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September 12, 2024

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Vol. 52, No. 08



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North Warren Wins Big Over Wallkill Valley in Girls Soccer



North Warren took on Wallkill Valley in girls soccer on September 4th. North Warren won, 7 to 1. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Lehigh Valley Schools and Homeowners Continue to be Shortchanged by Harrisburg

By Senator Lisa Boscola – 18th Senatorial District
The Commonwealth's Independent Fiscal Office ("IFO") just released a report showing that Northampton (5th) and Lehigh (7th) County homeowners face some of the highest property tax burdens in the state. Even with some of the heaviest tax burdens already, thirteen of the seventeen school districts in Northampton and Lehigh County raised their property taxes again this year. In the 18th Senatorial District, the district I represent, 5 out of 7 school districts raised property taxes. In February 2023, the Commonwealth Court ruled that our public education funding system was unconstitutional. The Court found large inequities in funding between school districts. This was caused in large measure by our over

reliance on local property taxes to fund our schools. In response to that ruling, as part of this year's budget we boosted the state's basic education funding by \$1.1 billion. Additionally, the legislature created a tax equity program with \$32 million dedicated to providing additional relief for homeowners in school districts with high property tax burdens. This tax equity program clearly used a convoluted formula to dispense the money. Less than half the money (\$13 million) went to school districts in counties in the top 5 of heaviest tax burdened. Two counties in the top 5 (Northampton being one, Pike being the other) received no tax equity money. One school district in the Lehigh Valley received \$24,000, less than 1% of all the money allocated in the program despite

Frelinghuysen Land Use Board Discusses Industrial Cannabis Facility



The Frelinghuysen Land Use Board pushed their agenda forward on Monday, September 9th, in front of an angry crowd by taking a second vote, not recognizing the first one taken at the prior meeting which declared "Sunday School" a school. Now at Monday's meeting after regrouping their board, they re-held the vote with the land use board voting that the Sunday School is NOT recognized as a school therefore avoiding the setback forms schools require for the applicants facility. This weighty declaration was challenged by the opposing counsel, retained by the citizens of Frelinghuysen, which opposes the industrial Cannabis applicants plans to build a facility in close proximity to Felinghuysen Elementary School and Yellow Frame Sunday School.

Bangor Girls Field Hockey Wins With a 2-0 Shut Out Over Saucon Valley



Bangor took on Saucon Valley in field hockey on September 7th. Bangor won, 2 to 0. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Lehigh and Northampton counties' ranking in the IFO report. Sadly, it's become too clear that many elected officials in Harrisburg are not serious about property tax reform – how do we know? First, in the 2022 budget an overwhelming number of members of the General Assembly voted to double cross homeowners by

removing table game revenue money from the property tax relief fund, which provides tax relief to homeowners, and placing it in the general fund. This vote has cost homeowners nearly \$400 million dollars in relief and will continue to shortchange the relief fund over \$140 million annually. Second, the newly

created tax equity fund to help school districts with the heaviest tax burdens was allocated in a way that shortchanged homeowners with the heaviest burden according to the IFO. Third, twice this session I put forward a constitutional amendment calling for the elimination of *SCHOOL cont'd on pg 3*

BANGOR (2) VS SAUCON VALLEY (0) FIELD HOCKEY YOUTH DAY



Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

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SCHOOL

Continued from page 1

of property taxes for homeowners by the year 2026 and requiring the legislature to devise a replacement plan. Both times my Senate colleagues, many of whom claim to support the elimination of school property taxes for homeowners, used a procedural mechanism to avoid voting on the issue.

In addition to legislation to fully eliminate local school property taxes, I have proposed providing property tax relief to senior citizens. Senate Bill 469 would prohibit any political subdivision from imposing any increase in property taxes on residents that are 65 or older with some income limitations.

I am also introducing legislation to expand the Longtime Owner Occupant Program (LOOP) to provide property tax relief to more Pennsylvanians. This bill would be a constitutional amendment that would provide all counties the ability to opt-in to allow for property tax relief to homeowners who have lived in their homes for at least 10 years by exempting or deferring property tax increases, even if their home assessment values rise in the future.

