSS1ZDwdCd-aLak=/1400x0/arc-anglerfish-arc2-prod-raycom.s3.amazonaws.com/public/HCS673CK2JG3DOYDUQ3AL5FUXY.png

Photo "B1": http://www.howdoesyourgardenmow.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/mulching_mower.jpg

Photo "B2": <https://www.oglesby.il.us/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/grassclippings-rm.jpg>





SAFETY TIPS



Use propane, charcoal and wood pellet barbecue grills outdoors only. Indoor use can cause a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Place your grill well away from siding and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Do not store or use a grill on a porch or balcony.

Ride with both hands on the handlebars. Ride in single file with traffic. Stop at all stop signs and obey traffic lights.



Always wear a bike helmet and bright clothes when cycling so people can see you. Put reflectors on your bike.



Never swim near a boat, marina or boat launching ramp.



Adults need to stay with children when they are around water.



Always wear a bike helmet and bright clothes when cycling so people can see you. Put reflectors on your bike.



Build campfires at least 25 feet away from tents, shrubs and anything that can burn.



If you want to see fireworks, go to a public show put on by experts. Sparklers can reach 1,200 F and cause third-degree burns.



Keep the pool and deck clear of floats, balls and toys after you get out of the pool.



Adults need to stay with children when they are around water.

Always swim with a buddy.



Use chimineas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits outdoors only and at least 10 feet away from your home or anything that can burn.

10 feet



Always use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life safety jackets.



How to Tell the Difference Between Poison Hemlock and Queen Anne's Lace

July 02, 2015 • By: Gabe Garms

<http://www.ravensroots.com/blog/2015/6/26/poison-hemlock-id>

Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is one of the deadliest plants in North America and can be fatal if just a small amount is ingested. It has been in flower here in Washington for the last month or so and can be found across much of the United States. It grows (often in dense patches) along roads, trails and the edges of fields and streams. I actually have it growing in my back yard, right along side one of it's most common look-a-likes, Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*).

Queen Anne's lace is a wild edible (the root) and given that it typically does grow in the same conditions as poison hemlock, being able to tell the difference could save your life. Plus, you'll want to know if you have it growing on your property because it's also toxic to pets and livestock. So let's walk through how to identify both so that you can confidently identify them in the future.

Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) vs. Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*):

1. Both are in the Apiaceae family and have hollow stems, but poison hemlock's stem is hairless and has purple blotches. Even a very young poison hemlock will display the purple blotching. On the other hand, the stem of Queen Anne's lace doesn't have purple blotches and is hairy. See the photos below for a comparison.



QUEEN ANNE'S LACE
(DAUCUS CAROTA)



POISON HEMLOCK
(CONIUM MACULATUM)

2. The flowers of both species are white and bloom in an umbrella shape pattern (called an umbel). Plants in the Apiaceae family have flowers that appear in compound umbels, which means that all of the little umbrellas branch out from one main, central umbrella - if that makes sense. If it doesn't, don't worry about it. Just know that the flowers of Queen Anne's lace have a single purplish/red flower in the center of the umbel the vast majority of the time (see picture below left). Legend has it that Queen Anne pricked her finger while sewing the lace and a droplet of blood fell to the center of the flowers. Also the umbrella shape of Queen Anne's lace is flat-topped, while the

poison hemlock umbel is more rounded. Notice the difference below.



QUEEN ANNE'S LACE



POISON HEMLOCK

3. The leaves are probably the most difficult feature to distinguish between the two. While they are both fern-like in appearance, the leaves of Queen Anne's lace, similar to the stems, will also have hairs on their undersides. See in picture below.



LEAVES OF QUEEN
ANNE'S LACE - HAIRY



LEAVES OF POISON
HEMLOCK - NOT HAIRY

4. A final distinguishing feature is that Queen Anne's lace has 3-pronged bracts appearing at both the base of the flowers and the main umbel. It's actually the only member of the Apiaceae family that has this feature. If you look at the picture of the poison hemlock flowers under #2 above, you'll see that poison hemlock is absent of the long bracts.

Hopefully, you'll now be able to identify both plants when you encounter them in the wild. And if you can, please pass this information along. It may just save the life of a loved one or pet. Thanks for reading!

Note from the Township Manager: Poison Hemlock is widely seen in South Central Pennsylvania.



LONG, 3-PRONGED BRACTS OF
QUEEN ANNE'S LACE

Lower Swatara Township

1499 Spring Garden Drive
Middletown, PA 17057

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
HARRISBURG
PERMIT NO. 592



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Vice-President Todd F. Truntz

Assistant Secretary Ronald J. Paul

Commissioner Michael J. Davies

Commissioner Christopher DeHart

Township Officer:

Jean Arroyo, *Township Secretary*

Police:

Jeffrey Vargo, *Chief of Police*

Public Works:

Lester Lanman, *Director*

Zoning, Planning and Code

Enforcement:

Donald A. Fure, *Director*

Finance Manager:

Rebecca McClain

Township Manager:

Betsy McBride

<http://lowerswatara.org/>

A Friendly Reminder From The Finance Office

County/Township Real Estate/Property Tax Bills

If you haven't done so already, please pay your County/Township property tax bills. These bills are currently due at the 5% penalty rate indicated on your tax bill. As a reminder, the County/Township Real Estate bills must be paid by December 31st to avoid being turned over to the Dauphin County Tax Claim Office, at which time additional penalties will be added. County/Township Real Estate/Property Tax bills are paid to the Dauphin County Treasurer. Contact the Dauphin County Treasurer's Office (717-780-6550) with any questions.

Per Capita/Occupation Assessment Tax Bills

It is the responsibility of all Lower Swatara Township residents 18 years and older, to be on the Township tax rolls. If you are not receiving a Per Capita Tax Bill, please call Berkheimer (610-599-3141). All Lower Swatara Township residents 18 to 72 are responsible for the \$10 Per Capita Tax. Residents can request an exoneration for the \$25 Occupation Assessment Tax. Criteria for exoneration can be found at the bottom of the Per Capita Bill. The Per Capita Tax bill will be sent out by Berkheimer on July 1st. Contact Berkheimer (610-599-3141) with any questions.