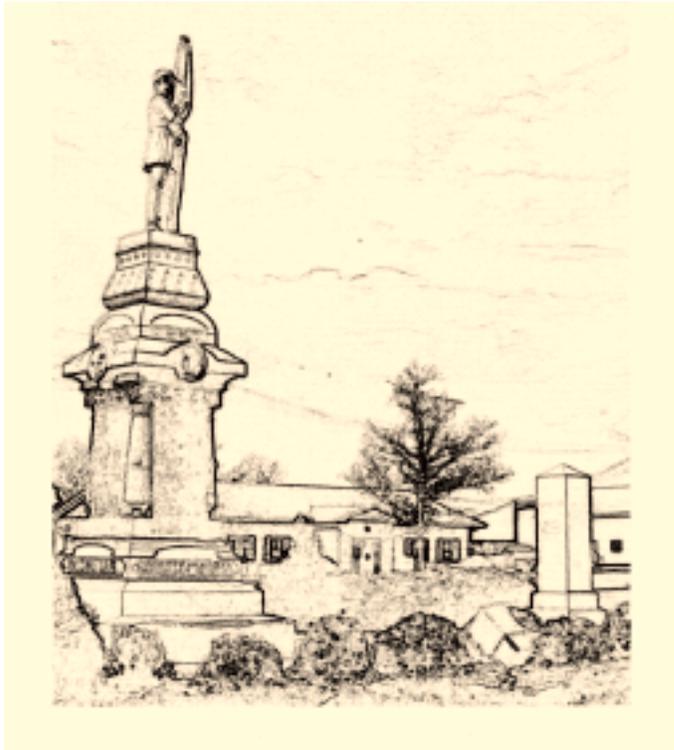


# The Pittsfield Township Talk

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# The Pittsfield Township Talk

## WHO TO CALL

### TRUSTEES

Steve Magyar, Chairman 774-4338  
Mark Diedrick 440-213-5744  
Mark McConnell 647-3427

