

# HARPERSFIELD TOWNSHIP

## NEWS LETTER

SPRING 2026



### ARTICLES

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**New Hire**                      **Sip Magazine**  
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**Fire Department**  
**Thank You**

### TIME TO TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT

We are saddened to report the recent passing of two of our former Township Trustees, Cliff Henry and Ray Gruber. Cliff was a Trustee for over 25 years and was very active in the community. He was on the Harpersfield Volunteer Fire Department for over 50 years. He took care of the financial bookkeeping for all the fundraising events, including the Beef Roast and Fish Fries. In addition, he gave his time and expertise to numerous boards and organizations, including the Geneva Area Chamber of Commerce, where he served as both Chairman and Vice Chairman. Ray also proudly served many years as a Township Trustee. He served as a board member for The Ashtabula County Port Authority and on the Northwest Ambulance Board. He also served as Chairman for The Geneva Senior Center for 20 years. We will all miss the articles he wrote on the history of Harpersfield in the newsletters. Both men served as role models in our community, both in their dedication to our Township and their faith in God. Their legacy is one of service, integrity, and selflessness. They will be greatly missed, but the lasting impact of their work will continue to benefit the community for years to come.

-Ed Spoor, Township Trustee

### MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Memorial Day Parade and Service, sponsored by the Harpersfield Ruritans, will be held on Monday, May 25th. Parade begins at 11:30, with line-up at 11am at the Administration Building/Fire Department, 1481 Harpersfield Road. Attention Kids: Be sure to decorate and ride your bikes in the parade for the Memorial Day contest! Honor Service with guest speakers to follow at the cemetery, Route 307 just west of Harpersfield Road. A free hot dog lunch will be provided by the Ruritans.

## CORK

Cork Cemetery is in a beautiful country setting. It's small but mighty inhabitants were families of early settlers to our area. Many of the stones are gone, but it doesn't diminish the importance of their lives. So where is this mighty location? Cork Cold Springs Road in Harpersfield. A small plot of land with trees and bursts



of sunshine on souls. It's simple not to notice, to just drive by and ignore the quaint green sign. The local history archives are found in the genealogy department of the Ashtabula County Library. The Cork land was first owned by Abraham Scott. There was a Scott family who settled in Painesville in 1806. There was also an Abraham Park Scott who lived in Jefferson County, Ohio and was the head of his household in 1820. The cemetery land was situated on a section of South Harpersfield Methodist Church. The church still stands today.

Gustavus Hamilton Secheverall was born in Montgomery County, New York on December 13, 1796. His father had drowned so he came to Ohio with his mother. They settled in Madison, but eventually bought a farm in Harpersfield. Gustavus was a member of the methodist church and was a freemason. He was very strict in his beliefs. He married Esther Myers in 1817 and who died the first year of their marriage. His second wife was Mary Brakeman and they had eight children. The church started in the home of Gustavus. The minister was John Crawford. The cemetery land was next deeded by R.H. Blanchard to the trustees of the church. It was then that the church was constructed. Records show James Bishop devoting his life in various positions to the church for forty years.

By 1848 the land was sold to the State of Ohio for a cemetery. It's unknown if those interred before that date were already there or if they were reinterred. The records show several souls having passed before 1848. Eleanor Tucker-1845, Eleanor Phelps-1844, Ezra Gregory-1823, and Ora Evans-1845. There is, however, a discrepancy on Ora. The Daughters of the American Revolution have Ora as being buried on County Line Rd in Harpersfield in a field. I wonder if the previous stone only showed Ora's name in memory of him.

Gustavus was buried in Cork Cemetery in 1866 along with other family members. It was said in his obit, "we rejoice that the same God will awaken our brother from his death sleep and give unto him that blessed and complete life that has no second death." It was also stated that the lodge draped a mourning cloth for 30 days.