Finally, as I referenced earlier, we need to scrap the convoluted tax equity formula enacted earlier this year. I am introducing legislation to incorporate IFO data, to ensure school districts in the counties with the highest tax burden receive priority funding from the tax equity

program should it be used again next year.

As the IFO report demonstrates so convincingly, the issue of property taxes in the Lehigh Valley is real. It will take bold leadership in Harrisburg to fight for needed reform. Property tax relief will only happen by making it a priority... It is my top priority, and I will continue to relentlessly fight for needed changes. Homeowners in the Lehigh Valley deserve a break and teachers and administrators deserve a modern, reliable funding stream to ensure a quality education for every student in Pennsylvania.

Report: http://www.ifo.state.pa.us/download.cfm?file=Resources/Documents/County_Property_Tax_Burden_Aug_2021.pdf

BANGOR (6) VS WILSON (1) GIRLS SOCCER



Photo by Dale Young/ The Free Weekly Press

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NORTH WARREN (7) VS WALLKILL VALLEY (1) GIRLS SOCCER



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BANGOR (7) VS NORTHWESTERN (55) FOOTBALL



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Free Job Training Program for Women Starts in October

Project Self-Sufficiency announces that the next session of its popular employment skills training program, Higher Opportunities for Women (HOW), will launch October 1st. The 16-week HOW Program combines intensive computer skills training with classroom instruction and on-the-job experience. Curriculum prepares women who have been out of the work force or underemployed to seek entry-level office administrative positions. Classes will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the agency’s campus, located at 127 Mill Street in Newton. Open Houses about the Higher Opportunities for Women program will be held at 10:00 a.m., September 16th; 1:00 p.m., September 10th and September 20th; and 5:00 p.m., September 12th and September 25th. Interested participants are invited to call 973-940-3500 or visit <https://www.projectsufficiency.org/higher-opportunities-for-women> to enroll. Women who take part in the agency’s HOW program can expect 80 hours of computer skills training, including instruction in Microsoft



Word, Excel, and other applications. The HOW program also includes 40 hours of classroom instruction and 120 hours of an unpaid externship at a community employment site, which further prepares participants to successfully venture into the job market. Additional coursework focuses on workplace navigation, life skills training, resume preparation, and interviewing strategies. Since the HOW program’s inception, more than 1,200 women have gained self-confidence and learned marketable skills which placed them on the path to economic self-sufficiency. Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency explains that the HOW program is more than just a job-skills program. “The job market is constantly

evolving, and the Higher Opportunities for Women program gives participants the skills and confidence they need for success.” Project Self-Sufficiency has assisted low-income individuals and families in northwestern New Jersey since 1986. Services offered at Project Self-Sufficiency include high school equivalency education, computer courses, employment skills training, job placement services, support groups, parenting classes, childcare and preschool, legal assistance and education, counseling and advocacy, referrals, and help with emergency basic needs, like food and clothing. For more information about the programs and services offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, visit www.projectsufficiency.org or call 973-940-3500.

Norwescap, In Partnership With United Way, Seeks Volunteers to Help with Tax Assistance for Those in Need

Time to spare, ideas to share, energy to make an impact? The principle of donating time and energy for the benefit of other people as a social responsibility rather than for financial reward is longstanding. VOLUNTEERISM counts!

Norwescap, in collaboration with United Way, invites community members to join its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program and make a meaningful impact on the lives of individuals and families in Warren and Sussex Counties. Gearing up for the 2024-25 tax season, Norwescap and United Way are calling on community members to consider becoming volunteers. Any adult with a passion for helping others is welcome, no tax expertise required. The impact of one’s involvement goes beyond numbers – it helps individuals and families access the tax credits they deserve.

Rochelle Ostenfeld, VITA Coordinator/ Volunteer Manager, noted, “With tax season approaching, VITA is a critical program requiring dedicated volunteers. We are committed to recruiting and training volunteers to meet the demands of this essential service.”

