

HOUSING HEADLINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE BHA

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BHA Director Announces Retirement

In a career that spanned parts of six decades and saw plenty of variety, Clara Kendy's BHA journey reached its end in February. After a 48-year career which took her from a starting position as a clerk to the executive office at BHA, she announced her retirement effective Feb. 27. In summing up Clara's professional career at BHA, one might say that whenever, wherever she was needed, she responded with her best effort.



became BHA's fourth ever executive director (and first female) in 2003.

During her time, she saw many changes. In her own words:

"I started 48 years ago in South Terrace and to this day I run into former tenants or their children and grandchildren who still recognize me. My bonus came from the foods prepared by the mix of ethnic cultures who shared with me their strudel, oxtail soup, tacos,

sweet potato pie, just to name a few.

Eight years later I was given the newly created Purchasing Agent position. Starting from scratch I created requisitions, purchase orders, receiving forms and procedures to bid and follow up on purchases and products. In the early 80s when Lynfield was built and I was given the manager's position, I felt like I went back home. Seeing the gratitude on the faces of the residents who were given the opportunity to live in a brand new home was amazing. Along with managing Lynfield and the four high rise apartment buildings, the new

Mrs. Kendy's career began as a clerical employee and her initial assignment was at South Terrace. In the 1970's she served as BHA's very first purchasing agent. When she was needed, she became manager of the brand new Lynfield development in the 1980's. She also took on the challenge as manager of all four high rise buildings following the centralization of that important function.

Once again answering the call, she assisted then executive director Frank Loretto through the 1990's as his deputy director. She then

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BHA IS NOW ON FACEBOOK. LOOK FOR US AND LIKE US!



FROM THE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This issue marks the first column by Gene Gonzalez. Gene is serving as acting director following the retirement of Clara Kendy.

At the end of February Mrs. Kendy retired, ending a career of more than 48 years at the Bethlehem Housing Authority. She had been the Executive Director since 2003. During her tenure, Housing Authorities throughout the country were forced to cut programs and or staff due to reductions in the Federal Budget. Through Mrs. Kendy's leadership the Authority was able to form partnerships that enabled us to continue to provide children's programs, senior citizen activities, and homeownership opportunities even under these unprecedented fiscal challenges, while maintaining our staff.

Many of our current staff members worked with Mrs. Kendy for many of those years and will continue to make every effort to continue the many programs she started thereby providing our clients with both a sound social and physical environment to reside in.

I am honored to have been given the opportunity to continue what has been started as interim director. With the support of our board and with the help of our great staff, I look forward to the future challenges with confidence.



Eugene J. Gonzalez Jr.

BHA Director Announces Retirement continued from page 1

Parkridge development was added to my managerial responsibilities, bringing my full compliment to 700 homes and apartments.

In 1995 I was promoted to be the Assistant to the Executive Director and shortly thereafter I was named Deputy Executive Director. In May 2003, the Board of Commissioners entrusted me to become BHA's first female Executive Director.

The improvements that we have made through the years are too numerous to mention. I am most proud of our youth programs and facilities, such as the First Tee Golf Center, numerous playground and recreation improvements and partnerships with agencies for After School and summer programs, geared to keep our children and teens involved. It has been so gratifying to have been a part of the renaissance of BHA and a pleasure getting to knowing so many of the residents, especially the numerous "kids" that I have befriended over the years. They are our future and I wish them the best life has to offer.

Because of my love for children, my next career will be in childcare. My son Joe and his wife Logan are expecting our first grandson in April and my husband and I are looking forward to caring for him and spoiling him." ▲



Clara Kendy enjoyed several well-deserved tributes during her final month as executive director. On February 11, the community officers surprised her with a sheet cake at the monthly Drug & Criminal review meeting. Special guests included former BHA officer Erik Kaintz and Chief Mark DiLuzio.

On Friday, February 20, the staff gathered at Monocacy Tower's community room to treat her to a covered dish luncheon. She was given several gifts including a "BHA Memory Book", which featured color photos of her time as executive director. Finally on Monday February 23rd, the commissioners treated her and her family to dinner where they presented her with a gift of gratitude for her service.



