

AROUND TOWN

people and events and happenings

Something in Port for the kids to do



Brian Krista/Record staff

Police Chief Joseph Swam has helped create several afterschool activities for the youth of Port Deposit.



Brian Krista/Record staff

A separate room is being built in Port Deposit's Town Hall and will house donated exercise equipment, which can be used by the town's youth after school.

By Lindsey Robbins
Record staff

In a town with little to offer its restless youth population, other than a lot of water and boats, the young people have decided to take a stand, with help from some adult volunteers.

Following a teenager-led presentation to the Port Deposit Town Council last year on recreation ideas for youths, both teenagers and adults have joined forces to make the town more engaging for its younger residents.

"There's nothing for kids in the recreational sense," said Police Chief Joseph Swam, one of the leading agents in the movement.

Swam tries to dedicate about two hours each day to providing a variety of activities for young people,

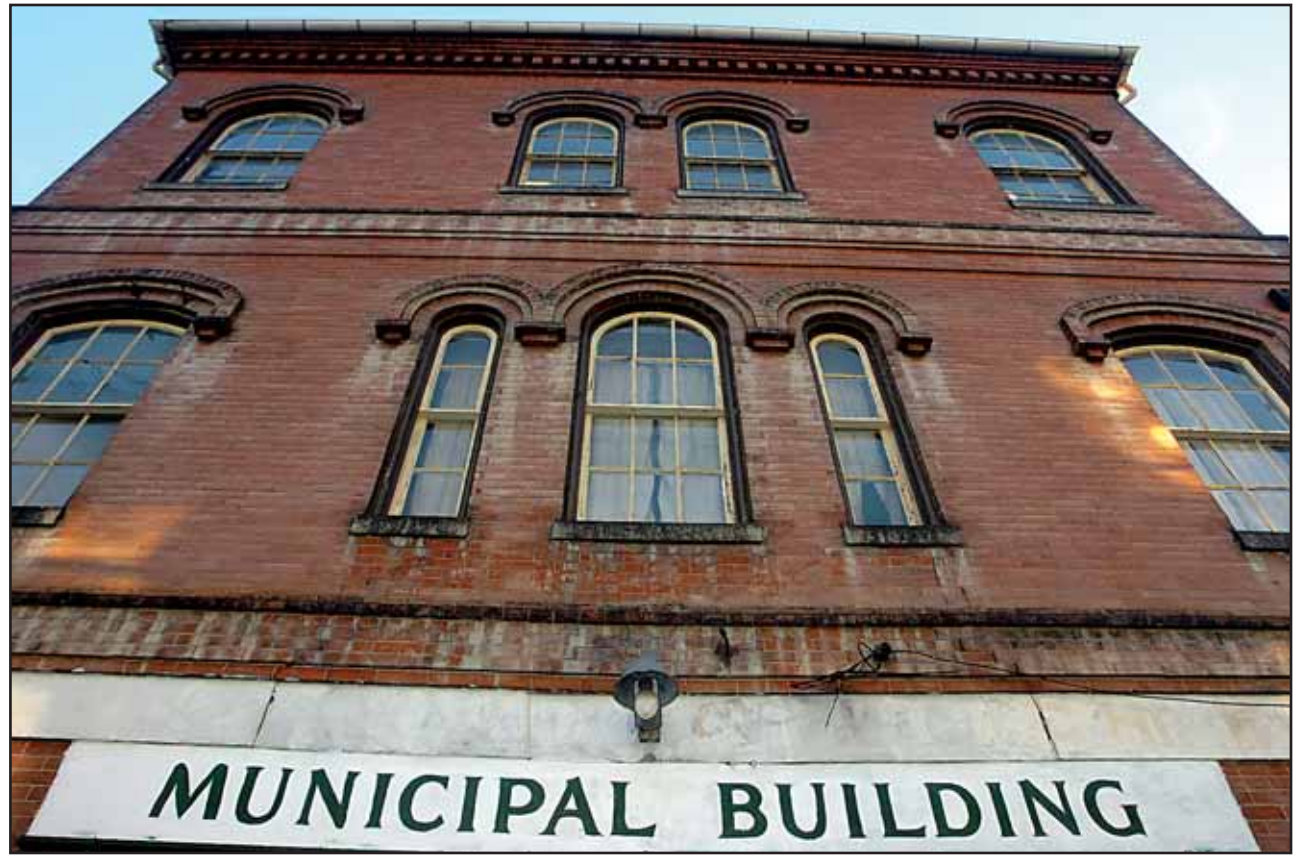
depending on the weather. He supervises a basketball clinic in the summer, a workout gym at the police station in town hall and is setting up a rec room in the nearby municipal building, along with a class to teach young girls how to protect themselves in risky situations.