The cemetery also has several civil war patriots, but the stones are mostly gone. The church itself is said to be "one of the longest continuously operated churches in the western reserve." Who are some of the souls buried in the cemetery? The Adkins family, one of which was Alanah Bartholomew Adkin (1793-1865). She came from Harpersfield, New York and lived nearby a horrific revolutionary war battle in 1780. Daniel Kelsey, whose father Jonas, was in the 3rd regiment under Captain Peleg Ransom in New York, also in the Revolutionary War. Jonas married Sarah Woolsey (1789-1861), whose family was also known to be in the war. Perhaps one of the later souls interred in cork was William Zanzig. There are other names such as Bishop, Blanchard, and Coy. These were all people important to our county. People who we should pause to think about. All of them in a small community cemetery in Cork.

-Marie Patrick, Harpersfield Resident

## SENIOR CENTER

The Geneva Area Senior Center is continuing to do well and ready to welcome new members. New for 2026, our previous Assistant Director, Cindy Tulloch, moved to the site Director position. We also have Roberta Wilkinson-Boomhower as our new Assistant Director. These ladies are doing an outstanding job and are bringing more new ideas and fun events to the center. It is free to join the senior center for any senior age 60 and over in the Geneva area school district. Every month there is a calendar of fun and engaging events. Many of the events are free. The center also offers free rides to doctor appointments, the grocery store etc. for members. If you are interested in joining and attending any of the events, please contact or stop in to the Geneva Area Senior Center at 62 W. Main St., Geneva or 440-466-3048. The center is open Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM. If you would like to receive the monthly calendar by email, please contact myself at 440-812-4101.

Thank you,

Tonia Varckette

Geneva Area Senior Center

Board Member



## ROAD DEPARTMENT RUMBLES

This summer the Road Crew will be very busy with many projects needing to be completed. The Crew will be doing roadside cutting to keep back the high weeds, while also mowing all the cemeteries, both fire stations, and the Administration building. They also will be replacing 2 road cross pipes and oversize them for better drainage, along with many miles of ditch cleaning. Road chip-and-seal will be starting soon. There will be approximately 10 miles completed this year, using over 1,400 ton of stone. The Township has also scheduled asphalt resurfacing of three roads. These roads are Harper Valley Lane, LaFever Road from Rt. 90 to Rt. 84, and a section of State Road. These resurfacing projects have not been bid out yet.

-Jared Petro, Road Superintendent

## TOWNSHIP CLEAN UP DAY

The Free Clean-up Day for all Harpersfield residents will be held on Saturday Sept. 12th from 8:00 A.M - NOON RAIN or SHINE (PROOF OF RESIDENCY REQUIRED).

Location: Doherty's Trash Transfer Station 1439 Rt. 534 South. All vehicles please enter from Rt. 307. ENTER from the eastbound lane to prevent backup on the roundabout. You will still EXIT onto Rt. 534. SIGNS WILL BE POSTED TO HELP DIRECT ALL TRAFFIC. Please check out our Facebook page or web page.

NO -- Commercial Businesses or Haulers. AND PLEASE NO -- Tires, Paint, Paint cans, Batteries, Petroleum products, chemicals, shingles, pesticides, automotive fluids, fuel, propane tanks, barrels or yard waste.

PLEASE SEPARATE ALL METAL ITEMS AS THE METAL IS RECYCLED AND USED TO OFFSET THE TOWNSHIP'S COST FOR THE DUMPSTERS. Once again this is a GREAT opportunity to dispose of unwanted items at no charge and a great time to meet your Trustees!! LET'S KEEP HARPERSFIELD BEAUTIFUL!

-Ed Spoor, Township Trustee

## HAPPY HARPERSFIELD

There is an inclination in human beings to support each other. Whether it's parenting, teaching, donating, or governing, part of our nature is to care for the well-being of others." — Andrew Hume

Did you know that acts of service don't just help others - they benefit us as well? When we lend a hand, our bodies release feel-good hormones like oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin. These help reduce stress, build resilience, and create a genuine sense of well-being.

I see that spirit of service every day here in Harpersfield Township, and it's something I'm truly proud of. Our community is full of "happy helpers," and that neighbor-helping-neighbor mindset is what makes this such a special place to call home. Whether it's volunteering at the fish fries, supporting the Harpersfield Heritage Society, or simply clearing a neighbor's driveway after a snowstorm, these everyday acts of kindness define who we are.