The Norwescap Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program has been a cornerstone of

community support through financial empowerment for many years. It was established to provide free tax assistance to individuals and families with limited income, seniors and disabled persons, ensuring they receive the full spectrum of tax credits they deserve.

Over the years, VITA has transformed lives, offering a helping hand to those striving for financial stability. Kathleen Jones, 96 years old, of Phillipsburg, stated, “My family moved away and I didn’t know what I would do at tax time! This program is one of the greatest gifts I could ask for!”

Sue Warga, Outreach Specialist of Norwescap Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP), commented, “VITA is a great program that Norwescap and United Way offers to the community-at-large. We serve the underserved.” She added, “Often times we get more money into the client’s pocket than they could have expected!”

What is Norwescap Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program? VITA is a community service that assists individuals and families in navigating the complexities of the tax system.

Who Can Volunteer? Volunteers for VITA play a pivotal role in providing free tax preparation services to low-income

individuals. Ostenfeld said, “If you have a passion for making a positive impact and a desire to support others in your community, you are the perfect candidate. You just need a willingness to help and a commitment to making a difference.”

Volunteers contribute to the financial well-being of their neighbors and help foster a sense of community resilience.

Norwescap, a leader in community services, and United Way, a powerhouse of philanthropy, have joined forces for many years to serve New Jersey communities. Mark Valli, CEO, Norwescap, reinforced the need for VITA saying, “This dynamic partnership ensures that the VITA program reaches those who need it most, making a lasting impact on the financial health of our community.”

Ready to be a catalyst for change in your community? Sign up to be a Norwescap VITA Volunteer today! Training is provided, and your dedication will make a real difference in the lives of others. To join this community-driven initiative, visit Norwescap.org today or contact Rochelle Ostenfeld at ostenfeldr@norwescap.org.

Learn more about Norwescap and its many community initiatives at norwescap.org or call 908-454-7000.

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PEN ARGYL(14) VS NORTHERN LEHIGH (26) FOOTBALL GREEN & WHITE DAY



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November Gala to Kick Off Warren County's Bicentennial Year

Warren County will officially kick off its Bicentennial Year with a November 12 gala to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the legislation that created the County.

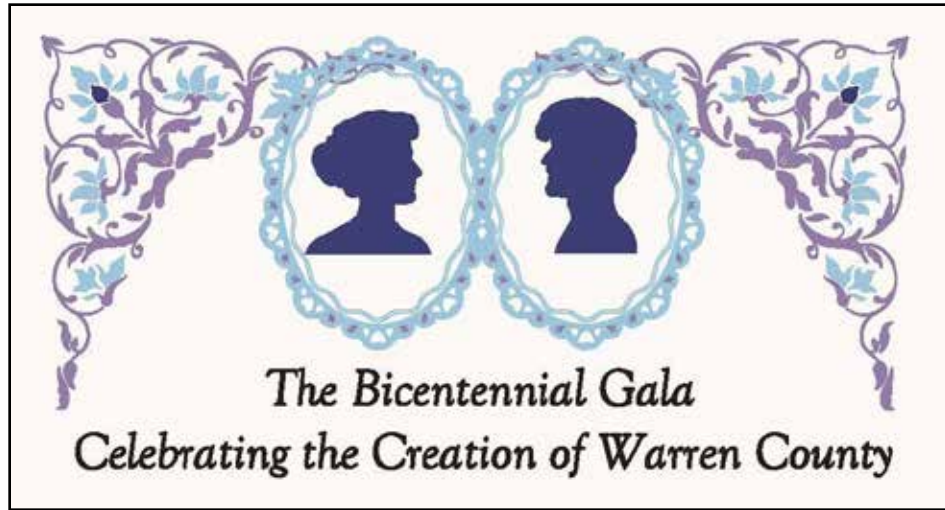
Tickets are now on sale for the celebration that starts at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, at David's Country Inn. The gala will include a dinner buffet, cash bar and music, along with dancing, a demonstration of period dances, and a costume contests. Attendees are invited (but not required) to come in Regency/Federal Era attire in honor of the County's earliest days.

