Stillwater Township News

June 2010

Inaugural community garage sale scheduled for late June

The township's first community-wide garage sale will be held on Friday, June 25 and Saturday, June 26. All Township residents are welcome to participate, either as sellers or buyers.

Organizers plan to prepare maps of all the sale sites to use as fliers and also advertise the sale to the public. Sellers may choose one of two ways to sell their wares. They can pay a $5 registration fee to hold the sale at their home, or they can pay a $10 fee to rent an 8-foot table that will be set up for them at the Town Hall. In both cases, the fees will be used to advertise the sale.

Sellers may participate either one day or both days. The hours of the sale will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days, and the sale will be held rain or shine.

To register for the sale, go to the Township website at *www.stillwatertownship.com*, or contact Rick Jacobson at Rick.Jacobson@Stillwatertownship.com or (651) 351-0299. Registration deadline is Wednesday, June 23.

Maps for the sale will be available on the website as the date for the sale nears.

Do you recognize this place?

Enter our photo contest by visiting ***www.stillwatertownship.com*** and completing the Photo ID form online. A winner will be drawn at random from all the correct answers received by June 11.

The lucky winner will receive a $25 voucher to be redeemed with vendors at this summer's township Farmers' Market. You may also mail your answer and contact information to Stillwater Township Photo ID Contest, 13636 90th Street N., Stillwater, MN, 55082.

The winner of the last mystery photo contest was Bob Parke, who identified the picture in the last newsletter as the (snow-covered) boat ramp at the Boomsite.

Beverly Petrie

Join us at the annual Township picnic

The annual Stillwater Township community picnic will be held on Sunday, Aug. 22.

In addition to good food, games for kids and the companionship of your fellow neighbors, this year's event will feature the christening of the Otto Berg picnic shelter in honor of former Township Clerk Pat Bantli. She retired recently after 37 years of Township service.

Rain date for the picnic is Aug. 29. Check the Township website for more information or call Rick Jacobson at (651) 351-0299.

Township searching for recycling coordinator

The township is looking for a person to serve as recycling coordinator, who would develop and execute recycling education and promotion in the township. The position calls for two or three recycling projects a year, each requiring about 25 hours of work. This independent contractor position is being funded by a grant. Please submit a letter of interest and/or a resume to Kathy Schmoeckel at Kathy.Schmoeckel@StillwaterTownship.com or 13636 90th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082.

In the know

Contract to be let for painting Town Hall

The Township is looking for a contractor to paint the Town Hall. All exterior surfaces are to be washed and primed as needed, and the structure is to be painted with a single coat of quality white paint.

Bids can be submitted to Kathy Schmoeckel at the address above.

Farmers' Market begins in June

Weekly Farmers' Markets at the Town Hall will resume on Wednesday, June 16, and continue each Wednesday until the end of September.

Organizer Rick Jacobson said that most vendors from last year's inaugural season have returned. Items to be sold include vegetables, honey, popcorn, and jams and jellies. In addition, some new vendors have signed on, including a vendor of Italian gelati. Jacobson expects to have at least 15 vendors. The markets will be held from 3 to 7 p.m. each Wednesday.

Town board cuts back meetings

The township board has begun meeting less frequently as a way to save taxpayer funds.

Although it has routinely met twice in all months except for November and December, town officials have recently decided to meet just once a month if the agenda for a second meeting only holds one or two items. This move saves money that would have been paid to supervisors and township employees who are required to attend meetings. Each canceled meeting saves the township $600.

Dog licenses must be renewed this year

The current period for dog licensing will end on June 30. All dogs that will be in the township for more than 30 days a year need to be licensed.

Residents who have current licenses will get renewal forms in the mail in May. Licenses for neutered and spayed dogs cost $15. Licenses for pets that are neutered or spayed and also have an implanted ID chip are $5. The fee for dogs that are not neutered is $30.

The fee for a lost dog license is $5. If a dog is impounded, the fee is $60 for the first occurrence and $80 for the second.

Summer burning rules

Spring burning restrictions have been lifted, but permits are necessary to burn brush. Hours for burning will be 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. Permits allow residents to burn piles of brush, leaves, grass or untreated lumber, and can be obtained by calling (651) 439-0796. A 24-hour advance notice for the permit is requested, and the fee is $15. Failure to get a permit will result in a fine. No fee is charged for burning piles of buckthorn.

Recreation fires do not require a permit and are allowed any time, except for rare occasions when the DNR imposes a total burning ban. Fires must be kept smaller than a 3-foot cube to be considered a recreation fire. Please notify the Township Police Chief Steve Nelson at (651) 439-0796 when you plan on having a recreation fire so you can be contacted in case of any DNR alerts, last minute burning bans or EPA air quality alerts.

Heavy Metal recycling to be held every other year

In an effort to save money and respond to dwindling interest, Heavy Metal recycling day will be held every other year, beginning next year.

The one-day event, usually held in early June, is an opportunity for residents to recycle large items, such as household appliances and vehicle tires.

Maroney's Sanitation Inc., which conducts the collection, reports that fewer items were recycled last year than usual. Therefore, township officials decided to hold the recycling event every other year.