Harpersfield is a community grounded in authenticity, compassion, and a shared sense of responsibility for one another. I'm grateful to be part of it, and I look forward to continuing to connect with and celebrate the many people who make this community so strong.

If you've been thinking about getting involved, I encourage you to take that first step - whether it's volunteering your time, supporting a local organization, or simply lending a hand to a neighbor. Every act, no matter how small, helps strengthen the community we're all proud to call home.

-Lisa Linehan, Township Trustee

## WATER PROJECT



The South River Road Phase 2 project is now complete, adding city water and fire protection on South River Road from Stolz Road into Lake County. The water service includes Virant's Winery on Adkins Road and Debonne Winery in Lake County. Also within this project – Brant Road and Rt. 534 from State Road to Harpersfield Road. In total, this project added 19 hydrants and over 3 miles of water mains to the Township. The Harpersfield water tower at I-90 has started and will be done this summer, providing much needed water storage for fire protection.

-Ed Spoor, Township Trustee

## FISH FRY

A huge thank you to the Harpersfield Volunteer Fire Department and Community Volunteers for hosting the 2026 Fish Fries and to all those in attendance, who surely enjoyed a delicious dinner! 2026 was another great year, serving 2,685 dinners and 126 extra sides. 2027 Fish Fries will begin on January 29th and end on Good Friday, March 26th.

-Ed Pristov, Township Trustee

## EARTH DAY

First Energy, represented by George Emery, donated Red Bud seedlings to Cork Elementary School students in support of Earth Day. This year marked the 29th consecutive year First Energy has donated seedlings. Earth Day falls on April 22nd every year and was created to bring communities together to celebrate nature and educate the public on critical environmental issues.

-Ed Pristov, Township Trustee

## 2027 HARPERSFIELD COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The Harpersfield Township 2027 Community Calendar, featuring residents, businesses, and community organizations, will be available by early October, 2026. Paid for by the advertisers and Harpersfield family sponsors, the calendar is in its 15th year of publication and is such a special Harpersfield tradition! Along with our loyal advertisers who have been supporting the calendar for years (thank you!), the 2027 calendar will include 8 new area businesses. Look for the new calendars this fall at most of the local businesses and organizational events. They will also be available at the administrative offices on Harpersfield Road – come to a zoning or trustee meeting and pick one up!



If you have any pictures that you'd like us to include in our 2028 calendar, please email them to [harpersfieldcalendar@yahoo.com](mailto:harpersfieldcalendar@yahoo.com). NEW FOR 2028 – The calendar committee will host a photo contest and the winning photo showcasing Harpersfield will be featured as the front cover of the 2028 calendar! Stay tuned for more details. And as always, a special thank you goes out to our calendar crew – Gary Somnitz, Jean Hoffman, Jim Pristov, and Ed Pristov – for all their donated hours to make this calendar possible.

-Lisa Linehan, Township Trustee

## STREET LIGHTING

There are approximately 130 streetlights in the Township. Fixtures are currently a mix of LED, high pressure sodium, and mercury vapor and are typically located at street intersections. Streetlights improve overall safety by providing adequate lighting, which reduces accidents and can be a deterrent to criminal behavior. First Energy maintains the lights and will gradually upgrade all units to a soft white LED fixture. Should a streetlight be out, report the pole location to Ed Pristov at 440-812-6535. Placing a ribbon around the pole will assist in ensuring the correct unit is replaced.

-Ed Pristov, Township Trustee

## TOWNSHIP MEETING MINUTES

Meeting minutes are still being posted to our website, but on a monthly basis. The zoning commission and the trustees both meet once per month, but minutes cannot be posted until they are approved by the members at their next meeting.