"For three summers in a row, Warren County and the Bicentennial Cultural and Heritage Advisory Board have hosted concerts to raise awareness

of the approaching anniversary of the County's formation. Now it's time to get the celebration started," said Warren County Commissioner Lori Ciesla, liaison to the bicentennial committee.

"This November 12 event will kick off our special bicentennial year in style," Ciesla added, noting, "More events are planned throughout 2025 to celebrate our past 200 years and to look to our future."

"The Bicentennial committee is so excited to be hosting the Gala at the beautiful David's Country Inn," said Laurie Rapisardi, executive director of the Hackettstown Business Improvement District, who chairs the Bicentennial Cultural and Heritage Advisory Board. "The



evening will bring you back in time as we celebrate our amazing Warren County's 200th Anniversary with music, dancing, costumes and so much more! We hope to see you there!"

Tickets can be purchased online or by mail with information available at www.warren200.com. Through September

30, tickets are \$25 per person, and \$35 per person from October 1 until sales close on November 1. For more information, call 908-475-7750 x2.

Warren County was created by legislation passed on November 20, 1824 by the New Jersey Legislature, which carved off the southern portion of

Sussex County into a new entity, named for Dr. Joseph Warren of Boston, one of the early advocates for independence from England. Commissioned as a General, Warren was killed in the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775 and was a revered figure in the early days of the United States.

The initial legislature set the general boundaries for the new county, came into existence in 1825 with the exact delineation of the border and the election and seating of its first Board of Chosen Freeholders.

David's Country Inn is the perfect spot to launch the yearlong bicentennial jubilee, as it dates back to the County's earliest days. An elegantly restored Victorian mansion, it originated as a log structure built in 1787 and named The Warren House in honor of Dr. Warren. The existing frame structure was constructed in 1840 and served as an inn for decades. For the past 46 years, the Falzarano family has owned and operated David's Country Inn as one of the area's premiere wedding and event spaces.

Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and the Northampton County Digital Navigator Coalition Host Free Digital Device Training Workshop

The Northampton County Digital Navigator Coalition is hosting a Digital Device Training Workshop on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

This free community event will take place at the Northampton Community College Fowler Center located at 511 E. 3rd Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015. The event will begin

with an open discussion from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM, where community members can share their broadband experiences and address issues like service availability, affordability, and device

access. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own devices, such as smartphones, laptops, or tablets, to receive personalized assistance. From 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM, students from the

Bethlehem Area School District will provide hands-on training, helping attendees with internet navigation, setting up smartphones, and adding apps to your devices.

For more information, contact the Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development at 610-829-6306.

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From Fruits And Veggies To Sinatra, WBID's September Farmers Market Covers It All

The Washington Farmers Market is more than just fresh fruits and veggies.

The Farmers Market is held weekly in the center of Downtown Washington every Saturday by Veteran's Park, through September 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. In addition to farm fresh fruits, vegetables, plants and more, each week features a different special activity or theme, including musical performers, special days, and more.

The Farmers Market brings entertainment, too! On Sept. 28 Peter Grosso takes the stage to sing classic Frank Sinatra and other favorites from the "Chairman of the Board's" contemporaries. Meanwhile, Steve Kunzman is the entertainment during the Potato Fest on Sept. 14 and on Sept. 21, it's full steam ahead for the WBID's annual Festival in the Borough which includes a full day of



music, vendors and kids market vendors coming this year are: Pipers Hill Farms, Greenbytes



Farm, K & A Farm, Fiddler's Farm, The Rooted Lion/Dandy Lion Acres Farm, Brogsdale Candles, Sweet Tucker's Bake

Shop, K&D Refillery, and Missy's Angels Animal Rescue. Other vendors who will be on hand during the season are Sourland Mountain Spirits, Bee To The Honey, Autumn Delights, Wick'ed by Anais, Melaina's Flower Field, and Hello Georgous.

