

towns

WHERE WE LIVE

▶ TRAPPE

Textile exhibit now on display

The Historical Society of Trappe, Colledgeville, Perkiomen Valley welcomes visitors to a textile exhibit at the Dewees Museum, 301 W. Main St., Trappe.

The exhibit showcases a large 18th century textile collection consisting of coverlets, quilts, and fabrics of various types as well as related items loaned for this event.

Tour guides are available on Sundays from 1:30 to 4 p.m. through Sept. 13 (closed Labor Day weekend).

You may also call to arrange a group tour at (610) 489-7560. Also open is The Henry Muhlenberg House located at 201 W. Main Street.

Donations, used to maintain these sites, are always appreciated. For information call (610) 489-7560 or visit www.trappe-historical-society.org.

▶ HATFIELD

Township seeks candidates

Hatfield Township is seeking letters of interest from Ward 3 residents interested in filling the commissioner seat vacated by Brian Pifer's resignation.

All registered voters who have lived in Ward 3 for at least a year are eligible to be considered for appointment.

Letters of interest must be submitted by 2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11, and may be addressed to Township Manager Andrew Haines, 1950 School Road, Hatfield PA 19440.

All valid candidates will be provided an opportunity to interview for the vacant seat, and each candidate will be contacted following the Sept. 11 deadline with further directions regarding the selection process.

If residents have questions about their validity as a candidate or are uncertain if they live in Ward 3, contact Haines at (215) 855-0900 or visit www.HatfieldTownship.org.

▶ MONTGOMERY TWP.

You can help with fundraiser

The volunteers of Stray Cat Blues Inc. will hold a Bidding for the Blues Silent Auction from 6 to 9 p.m. Sept. 16 at PineCrest Country Club, Route 202, Montgomery Township.

It will benefit the non-profit cat rescue's community outreach Trap, Neuter, Return program.

So far, the top donation for the auction is a one-week stay next summer in a beach home in Ocean City, Md. The group is seeking financial donations of any amount and vendors willing to donate a gift basket or restaurant certificate.

All donors will be promoted at the auction to several hundred attendees. Tickets for the event are \$20.

For further information about attending or donating to the Bidding for the Blues Silent Auction, visit www.straycat-blues.petfinder.org or e-mail sstrays@yahoo.com.

▶ BUCKS

Blood drive set

Temple Judea of Bucks County, 300 E. Swamp Road, Doylestown, hosts an American Red Cross Blood Drive from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sept. 8. Appointments preferred. Call (215) 348-5022.

All charges held in attempted rape case

By KEITH PHUCAS
For The Reporter

LOWER PROVIDENCE

— All charges were held for trial at a preliminary hearing for Seth Griffith, the Norristown man accused of attempting to rape a 19-year-old woman after he followed her home from Wal-Mart.

The 33-year-old defendant appeared before District Judge Benjamin Crallah at the Thursday morning hearing in Colledgeville. The \$2 million bail set at his preliminary arraignment in August was unchanged.

Griffith, of the 500 block of Haws Avenue, allegedly followed the Audubon teenager

around the West Norriton store on Monday afternoon, July 31, before following her in his car to her residence.

After the attack, the defendant fled the area and was captured in Nevada 16 days later.

He is charged with attempted rape, attempted sexual assault, indecent assault, criminal trespassing, burglary, stalking, recklessly endangering another, unlawful restraint and possessing an instrument of crime, according to court papers.

Surveillance video inside Wal-Mart showed Griffith, dressed in a T-shirt, tan shorts and flip flops, alleg-

edly following the young woman around the store. Then when she left in her car, he followed her out of the parking lot in a silver-colored Honda Accord to her home about two miles away.

After the woman went into her house, the defendant reportedly got into the residence through an unlocked door and attacked her in her bedroom. After allegedly shoving her onto the bed and straddling the 19-year-old, she screamed and kicked him, and he pulled off her underwear and threatened to rape her.

While on top of her, Griffith allegedly put a small black belt around her neck,

and though he exposed himself, he agreed not to force her to have sexual intercourse.

A few minutes later, the attacker got up and left the room, and she watched him exit the house through the open garage door just before 5 p.m., slipping on a pair of flip flops as he fled, according to authorities.

After releasing still video from the store surveillance to the news media the following day, Lower Providence police received tips identifying Griffith, who lived in the 500 block of Haws Avenue in Norristown.

When Norristown police interviewed the wanted

man's mother, she told them her son had been to the Wal-Mart store, and she identified him from the video.

That same day, the victim identified her attacker in the surveillance shots and in a photo array.

Police then issued a warrant for his arrest and the fugitive's picture and other information was entered into the National Crime Information Center computer system to aid in the manhunt.

Griffith's mother reportedly told detectives her son asked her July 28 to take him hiking in central Pennsylvania, and a day later investigators drove to the Lewis-

burg area, about 60 miles north of Harrisburg, to look for him.

Also in the days following the sexual assault, police received a tip that a man resembling the suspect was seen in the Pittsburgh area; however, Pittsburgh police were unable to find him.

On Aug. 12, police in Nevada stopped a stolen car Griffith was driving just after 8 p.m., and Griffith was taken into custody. He was later extradited to Pennsylvania.

A formal arraignment is scheduled at Montgomery County Courthouse on Oct. 28 at 9:30 a.m.



MARK C. PSORAS/THE REPORTER

Workers strike at Precision

STRIKING WORKERS of Precision Tube, a division of Mueller Industries, and fellow United Steelworkers have a rally outside of the facility in North Wales on Wednesday.

