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# PRESS



January 9, 2025

GOD BLESS AMERICA

Vol. 52, No. 25



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## Domenic Daleo Excels in North American Grappling Tournament



Domenic Daleo is only seven years old and weighs 52 pounds. He was entered in the North American Grappling tournament held in Hillsborough Township, NJ. Domenic completed in two children's divisions. There are two types of matches. Gi, which means in typical Judo gear and No-Gi, which means ordinary gym clothes. Not surprisingly he had no competition in his group. So they moved him up to intermediate, with 8 and 9 year old kids. It doesn't sound fair does it?...I mean for the other kids, because he won two matches in the No-Gi for a first place belt, and a second place metal in the Gi. Domenic is a Blairtown Local and as been competing since he was five. Best of luck in future competitions, and keep up the great work! Bob Halberstadt/The Free weekly Press

## Slate Belt Heritage Center Seeks Nominees for Preserva- tion Award

The Slate Belt Heritage Center, located at 30 Forth 1st Street, Bangor, Pa, is pleased to announce that it is now accepting applications for its' "Annual Heritage Award". The purpose of the award is to acknowledge individuals who have performed exemplary acts that promote and preserve the culture and heritage of the Slate

Belt. Candidates may be an individual or group and can be nominated by themselves or by another party.

There will be three (3) categories:

1. Initiative Award: Applicant who has performed exemplary actions in promoting and preserving the Slate Belt heritage through in-kind actions. This *SBHC cont'd on pg 3*

## Bangor's Avery Nelson Scores 1,000th Career Point in Rivalry Game Against Pen Argyl



Bangor and Pen Argyl went head to head on December 28th in their girls basketball rivalry game. Pen Argyl won 57 to 44. Bangor Senior, Avery Nelson (pictured above) scored her 1000th point of her career, she had 27 points in the game. Pen Argyl's Julia Vargo also scored 27 points in the game. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## Rt. 80 Re-Opens After 40ft Sinkhole Repair



All lanes of Interstate 80 eastbound in Wharton reopened at about 8 a.m. Monday Dec 30th, according to an announcement by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, following the completion of emergency sinkhole repairs near mile post 34. This announcement comes four days after a sinkhole, 40 feet wide and 40 feet deep, developed off of the shoulder of the roadway Thursday morning, closing all lanes. This sinkhole was found to have been caused by the collapse of an abandoned mineshaft, leading to days of delays and detours for motorists. Per the NJDOT, contractor crews have worked "around the clock" since Thursday to complete the repairs as "quickly and safely as possible." "I want to commend the outstanding efforts of the NJDOT and contractor crews that worked tirelessly to get Interstate 80 reopened quickly and safely for the motoring public," said Commissioner Fran O'Connor. "Given the extensive nature of the damage, it is truly remarkable the amount of work that was done in such a short amount of time." Photo by Bob Halberstadt/The Free Weekly Press

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# NORTH WARREN HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT DECEMBER 27TH & 28TH

Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



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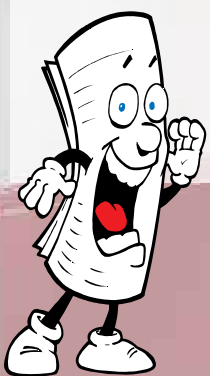
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# NORTH WARREN VS MORRIS COUNTY TECHNOLOGY GIRLS BASKETBALL 12-27-2024



Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## SBHC

Continued from page 1

means acts that do not necessarily involve monetary donations but can be unpaid service for a preservation cause.

2. Architectural Award: Applicant who is saving or conserving a historic building, place or artifact where restoration is authentic to preservation.

3. Special Focus Award: Applicant who is saving or conserving tradition or a body of knowledge. That individual who contributes to educational information via exhibits, documentation, internet, archival, etc.