For more information about the Farmers Market and other WBID news, visit washingtonbid.org or LIKE the Washington BID Facebook page.

Rep. Susan Wild Joins Weatherly Mayor and Local Advocates to Celebrate Funding for New Penn Haven Trail

Congresswoman Susan Wild joined Weatherly Mayor Paul Hadzick, Borough Manager Harold Pudliner, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Deputy Secretary of Conservation and Technical Services Claire Jantz, and Trust for Public Land's Land Protection Manager Ellen Lott to visit the site of the Penn Haven trail. "Once used to deliver coal from Carbon County across the country, the Penn Haven trail will now be used to connect residents and nature lovers throughout our community to the outdoors while

also improving our water quality," said Congresswoman Susan Wild. "By connecting Weatherly to the Delaware & Lehigh trail, Penn Haven will expand outdoor recreation activities throughout the Lehigh Valley, as well as invest in the Black Creek Watershed. I'm proud to have brought federal funding home for this project, and I'll continue working to ensure the Greater Lehigh Valley receives its fair share in the upcoming budget negotiations." "We are thrilled to help bring improved access to the outdoors to the people of Weatherly and Carbon County," said Owen Franklin,

Vice President for the Great Lakes Region at Trust for Public Land. "Collaborative efforts like this show how much we can accomplish when we work together. The Penn Haven Trail is a triple win for the community - it conserves important habitat, provides opportunities for outdoor recreation, and will help build a sustainable economy in Carbon County. We are grateful to Congresswoman Wild's support and look forward to working with her in the future." This project, which Rep. Wild brought home over \$1.7 million for, was one of five projects in Carbon County

Rep. Wild secured Community Project Funding for in the Fiscal Year 2024 government funding package, and one of 14 projects throughout the Greater Lehigh Valley that she successfully advocated for to be included in the final package. The grant will allow the Borough of Weatherly to acquire the 1,140-acre Penn Haven property to preserve water quality in the Black Creek watershed, provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities for the public, and build a five-mile trail linking Weatherly with the much-used, scenic Delaware & Lehigh Trail.

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Local New Jersey Preschool and Daycare Center Achieves Prestigious Award

The Little Sprouts Early Learning Center was recently awarded a four-star rating from Grow NJ Kids, the state-sponsored initiative to raise the quality of child care and early learning throughout New Jersey. The rating is based on a rigorous process which considers documentation, classroom environment, in-person observations, and other factors. The Little Sprouts Early Learning Center is an expansive childcare and preschool facility which offers space for 83 youngsters, ages 6 weeks to 6 years, and is operated by Project Self-Sufficiency at 127 Mill Street in Newton.

Jennifer Blohm is a Technical Assistance Specialist from the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium, one of three agencies assigned to provide technical assistance and support to programs participating in Grow NJ Kids. Blohm was so impressed by the quality of the Little Sprouts Early Learning Center environment, that she decided to enroll her own child in the preschool. "The goal of Grow NJ Kids is to have quality care across the state of New Jersey in all programs. The classrooms at

Little Sprouts achieved very high scores in the observation tool which resulted in a 4-star rating for the program. It's an amazing achievement and it really speaks to the high quality of the environment."

Participating Grow NJ Kids facilities are monitored every three years. During the evaluation, specialists review an array of documentation related to the center, including handbooks, professional development records and curriculum as well as equipment and facility logs. In addition, raters assess teaching strategies, interactions between faculty and students, and adherence to guidelines for health and safety, literacy, classroom displays, diversity, and community outreach. Between assessments, specialists are available for in-class support and assistance.

"We are acutely aware that high-quality childcare and preschool are needed to prepare students for a lifetime of success, both in the classroom and in the community," remarked Project Self-Sufficiency Executive Director Deborah Berry-Toon. "We are extremely proud of the faculty at



the Little Sprouts Early Learning Center for their dedication to their students, their creativity, and their commitment to offering the highest quality care to each and every child who comes through our doors."