Recreation News

Robbie Robinson

WE are full speed ahead with the Parkridge homework program. This after school program is well-attended by Parkridge kids, who regularly attend the afternoon sessions held Monday through Wednesdays at the Ed Miller community center. We have received nice donations including computers to provide tools for our kids to excel in their studies. I and several volunteers have been able to provide a great all around experience for the participants. Spring is coming soon and with it, our recreation program looks forward to a full menu of activities clear through the summer. More to come here at the newsletter and especially at our Facebook page. ▲



BHA-TV Features Music

Since it was unveiled over one year ago, BHA-TV has become more and more a part of the daily routine for high rise residents. In addition to being the source for all notifications concerning what's happening relative to each building, BHA-TV also tries to be entertaining. "We strive to keep the programming fresh and interesting", said high rise manager Millie Matos. To do this, she and her staff add photographs and informative slides often. "We can tailor the message for individual buildings if need be" Mrs. Matos said. "The best part about BHA-TV is that a resident can receive all of the information they need to know in just five minutes. The news recycles regularly, so a person is never more than five minutes away from a complete update". A recent improvement was the programming of music in the lobby sets. "We were thrilled to be able to add Holiday music in December", said Mrs. Matos. The remainder of the year will feature soft hits from the past. "I sometimes come out here to sit and just listen to the music", said Monocacy resident Pete Cimino. Although the technology only allows for the music feature in the lobby sets, every effort is being made to provide music in the other sets as well. ▲

Moving Day

The week of January 5th represented "moving day" for the clerks at the Family Development Office. The office serves the needs of all non-high rise developments and therefore is very busy. For several weeks the clerks were required to work in a temporary area while the main office underwent much-needed expansion and modernization. Returning to the newly renovated area was a relief for all. "The staff is thrilled by the end result", said manager Zulma Rodriguez. "We now have a more efficient layout, plus more space, more privacy and more room for filing", she added. The job also includes revamping of the managerial offices as well. ▲



The clerical areas are friendlier for people in wheel chairs and for mothers with strollers.



The new clerical areas are well-lit and provide much more room and privacy.



RESIDENTS' REMINDER

ZULMA RODRIGUEZ

If you have ever experienced the damage and inconvenience that result from a **flood caused by a ruptured washing machine hose**, you know what a serious matter this can be. To all of our residents- If you have a washer, please inspect the hoses and replace with new ones when you detect wear. Another good tip is to use the washer shut off valve just to play it safe.

BHA residents enjoy that extra measure of security by having a community police program in place. There is more that you can do. We encourage you to contact the police and let them know about suspected drug-related activities in your neighborhood. Call our **Drug Hotline at 610-691-6660**.

Spring and summer are practically here. Get your yard in top shape with grass seed, available through our office. In addition, once again, BHA will sponsor our annual "Most Beautiful Yard Contest". Details are available by contacting the FDO office.. ▲

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS

Federal funding for the Housing Choice Voucher program has remained flat. We are leased up at 428 vouchers as of the present time. ▲

FYI for Seniors

Among seniors, women and patients with diabetes and dementia are the most likely to fall into the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan "donut hole" - the gap occurring after beneficiaries reach their annual coverage limit and before catastrophic coverage kicks. Because this gap leaves them exposed to unsubsidized medication costs, these clinically vulnerable groups should be counseled on how to best manage costs through either drug substitution or discontinuation of specific non-essential medications. The Lehigh Valley Senior Services Council was created in 2009 to promote awareness of resources available to older adults and their families. If you have questions, perhaps they can help you. Their number is (610) 674-2210. ▲

Most Beautiful Yard

FOR the past fifteen years, BHA has sponsored a "Most Beautiful Yard" contest. All BHA residents are welcome to participate. There is no signing up necessary, simply commit to keeping a nice front yard and our judges will take tours to find the very best ones. Prizes are awarded to the best of the best. Any questions? Call the FDO office at 610-865-8342. ▲



CONSTRUCTION CHECK LIST

CURT KICHLINE

The Marvine renovations continue; we are wrapping up the generator replacement project in each high rise; the Family Development Office renovations are complete; we are installing carbon monoxide detectors in our family developments. We expect to be doing an environmental review soon and we are exploring further improvements to ensure that energy is used wisely and efficiently in all developments. ▲

HIGHRISE HIGHLIGHTS

MILLIE MATOS

To all high rise residents -

For a better BHA experience, start a resident council within your building. There are so many advantages and we at BHA fully support these efforts. There are presently openings at each building as of press time. Please contact the CHOO office or Mirella Snow at **610-865-8372** for further information.

