

THE FRIENDS OF WORCESTER

P.O. Box 545, Worcester, PA 19490
www.friendsofworcester.org
email: info@friendsofworcester.org

Spring 2005



President's Report for 2004

It is clear from the support Friends of Worcester receives and the words of appreciation we hear that Worcester residents value open space and support our efforts to preserve it. The evidence is overwhelming. People in Worcester want to see farms, meadows and woodlands dominate our township. We prefer a landscape that recognizes our historic past and integrates it into our future through intelligent land planning and sensitive historic preservation. Friends of Worcester is able to promote these objectives through the generosity of our supporters and an informed citizen constituency.

During the past year, FOW representatives have attended Montgomery County Planning Commission meetings to advance Worcester's interests on a regional basis as the broader community struggles with issues related to traffic, flooding, open space and historic preservation. We are currently improving our website in order to better inform township residents as we endeavor to protect our township from inappropriate development and suburban sprawl. We recently published a new brochure. Members attend township meetings and communicate our position. We were present at the polls in the fall to encourage residents to come to the township's very successful open space and historic preservation "mapping" meeting. Our spring photo contest for local high school students, our flea market/yard sale, and running the food tent at the Farmer's Union Horse Show are becoming annual FOW friend-raising events.

Our goals for the coming year include continuing our outreach efforts through our newsletter, website, brochure, and sponsorship of several events aimed at attracting a broad community audience. We plan to educate township residents on issues related to Growing Greener conservation land development, historic preservation, stormwater management, village commercial zoning, and the benefits of horse farms and equestrian trails in preserving open space. We are always interested in increasing the involvement of our supporters, and we encourage all township residents to attend our meetings and special events whenever possible. Your voice is always welcome.

Given the increasing number of demands on our organization and the need to carry on our business in a timely manner, in the fall of 2004 the officers hired a part-time admin-

istrative assistant to handle the routine office work, so that our volunteers can spend all of their time developing our interest in education programs.

Our final event of 2004 was the Holiday Party graciously hosted by Rob and Wini Hayes. A wonderful community spirit was fostered as so many gathered to enjoy one another's company. The combined energy and enthusiasm of our supporters and the understanding that "Once it's gone, it's gone forever" contribute to my excitement and enthusiasm in continuing as President of FOW. I appreciate the opportunity to work on our goals in a community where so many care. 🍎

Interview with Art Bustard

FOW: *Tell us a little about yourself.*

Art Bustard: I have lived in Worcester all my life. I received my undergraduate degree from Shippensburg University in Cultural Geography, which included transportation and land use planning, and my masters from Lehigh University in Business History. My wife Barbara and I have been married for 25 years, and our daughter Mary Kate is a sophomore at Kutztown University. Bustard Road is named after my great-grandfather, who was a farmer with an apple cider business. In 1919, my great-uncle started the family business, Cedars Advertising, in Worcester. I started working in the business in 1977, and

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I have been actively running it since 1988.

FOW: *Tell us about your involvement in the local community.*

Art Bustard: While our daughter was in high school, I was involved with the Post-Prom Committee at Methacton. I also served on the Meadowood Board for four years. I have been involved in the Republican Party for 10 years and have been Chairman of the Republican Committee in Worcester for 5 years. I attend Board of Supervisors meetings regularly to hear residents' concerns.

FOW: *Why are you running for Supervisor?*

Art Bustard: This is a critical time for Worcester. Our township has experienced significant development in the last 10 years. In the past, supervisors have been responding to the effects of development. I want to be more proactive. We need to update our land use plans, ordinances, and building codes continuously so that we guide development for the good of the whole community.

FOW: *If you are elected, what do you want to accomplish?*

Art Bustard: It is important to increase the level of communication between the residents and the supervisors. I also want to see the Planning Commission, Zoning Board, and Board of Supervisors working more effectively together toward the same goals. I feel that Worcester should function differently in the 21st century. There are challenges ahead. We should be working with the county and neighboring townships to find solutions to regional problems such as traffic, water resources, and storm water runoff.