### FISCAL OFFICER

Jim McConnell 775-3352

### ROAD SUPERVISOR

Dan Shinsky 774-7223

### ZONING INSPECTOR / TYPE II BUSINESS PERMITS

Dan Shinsky 774-7223

### TOWNSHIP HALL SUPERVISOR

Pat Koniarski 774-3828

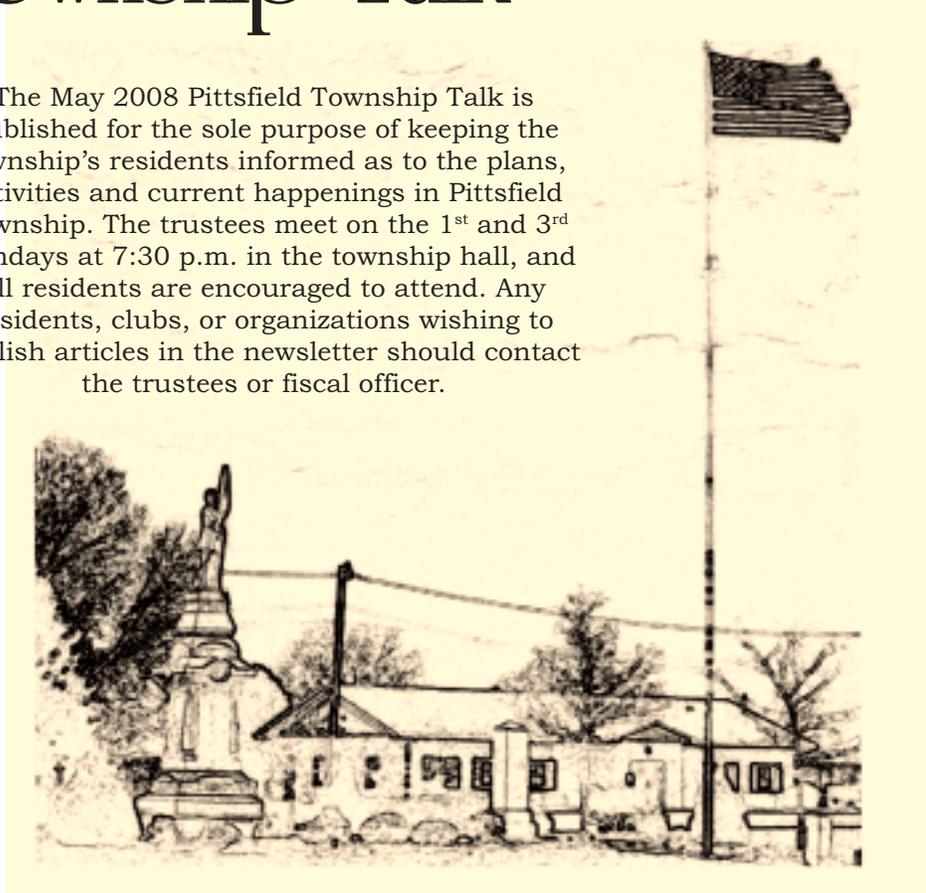
### CEMETERY SEXTON

Jim Sheffield 775-7147

### TOWNSHIP WEBSITE

<http://www.pittsfieldtwp.us>

The May 2008 Pittsfield Township Talk is published for the sole purpose of keeping the township's residents informed as to the plans, activities and current happenings in Pittsfield Township. The trustees meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 7:30 p.m. in the township hall, and all residents are encouraged to attend. Any residents, clubs, or organizations wishing to publish articles in the newsletter should contact the trustees or fiscal officer.



## **MAINTENANCE ON TOWNSHIP'S ROADS HAS BEGUN FOR THE SEASON**

The township will be undergoing some orange-barrel blues once the construction and road paving crews start to visit us. Pitts Road will be the township's main project this summer when a culvert is replaced just south of Whitney Road. The old steel culvert pipes will be replaced by concrete box culverts.

Seventy-four percent of the money for the Pitts Road project is being provided by the Ohio Public Works Commission, with the township paying the balance. The township has sought to have the project start as soon as possible, but because of bid dates work cannot start before July 15 and may not start until later due to the contractor's schedule. The road will be closed for approximately 45 days while the work is being completed.

Already, Whitney Road has been closed on both sides of state Route 58. The township replaced a culvert pipe on the west side, and then the county closed the road to the east so bridge repairs could be completed.

Paving work on Pittsfield's roads will begin in June. Township roads to be chip-and-sealed this year are Hughes Road from Quarry Road to Route 58; Pitts Road from Whitney Road to Route 303; Whitney Road from Pitts Road to Route 58; Kipton-Nickle Plate Road from the township line to Hallauer Road; and Merriam Road from Pitts Road to Route 58.

If you haven't needed to travel US Route 20 in the past few months, then the best advice is to avoid it. Signs are posted from Wal-Mart to the west warning travelers of the rough ride, and the speed limit has been knocked down to 45 mph because of the road's condition. But Route 20 will be paved this summer from east of Norwalk to about Rt. 58, according to Ohio Department of Transportation's website. This project was scheduled to start in April and will last until about October. Expect one lane of traffic to be open with flaggers.

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## **TOWNSHIP'S WORKSHOPS TEACH SKILLS TO RESTORE CEMETERIES IN THE AREA**



*At his March 19 presentation, John Heider showed photos of the work he has completed in cemeteries.*

John Heider didn't set his life's course to include repairing headstones and locating unmarked graves. But when this retired teacher was asked to help clear brush and restore a cemetery in the middle of an Illinois field, he took to the challenge where others before him had walked out.

Heider has been working with the township trustees and township historian Ralph Hayes in order to teach his craft to local people interested in cemetery preservation. At his March 19 presentation, Heider showed photos of the work he has completed in cemeteries, the kinds of equipment he uses to find and lift large buried headstones, and discussed how to properly repair broken stones. Despite the snowy weather, approximately 25 people turned out for this initial workshop. The group included representatives from nearby townships, members of the Pittsfield Township Historical Society, and others interested in preservation efforts.



*Headstones which were repaired during a recent work session in Pittsfield's East Cemetery*

Graveyard renovation is best learned by hands-on methods. When he was first approached with the idea, Heider had restored antique farm equipment for 25 years but fixing a graveyard was a new challenge for him. He had to seek out others who had been restoring cemeteries to hone his own craft. It was these experiences and research that Heider was willing to pass on to participants in our area during a three-day workshop conducted in Pittsfield's East Cemetery the first weekend of May.