The Little Sprouts Early Learning Center features separate classrooms for each age group, from infancy through preschool. Free preschool is available to Newton students, ages 3 and 4. The center uses Creative Curriculum, a curriculum approved by the State of New Jersey and endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in all classrooms to help children learn important skills in math, literacy, science, social studies, the arts, and technology. Fully qualified teachers are available in each

school room and the child-teacher ratio adheres to or exceeds state standards.

The availability of an on-site vegetable garden and weekly visits by Master Gardeners provides interactive instruction about nutrition, the origin of food, cooking, and other topics. The curriculum is enhanced by frequent special guests who read to the students and offer simple lessons in the arts.

Each classroom has new equipment and classroom learning materials to support dramatic play, science and technology, sand and water play, reading, and music. The center also contains an all-purpose room for active indoor play and parent presentations, as well as a sick room for those children who may fall ill during the day. The center is equipped with

two separate playgrounds, one for younger tots and one for older children. All types of state-sponsored child care benefits are accepted, including New Jersey Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and child care offered through the state's Work First New Jersey cash assistance program. For more information visit the center's website, www.littlesproutsearlylearningcenter.org or call 973-940-3540.

Project Self-Sufficiency has assisted low-income individuals and families in northwestern New Jersey since 1986. Services offered at Project Self-Sufficiency include high school equivalency education, computer courses, employment skills training, job placement services, support groups, parenting classes, childcare and preschool, legal assistance and education, counseling and advocacy, referrals, and help with emergency basic needs, like food and clothing. For more information about the programs and services offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, visit www.projectsellsufficiency.org or call 973-940-3500.

Research shows that children who are in quality childcare and early

learning programs when they are young are better prepared for kindergarten with better reading skills, more math skills and larger vocabularies. Grow NJ Kids, New Jersey's Quality Rating and Improvement System, is the state's program to raise the quality of childcare and early learning across the state. Grow NJ Kids gives childcare and early learning programs resources to assess and improve their programs, while providing parents with information that allows them to evaluate the quality of programs and make the best choices for their child. The goal is to create a system that encourages ongoing improvement.

All types of programs can participate in Grow NJ Kids; a childcare center, a school- or center-based preschool program, a Head Start program, as well as a registered family child care provider, who cares for children in his/her home.

Grow NJ Kids is administered by the NJ Department Human Services in partnership with the Departments of Children and Families, Education and Health.

You can learn more about available childcare options or search for a participating program near you at www.GrowNJKids.gov.

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Phillipsburg, N.J. Railroad Festival Celebrates 172 Years Since Rail Came to Town

Platinum Star Cleaning will present the third annual Phillipsburg N.J. Railroad Festival, celebrating 172 years of railroad with music, food, vendors, and three walkable areas of railroad fun on Saturday, September 14th, 2024, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

The first railroad to arrive in Phillipsburg was the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ), which opened on July 2, 1852. Phillipsburg was once a major transportation hub, home to five major railroads with roundhouses and turntables as well as the Morris Canal.

Presenter Aaron D. Coleman, owner of Platinum Star Cleaning and producer of the event, stated, “He saw the importance of continuing the annual festival for the Town of Phillipsburg and the surrounding community after the last two years of the festival, which drew over 3000 attendees, and expects many more this year.” Coleman said, “I feel it’s important for businesses to give back to the community. “ Mr. Coleman further declared that the “All Aboard” sponsor for this year is McWane Ductile, Iron Strong since 1871 in Phillipsburg. Mayor Randy Piazza said, “It’s great to see The Phillipsburg Railroad Festival not only come back for its 3rd year, but come back bigger and better than before.”

Coleman has built and fostered relationships and has been working on a plan he created connecting over sixty acres of Walters Park to Delaware Park, first with Walter’s Park to PU Tower & PU Station that will include trolley service, walking, and

bike paths. Space for an amphitheater, reconstruct a roundhouse within its existing footprint, and reuse existing coal chute foundates for museum buildings to hold artifacts and displays.