Consideration is given to projects with:

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  - Whether the project meets Professionally accepted preservation and/or scholar standards.
  - Whether the project is considered "complete" with goals and how they were achieved.
  - Whether the project had a significant impact with before and after photographs for proof of information and/or proof that a historic piece would have been otherwise lost if the nominee had not completed the project.
- Nominations will be accepted this fall and

will be reviewed in January of each year. the awards will be presented at a special program in June. One prize will be awarded with the possibility of one per category depending on committee's review of candidates. Nominations should include a description of entry, photos (if applicable), and any pertinent documentation. The Heritage Center retains the right to exhibit and/or publish the application materials, including photographs. Applications for those not chosen will be held on file, indefinitely, for future consideration.

Interested parties may obtain an application at the Heritage Center (Sundays 1-3), at local municipal offices or by contacting Karen Brewer at 484-894-5661. If calling, please leave an address to where applications can be mailed in addition to name and phone number. For additional information contact Karen Brewer.



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### New Jersey Assemblyman Mike Inganamort Slams Hochul's "Money Grab" Congestion Tax

New Jersey Assemblyman Mike Inganamort is calling out New York Gov. Kathy Hochul's congestion tax as an unfair and desperate "money grab" targeting New Jersey commuters.

"This is a money grab, plain and simple," said Inganamort, a member of the state Assembly Transportation Committee. "The MTA is hemorrhaging money and New Jerseyans shouldn't be forced to bail them out. We're not chumps."

He pointed to a Citizens Budget Commission report showing that nearly half of New York bus riders skipped fares in 2023, costing the MTA more than \$700 million. He also criticized the agency for wasting \$1 billion on unnecessary, oversized designs for its Second Avenue subway expansion plan in East

Harlem. President-elect Donald Trump has called the tax a "disaster" and promised to cancel it during his first week in office. Inganamort echoed Trump's criticism, insisting that the tax unfairly shifts the MTA's failures onto New Jersey commuters.

"If Governor Hochul's goal is to keep New Jerseyans out of New York City, the rising violent crime is doing that already," continued Inganamort. "Instead of improving safety, after a year where 11 people were murdered on New York subways, she's making it more expensive for people to drive in the safety of their own cars."

He urges New Jersey and federal leaders to block the congestion tax, calling it a direct attack on the wallets and safety of hardworking commuters.

### Parents Needed to Serve on Advisory Board - Project Self-Sufficiency Seeks Input from Parents about Needs and Services

Local parents are invited to attend an information session about the Journey Family Success Center Parent Advisory Board at Project Self-Sufficiency, Tuesday, January 7th, 5:00 p.m. Organizers are seeking input from families regarding area services, parenting challenges and concerns, and ideas for upcoming events. Family Success Center staff will highlight ways the agency can address issues facing local parents and incorporate feedback into future programs. Dinner and childcare will be provided for those in attendance. The gathering will also be available on Zoom; interested participants are invited to call 973-940-3500 to obtain log-in details. Advance registration for the in-person session is required.

"Input from parents is crucial to the success of the Family Success Center and we are excited about offering residents the opportunity to meet area providers, express

their concerns about gaps in services, and identify strategies for moving forward," remarked Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. "The Family Success Center has supported Sussex County parents and children for many years. Expanding the Parent Advisory Board will allow us to further respond to the needs of area families and incorporate their suggestions into existing and new programs for the community."

Those who attend their first meeting of the Journey Family Success Center Parent Advisory Board will be eligible to receive a gift card. Project Self-Sufficiency is located at 127 Mill Street in Newton. For information about the Parent Advisory Board, or to find out more about any of the programs sponsored by the Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency, call 973-940-3500 or visit [www.journeyfsc.org](http://www.journeyfsc.org). 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.projectsselfsufficiency.org](http://www.projectsselfsufficiency.org) or call 973-940-3500.

The Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency is a program of support which includes parenting skills training, economic self-sufficiency services, family activities, legal education services, information about health and nutrition, referrals, advocacy, and other services. All activities are free and open to the public. Family Success Centers offer services to children, youth, families, individuals, and communities. Funding is provided by the New Jersey Department of Children & Families.