FOW: *How do you feel about the need for open space preservation?*

Art Bustard: We are one of the fastest growing communities in Montgomery County. We must be aggressive about open space preservation. We should explore applying for all funds available from the county and state programs. We need to look at conservatively using township money to preserve what we have now.

FOW: *How do you feel about the need for better ordinances to preserve our villages and historic buildings?*

Art Bustard: It is important to use whatever tools are available. I have no problem with revising our ordinances to control Worcester's growth. We need our Zoning Board to adhere to these township regulations. Other townships have historic building ordinances. We should look at them and see if one can work here. Village-commercial zoning

makes sense as our villages of Cedars, Center Point, and Fairview Village grow, to keep them pedestrian friendly with small shops. We do not want to see strip commercial development in Worcester.

FOW: *How do you feel about completing the proposed greenway from Heebner Park to Evansburg State Park?*

Art Bustard: The greenway corridor is located entirely on township-owned land, which the township acquired for this purpose. We need to honor our commitment to Montgomery County to build this trail to connect these two parks. This trail can provide a great recreational opportunity for township residents. I am not in favor of putting other trails in residents' back yards without their approval.

FOW: *How do you feel about a turnpike slip ramp in Worcester?*

Art Bustard: I am against building a slip ramp in Worcester. There is a major regional traffic problem, but this slip ramp would increase traffic on our local roads. It doesn't belong in a residential area such as Schultz Road. It makes more sense to put it on a major highway such as Route 202.

FOW: *Where do you see Worcester 20 years from now?*

Art Bustard: We are at a turning point. Development is inevitable. We must guide development with strategic land planning. We must be more aggressive in order to keep open space in Worcester. I have lived here all my life, and I feel a responsibility to our community to preserve its rural character. I want to make that difference. 🌱

Editor's Note: Art Bustard is the endorsed Republican candidate for Supervisor in the May 17th primary election. He will be opposed on the Republican ticket by Frank Davey and Jim Phillips. FOW interviewed Mr. Davey in the Winter 2003 issue of this newsletter, which is available at friendsofworcester.org. At this time, no Democratic candidates are running for Supervisor.

The Case for Open Space

When you look out your window, when you drive to work, when you glance at your tax bill, the case for open space preservation has been made. In November 2003, Worcester voters went to the polls and gave an enthusiastic 83 percent thumbs-up to Montgomery

County's plan to spend \$150 million over the next 10 years to preserve open space throughout the county. In November 2004, Worcester residents eagerly turned out at the Open Space Committee's first public meeting to help the committee identify important places to preserve in the township. FOW received a broad-based response this year to our annual support letter. It is clear that Worcester residents value our open space – the fields, working farms, woodlands, and historic properties that mean “Worcester” to us.

Once, it was enough for Worcester's supervisors to just say “no” to developers who wanted to cover our fields with houses and shopping centers. Now, developers are more sophisticated, land is scarcer, and development is pressing more insistently against our borders. We have seen farms sold for development. We have seen houses spring up where corn used to grow. In Fairview Village, we will see a drugstore where a historic building once stood. What can we do? We can just complain, or we can act.

Worcester is now in the process of revising our Open Space and Comprehensive Plans. These documents will be the township's road map for the next 10 years, as we strive to retain Worcester's rural character in the face of unprecedented development pressure. We know that some development is inevitable. The question is, how will it occur? What will it look like? Will it change Worcester forever, or can we grow while preserving our community?

Communities are accustomed to planning for growth and deciding where the houses and commercial centers will be located. We need to plan for open space as well. Open Space Coordinator Susan Caughlan notes that open space should not be the land that no one wants for anything else. Instead, open space should be the land that we – the residents – think is the most important to preserve. Because we want Worcester to remain rural, we should aim to preserve at least half of the remaining acreage in our township. That's a tall order – how do we accomplish it?