Molly Maguire's plans approved by council

By DAN SOKIL
Staff Writer

LANSDALE — Molly Maguire's is coming to Lansdale, after plans for the Irish restaurant and pub were approved by Borough Council on Wednesday night.

"On behalf of my clients, the applicants for Molly Maguire's Restaurant and Pub, we'd like to thank the council very much for their approval," said attorney Frank Bartle.

Bartle was on hand to present an indemnification agreement signed by Declan Mannion and Conor Cummins, the two prospective owners of Molly Maguire's.

Getting that agreement was the last condition needed before council voted to grant preliminary and final land development approval to the restaurant company.

A separate vote by council officially vacated a strip of Wood Street the pub owners need to create a plaza outside the proposed restaurant, which the owners have said they plan to open by St. Patrick's Day 2010.

Both motions, to pass the resolution granting plan approval and to approve an ordinance vacating the property, passed by 6-1 votes, with council member John Smiley voting against, council member Mike Riccio abstaining from the vote, and council member Anne Henning Scheuring absent from the meeting.

Judge denies child molester's request for program

By CARL HESSLER JR.
For The Reporter

NORRISTOWN — A judge has denied a convicted child molester's request that he be allowed to spend part of his sentence in a psychological treatment program instead of prison.

Montgomery County President Judge Richard J. Hodgson, in a one-page order, said he will not modify or reconsider the 11½- to 23-month prison term he imposed against Scott William Shipley, who admitted to having indecent contact with an 11-year-old girl while vis-

iting the girl's Towamencin family.

Shipley, through his lawyer James P. Lyons, had argued in court papers that continuing his psychological treatment while in custody "would most likely endanger him."

Therefore, Shipley asked the judge to allow him to serve at least a portion of his sentence in a long-term sexual offender's treatment program.

On Aug. 20, Hodgson, calling Shipley's conduct "incomprehensible," sentenced Shipley, of Ridgeland, to the prison term and seven years'

probation. Shipley also must report his address to police for 10 years in order to comply with Megan's Law after he's released.

Shipley pleaded guilty to charges of unlawful contact with a minor, indecent assault, corruption of a minor and theft by unlawful taking in connection with the October 2008 incident while he was staying at a home in the Grist Mill development in Towamencin.

The theft charge arose because Shipley took a pair of the girl's underwear with him after he fled from the home, according to testimo-

ny. The girl's father testified his daughter was traumatized by the event, was afraid to sleep in her own bedroom and has undergone counseling.

Assistant District Attorney Samantha Cauffman argued for a state prison sentence against Shipley, calling his conduct "brazen."

Lyons previously argued for leniency on behalf of Shipley, hoping for a sentence of no more than a minimum of three months in prison, claiming Shipley expressed sincere remorse and sought psychological treatment to gain insight into why

he committed the act.

Towamencin police responded to the girl's home at 1:34 a.m. on Oct. 6, to investigate a report of sexual assault that occurred in the home. Police learned that an acquaintance of the residents, Shipley, was visiting from Mississippi and stayed overnight.

Shipley entered the bedroom of the girl, touched her inappropriately and had other indecent contact with her, according to the arrest affidavit filed by Towamencin Detective James Hanrahan.

"(The girl) stated that she was very scared during this ordeal and was trying to think of an excuse to get out of her bedroom. She told him that she had to go to the bathroom and she left and told her parents what had happened," Hanrahan wrote in the arrest affidavit.

Immediately following the incident, Shipley left the home and police subsequently tracked him to the Hershey area. Police located Shipley at a Comfort Inn in Derry Township, Dauphin County, where he was taken into custody.

Donation to help fund police overtime for Uninvest Grand Prix

By BRADLEY SCHLEGEL
Staff Writer

TOWAMENCIN — A \$750 donation from a township resident will be used to help pay police overtime costs incurred by the Uninvest Grand Prix bike race next weekend.

Reeves Miller said he made the contribution through his real estate company to make sure the municipality participates in the race.

"It's important that the township not be excluded," said Miller, a partner in Prudential Keystone Properties and a broker/owner of North Penn Real Estate, a property management company.

"It would have been a black eye if the race did not go through this community," he said.

In July, the supervisors discussed opting out of the annual bicycle race, which spans 100 miles through 17 Montgomery County municipalities.

The elected officials cited nonreimbursed police overtime pay as the main reason before tabling the discussion.

Tim Dickinson, Towamencin's police chief, said he was concerned how the race would proceed through the township without local intersection control.

Last month, the supervisors approved a permit allowing the race — which includes a recreation ride and a race featuring professional and amateur cycling teams — to traverse Towamencin.

Though Sparta Cycling and Uninvest, the main sponsor of the Sept. 12 event, will not reimburse the township's police officers for overtime, the municipality will explore alternate methods to recoup the funds, according to supervisors Chairman Dan Litley.

"We'll make it work," Dickinson said. Miller's contribution should half the municipality's police overtime costs.

Last year's race cost Towamencin \$1,500 in overtime pay, according to township Manager Rob Ford.

The officers deserved to be compensated for their efforts to protect the riders and spectators, according to Miller.

"In these hard economic times, everyone needs to chip in," he said. "I appreciate what the police officers do for the residents and the community."

Though not a cyclist or a fan of bicycle races, Miller said he might experience the event.

"I have considered going," he said.



MARK C. PSORAS/THE REPORTER

Drive thru service

A COUPLE watches as their vehicle is removed from the side of the Macaroni Grill building as Fire Department of Montgomery Township firefighters work on the scene early Thursday evening. The couple were not injured after losing control of the car and crashing into the back of the restaurant. No other injuries were reported. PECO was called to the scene and the restaurant remained open throughout the event.