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TeamTommy Inc is a 501c3 pediatric cancer foundation offering support to families of the Slate Belt community. The foundation was created to carry on the legacy of Tommy Stackhouse, a 2021 graduate of Bangor High School who was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia in 2019 and subsequently, passed from the same in May 2022. Tommy was a Special Education major at Northampton Community College and was dedicated to helping teens with disabilities. TeamTommy Inc provides grocery and gas gift cards along with hospital cafeteria stipends to pediatric cancer families. Comfort boxes are also sent to patients with fun items to make their hospital stay a little less cumbersome. We also present a scholarship to a graduating senior at Bangor High School. Behind every facet of our mission is one simple goal: to improve the lives of pediatric cancer patients and their loved ones.

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### Commissioner Jason J. Sarnoski Named Director as Kern Starts Third Term

Commissioner Jason J. Sarnoski was named Director for the year and Commissioner Lori Ciesla tapped as Deputy Director as the Warren County Board of County Commissioners held their annual reorganization meeting in the Warren County Courthouse today.

Commissioner James R. Kern III, re-elected last November, was surrounded by family members as Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. administered the oath of office for Kern's third three-year term on the board.

Kern was joined at the front of the historic Courtroom 1 by his wife, Carina Sitkus; his parents, Joan and Jim Kern, Jr.; his sister, Elizabeth McGuinness; and niece and nephews Caylee, Chris, and Charlie McGuinness. Kern noted that at last year's reorganization meeting, "I had some pretty ambitious goals for Warren County, and we were able to achieve them."

In the past year, the County has made the largest investment in public safety in recent memory, which will help first responders stay safer and do their jobs, Kern noted. He also announced the Conservation Challenge a year ago,

and in 2024 Warren County became the first county in New Jersey to be certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

Warren County continues to be a leader in farmland preservation in New Jersey, Kern said, while other achievements include the opening of a new building to house county Social Services and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Warren County, while construction is underway to completely rebuild the Catherine Dickson Hofman Branch of the Warren County Library system, which will open this spring.

Kern also touted the new county government newsletter, Warren County Chronicle, as a way to keep residents informed.

Both Kern and Sarnoski referred to Warren County's recent effort to spur an update to the way governments publish legal notices, and legislation signed this week temporarily allows publishing in a newspaper's online edition, as many news organizations abandon their print editions and go with digital publication only.

"Jim and NJAC (New Jersey Association of Counties) led the



Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. administers the oath of office as Warren County Commissioner James R. Kern III starts his third term on the board. With Kern are his wife, Carina Sitkus; sister, Elizabeth McGuinness; and his parents, Joan and Jim Kern, Jr. (not visible), as well as nephew Charlie McGuinness; niece Caylee McGuinness; and nephew, Chris McGuinness.

charge in suing to make sure the public has access to information that they deserve," Sarnoski said.

Looking back on his 14 years on the board as he gets ready for his fifth stint as Director and prepares to run for a sixth term, Sarnoski said he realized, "This is one of the most impactful and historic boards that I have been on. Not only are we leaders of this county, but we hold leadership positions on statewide boards." Kern is on NJAC's executive committee while

Sarnoski is a long-time representative on the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and is in line to become its chairman.

The commissioners have used their influence to improve not only Warren County but the state as well, Sarnoski said.

Sarnoski said that when he becomes NJTPA Chairman he will have more authority to fight wasteful spending like the proposed Route 80 rockfall mitigation project, and push for

projects in Warren County that have been critically underfunded and delayed by the state.

Sarnoski noted that as of July of this year, Warren County will be completely debt-free. "We will continue our pay-as-you-go philosophy that has protected the taxpayers' pocketbooks while building a strong and resilient county," Sarnoski said.