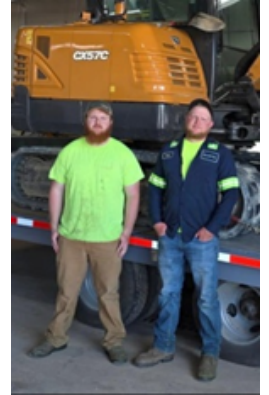
## NEW HIRE

As we said goodbye to Cody Craine in March after 10 years of service to our community, we welcomed long-time employee Jared Petro into the position of Road Superintendent. It has been a seamless transition and Jared is doing well with his new responsibilities.

In April, we also said goodbye to Road Crew Member Frank Benetka and thus began our search for someone to help Jared hold our township together. This was no easy feat, as we had many qualified applicants, but we ultimately offered the position to Austin Massena. From Austinburg, Austin came highly qualified. He graduated from A-Tech and went on to earn an Associate's Degree from the University of Northwestern Ohio in Medium/Heavy Duty Technology. In other words, Austin can drive and repair any piece of equipment the township owns! Equally as important, Austin and Jared have a good working relationship and seem to compliment each other well. They even look alike! If you see Austin around, be sure to welcome him to Harpersfield!

Side note: being a trustee continues to humble me in many ways, and this hiring process was no exception. Having to tell friends and fellow residents that they didn't get the job was not on my bingo card for 2026! If you were one of those very qualified applicants that we had to turn down and are reading this, please know that we appreciate each and every one of you!

-Lisa Linehan, Township Trustee



## SIP MAGAZINE

### Sip Magazine

Be on the lookout for this year's edition of Sip Magazine, to be released this month. Coordinated by the Township Trustees, there will be a full-page ad highlighting all of Harpersfield's wineries, distilleries, and cideries – 16 in all! We are proud of the accomplishments of our community businesses and want everyone to know that Harpersfield is a stand-alone destination! To compliment the ad, the winery page on our website has been updated. Use the QR code to check it out. Many thanks to our webmaster, Gary Somnitz, for his dedication to our website!



## HARPERSFIELD HERITAGE SOCIETY

### Harpersfield Heritage Society

Interested in preserving Harpersfield's History? Come join us on the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm as we collaborate on projects highlighting our community's unique heritage. Meetings take place in the Old Town Hall, 1324 Harpersfield Road. Contact Lisa Linehan at 440-645-7357 or [Lisa@harpersfield.us](mailto:Lisa@harpersfield.us) for more information.

Upcoming projects include: 250th Celebration, organizing and displaying our collection, repainting the interior of the Old Town Hall, updating the electrical (please reach out to Lisa if you have any electrical skills and would be willing to help), touring Shandy Hall, and many more!



## FIRE DEPARTMENT FLICKERS

Harpersfield Volunteer Fire Department's total number of calls for 2025 was 247. This is an uptick in calls, but on a good note, the severity of calls has decreased. We would like to remind you that if you haven't changed the battery in your smoke detectors, now would be a good time. Remember, change your clocks - change your batteries!

The Lenten Fish dinners were a huge success! We served 2,685 dinners and are looking forward to next year's Easter season to beat that number. As always, this event couldn't happen without all of our faithful volunteers!

This year on August 22nd, we are teaming up with the Ashtabula County Covered Bridge Committee and will be hosting a lunch and dinner on the Harpersfield Covered Bridge. Tickets are available ahead of time and can be purchased through fire department personnel or by scanning the QR code. Other fundraisers include the Golf Outing, Grape Jamboree, Clambake, and Craft Fair.

Thank you for your support and as always, Stay Safe!

-Frank Henry, Fire Chief



## THANK YOU

A special thanks to Trustee Ed Spoor and Zoning Administrator Larry Lister for mowing the township properties while Jared was on vacation! It takes all of us to keep Harpersfield beautiful!

And a very special thank you to resident Joanie Keehn for donating her time to put together our first digital community newsletter. With the retirement of Renée Hanyok, longtime printer of our newsletters, our residents have graciously stepped up to fill in the gaps! Going digital saves the township \$540 just in postage per newsletter, but printed copies will be available at Bilicic's and the Administration Building for those who would like one.