

DOWNTOWN MILFORD NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 1

SPRING 2004

President's Message

To all that are members, thanks for your support and to those not yet members, please consider supporting our far reaching organization. I wish to thank the many individuals and organizations that supported the Santa House. An article was in the Milford Chronicle recognizing these contributors by name. Since this is the first newsletter in quite a while and this is the beginning of my term of office, I would like to name the many activities this small, independent organization coordinates with a surprisingly small number of dedicated and over-worked volunteers. If you have an interest in any of these programs, please call me and I will refer you to the appropriate chairpersons. Those programs that are ongoing: grant administration for façade improvement of downtown buildings, improving the appearance of the downtown area, helping the fire devastated businesses rebuild, Farmer's Market, Santa House, triennial newsletter, low interest business loan program, working with the City for ordinance and boundary changes, becoming members of the state and national Mainstreet program and participating in People's day and the community parade.

Cont. on page 3

Inside this issue:

Calendar of Events	2
New Spring Event	3
Farmers Market Update	3
Santa House Update	3
DMI Website Update	4

The LadyBug Shop & e-Commerce Come to Downtown Milford

While the appearance of Milford's historic downtown has improved dramatically over the last ten years—due to the Riverwalk, street landscaping, building renovations and a few new buildings—many of the downtown storefronts remain vacant. Most retail businesses, which once drew customers to the center of town, now line Dupont Highway. Milford's downtown has ceased to be a "destination", either for local residents or visitors to southern Delaware. Without significant foot traffic downtown, it is difficult for any new retail shop to get started there. Periodically individual shops open, but most fail to survive long enough for the number of shops to reach the critical mass necessary to bring

shoppers back downtown. The LadyBug Shop may help change this pattern. Dan and Rhonda Bond, working with Nancy Conard, are establishing a small, specialty retail shop at 19 NW Front Street. They hope its "click and mortar" business model will succeed where many traditional "brick and mortar" businesses have not. They will sell their "ladybug theme" products on the Internet as well as from their shop, which will be located at 19 NW Front Street. The inspiration for the shop was Delaware's state bug (see Spring Event, page 3). Subsequent research by the Bonds convinced them that there is tremendous demand for ladybug theme products among the tiny bug's admirers around the world.

The LadyBug Shop will open its doors to shoppers in Milford in November, it



The LadyBug Shop

plans to go on-line with an e-commerce website www.LadyBug-Shop.com early next year. Access to the millions who now regularly search for goods on the Internet will

Cont. page 2

Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc.

Nine years and Counting.....

Nine years ago, a new business opened its doors at North Walnut Street to offer engineering services to the City of Milford and other municipalities in Kent and Sussex County. Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc., expanded from its Salisbury

location with 5 employees and a commitment to providing outstanding personal and technical services to each and every client.

Today, DBF Milford includes over 40 employees providing property survey-

ing, site design, municipal planning, architectural design and specific engineering services to over 100 municipal, commercial and residential clients. The office has expanded three times and includes suites in Penney Square

Cont. page 2

LadyBug Shop: a “click and mortar” model

FROM PAGE I

help the LadyBug Shop to overcome downtown Milford’s current shortage of shoppers. The Bonds hope the shop will inspire and guide others to establish similar specialty shops in the surrounding area. If so, the LadyBug Shop as well as other downtown businesses can then benefit from the traffic that a critical mass of shops can generate.

To help this process along, the Bonds made a donation to Downtown Milford Inc. (which was matched by Dan’s employer, Ambac Assurance Corporation) to fund the development of a website for the downtown community. This site, www.DowntownMilford.org, is already being built by local webmaster Scott Livingood, who also is constructing the LadyBug Shop’s website. (See update on DMI website, page 4.) The goal will be to once again make downtown Milford a unique destination that will attract people.