In the coming year, Sarnoski said he plans to continue to reduce taxes and invest in farmland preservation

to keep the county rural. "This board has been careful and prudent with your tax dollars," he noted.

"As the county enters its 200th year ... I want to say how proud and honored I am to have been a little part of this great county's history," Sarnoski added.

Commissioner Lori Ciesla noted that the County is now in its bicentennial year, as the celebration kicked off with a gala last November marking the 200th anniversary of the November 1824 legislation that divided the southern section of Sussex County in a new county. More events are planned for 2025 to mark the two centuries that Warren County has existed, she said.

All three commissioners praised the state and federal legislators who represent Warren in Trenton and Washington, DC, while also applauding the county government staff for their efforts.



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# BANGOR (74) VS PALISADES (27) SENIOR NIGHT BOYS BASKETBALL & HALL OF FAME INDUCTION



Michael Bucher with his parents, Joy and Michael



Alex Farensbach with his parents, Cassie and Peter



Nolan Koza with his mother, Lisa



Hunter McShane with his parents, Pam and Rick



Yaniel Rivera Gonzalez with his mother, Roxanne



Jeremiah Singer with Melissa Bates, and Kim Singer



Exavior Prado with his family  
Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## BANGOR HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CLASS OF 2024



Pictured Above are this year's Hall of Fame inductees: Toni Caiazzo and Zachary Kantz . (Left) Toni Caiazzo - Class of 1986, Hall of Fame Inductee for Field Hockey and Softball. (Right) Zachary Kantz - Class of 2014, Hall of Fame Inductee for Football, Track & Field, and Swimming.

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# BANGOR (74) VS PALISADES (27) SENIOR NIGHT BOYS BASKETBALL GAME

Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



## Space Bill To Provide Fully Disabled Veterans Access To Dental Care Passes Committee

Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee passed legislation sponsored by Senator Parker Space (R-24) that would require certain dental clinics to prioritize appointments for fully disabled veterans. "Our veterans have made tremendous sacrifices for our country, so it's our duty to make sure they

receive the care they deserve," said Senator Space. "This bill is a small but meaningful way to show our gratitude and ensure our veterans have access to essential dental services." Currently, Rutgers is the only university with a dental school of medicine and has three community clinics throughout the State.

Senator Spaces bill, S-1859, would require all dental clinics that are associated with New Jersey universities to ensure timely treatment for disabled Veterans within 30 days of scheduling an appointment. You can read the full text of the bill online at: [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/S1859?utm\\_](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/S1859?utm_)

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### Clean Team Workforce Announces November Employee of the Month



The Clean Team Workforce congratulates its Employee of the Month for November 2024, Michael D.

Michael has been a model worker for the Clean Team Workforce. He is prompt, a team player, and ready to work every day. He also has been an asset to the demolition crew. He was recently promoted to crew leader for a demolition contract the Clean Team Workforce will begin at the end of December.

Before Michael became homeless, he worked for 15 years as a supervisor for a filter manufacturing company. As the demands of his job grew, so did the stress that he experienced from the increased workload. Michael ended up having disputes with his supervisor and health issues because of his stress.

He suffered from dizzy spells and psoriasis from "head to toe." Michael said, "It was so difficult to function, and it was unbearable at times." Ultimately, he parted ways with his employer

and decided to live off his savings until he found a job with less stress.

Unfortunately, between the cost of Michael's psoriasis medication and his inability to promptly land another job, he drained his savings. No longer capable of paying his rent, he came to the Allentown Rescue Mission for help.

Michael joined the Transformation Program at the Mission and used the time there to better his life and situation. He took advantage of the life skills and Bible classes taught in the program, which give him a new perspective on life. After completing the eight-week program, Michael was hired by the Clean Team Workforce.

Today, Michael is making friends, saving money, and working toward a bright future. Eventually, he would like to find a supervisory position with a Lehigh Valley manufacturing company and be able to afford a little place of his own.