Platform connection between PU Tower and PU Station with staircase access. Also proposed is a transportation museum in a new parking garage with room for a restaurant/event space and ground-floor retail. “It is the goal with this plan to provide harmonious connectivity between all properties and non-profit railroad groups while promoting sustainable tourism and economic development that benefits the community for years to come,” Coleman remarked. He also spearheaded the restoration and completion of the Phillipsburg Train Station, which is now a museum, and the first floor has been ninety percent restored.

Coleman praises the non-profit railroad groups, elected officials, community, businesses, and many volunteers for this “all aboard” movement in Phillipsburg. Coleman is trying to secure funding from the private sector for the conceptual plan and present it to the town, railroad nonprofits, and NJ Transit and Norfolk Southern.

The festival, which will have three walkable areas, kicks off at 11 a.m. in Area 1, Shappell Park, and the surrounding area with over fifty vendors, including food, crafts, businesses, sponsors, and exhibits with live music performed by Truth and Soul. The Phillipsburg High School Band will kick off the festivities with Mayor Randy Piazza of Phillipsburg,



Council President Pete Marino, Council Vice President Melissa Paulus, and Council Member Lee Clark, along with other elected officials, including NJ

Congressman Tom Kean and representatives from Seantor Douglas Steinhardt, recognizing the non-profit groups along the railroad, followed by a ribbon cutting celebrating 172 years of the rails coming to the Phillipsburg/Easton area.

Also nearby will be the Centerville and Southwestern Railroad (a.k.a. the Becker Farm Railroad), a miniature free train ride operated by the Phillipsburg Railroad historians with museum displays and equipment. The National Museum of Industrial History (NMIH) in Bethlehem, PA, is bringing TUG, the museum’s former Bethlehem Steel rubber-tired rail car mover, to the Phillipsburg Railroad Festival. Phillipsburg Union Station will also feature various train exhibitors and vendors. The park will feature a well-known local band, Truth and Soul, and Tootsie the clown and face painter.

Area 2 is Phillipsburg Union Station, the former train station built in 1914, owned by The Friends of the NJ Transportation Heritage Center. Currently the first floor has been restored and is open for tours with

newly built exhibits of various antique railroad artifacts, Morris Canal, and bus transportation displays. On center display in the station from Liberty Historic Railway are vintage railfan trips. The front facade of the historic train station has been restored to its original condition, made possible by a grant through the county.

A short walk away is the Phillipsburg Union Tower. The former CNJ railroad switch tower in Phillipsburg has been undergoing a full restoration since 2007. PU Tower will be open for tours with slideshows and films. Q & A with Bill Strassner, a former employee of 52 years,

signs up for one more shift.

Area 3 is the location of Delaware River Railroad Excursions, where you can purchase tickets for a trip on the Warren County Winery Train, where you can enjoy a beautiful journey along the scenic Delaware River. Visit one of New Jersey’s most beautiful wineries. You will journey along the Delaware River to the farthest end of our railroad, debarking at the historic Riegelsville train station. The winery is just up the hill from the train station, and the shuttle bus will take you up their driveway. Trains run every 2 hours; you may visit either of the local pubs and return on a later train.

For the kids, take a ride back to the Jurassic Period and discover the magic of DINO DAYS! The Dinosaur Show with Field Paleontologists Mike and Roberta Straka will take you on a scientific exploration highlighting the world of dinosaurs, fossils, and rocks and minerals.

Each summer, the team explores the Badlands of North and South Dakota, excavating dinosaurs. This fun-filled wow-factor show will cover the formation of fossils and herbivores vs. carnivores. Book your trip in advance for a beautiful ride on their historic railroad passenger cars.

The festival will also feature “The Phillipsburg Self-Paced Audio Walking Tour” which promotes a deeper understanding and appreciation of the community’s rich past. Participants have the freedom to explore significant historical landmarks and learn about the events, personalities, and milestones that have shaped the Town of Phillipsburg.

Free trolley service will be available from 11-5. Come and discover Phillipsburg’s rich railroad heritage and celebrate 172 years of railroad history! All aboard on September 14th, 2024.

