

The Village Times

January 2026

From the Editor

Welcome to the New Year

As we step into a brand-new year together, let's carry forward the laughter, lessons, and love that brightened our days in the one just passed. In 2022, we came together to purchase our community—a bold step rooted in hope, courage, and the belief that we could create something better together. Since then, we've stumbled at times, celebrated meaningful successes, and grown stronger because of the dedication and heart each member brings.

Every sunrise offers us a fresh chance to connect with one another, to learn something new, and to appreciate the simple moments that make life meaningful. As a still-new cooperative, we continue to build our foundation—learning, adapting, and working toward greater

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Welcome to January 2026.

By Rich Deleo

If when you hear Liberty, Independence and Revolutionary you think of Evergreen, you wouldn't be wrong, but you need to think on a larger scale. This year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of our country. A group of forward thinking men, and the states they lived in, joined together to form the United States Of America, to make the greatest nation in the world. Quite the feat, then and still is now.

This will be a year filled with patriotic gatherings, parades and flag waving celebrations with fireworks all across the country. Considering our patriotic theme community can I suggest we celebrate as well. July 4th may be the high point, and is still some months away, but that gives us plenty of time to come up with ideas to appreciate where we live, both country and community. Lets take this year and do as they did, be forward thinking and band together with a few patriotic projects.

Some quick suggestions might be a greater displaying of the

flag, either by hanging physical flags (at the front sign?) or in image (think a flag display at the pool, or painted flag representation on the side of the water tower, stars and stripes?). Maybe some tasteful red, white and blue paint for the fire hydrants, mailboxes or message boards etc. One idea I heard was a decorated golf cart parade for July. And why not formally name the lake or its island or both with a name fitting our community. Which do you like Freedom Lake or Patriot's lake? Anyway these are just suggestions, what ideas do you have?

I encourage the board to get behind the general idea and for the best of the ideas, lets get everyone involved. A community wide decoration committee could be started and maybe a Decoration Day could be planned. All these and more could be resident funded through donations and not cost the community in general any expense.

I remember with pleasure all that went on in 1976 for the Bicentennial. Unfortunately we won't be around for the 300th, I certainly won't, unless my memories are inside an AI robot, you never know. But lets leave a mark for the 250th. Lets hear your ideas.

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A Journey Through New Year's Celebrations

For more than 4,000 years, people around the world have marked the arrival of a new year with traditions that celebrate renewal, hope, and fresh beginnings. What started as ancient rituals has grown into today's global festivities filled with fireworks, gatherings, and heartfelt resolutions.

The first known New Year festival emerged in Mesopotamia around 2000 BCE. Called *Akitu*, it was celebrated during the spring equinox and honored the rebirth of nature and the gods. The Egyptians tied their New Year to the annual flooding of the Nile, a life-giving event that promised fertile soil and prosperity. The Babylonians added their own influence by making pledges to their gods—an early ancestor of the resolutions many of us still make today.

As centuries passed, the Romans helped shape the calendar we use now. Their year originally began in March, but in 153 BCE January 1 was chosen to mark the start of the civil year and to honor Janus, the two-faced god of beginnings and transitions. Julius Caesar later cemented January 1 as New Year's Day when he introduced the Julian calendar

in 46 BCE, spreading this practice across the Roman Empire.

Around the world, different cultures developed their own rich ways of welcoming a new year. Chinese New Year follows the lunar cycle and bursts with color, dragon dances, lanterns, and family reunions. The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, encourages reflection and prayer, marked by the sounding of the shofar. In the Islamic tradition, the New Year begins with the month of Muharram, commemorating the Hijra—the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina. Hindu and Tamil New Year celebrations often align with agricultural cycles and regional calendars, honoring both seasonal rhythms and spiritual beliefs.

Modern celebrations took shape after the Gregorian calendar reform of 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII refined the dating system and January 1 became the worldwide standard for New Year's Day. By the early 20th century, new traditions were taking hold, including the famous New Year's Eve ball drop in New York's Times Square, first held in 1907 and now watched by millions each year. Across the globe, cities have added their own flair—fireworks over Sydney Harbour, glowing lanterns in Hong

Kong, samba dancing in Rio, and champagne toasts in Paris.