With a creative menu of options for preserving land, we can insure that Worcester remains a rural community despite the pressure of development. Some land is so important – the best farms, the most sensitive natural resources, the most important historic buildings – that it must be preserved just as it is, for future generations to enjoy in the same way we enjoy it today. We must identify these most important places and work to preserve them now. There are various state and county programs available to help us with this task, but we must also be willing to put up township dollars to make sure these programs are a success in our township. Montgomery County's farmland

preservation programs, which over the past 5 years have helped us preserve several important properties in Worcester, have become so competitive that there are now waiting lists for these programs.

Other lands may be able to handle some growth while still preserving their particular unique aspects. For example, houses can be built on a farm without turning every field into wall-to-wall house lots, or a historic house can be reborn as a bed and breakfast. Our land development ordinances should be revised to require conservation development – residential development that keeps at least half of the land as open space, leaves the important natural resources undisturbed, and locates the houses to take advantage of the views of open space, not destroy them. We need more flexible commercial development ordinances so we can manage the growth of our existing villages in Cedars, Center Point, and Fairview Village without bowing to the threat of big-box chains and strip commercial development. We need an ordinance to help protect our historic buildings when a property is sold for development, so that we do not lose any more historic houses before anyone knows that they're threatened.

Most important, we need elected and appointed officials who are looking out for Worcester's best interests by thinking ahead to see both the opportunities and the threats that are down the road. We also must incorporate more creative options into our dealings with developers, to produce the best results for Worcester. To do this, we need to have staff and consultants who are at the top of the curve. Gone are the days when the first response to any new idea should be “just say no.” Worcester must be able to work effectively at the local, county, and state level to protect and advance our interests. Montgomery County has said that it will invest \$75 million in land acquisition, trail development, farmland protection, and park and historic site improvements over the next 10 years. We need to be able to take full advantage of this opportunity for Worcester. 🌱

Once it's gone, it's gone forever!

Horse Farms Keep Worcester Rural

During the early days of Worcester, our township was dependent on horses. They contributed the energy that made central Montgomery County one of Pennsylvania's most successful agricultural regions during the last century. Not only did horses plow the fields and power early farm machinery, they also provided transportation for farm families and their products. It is no

surprise that the Farmer's Union Horse Company for the Recovery of Stolen Horses and Detecting the Thieves was chartered in 1834 as a farmers' cooperative insurance company, to insure these valuable animals against theft.

Now we find that horses (actually their owners) are again making a significant contribution in Worcester. Over half of Pennsylvania's equine population is housed on properties under 20 acres, and 21 percent of horse farms are less than 5 acres in size. At the public meeting sponsored by the Township Open Space Committee last fall, residents identified over 50 small farms in Worcester and more than a dozen large ones. Some of these are planted in traditional or specialty crops, but many of these smaller properties are family horse farms.

Worcester is unique in Montgomery County in having maintained many of our horse farms long after those in neighboring townships have fallen to development. The image of horse farms is one of wealthy gentleman farmers overseeing large lush pastures surrounded by white board fencing. The reality is that these small farmettes are often owned by dual-income families who want to have two or three horses and can't afford to keep them at expensive boarding farms. Their properties are too small to qualify for the tax break given to farms larger than 10 acres, so they are paying high taxes on their open land for the privilege of keeping their horses at home. This existing base of small horse farms in the township helps preserve our rural character and open space.

The Township Open Space Committee is looking at many land preservation options for our farms and other open spaces, but some of these smaller properties may not quali-

fy for the state, county, and local initiatives used to protect larger parcels. Developers, however, are quick to seize any ground to build more houses. The existence of an equestrian community in the township encourages more horse owners to acquire these smaller properties. Here in Worcester, proximity to trails, particularly those in Evansburg State Park, has kept many small farmettes from succumbing to developers' offers. These open pockets of land are part of Worcester's rural heritage, and they don't cost the taxpayers anything!

Township officials should be implementing ways to make our township as appealing as possible to horse owners, so they will continue to grow their community. Encouraging spur trails that provide links between smaller properties is one way to do this. Over 50 years ago in the Gladwyne neighborhood, an organization known as Bridlewild was formed to ensure that horseback riding could continue in the region even as development began to encroach on large tracts of land. This organization established legal groundwork for the development of easements and protection of landowners who permitted trails to cross their properties. In the late 1960s, following the lead of Bridlewild, Horseyways was created to keep trails open for riding in Lower Gwynedd, Whitpain, and Whitmarsh townships. Over the ensuing years, Horseyways members worked with property owners, developers, and township officials to maintain and further a trail network throughout the Wissahickon Valley despite the enormous amount of development that has taken place in that region. Worcester should build on the precedents established by these organizations and enhance the asset of trail proximity that already exists here in the township.