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Knowlton Twp. Fire and Rescue Company #1, Station 41 sends a special thank you to the Atlantic Air Ambulance for their training on landing zone safety and air medial operations on August 26th. Also attending the trainign was their mutual aid companies for better joint on scene operations. Those included were: Portland Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 Station 33; Mount Bethel Vol. Fire Company Sta. 37; and Hope Volunteer Fire Department - Station 38 Fire. Knowlton Twp. Fire and Rescue Company #1 - Station 41 is always looking for new members, stop by the Station any Monday night after 7:00 PM, send them a message, call at 908-475-4268, or visit knowltonfirerescue.com/join.

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Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



Mary E. Stone
Stone Associates
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Hello, fellow readers,
While we don't often see the nighttime chorus of insects from mid-to-late summer into fall, we indeed hear them, and some

continue to sing by day, joining the daytime ruckus of the cicadas we spoke about last week. What a choir! They don't cause significant damage, supply food for wildlife, and help keep garden pests in check. To follow are a few well-known nighttime singers.

The Agile Meadow Katydid has a muted green body, cream-colored wings, and head. They adore weedy and grassy areas with lots of sun, live from New Jersey to East Texas, and are fast, hence the common name and scientific name (*Orchelimum agile*.)

When threatened, they are savvy at hiding. Their camouflage colors blend



with the leaves, and if further pursued, they rapidly hop repeatedly before resting. They can't fly but use their wings to sing both day and night, although their songs differ a bit. While they don't move much by day, they sing most loudly for a mate. Then, they are on the move at night when predators are less likely to find them while seeking food—primarily leaves, sometimes fruit, dead insects, and aphids if they are slow-moving.

I adore Biokids' website's description of their song: "The sound they make is distinct from that of all of the other types of katydids and grasshoppers. The song begins with a Zeeee, lasting three seconds, a five-second pause, and a series of Zips." And sing louder and faster as the temperatures rise. Male Katydid rub their wings together to call fe-

males; both males and females have ears on their legs. Katydid will eat garden plants or crops, but typically not enough to cause much damage. Plus, they are food for frogs, snakes, birds, small mammals, spiders, and insects.

Next in our nighttime chorus is the Fall Field Cricket, which looks and sounds the same as Spring Field Crickets. Both are large, black, with round heads and sing the classic cricket chirp, writes Songs of Insects.com, which describes it as "a series of clear, loud chirps at the rate of about one per second or faster. Each chirp is a brief trill consisting of three to five pulses given too fast for the human ear to detect." Fall and Spring Field crickets chirp day and night, though they are usually quiet at dawn.

In mid-summer, both Spring and Fall Field Cric-

kets are often silent—a welcome intermission. Like the Agile Meadow Katydid, they feed on leaves, fruits, and dead insects, but they also feed on roots, flowers, and seeds, and they are sometimes cannibalistic, leaving me queasy. They'll eat flea beetles and insects from spider webs, grasshopper eggs, and the pupa of flies and caterpillars. (Pupa is the transformation between immature and mature stages.)

Snowy Tree Crickets sing from understory plants in and around woodlands. They find warmer spots closer to the ground and tree trunks when temperatures are colder. The name Snowy Tree Crickets comes from being so pale they appear white, and folks call them Thermometer Cricket. They say you can determine the temperature by the

rate of their pleasant, evenly-spaced chirps. Count the number of chirps in 13 seconds and add 40 to find the temperature in Fahrenheit. The warmer it gets, the faster the chirp, beginning at dusk until morning and sometimes during cloudy days. They rub their wings together to make eight, sometimes five, pulsed chirps that sound like Spring Peepers as the Tree Crickets do; don't we adore their chorus?

As with the previous nighttime singers, the Snowy Tree Crickets eat a variety of flowers, fungi, and leaves, but they only do minor damage. They eat aphids and scale insects, helping us in the Garden of Life, and serve as a food source for other critters—a beautiful thing, a beautiful chorus.

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