### Pennsylvania Senate Democratic Caucus Celebrates Hommrich v. Boscola Decision from Commonwealth Court as Victory for Elected Officials, Democratic Process

The Commonwealth Court issued a ruling in the Hommrich v. Boscola defamation case, reversing the trial court and holding that the statement in Senator Boscola's net metering co-sponsorship memo is protected by legislative immunity.

J. Cohn-Jubelirer authored the the 6-1 decision, concluding that the "co-sponsorship memo falls within the sphere of legitimate legislative activity, thus immunizing Senator Boscola from suit in accordance with the legislative privilege doctrine." This is a win for protected speech under the Speech and Debate Clause, Art. II, Section 15 of the Pa. Constitution and will protect legislators from future lawsuits ancillary to their efforts to craft legislation.

The defamation claim in question was brought against Senator Boscola by Mr. Hommrich after she issued a co-sponsorship memo to all Members in 2023 seeking support for her legislation that would, "upon the recommendation of the [PUC] . . . close the Hommrich loophole by limiting net metering to generator's system designed to generate no more than 110% of the customer-generator's requirements for electricity."

Legislators commonly use co-sponsorship memoranda to kickoff the legislative fact-finding process and express the intent to fellow members behind their soon-to-be introduced legislation.

The phrase "Hommrich loophole" in the memo related to a 2020 court ruling in Hommrich v. Pa. PUC holding that



the PUC exceeded its statutory authority when it established limits on net metering for solar facilities producing up to 3 MW of electricity.

Constitutional legislative immunity protects the legislative process from judicial interference with legitimate legislative activities. In a strong opinion, J. Cohn-Jubelirer concluded that "there is no doubt as to the applicability of the legislative privilege to the Co-sponsorship Memo."

The "preparation and circulation of co-sponsorship memoranda are core legislative functions within the legitimate legislative

sphere," and "[t]o subject legislators to litigation for actions taken during the legislative process would, in essence, permit the very ills against which the legislative privilege seeks to protect."

Of note, House Democratic and both Republican Caucuses filed a joint amicus brief in support of Senator Boscola's legislative immunity claim.

"I am grateful the Commonwealth Court ruled in my favor yesterday," said Senator Lisa Boscola regarding the outcome of this case. "Co-sponsorship memorandums are an essential component to the legislative process.

Subjecting elected officials to lawsuits for the contents of those memorandums would have a chilling effect on the legislative process. I am proud that the Senate Democratic Caucus led the charge to defend the Speech and Debate clause and that the other three caucuses joined in our efforts."

"I am very pleased with yesterday's Commonwealth Court decision, which affirms lawmakers' protections as we carry out our duties in office," said Senator Costa of the ruling. "Our primary concern as legislators, regardless of our party or chamber, is to draft and advocate for bills that will improve the lives of every Pennsylvanian. The protections afforded us in the speech and debate clause allow us to do our jobs without fear of frivolous lawsuits, retaliation, or bullying by bad actors seeking to interfere with the legislative process. I am proud to have supported my friend and colleague Senator Boscola throughout these proceedings, and I am glad that the courts ruled in favor of our democratic processes today."

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# Warren County Habitat for Humanity Welcomes 25th Homeowner Family in 25 Years

Jacob Werkheiser and his three young boys, Coltin, Lincoln and Jacob Jr., became Warren County Habitat for Humanity's (Warren County Habitat) 25th Homeowner Family in 25 years. On Saturday, November 9th, 2024, they were officially handed the keys to their new home in Phillipsburg, one with enough rooms for everyone to live and sleep comfortably in.



Prior to moving into his new Habitat home, Jacob and his three sons lived with his parents in a small home they rented. The six family members slept in a two-bedroom home, with a third "bedroom" that was just bigger than a closet. They would utilize their living room as a bedroom. When they were accepted as

a partner family in May of 2023, having their own bedrooms was a dream that was no longer out of reach.