The LadyBug Shop will offer a wide range of products—children’s books and toys, jewelry, cards, T-shirts, items for the home and garden—all with a ladybug theme. Many of the products

will be directly sourced from artists and craft persons from the local area and around the world. Anyone interested in learning more about the LadyBug Shop--or DMI’s new website—should call 302-422-5470.



Rhonda Bond and Nancy Conard

Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc. : 9 years downtown

FROM PAGE I

as well as in the renovated building at 23 North Walnut Street.

Chuck Hauser, a DBF principal and long-time Board member of Downtown Milford Inc., notes with a grin, “You’d probably recognize most of us -- we’re regulars in the downtown cafes and restaurants, some of the crew play basketball in the park at lunch while others stroll the Greenway. Being able to take a short break with a pleasant walk to the bank or drug store is a real help to a busy staff. And we’re looking forward to the new businesses that are anti-

ipated in the downtown area.”

The firm’s strength is often illustrated by its ability to develop buildable solutions to today’s infrastructure and development challenges. DBF has assisted in many Milford projects including the riverbank stabilization, the Benjamin Banneker Elementary School site design, and most recently with architectural services for buildings caught in the downtown fire last May. The Company is proud to be part of the Downtown Milford success story.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 19

Social Hour 5-7 p.m.
Delaware Music School

March 4

Monthly Meeting 7 p.m.
Milford Library Conference Room

April 1

Monthly Meeting 7 p.m.
Milford Library Conference Room

April 24

“Bug and Bud Festival” 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Memorial Park South
Farmer’s Market 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Walnut St. across from Second Street Players

May 1

Community Yard Sale 8 a.m.. - 1 p.m.
and
Farmer’s Market 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Walnut St. across from Second Street Players

May 6

Monthly Meeting 7 p.m.
Milford Public Library Conference Room

May 8

Rain Date for Community Yard Sale
Farmer’s Market 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Walnut St. across from Second Street Players

May 22 and 29

Farmer’s Market 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

June 3

Monthly Meeting 7 p.m.
Milford Public Library Conference Room

June 5

Strawberry Festival 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Walnut St. across from Second Street Players

June 12, 19 and 26

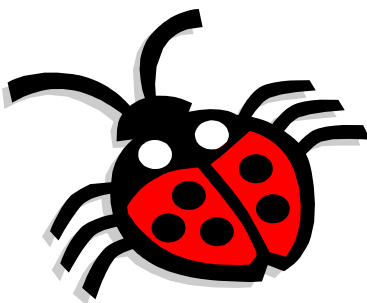
Farmer’s Market 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Milford Parks & Recreation Introduces New Spring Outdoor Event

The 1st Annual Milford Bug & Bud Festival will be held in downtown Milford, at Memorial Park South (between the River and SE Front Street) and at the Library Amphitheater on Saturday April 24 from 10a.m. to 2p.m. The rain date is Saturday May 1.

Milford Parks and Recreation Department and Downtown Milford Inc., are organizing the event with support from Milford civic groups: the Century Club, the Delaware Music School, the Milford Garden Club, the Milford Public Library, the Milford Public School District and the Delaware Red Cross, among others.

The Bug & Bud Festival will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Ladybug becoming the official Delaware State Bug, as well as the City of Milford's participation in the national Tree City program and Arbor Month. Ceremonies celebrating Arbor Day and the Delaware State Bug will begin at 10 am.



Most of the Festival activities will be centered on the children of our community. At 11 am Milford Parks will lead a 2-mile Greenways Walk. Free Bug & Bud Festival commemorative t-shirts will be available for pre-registered walkers to promote healthy lifestyles and outdoor activities. All walkers will receive a coupon for a free hotdog from the Parks Department snack grill. An Arbor Day Booth will provide information about Milford's Tree City initiative and will have a supply of free tree seedlings.

The Delaware Music School is coordinating children's entertainment throughout the event. Free children's books will be distributed by the Milford Public Library, and the Farmer's Market area will include food and Farmer's Market vendors, Red Cross demonstrations, and representatives from Milford-area organizations with children's programs and much more!