The phrase "do no harm" was uttered a few times by Heider, who recommends cleaning headstones with plastic tools and never metal, which can damage the stone. Water is his cleaning agent of choice, followed by a 4:1 ratio of water to ammonia, or a non-ionic cleaner such as Orvus soap.

Another practice that he recommends against is setting markers in gray, wet concrete since acid salts from the concrete will shorten the life of the marble. White Portland cement is his preferred mix, and he saves the concrete for filling voids or other uses.

Despite the generally lousy, wet weather, some residents were able to get their hands dirty over the weekend workshop. A number of stones in the old section were realigned and leveled by filling new gravel under their

bases. Several broken stones were put back together like jigsaw puzzles, and epoxy was used to rejoin the pieces. Portland cement was used to set headstones back into their bases, and then to seal up cracks from the weather.

Heider also let his students try dowsing to locate gravesites. Dowsing is a centuries-old method typically employed to locate water. Armed with two copper wires bent into L-shapes, Heider can determine not just the graves, but the sex of the person buried there and if there is more than one person in the grave. By finding the length of the grave, he can also make a fair guess on the person's age. So how's it work? Heider is the first to admit he can't explain dowsing, but he says there's no trick to using it. Practicing over marked graves will help students hone their skills and learn to "read" what their dowsing wires are telling them.



*A few of the many markers still in need of help.*

Pittsfield still has a number of headstones in need of repair, but the hope is to continue building a pool of trained volunteers who can complete additional work throughout the summer and on an on-going basis. For more information on the Pittsfield Township Historical Society or the township's cemetery preservation efforts, contact Township Historian Ralph Hayes at 647-2203 or e-mail [hayes@kellnet.com](mailto:hayes@kellnet.com).

## **The township has recently posted the following rules in its cemeteries.**

1. Planting of shrubs and trees on cemetery lot is not permitted.
2. Placing of stones or marble chips around markers is not permitted.
3. All waste paper, boxes or bouquets must be disposed of in the containers provided.
4. The sexton and/or maintenance workers reserve the right to remove and dispose of any flowers, wreaths, etc. when they become unsightly. Cemetery clean up will be done November 15 for fall clean up and April 15 for spring clean up.
5. Flower pots or urns shall be no larger than 10 inches in diameter.
6. Poles or shepherd hooks for hanging baskets are permitted — the bottom of the basket must be at least 18 inches above the ground.
7. The placing of toys, articles of clothing, boxes, bottles or cans is not permitted.

## PUT YOUR PAPERS IN ORDER BEFORE YOU START BUILDING

Residents are reminded to please obtain building permits prior to starting any additions or new construction. If you fail to obtain necessary permits prior to the start of a construction project, you will be charged extra for the permit. Permits are needed whether you are adding onto your house, expanding an outbuilding, putting on a covered porch, or constructing a new barn.

Applications for building permits and a list of applicable fees are available on the township's website at [www.pittsfieldtwp.us](http://www.pittsfieldtwp.us). You may also call the township garage at 774-7223 and leave a message if you have questions or need a permit.

## USE CAUTION WHEN APPROACHING SLOW MOVING VEHICLES

The township doesn't have the only tractor that you may encounter on the road. Please watch for our local farmers who will be busy when planting season starts. Many of the newer farm implements can take up more than half a lane on a township road. Please be patient and wait for a tractor to move over before trying to pass them – the tractor's driver may not know you are behind them right away, or they may be looking for a good place to pull over without hitting another person's mailbox or a road sign.

It is never a good idea to speed up behind a tractor or other farm vehicle; they may stop to turn and cars generally don't fare well when they hit a large steel object.

## MORE OPTIONS OFFERED FOR HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD WASTE

The Lorain County Solid Waste Management District has announced some additional dates for county residents to dispose of certain types of hazardous household waste.

An **Electronics Collections Day** will be held closer to home in case you missed the one offered in Lorain this spring. Electronics can be dropped off at the Wellington Township Garage, 105 Maple St., Wellington, on Saturday, June 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is the most responsible way to dispose of used personal computers and related items, cell phones, small office equipment, televisions, or audio equipment. Components from these electronics are recycled instead of being buried in the landfill.