Be wary of peddlers

If someone comes to your door asking you to purchase anything, please ask them to show you their Township Peddler's Permit. It will show their picture and will be signed by Police Chief Steve Nelson and a town board supervisor.

Anyone not having this permit is probably in violation of our ordinance. Try to get a description and license number of the vehicle and call Nelson at (651) 439-0796 or the Sheriff's Department. There are exceptions to this ordinance so if you are not sure call Nelson.

Township duo get a buzz out of bees

Ben Prchal pulls on a white head-to-ankle jumpsuit and gloves, while John Wasser stuffs wisps of dried grass into a metal can and sets it afire. Then Wasser stands back at a safe distance while Prchal waves the smoking can over a stack of boxes lined up against the back wall of Wasser's barn.

"Calms 'em down," explains Wasser.

He was talking about the thousands of honey bees clustered in the boxes. It was time for Prchal to pull off the lids and see how they were doing.

Prchal, 17, and Wasser, his neighbor across Myeron Road, have been keeping bees together for four years, ever since Prchal was 13 and Wasser decided he wanted a project for the two friends to do together.

"He called me up one night and said, 'Hey, want some bees?'" Prchal recalls.

The two are foursquare in the center of a resurgence of small-scale, backyard beekeeping, says Jim Kloek. He runs a beekeeping supply business called Nature's Nectar out of his home on Manning Avenue and is the one who supplies Wasser and Prchal with their bees and equipment.

Ben Prchal shows a frame of bees he and his neighbor, John Wasser, tend each summer on Wasser's farm.

Kloek has been keeping bees for 18 years ("Ever since my wife gave me some bees for Christmas.") and has had the bee supply business for 10 years. In the past few years, he has seen interest in beekeeping skyrocket.

His business has been busy, and a two-day class for beginning beekeepers at the University of Minnesota has 250 students and a waiting list of 150.

"It's hot right now," Kloek says. "Bees have been in the news lately, and I think there's a genuine interest in people wanting to help out."

He's referring to Colony Collapse Disorder, the term for the recent mysterious dying off of multitudes of honey bees. Although some experts point to the role of pesticides and habitat changes, scientists are not sure of the cause.

But the consequences of CCD can be dire, since about one-third of the U.S. food supply relies on honeybees for pollination.

Kloek says the other reason that backyard beekeeping is suddenly popular, is that "you're stepping back in time. It's an old traditional pastime. And the more people find out about bees, the more they realize that bees are really cool."

That's certainly true of Wasser and Prchal.

"They are just so fascinating," says Wasser, who kept bees for a time when he lived in Washington state.

His 10 acres in the township was the perfect site for a hive, so he recruited Prchal, who is now a junior at St. Croix Lutheran High School in West St. Paul.

Most years, they order two pounds of bees from Kloek, which come in a container with a queen bee in the center. They put the bees in a box with frames that the bees will use to hold the honey they produce.

As the queen breeds more bees and they all start to produce honey, it's important to add more boxes to the stack to expand the space and keep the bees from feeling crowded. If not, the dreaded "swarm" might happen, which is when the entire colony of bees loads up on honey and abandons the hive in a dense cluster with the queen in its center.

By happenstance, two swarms landed on Wasser's farm, once on a fencepost and another up in a tree. So Prchal suited up and captured the swarms to create a new hive alongside the existing one.

He admits it was "pretty weird" to plunge his gloved hand into the thick of the swarm to grab fistfuls of bees he then dropped into a bucket. The maneuver was possible only because honey-glutted bees are torpid. Just one thing gave him pause. "I looked down and realized some skin was showing between my glove and suit. I covered it up really fast."

For a longer version of this story, plus informational resources on beekeeping, go to the township website at www.stillwatertownship.com.

Stillwater Township
13636 90th St. N.
Stillwater, MN 55082
www.stillwatertownship.com

Presorted
Standard
US Postage
PAID
SPC

Meetings

Township meetings are free and open to the public. Check the bulletin board at the town hall or the website for current agenda and meeting information**.**

Township Board of Supervisors meets as necessary on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7 p.m., except for November and December, when meetings are held on the second Thursday.

Planning Commission meets as necessary on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.

Parks Committee meets as necessary on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m.

If you need.....

Burning permits
Steve Nelson
(651) 439-0796

Building inspections
Jack Kramer
(651) 351-5051

Park reservations
Rick Jacobson
(651) 351-0299

Animal Control
Steve Nelson
(651) 439-0796

Contact us

Township Board of Supervisors
Linda Countryman (651) 351-0714
Matt Beane (612) 590-6949
Jim Hiniker (651) 351-1867
David Johnson (651) 439-5448
Sheila-Marie Untiedt (651) 439-6476

Township Clerk
Kathy Schmoeckel (651) 439-6451

Clerk for Parks and Planning Commmission
Barbara Riehle (651) 275-9484

Township Treasurer
Marsha Olson (651) 275-9178

Police Chief
Steve Nelson (651) 439-0796

Website Publisher
Bob Ranalla (612) 819-8497

Newsletter Editor
Beverly Petrie (651) 430-9294

Find this information plus email addresses at www.stillwatertownship.com