As with all Habitat Homeowners, Jacob was required to perform over 250 hours of sweat equity: time spent volunteering on the build site or other various volunteer sites with Warren County Habitat. By the time his home was complete, he

had performed over 280 sweat equity hours.

Warren County Habitat for Humanity was graciously joined by an integral community partner for this project: NORWESCAP. "This is what it's all about - working together," Mark Valli, CEO of NORWESCAP mused. "NORWESCAP, our investors, the Department of Community Affairs,

the town, all coming together to make sure Jacob and his sons have an amazing experience and have a future they can be proud of. So, thank you Habitat for Humanity, thank you for all of you who support Habitat... We're grateful for this work, but nobody's more grateful than the three little boys who are going to absolutely destroy this basement

the second they move in."

Thanks to NORWESCAP's partnership and that of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, PNC Bank, Provident Bank, and Valley Bank, the build was completed flawlessly. The home was Warren County Habitat's third modular build as well, and it could not have happened as smoothly or as timely as it did without the support of Phoenix Modular.

The energy was high at the Werkheiser family's Home Dedication, but no one was bursting with excitement quite like Coltin, Lincoln, and Jacob Jr. In the same vein as Mark Valli's comment, Cara Vega, Family Support Chairwoman, shared,

"The boys are very excited to have a bit more space, [and] the yard they've already been running around in." Seeing them chase each other, dance humorously on their front porch, and run around their new yard painted a perfect picture of the joy and hope that homeownership brings.

Warren County Habitat for Humanity is the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity, International and has served Warren County since 1999. An accredited 501 (c)(3) charitable organization, Habitat's mission: Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope. You can learn more about Warren County Habitat at [www.warrenhabitat.org](http://www.warrenhabitat.org).

# Attention Cat Parents: HSN1 Bird Flu Detected In One Brand Of Raw Cat Food, And Migrating Birds Can Spread Virus To Outdoor Cats

With an uptick of documented cases of bird flu sickening domestic and wild cats in the U.S., a Lehigh Valley business with ties to the cat rescue community is sounding the alarm about the virus and urging cat owners to

be cautious about what's in their cats' food dishes.

Purr Haus owner Laurie Mason Schroeder is urging cat owners to check the labels of raw cat food in their freezers, and to keep an eye out for dead birds around

their properties.

"Cats are hunters by nature," she said. "Keeping our pet cats indoors is the best way to protect them from bird flu, as well as other dangers like predators and being hit by cars."



were that pet cats should be kept indoors to prevent them from hunting and eating wild birds.

Bird flu can affect cattle and other animals, but cats are especially susceptible to it. Last week, 20 cats at a Washington animal sanctuary, including cougars and African servals, died after eating wild birds. The virus has been prevalent on dairy farms and has been detected in raw milk.

Signs of bird flu in cats include lethargy, loss of appetite, fever, eye swelling and discharge, breathing issues and neurological symptoms such as tremors, seizures or blindness. Contact a veterinarian immediately if your cat shows any signs of illness, Mason Schroeder said.

For people who feed community cats - felines that live outdoors, preferably after being trapped, fixed and vaccinated through TNR programs available in the Lehigh Valley - Mason Schroeder suggested moving cat feeding stations away from bird feeders, and cleaning up any dead birds or bird droppings they find. Unusual amounts

of dead birds should be reported to county health departments.