The Solid Waste Management District will hold a **Fall Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day** on Saturday, Sept. 13, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Grafton Township Hall and Fire Station, 17109 Avon Belden Rd. in Grafton. (This facility is near the intersection of state Routes 83 and 303.)



Also, **Fluorescent Bulb and Ballast** recycling is held the second Tuesday of every month at the county warehouse, located at 25 East Ave., Elyria. Businesses, government agencies, school systems, and residents may drop the items off between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Recycling the bulbs and ballasts helps limit the chances of mercury contaminating the water supply.

## MONEY AVAILABLE TO FIX RURAL HOMES BASED ON LOW-INCOME STATUS

Is your home in need of major repairs, but you are unable to afford necessary upgrades? The United States Department of Agriculture offers home repair loans and grants to low income applicants in rural areas.

Money from the USDA's Section 504 loan or grant funds may be made to modernize the home or remove health and safety hazards. Grants are available only for repairs that remove health or safety hazards.

There are limits as to what kind of projects qualify for these loans and grants. Some authorized projects

include installation or repair of sanitary water and waste disposal systems, including plumbing and fixtures to meet local health department regulations; payment of reasonable connection fees and installation costs for water and sanitary sewer; repair or replace heating system; electrical wiring; repair or provide structural supports; repair or replace roof; replace deteriorated siding; repair or remodel homes to make accessible and usable for household members with disabilities; energy conservation measures such as insulation and combination screen-storm windows and doors.

The loan and grant money cannot be used to assist in the construction of a new dwelling, repair a dwelling of such poor condition that when the repairs are completed the dwelling will continue to be a health or safety hazard, move a mobile or manufactured home from one site to another, or to pay for any off-site improvements. In addition, grants cannot be used to make changes for cosmetic or convenience purposes, including painting, paneling, carpeting, improving closets, improving kitchen cabinets, air conditioning, landscape planting, or repairs to garages.

So who may be able to use these grants and loans? Applicants' adjusted household income may not exceed income limits, which are available through local Rural Development offices. Our nearest office is located at 2650 S. Richville Dr. S.E., Suite 102, Massillon, OH 44646, or call (330) 830-7700. This is also the office to contact for the Rural Housing Assistance forms that must be completed to start the application process

Qualified applicants must own and occupy the home to be repaired. The USDA Rural Development representative will inspect the property to confirm that it qualifies, and to check on progress of the project before it is paid in full.

Applicants must be unable to obtain financial assistance from other sources, and lack personal resources that can be utilized to meet their needs. Applicants can have liquid assets up to \$7,500 (the limit is \$10,000 for the elderly). The value of the dwelling and a minimum adequate site, personal automobile and household goods are excluded from the assets. Liquid assets are regarded as cash or other assets that can be converted to cash in 90 days or less. Real estate acreage larger than a minimum adequate site won't be excluded from the evaluation.

Applicants also must demonstrate that they have the ability to repay proposed loans. To be eligible for a grant, an applicant must be at least 62 years of age and lack the ability to repay a 504 program loan.

The RH 504 loans are at a 1% interest rate, and terms are for up to 20 years. Loans can also be made in combination with grants. The loan limit is \$20,000 outstanding balance, and the grants are at a \$7,500 lifetime limit.

Loans of \$7,500 or more are secured by a mortgage on the property being improved. The total of all debts secured by a property may not exceed the value of the security. Loans of less than \$7,500 may be by promissory note only. Grant recipients are required to sign a repayment agreement which requires that if the property is sold or transferred to the grantee's heirs or estate before the end of a three-year period, the full amount of the grant will be repaid to the government.

More information about the Section 504 program is online at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov).

## **COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS IMMUNIZATION CLINICS**

Think shots are just for children? Some immunizations have recommended booster shots even for adults. The suggested booster shot for the Td (diphtheria/tetanus) immunization is every 10 years. Chicken pox vaccinations can prevent serious complications in adults who never had a case of it as children. Some individuals may need a Hepatitis A or B vaccination if they travel or are at risk for exposure to these viruses. Students entering college are typically required to have an immunization for meningitis.