Despite cultural differences, many traditions remain universally familiar. People make resolutions—echoes of those ancient Babylonian promises—aimed at self-improvement. Families share foods believed to bring luck or prosperity, such as lentils in Italy, grapes in Spain, or dumplings in China. And the age-old belief that loud noises can drive away evil spirits lives on in fireworks displays and joyful celebrations.

Of course, New Year's is not the same holiday everywhere. Not all cultures recognize January 1 as the start of the year, and the growing commercialization of celebrations sometimes overshadows the deeper spiritual and seasonal roots of these traditions. Still, the heart of the holiday remains unchanged.

From Mesopotamian rituals to the glowing lights of Times Square, New Year's celebrations reflect a shared human desire to pause, reset, and welcome the promise of what lies ahead. No matter how or when it's observed, the New Year invites us all to embrace renewal, honor our traditions, and step forward with hope.

You're invited to our upcoming Town Hall Meeting, at the Clubhouse. A chance for all members to come together, share concerns, and help shape the actions that guide our community forward. Your questions, ideas, and comments are not only welcome, they're essential to our shared success. We hope you'll join us, lend your voice, and be part of the conversation.

Thursday, Jan 8th at 6:30pm and Sunday Jan. 10th at 3:00 pm.

JANUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 <i>BINGO</i> 1:00 pm	6	7 <i>Stretch</i> 10:00 am <i>\Camera Club</i> 6:30 pm	8 <i>Town Hall Meeing</i> 6:30pm <i>Clubhouse</i>	9 <i>Stretch</i> 10:00 am	10 <i>Town Hall Meeing</i> 3:30 pm <i>Clubhouse</i>
11	12 <i>BINGO</i> 1:00 pm	13 <i>Stretch</i> 10:00 am	14 <i>Prayer and Share Fellow-ship</i> 10:00 am	15	16 <i>Stretch</i> 10:00 am	17
18	19 <i>BINGO</i> 1:00 pm	20	21 <i>Stretch</i> 10:00 am <i>Camera Club</i> 6:30 pm	22	23 <i>Stretch</i> 10:00 am	24
25	26 <i>BINGO</i> 1:00 pm	27	28 <i>Stretch</i> 10:00 am	29	30 <i>Stretch</i> 10:00 am	31

A New Year, A New Way to Grow Together

Sam Brockman Director at Large
Happy New Year, neighbors!

As we step into 2026, it's a wonderful time to look back at what we've achieved. Just three years ago, we took the bold step of buying Evergreen Village together. We aren't just residents; we are the stewards of our own future. That is a rare and beautiful thing.

The Heart of Our Community

Our community runs on the heart and soul of our volunteers. The friends and neighbors who serve on our Board and committees aren't "the authorities"—they are our peers who have stepped up to help navigate the complexities of our shared home.

However, even with the best intentions, the "business" of running a community can be heavy. To make things run smoothly and professionally, we invested in a Property Management Team (PMI) to handle the daily logistics and maintenance that keep our home beautiful.

Helping Us Help You

We've noticed a small habit we'd love to shift in the new year. Sometimes, when something isn't quite right, the first instinct is to share that frustration with a volunteer or a neighbor, or on social media. While we always want to hear from you, there is a much faster way to see results!

To ensure our volunteers can focus on long-term planning and PMI can stay on top of repairs, we kindly ask for your help with the following:

Report Directly: If you see a maintenance issue or a problem on the grounds, please report it directly to PMI. They are our dedicated resource for getting things fixed!

Use the Right Channels: When we bypass our Property Manager and go straight to volunteers, it can actually delay the fix, as the information has to be passed through several hands.

Constructive Collaboration: We are all "set in our ways" to some degree, but our common goal is a peaceful, well-maintained home. Approaching a problem with a "How can we solve this?"

mindset makes our community stronger.

We are grateful for the many volunteers who have given their time and energy to our community. At the same time, we've noticed that some members hesitate to step forward because of past experiences with critical comments or a lack of cooperation. Let's remember that volunteers are neighbors offering their best, and they thrive when supported with patience and appreciation. By working together constructively, we can ensure that volunteering remains a joyful and rewarding part of our shared life.

Ownership Means Participation

Being member-owned means we all share the responsibility for the atmosphere here. Let's make 2026 the year we lead with kindness toward those who volunteer their time, and use our professional management tools to keep our community in tip-top shape.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We are so much more than neighbors—we are partners.