SUPPORT FRIENDS OF WORCESTER

FRIENDS OF WORCESTER is a non-profit organization made up of new and long-time residents of the township. All involved residents share an appreciation for the rural quality of Worcester and share a common concern for its future. FOW seeks to influence that future. All funds received are used to support our efforts to preserve open space, maintain the rural lifestyle of the community and keep our neighbors informed through our minutes and newsletters. All contributors receive our monthly agenda and minutes as well as notification of important township events.

Friend - \$30 Partner - \$50 Benefactor - \$100 Other

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

All residents, contributing or not, are always welcome at FOW monthly meetings.

Please send your tax deductible contributions to:

**FRIENDS OF WORCESTER
P.O. Box 545
WORCESTER, PA 19490**

The official registration and financial information of The Friends of Worcester may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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Worcester is currently a magnet for developers who envision houses on every wooded lot and field. Let's do all we can as a community to ensure that we are attractive to horse owners who want to keep these fields and woods undeveloped. FOW has demonstrated that every house built ultimately costs taxpayers more than its owners pay in taxes. In contrast, horse farms don't cost the taxpayer anything, and they protect the rural character that we value in Worcester. 🌱

Going Organic

Worcester is proud to be the home of Montgomery County's first certified organic fruit and vegetable farm. Willow Creek Orchards, the former Heebner farm on Stump Hall, Hollow, and Heebner Roads, has received its organic certification from Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO), a certifying agency accredited by the USDA to monitor organic standards. Farmers Drew and Melissa Smith have worked hard over the last 3 years to meet the requirements of the organic certification process. They feel that this process truly adds credibility to the foods they produce.

The National Organic Program, which was established in 2002, has clear rules and regulations that farmers, processors, and food handlers must follow in order to receive organic certification. Farmers must demonstrate that no prohibited substances have been applied to the land or used in production for a 3-year period. In addition to producing food without synthetic chemicals, farmers must use farm practices that improve the soil, reduce pest pressure naturally, enhance the natural landscape, and eliminate contamination of soil and water. Finally, the handling of organic products must adhere to strict guidelines from harvesting to the point of sale. Certified organic farms are inspected annually to assure that the farmer adheres to the rules and regulations set forth in the National Organic Program. This includes a thorough tour of the farm and farm buildings as well as a review of all production, sales, and storage records.

Considering all these requirements, why would a farm want to be certified organic? For the Smiths, this was an easy choice. They believe that the "Certified Organic" label is important because it adds credibility to their products in a marketplace that can be confusing to the consumer. Certification also reflects their commitment to the environment and their community. By farming using these ecologically sound practices, organic farmers like the Smiths are reducing pesticide and herbicide run-off into our water supply, reducing erosion and promoting healthy soils, decreasing air pollutants, promoting biodiversity, and decreasing pesticide and herbicide residues in our foods.

So the next time you are at a grocery store, farm stand, or farmer's market, look at the labels. If you see the USDA Organic emblem, you can feel good knowing the requirements that are behind the seal.

For more information about organic agriculture visit: www.ams.usda.gov/nop, www.attra.org, www.paorganic.org, or Willow Creek Orchards' website at willowcreekorchards.com.



FOW Presentation at Meadowood

This spring, Friends of Worcester was invited by Continuing Resident Education at Meadowood (CREAM) to make a presentation on open space issues in Worcester. On March 29, FOW members presented a talk on "Development and the Case for Open Space." The presentation focused on Worcester's important historic, scenic, and natural resources and outlined some possible implementation strategies the township can use for preserving farms, historic structures, and open space. Watch for excerpts from this powerpoint presentation on our website.