Immunizations are offered to adults and children at the Lorain County General Health District. Walk-in clinics for adults are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month at the Health District office at 9880 S. Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria. No appointment is needed. There is a fee per immunization; call 322-6367 for prices. Some fees are covered by private insurance, Medicare or Medicaid.

Immunizations are also available for children at several locations throughout the county. Fees for these shots vary, but no child is denied immunizations due to an inability to pay. It is recommended that children are vaccinated at two months, four months, six months, 12-15 months, 15-18 months, 4-6 years, and 12-16 years. When taking your child for shots, be sure to take their records that show which immunizations they have already received.

For a schedule of an immunization clinic that will be held close to you, please contact the Health District or visit their website at [www.loraincountyhealth.com](http://www.loraincountyhealth.com).

# TRUSTEES WANT YOUR THOUGHTS ON TOWNSHIP'S FUTURE NEEDS

The trustees would like your assistance in planning for Pittsfield's future. They are interested in knowing what short and long term ideas you might have for the township.

Pittsfield is currently a township with slow to modest residential growth, a strong agricultural base, and a developing commercial area in the vicinity of the US Route 20 / state Route 58 intersection. Both the township's land use plan and the Lorain County land use plan project increasing residential and commercial pressure in Pittsfield Township over the next decade and beyond.

The township has a limited budget, but there are some funds available to consider discretionary type

expenditures beyond the necessary maintenance of road and drainage assets plus the operation of basic township functions such as the park, cemeteries and township hall.

If and when funds would be available, are there specific needs or services that you think the township should consider providing that are currently not available? Should the township's priorities remain unchanged and continue to concentrate on being as efficient as possible in maintaining the roads, ditches, cemeteries and township facilities?

Not all changes would necessarily require additional funding. As an example, the recently formed Pittsfield Township Historical Society has become very active and

an asset to the township with limited support from the township. The voluntary effort to refurbish many of the old headstones in the cemeteries is strongly supported by the township but has to date required only a modest financial commitment.

Send your ideas, preferably in writing, to any of the trustees or the fiscal officer either by mail or email. It is possible that a public meeting may be scheduled sometime in the next few months to provide a forum for discussion of the ideas presented. The trustees will keep you posted through future issues of this newsletter and at the regular meetings as this process proceeds.

## DRYING OUT MOSQUITOES' HIDING PLACES

Mosquitoes can be more than pesky blood-suckers, they are responsible for carrying many diseases. Mosquitoes can transmit encephalitis, West Nile virus, dog heartworms, and infected mosquito bites in children can lead to impetigo, a painful bacterial skin infection.



The Lorain County General Health District recommends that you reduce the number of mosquitoes by eliminating places they breed. Some species of mosquito can breed in as little as a half-inch of standing water. Dispose of containers that collect water, eliminate areas of standing water, repair leaky outdoor faucets that leave puddles, and unclog gutters. Also empty and flush out bird baths and animal watering containers at least once a week.

You can minimize your chances of being bitten by mosquitoes by tightly screening openings of your house, using an insect repellent, and avoiding outdoor activities when mosquitoes are likely to be biting – especially an hour before and an hour after sunset. When you are outside, wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Light colors are less attractive to mosquitoes. Cutting down high weeds around your house also helps, since mosquitoes will rest in tall weeds.

## THE GRASS IS GREEN, SPRING IS SPRUNG, SO NOW MOWING HAS BEGUN

If you live along one of the roads maintained by Pittsfield Township, expect to see Road Supervisor Dan Shinsky mowing them this summer with a new tractor and mower purchased by the township.

The tractor – a Case IH — arrived in February and cost the township \$6,000 after factoring in the state's purchase program allowances as well as the trade-in value of the township's previous tractor. The loader and new road mower were included in that purchase.

By keeping the grass and weeds down along the roads, township workers' goals are to maintain visibility for drivers approaching intersections and to prevent vegetation from clogging up ditches. Also, left unchecked, trees and brush will start to grow too close to the roads, and excess vegetation can affect snowplowing efforts in the winter. Residents are asked please do not leave items in the road right-of-way which will be run over by the mower.



*The Case IH tractor arrived in February.*