Lets work together on solutions. Happy New Year

Community Rules on Pets

Domestic pets are allowed in the Community with restrictions. Proper immunization and licensing is the responsibility of the Homeowner. Two domestic pets are allowed per home (dogs and/or cats) the following dogs are prohibited; 1.Any dog with a history of aggressive behavior or biting. 2. Any dog that is on a list of prohibited pets, as provided by the

Community's insurance company

All dogs will either be restrained on the ground space unit lot or kept on a leash. Any dog may not be left outside unattended for longer than fifteen minutes

All cats must be kept inside or the house

All wastes from pets must be picked up by the pets owner and supposed to be in the proper manner.



Lookin Back at 2025: A Year of Connection and Community in the Slate Belt

Celebrating heritage, and honoring the everyday moments that make our region home.

Bangor's 150th Anniversary: Honoring a Proud Past

A milestone year for Bangor brought residents and visitors together to celebrate 150 years of history, resilience, and community spirit. The Slate Belt Heritage Center hosted special exhibits exploring the borough's slate mining roots, early settlement stories, and the Native American history that shaped the region long before the first quarries opened.

"Our history isn't just something we preserve — it's something we live with pride."

A highlight of the celebration was the Bangor 150th Anniversary Celebration Band, which united musicians of all ages for performances that blended tradition with contemporary flair.

Passport to History Weekend

Exploring the stories that shaped the Slate Belt

In June, the Slate Belt Heritage Center welcomed families and history enthusiasts during the Lehigh Valley Passport to History Weekend. Visitors enjoyed guided tours, hands on learning, and a deeper look at the people and industries that built our towns.

National Night Out: A Summer Tradition

Wind Gap Park • August

The Slate Belt Regional Police Department once again hosted National Night Out, drawing families from across the region

for an evening of safety demonstrations, K-9 visits, fire and EMS displays, and children's activities.

"It's one of the few nights each year when the whole community gathers simply to enjoy being together."

The event strengthened relationships between residents and first responders while offering a relaxed, joyful summer evening.

Supporting Our Seniors

Pen Argyl's Mid Summer Outreach

The Slate Belt Senior Outreach program expanded its efforts in July, offering information on transportation, wellness services, and social opportunities. Outreach tables appeared at borough events, farmers markets, and library programs — a reminder of the strong support network that exists for older residents.

Libraries, Arts & Lifelong Learning

Blue Mountain Community Library and Local Arts Hubs

Throughout 2025, the Blue Mountain Community Library continued to be a cornerstone of community life. Story times, book clubs, craft sessions, and social gatherings kept residents engaged and connected — especially during the winter months when indoor programs bring neighbors together.

Grassroots Generosity in Action

Families First "Stuff the Bus" Campaign

Local families, businesses, and volunteers filled buses with school supplies to support students across the Slate Belt.

Seasonal Fundraisers

Fire companies, churches, and civic groups hosted raffles, craft

fairs, and community meals that funded scholarships, holiday giving, and essential services. Including Evergreen Village Annual Tricky Tray which raised \$750.00 for the Slater Family Network.

Holiday Drives

November and December brought food collections, gift programs, and winter weather support for families in need.

"When the Slate Belt sees a **need, the Slate Belt shows up.**"

Everyday Traditions That Keep Us Connected

While major events shape the calendar, it's the weekly and monthly traditions that give the Slate Belt its heartbeat:

- Weekly bingo nights at the Portland Fire Company
- Seasonal sales and fundraisers in Bangor, Pen Argyl, and Wind Gap
- Coffee hours, card clubs, knitting circles, and senior socials
- Monthly programs at the Slate Belt Heritage Center

These small, steady gatherings create the sense of belonging that defines our region.

Looking Ahead

As we turn toward a new year, the Slate Belt carries forward a strong sense of shared history and shared responsibility. The events of 2025 reminded us that community is built not only through celebrations, but through everyday acts of connection, kindness, and participation — the small moments that quietly strengthen our bonds. The Slate Belt's strength has always come from its people — past, present, and future — who continue to shape this place with care, resilience, and heart.

A Personal Ponder

By Sam Brockman

A Light That Hasn't Gone Out

It's hard to open a newspaper or turn on the television without feeling the weight of it all. Prices rise, jobs disappear, wars rage far from home and too close for comfort. Many people feel alone, stretched thin, and unsure where to turn. It can seem as though kindness has gone missing and common sense has taken a long vacation.

