

Voices

The Centre Region's Independent
Community Newspaper

© 2007 Voices of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.

March 2007

BOARD OF EDITORS

managing editor
Suzan Erem
suzan@lastdraft.com

politics and economics
Ben Brewer
politics@voicesweb.org

community & lifestyles
Lara Hartman
community@voicesweb.org

university
Melinda Skutnick
university@voicesweb.com

environment
Cindy Hryszko
environment@voicesweb.org

arts & entertainment
Zach Kelly
arts@voicesweb.org

opinions & editorials
Paul Durrenberger
oped@voicesweb.org

calendar & webmaster
Michael Kovack
mdk5009@psu.edu

ART & DESIGN STAFF
Cassandra Derr, Mali Campbell,
Nick Staab, Michael Kovack

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Doug Bauman, Prince Spells,
Alison Aucone, Sarah Parker

CIRCULATION
Suzanne Weinstein and Roxanne Tote
circulation@voicesweb.org

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
advertising@voicesweb.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
president
ARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT, JR.
axg2@psu.edu

vice-president
ANDREW JACKSON SR.
axj119@psu.edu

secretary
MARY WATSON
mdwatson@aol.com

treasurer
PAUL DURRENBERGER
pauldurren@verizon.net

members-at-large
MIKE CASPER
mcc4@psu.edu

DAVID PEERY

Housing part of a bigger issue

Welcome to the most ambitious project *Voices* has pursued in years: An entire issue dedicated to affordable housing. We hope it will become a resource guide for readers interested in the issue. It's one place you can come to, free online or free in print, whenever you need to, for information about the different takes on this complicated subject.

I want to thank the many members and allies of the Centre County Affordable Housing Coalition, for their support both with advertising that helped fund this extra large edition, and the volunteers who wrote stories. Special recognition goes to Rhonda Johannesen and Linda Marshall who work behind the scenes every day to give this issue voice.

It took us months of volunteer time to put this issue of *Voices* together, and it wasn't until close to the end when I realized that our focus on affordable housing could cause us to lose sight of the much larger, more complicated issue. The reason housing isn't affordable is because most folks aren't mak-

from the desk of the Managing Editor
Suzan Erem

ing enough in wages to keep up plus health care is taking a bigger bite out of their checks. We have a growing gap between rich and poor in this country and our very region shows every sign of that. We have million-dollar homes that *someone* must be buying and we have people driving 60 miles to work because they can't afford a home close in on their wages.

Our county officials, good-hearted housing advocates and hardworking residents can spend years talking about how to make housing more affordable, but until we address the fact that the largest employer in the region doesn't pay a living wage to a large percentage of its workers, we will never be confronting this issue head on. Until we admit that the good union jobs we lost when Corning Asahi left cannot be replaced by service industry jobs paying minimum wage, we will not admit our



economy is hurting. Until we decide as a community that driving wages up, not down, has the preferred effect of providing consumers with money to spend and save, we will forever stagnate while we debate just one facet of the problem. Until we elect people willing to lead the way toward more humane policies, we will suffer with and contribute to a deteriorating sense of the common good.

So while I hope this issue of *Voices* helps our readers understand more about the housing industry and its players, what drives it and what can save it, I also hope we never lose sight of the fact that a conscious decision to entitle all of our citizens to economic security is a much more solid but admittedly longer-term solution to any housing crisis we suffer.

Top Stories in This Issue

POLITICS & ECONOMICS

- Housing costs drive workers away *by Sophie Kerszberg*3
Cities, towns reconsider benefits of density *by D.J. Liggett*.....3
Lack of affordable housing puts women at risk *by Jean Riddle Collins*.....6

COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLES

- The lives and times of mobile home residents *by Thelma Walters*.....8
Public transit helps make housing affordable *by Jacqueline Sheader*.....9
Land Trust homeowners tell their own stories *by Sue Heister*.....12
The major players of affordable housing *by Jessica Williams*.....16-17

UNIVERSITY

- Penn State staff commute to save case *by Melinda Skutnick*.....18
Costly student rentals create empty pockets *by Jessica Williams*.....18

ENVIRONMENT

- Affordable green construction *by Lara Hartman and Cindy Hryszko*.....21
Ways to avoid a home energy lemon *by Kevin Gombotz*.....21

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

- 'Pursuit' brings attention to homelessness *by Ellen Dannin*.....25
Musician/mortgage consultant rocks community *by Jeff Carton*.....25

OPINION

- Buy development rights among options *by Jon Eich*27
County willing to facilitate partnerships *by Chris Exarchos*.....30
Borough and partners work to fill housing needs *by Catherine Dauler*.....30

COLUMNISTS, SUDOKU AND MORE INSIDE!!

LETTERS POLICY

Voices encourages letters commenting on our news coverage and editorial policy. Letters should be typewritten, double spaced and a maximum of 250 words. Include address and phone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and to reject those deemed beyond the limits of good taste. Due to space limitations, we cannot guarantee publication of all letters. Letters become the property of *Voices of Central Pennsylvania*. Email to oped@voicesweb.org.

ADVERTISING POLICY

Contact *Voices* for ad rate information at advertising@voicesweb.org. *Voices* reserves the right to refuse any advertising deemed incompatible with our purpose and philosophy as a socially responsible publication. Only publication signifies acceptance of an ad by *Voices of Central Pennsylvania*. Publication of an ad does not imply endorsement or recommendation by *Voices* of any product or service. Cancellation of an ad by the customer after closing date incurs full charge. Direct advertising inquiries to advertising@voicesweb.org.

MAILING ADDRESS:

Voices of Central Pennsylvania
133 S. Allen St.
State College, PA 16801
TELEPHONE:
(814) 234-1699

For faster response send email
ON THE WEB:

voices@voicesweb.org
www.voicesweb.org

Submissions should be directed to the appropriate section editor.

Voices of Central Pennsylvania is an all-volunteer organization. We gratefully accept contributions and bequests to support our efforts.