Meadowood generously provided refreshments and opened the meeting to all residents of Worcester. The presentation was very well attended, and the audience demonstrated their interest by their questions and observations about development and open space in Worcester. Here, as everywhere, FOW heard the message: "What is the township doing NOW to preserve open space?" 🌱

Remember to Vote! Tuesday, May 17

Pennsylvania Growing Greener ballot question:

Do you favor authorizing the Commonwealth to borrow up to \$625,000,000 for the maintenance and protection of the environment, open space and farmland preservation, watershed protection, abandoned mine reclamation, acid mine drainage remediation and other environmental initiatives?

VOTE YES

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

FOW Volunteer Opportunities

Do you want to get involved with Friends of Worcester but don't know how? Even if you have just a little time to give, even if you can't get to meetings, we can use your help! Here are some specific tasks we need people to do. If any of these interest you at all, please contact us!

- **Photographers** – Can you take photos of FOW events and locations around the township, for use on our website?
- **Website development** – You don't need to know how to design a website, you just need good ideas on how to expand the FOW website to provide more of the information that township residents want to see.
- **Scrapbooker** – We need someone to keep track of our group's history in an official FOW scrapbook.

Contact us at sgc@friendsofworcester if you're interested in one of these volunteer opportunities.

Visit FOW's updated website:
friendsofworcester.org

More photos! More news!

- 2004 FOW Photo Contest
Winners & 2005 entry form
- Legislative contact information
- Newsletter archives
- Township meeting dates
- Action alerts — state and national issues that impact open space preservation
- FOW meeting minutes
- Open Space Makes \$ense

Coming soon:

- **FOW archives** — newspaper articles about local issues where FOW has made a difference — the slip ramp, Amoco, CVS

What would you like to see?

E-mail us at info@friendsofworcester.org

30th Annual Worcester Historical Society Antique & Flea Market

Saturday, May 7

8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Worcester Township Community
Hall, Fairview Village**

**Antiques ~ Bake sale ~ Refreshments ~
Crafts ~ Art ~ Plants**



65th Annual Farmers Union Horse Show *Saturday, June 4*

Heyser Field, Fairview Village
(behind Worcester Twp. Community Hall,
1031 Valley Forge Rd, Fairview Village)

Featuring:

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Pony Rides! Face Painting!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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Worcester Township Community Hall

8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Space \$10/ Kid's space \$5

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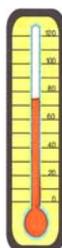
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**Third Annual
Friends of Worcester
PHOTO CONTEST**

Open to all Methacton High School students!

Theme: Springtime in Worcester

Winning entries will be on display at the
Farmers Union Horse Show
Worcester Township Community Hall
Valley Forge Road, Fairview Village
Saturday, June 4, 2005

Two categories: Traditional *or* Digital/Digitally
Enhanced
Black & white *or* Color

CASH PRIZES!

See Mrs. Talmadge at MHS for details and an entry
form, or go to friendsofworcester.org

FRIENDS OF WORCESTER OFFICERS

Kim David - President (610/584-1805)
Rob Hayes - Vice President (610/584-0371)
Wini Hayes - Treasurer (610/584-0371)
Barbara McMonagle - Secretary (215/257-1436)

**Join us at these upcoming meetings and events
WE WELCOME YOUR SUPPORT**

April 18 Monday	7:30 PM Bean Road Nursery Whitehall & Bean Roads (610-584-1805)
May 24 Tuesday	7:30 PM Bean Road Nursery Whitehall & Bean Roads (610-584-1805)
June 4 Saturday	Farmers Union Horse Show, Food Tent, & Community Yard Sale Heyser Field, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Worcester Township Meetings
Worcester Township Community Hall
(1031 Valley Forge Rd, Fairview Village)**

Board of Supervisors – Mondays 8 a.m. May 2, June 6;
Wednesdays 7:30 p.m. April 20, May 18, June 15

Zoning Hearing Board – Tuesdays 6:30 p.m. April 26,
May 24, June 28

Planning Commission – Thursdays 7:30 p.m. April 28,
May 5, May 26, June 2, June 23