And yet.

Even in a difficult world, something important remains true: who we are still matters.

This community is living proof of that. Every one of us has faced uncertainty before. We have lived through loss, sacrifice, change, and seasons when

the future looked anything but bright. You adapted. You helped one another. You endured—not because times were easy, but because we were steady.

The world may feel louder and harsher now, but it is still shaped every day by quiet acts of decency: a neighbor checking in, a shared laugh in the hallway, a kind word offered without being asked. These moments don't make headlines, but they hold lives together.

Being older does not mean being irrelevant. It means carrying perspective. It means remembering that fear passes, that communities survive, and that dignity is not granted by politicians or prices—it is practiced in how we treat one another.

other.

If you are feeling alone, know this: you are not invisible here. If you feel discouraged, remember that your presence still brings value. If you wonder whether kindness makes a difference anymore, be assured—it does. Often more than anything else.

We may not be able to fix the world, but we can shape our corner of it. We can choose patience over anger, generosity over withdrawal, and connection over isolation. These choices are powerful. They always have been.

Hope does not mean pretending everything is fine. Hope means believing that even now—especially now—our actions still matter.

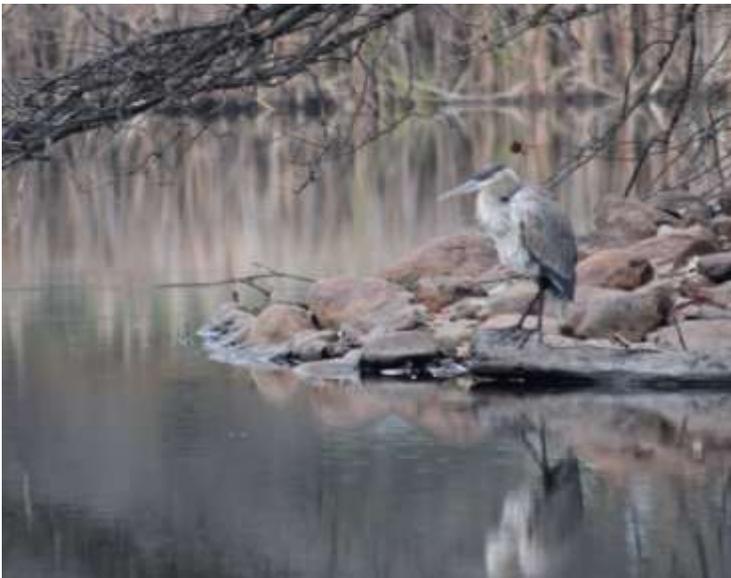
The Village Times Staff invites you to “Ponder”

contact Sam Brockman

Any subject, any view. Start a conversation

New Lake Resident

photo by Ginny Frank



Minimalistic

Photo by Adam Anik



A Brief History of Evergreen Village *By Dan Myers*

As we begin a new year together, it feels fitting to look back at the roots of Evergreen Village. Our history reminds us that this community has always been shaped by the hands and hearts of its residents—people who stepped forward, worked together, and built something lasting. As we turn the page to January, may this story inspire us to continue that tradition of shared responsibility, kindness, and cooperation.

Much of this history was originally shared in 2001 by resident Vern Mitchell.

Evergreen Village began as farmland owned by the Fisher family, about 82 acres that included a stone house and barn. After his father's passing, Jim Fisher sold shale from the lower part of the property (behind what is now 19 Lexington Lane).

In the early 1970s, the land was purchased by Rudolf Davidge, who hoped to build condominiums or high-rise apartments. When the township denied that plan, Davidge partnered with three others to form Emerald Enterprises, envisioning a community of single-family mobile homes called Colonial Village.

The first section developed was the lower part of Independence Way, where four double-wide homes were installed along with sewer, water, and landscaping. Six single-wide homes followed. One early resident recalled learning—on move-in day—that the owners had declared bankruptcy. The project had faced strong opposition from neighbors and the town, and legal costs eventually overwhelmed the developers. Although Emer-

ald Enterprises won its court case, the victory came too late to save the company.

In 1980, Van Daniel Yetter and John M. Yetter purchased the property and renamed it Evergreen Village. At that time, about ten homes were in place. Van handled office operations while John oversaw field work. Between 1980 and 1987, the community grew rapidly, with 81 additional homes added.