The Festival will wrap up with a Ladybug Parade at 1 pm. If you are interested in participating in the Parade, contact Parade Coordinator Dan Bond (email address dbond@ambac.com)

If you would like to help with the Festival please contact: Gary Emory or Mary Betts at Milford Parks & Recreation (422-1104) or Don Abrutyn of Downtown Milford Inc. (424-2053)

Farmer's Market

The Downtown Farmer's Market will open on Saturday, April 24 and will be open each Saturday (except May 15 - Hospital Fair Day) through the summer and early fall from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Market is located on Walnut Street across from the Second Street Players.

Special events planned include a Community Yard Sale on May 1 (rain date May 8) and the annual Strawberry Festival on June 5. Vendors interested in having a space at the Market and community members who would like to participate in the Community Yard Sale should contact Beverly Bowden at 422-6297.

Santa House 2003

While Mother Nature proved to be less than cooperative, the 2003 Santa House was a rousing success. Santa had some 500 children, 200 adults and 2 dogs visit him. Many community members and businesses donated talent, time and money toward this annual project hosted by Downtown Milford, Inc.

Planning has already begun for 2004 Santa House. If you would like to help, please call Don Abrutyn at 424-2053

Please Join
Downtown Milford, Inc.
At a
Community Social
At the
Delaware Music School

February 19, 2004
5—7 p.m.

Light Refreshments by
Sonnyge

President's Message FROM PAGE I

Programs which are new and underway: develop a liaison with Milford City government, recognize new businesses and those that rebuild in the fire area, develop a calendar of local events and share with state and county tourism offices, initiate quarterly social activities, initiate Make a Difference Day with various Milford organizations using Food for Food Pantry theme, develop

a "Click and Mortar" manual for potential entrepreneurs and develop a paid Coordinator position. We are overjoyed to inform you of a brand new festival we are co-sponsoring with Milford Parks and Rec., the "Bug and Bud Festival". It is scheduled for April 24 and a committee is actively putting it together now.

I'm sure you agree that this appears to be an overwhelming list of "things"; however, most are underway and promise to be great undertakings. You can make these programs a sure fire success with the contribution of your time and talents by contacting me and offering your assistance.

Don Abrutyn,

**Downtown, Milford, Inc.
P.O. Box 903
Milford, Delaware 19963**

DOWNTOWN MILFORD, INC.

Officers/Board of Directors:

President—Don Abrutyn
Vice-President—Pat Palmer
Secretary—Rhonda Bond
Treasurer—Robert St. John

Board Members At Large:

Beverly Bowden
Skip Pikus
Les Progar
Vaya Wissman

Chuck Hauser - Milford Chamber
of Commerce Appointee

DMI Meeting Schedules:

General meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. They normally are held in the conference room of the Milford Public Library, although due to Library functions, this may change.

Please see the Milford Chronicle for location. Following each general meeting, the board of directors will conduct its monthly business meeting that is open to the public as well.

Meetings:

Thursday, March 4, 2004
Thursday, April 1, 2004

Thursday, May 6, 2004
Thursday, June 3, 2004

Update on the DMI Website

If you have not yet visited Downtown

Milford's new website at

**www.downtownmilford.org,
please do!**

While it is still under construction, the website already provides lots of information on DMI (its purpose, board members, committees, achievements, by-

laws, etc.), Milford (including a section on the city's history) and downtown businesses. There is a section that provides links to other websites containing useful information for anyone considering opening a business in downtown Milford. Plus this and future DMI Newsletters will be accessible via the website.

Our primary development focus at this point is to get more information on downtown businesses on the website. Businesses that are members of Downtown Milford Inc. can have their own web page (including a photo and information about the business) added to the site for free. Businesses that are not DMI members will be the charged \$60.00 per year for this service.