"It's really wild," Swam said. "They call me Joe and sit around on the floor or chairs or enjoy my candy. It's nice to have people wave at you on the street with their whole hand."

Swam explained Port Deposit has more than 40 adolescents, which attend either Perryville Middle or High School, but they rarely make themselves known in the town because it holds no appeal to them.

The trio of young people behind the movement includes 17-year-old twins Beth and Katie Lambert and

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Brian Krista/Record staff

A portion of municipal building in Port Deposit is planned to be turned into an all-purpose recreational area.

Nothing funny about cultural illiteracy

A few years before I first worked for *The Record*, as a lad delivering it to homes along Chesapeake Drive for five cents of every 15-cent newspaper I sold, there was a sign at the State Theatre with the dire prediction that Pay TV Will Kill The Movies.

In those three TV channel days, small town kids like me had no idea what was coming. The future was all robots, shoe phones, space trips and the like. Pay TV? Who would pay for TV when it came into everyone's home for free?

Pay TV arrived in the late 1960s when Multiview Cable began supplying not only the three network feeds out of Baltimore that everyone could get with the antenna on their roof or a set of rabbit ears attached to the TV, but also similar channels from Washington and Philadelphia, D.C.'s independent Channel 5 and nearly impossible to pick up UHF channels from those three cities as well as from outlying areas of Pennsylvania.

That cable, primitive as it was, offered folks TV programming they couldn't get else-

where. And they paid for it. Many of those folks have never stopped, even for a month, their addiction to pay TV that began close to 40 years ago. The State Theatre is gone, though every time I walk out the front door of *The Record* office and look across St. John Street at the former State Theatre, I have my choice of wonderful memories.

The State Theatre was a victim of changes in the movie business, not pay TV. The movies moved to the malls, leaving great old buildings searching for relevance. Some found it, many didn't.

That's sort of where *The Record*, and newspapers in general, find themselves. As part of that effort, we very belatedly joined the cyberworld with the relatively recent addition of our electronic edition www.hdgrecordinline.com.

For subscribers, it has all the news on-line that is on our printed pages. The paper is available before it's printed (sometime late Thursday night or early Friday morning), which is great for our out of area and out of state readers, not to

mention our traditional subscribers, who occasionally get the news delivered a day late when we miss our post office deadline. For those who think green, there's a lot less paper to recycle and the only thing that gets on your hands is whatever you left on your computer keyboard, not the dirty, inky fingers some get reading the paper.

But this is neither a sales pitch for our on-line paper, nor an argument for the future of newspapers in the face of our ever-changing world of infinitely available news and information in all kinds of formats: blah, blah, blogs, wireless, texts, whatever. I'll leave

Up the Hill



By Ted Hendricks

that is the scariest threat not only to the newspaper business, but also to our country's future. "Jaywalking," where Leno takes a camera and microphone out on the streets and interviews rather normal looking people, is consistently one of the funniest things on TV. He has no trouble finding

that to others who are oh, so much smarter than everyone else, including me. There is one thing to keep in mind, the State Theatre is long out of business, but the movie business is booming and providing much of the programming selling pay TV.

Jay Leno has a regular bit on his top-rated Tonight Show on NBC

some of the most uninformed people imaginable.

Some of this week's examples? Three people couldn't identify a picture of John McCain; two of them said they had never heard of him. Who lives in Vatican City?, they were asked. "Vaticans," was the answer. A man who wears a tall hat was a second clue. "Abraham Lincoln," one of the respondents blurted out. You get the idea.

Another point I repeatedly make, though it may be an urban legend, but not by much, is that more people voted in 2004 for "American Idol" than voted for president.

That's what is so scary. Too many Americans are so uninformed, illiterate really, about the things that are important and so well-informed about the mindless and irrelevant. In another of those "Jaywalking" identify the photo questions, there was no hesitation in identifying Brad Pitt, but the other guy in the picture, Al Gore, stumped them all. One was either a teacher or going to be a teacher, who explained her dumbness by saying she was a

kindergarten teacher and was majoring in "crayon colors."

Knowledge is power, the saying goes, and more and more Americans are becoming powerless every day. Mark Twain, surely someone else too many Americans don't know, said: "He who doesn't read good books has no advantage over he who can't read."

It's not that people aren't as curious as ever because they are. It's those things that occupy their curiosity - J. Lo's twins, Paris Hilton, Anna Nicole Smith, who is still surviving on *Dancing With The Stars* - that's so troubling.

Our economy is in the toilet, gas prices are soaring, our young people are dying in a war, for crying out loud, and some people can't even name the guy in the picture who will be one of the two choices to lead our country and try to solve some of these issues in the next four years.

There's nothing funny about that for those of us who are angry and scared about how so much of American way of life is being eroded, solely because not enough people care.