Some of your neighbors might like to go to sleep a little earlier than you, so we remind all to be good neighbors by observing the **"10 o'clock rule."** Try to reduce TV, radio and other noises after that time each evening. Your neighbors appreciate this courtesy! You may too. ▲

Resident Spotlight: Pete Cimino

If you spend any time at Monocacy Tower, you know Pete Cimino. Pete lives on the ground floor at BHA's largest high rise building. "I've been here since 2007", Pete said proudly during our recent interview. "I like it here. My apartment is perfect and I have everything I need."

Like many others, Pete's journey that led to Monocacy Tower is interesting. Born in Bethlehem in 1922, Pete started life with some disadvantages. In addition to being born with two club feet, Pete and his siblings were orphaned when Pete was about five years old. They found themselves in an orphan's home in Philadelphia. Eventually, they were adopted. Pete eventually married and had two sons and a daughter. During the Great Depression, he found work like many others in the Civilian Conservation Corp. He had a desire to serve his country during World War II, but his disability prevented his service in the traditional ranks. Pete would not take no for an answer and he ended up serving in the US Merchant Marines. Pete saw action in the North Atlantic.

Following his service, Pete returned home with other GIs and looked for and found work at Bethlehem Steel. "I started in the labor gang and in the Open Hearth." The work was hard and dangerous, but this was the type of work reserved for unskilled laborers. "I eventually went to the #8 Machine Shop, then the Rolling Mill". Pete would eventually make his way to a much better job and he would go on to retire from his position as a crane operator in the 1980's. During his more than 30 years at BSC, he also put in time at the research center and at the headquarters building known as Martin Tower. "I loved it up there", he said referring to the mountaintop facility. "Great views and a terrific cafeteria".

Pete resided on East North Street in his home he shared with his wife for many years, before selling it and moving to Monocacy Tower. "We lived right across the street from Tank Park", he said proudly.

Pete's spends his days making Christian crosses for people. "Anybody who wants one", he explained. Some are made from clothes pins, others from different materials he finds. Pete has slowed down over the years but stays on top of current events and loves to sit near the building's mailbox. This busy intersection allows him to meet and greet fellow residents, visitors and BHA employees as they go about their business. "My car is parked right outside there" he said proudly. "I only drive when I have to now, but we used to go all over. We had a camper and went to Promised Land regularly. We also drove to visit friends in Florida, but those days are done". Despite advancing age, Pete is living proof that maintaining interests and hobbies can keep a person vibrant and happy. ▲



WHAT IS IT?

Look up, they're everywhere. They are the new LED street lights that are appearing all over Bethlehem, even in public housing communities. The Christmas City has put up green lights this year. We're not talking about holiday lights. Bethlehem began replacing its 4,000 street lights with eco-friendly LED bulbs beginning in late 2013.

According to City officials, the new bulbs are brighter and will last up to fifteen years.

"We are going to use 70 percent less energy than we had before," said one official. Bethlehem is the first city in Pennsylvania to take on the task. BHA residents may notice that the new bulbs are brighter and that can certainly make a difference for public safety. ▲





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Resident Commissioner



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR SO YOU DON'T MISS OUT ON THESE MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES!

May 11	Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
May 25	Memorial Day, BHA offices closed
June 8	Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
July 4	Independence Day, BHA offices closed
July 13	Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
Aug. 12.....	Resident Advisory Board, 2 p.m., Monocacy Tower

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Central Office	610-865-8300
Central Highrise Operations Office (CHOO) Litzenberger, Bodder, Bartholomew and Monocacy Towers.....	610-865-8352 OR 610-865-8353
Central Family Development Office Pembroke, Marvine, Fairmount, Pfeifle, Lynfield, Parkridge and Bayard Homes.....	610-865-8342 OR 610-865-8343
Maintenance	610-865-8319