The Clubhouse was built in 1983, and the swimming pool was added through the generosity of Mrs. Van D. Yetter. She had once hoped to remodel the original stone farmhouse, but engineering studies showed it would need to be rebuilt entirely. The house was demolished in 1999. Today, the peony bed and old stone walkway beside the pool are the last visible reminders of the original homestead.

Development continued steadily:

1988: Upper Independence Way and Molly Pitcher Road were added, creating 59 new sites.

1994: Lexington Way (Lane) was developed, adding 10 more sites.

1999 & 2023: Two homes in the village were lost to fire

Long-time residents often spoke fondly of the close camaraderie that shaped the early years—stories of gatherings, celebrations, and a strong sense of community.

The Evergreen Village Recreation Committee held its first executive board meeting on March 30, 1984, where the idea of forming a Community Association was discussed. Records are limited until 1990, when fifty residents met at the clubhouse and formed the Evergreen Civic Association.

Leadership shifted to elected officers in 1991. This structure continued until 1998, when resignations led residents to continue meeting informally as a social gathering.

In 1999, the group reorganized, revised its bylaws, and elected new officers. This continued for several years before eventually dissolving. In the early 2000s, Evergreen Village officially became a 55-plus community.

In 2013, residents formed the Evergreen Village Social Club, with elected officers and monthly activities and outings. The club remained active until September 2022.

In late 2021, residents learned that the Yetter family planned to sell Evergreen Village. A group of residents began exploring the possibility of becoming a resident-owned community.

In February 2022, a meeting was held at the Mt. Bethel Firehouse, where residents voted to move forward with the purchase. After many months of work, on October 28, 2022, Evergreen Village officially became Evergreen Village Cooperative, Inc., a resident-owned community.

Our history shows that Evergreen Village has never been just a collection of homes—it has always been a community built through shared effort and neighborly care. As we step into a new year, may we carry forward that same spirit, supporting one another, communicating openly, and taking pride in the place we call home. A fresh start is always possible when we choose to build it together.

From the Editor

Continued from pg 1

stability, growth, and unity.

In the months ahead, may we:

- Cherish the friendships that steady and uplift us
- Notice and savor the small joys woven into our daily routines
- Share stories that inspire, comfort, and remind us we're not alone
- Encourage one another with kindness, patience, courage, and understanding
- Strengthen our cooperative spirit as we work side-by-side toward shared goals

Together, we are shaping a community defined not just by where we live, but by how we uplift one another. This place belongs to all of us—a place where warmth is shared freely, where cooperation makes us stronger, and where hope grows in the company of good neighbors.

Here's to a year filled with new memories, meaningful conversations, and plenty of smiles.

Wishing each of you a peaceful, purposeful, and joy-filled New Year!

Did You Know -

The area that became Mount Bethel was among the earliest settled parts of what is now Northampton County. Ulster Scots (Scotch-Irish) settlers established homesteads around 1730, in an area referred to as the Old Hunter Settlement and later Old Mount Bethel.

The Settlement was closely tied to European expansion after agreements like the Walking Purchase of 1737, which greatly affected land claims between the Penn family and the Lenape (Delaware) tribes.

Originally part of Bucks County following early settlement, the community became part of the newly formed Northampton County in 1752.

In 1787 Old Mount Bethel split into two municipalities:

Upper and Lower Mount Bethel Townships

The village of Mount Bethel itself is an unincorporated community within Upper Mount Bethel Township.

It lies along important travel routes like PA Route 611, historically a key corridor paralleling the Delaware River.

One of the earliest institutions in the area was the Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church, tracing its roots back to 1738 and serving early settlers spiritually and socially.

Religious institutions often served as community centers in frontier regions like Mount Bethel.

The Slate Belt Museum & Historical Society, located in Mount Bethel, helps preserve the local history of the Slate Belt region, including this community's settlement stories. The museum is housed in the former Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church building and highlights early Scotch-Irish settlement.

Mount Bethel's history reflects the broader story of early Pennsylvania settlement — Scotch-Irish pioneers, post-Walking Purchase colonial development, early township governance, and community institutions built around churches and farm life.

While it has remained an unincorporated community rather than a formal borough or city, its identity is tied to deep colonial roots dating nearly 300 years.



Adam Anik