So far, the virus has only been detected in one brand of commercial raw cat food, Northwest Naturals, which recalled a line of its products last week after a cat in Oregon died after eating frozen food from the company that contained raw turkey. Among the FDA's recommendations

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### Assembly Honors Former Speaker Garabed "Chuck" Haytaian

Assembly Minority Leader John DiMaio and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin honored former Assembly Speaker Garabed "Chuck" Haytaian, who passed on Nov. 1, by presenting his family with a ceremonial resolution prior to the Assembly voting session Thursday. "New Jersey has lost a giant, and I have lost a dear friend,"



DiMaio (R-Warren) heart and soul of New Jersey politics. His said. "Chuck was the

tireless commitment to this state inspired everyone around him, including me." Haytaian was first elected to the Assembly in 1981, winning reelection six times. He held several key leadership roles, including minority whip from 1984 to 1985, majority leader from 1986 to 1989 and minority leader from 1990 to 1991. In 1992, Republicans gained

58 Assembly seats on a wave of opposition to higher taxes and Haytaian was elected to serve as Speaker, a position he held

through 1996. His daughter, Debbie Haytaian Snyder, and brother, John Haytaian, accepted the resolution on behalf of the family.

### Most Popular Baby Names for 2024 at St. Luke's Reflects Wide Variety

What's in a name? Apparently, there was quite a bit of variety in the naming of the newborns born at St. Luke's University Health Network in 2024. These are the top three (or more) favorites at campuses where babies are born: St. Luke's Allentown: Mia, Charlotte, Riley, for girls. Oliver, Henry, Lucas for males. St. Luke's Anderson: Girls—Olivia and Sophia (tied); Madelyn/



Madeline and Riley (tied). For boys—Liam, (tied); Zoe/Zoey and Mia Noah and Theodore.

St. Luke's Upper Bucks: Girls—Charlotte, Lucy, Emma. Boys—Jackson and Liam (tied); Henry and Luke (tied); Wesley, Noah, Andrew, Brooks, Carter (tied). The most popular baby names given to newborns at St. Luke's University Health Network in 2023 bears only a slight resemblance to the 2024 names. In 2023, Liam and Isabella were those top monikers, for boys and girls, respectively at the network.



St. Luke's Proudly Announces the first baby born in 2025. Owen Brewer was born at 12am on January 1st. Weighing 6lb 3oz, and measuring 18in. Congratulations to his parents, Nadia and Ethan Brewer.

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## Live Music This Saturday January 11th



# Allentown Rescue Mission Celebrates 125 years of Love and Hope



This January, the Allentown Rescue Mission will celebrate 125 years of Rescuing, Rehabilitating, and Restoring men experiencing homelessness. It's launching a year-long social media campaign to look back over its history and highlight moments, milestones, and the men who have benefited from its life-changing services. The Mission is also challenging the public to raise \$125,000 for its 125 years of service through individual and corporate donations.

In 1900, Obediah Becker founded the Mission

out of his family home, and by 1917, the Mission had grown into a substantial institution and the growth continued throughout the years. Today, the Mission shelters nearly 1,000 men and serves over 65,000 meals annually. It operates a 123-bed facility that provides three distinct programs to help men change the trajectory of their lives. It rescues men off the streets and teaches biblical principles and life skills in its Transformation Program to men seeking further healing. Men who complete the Transformati-



on Program, are eligible for immediate transitional employment on the Clean Team Workforce where they gain work experience and save money for housing to end their homelessness.

Over the decades, the

Allentown Rescue Mission has adapted to and addressed the changing face of homelessness to provide life-changing help to thousands of men. The Mission welcomed soldiers returning from all tours of duty be-

ginning with World War I, victims of the Great Depression, addicts from the emerging drug culture of the 1960s, patients after the de-institutionalization of mental illness and the AIDS epidemic, men financially injured from the 2008 recession and housing market collapse, and most recently men looking for safe shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Over the past 125 years, the Allentown Rescue Mission has been an essential institution addressing homelessness, re-education, and re-employment for thousands of clients. With continued community support, we hope to carry on our Mission to rescue, rehabilitate, and restore men for the next 125 years," said Skip Smith, CEO of the Allentown Rescue Mission.

The public is invited to follow the year-long celebration on Facebook, Instagram, or X, and donate to the \$125,000 fundraising challenge at [www.allentownrescuemission.org](http://www.allentownrescuemission.org) or on Venmo or PayPal. The Allentown Rescue Mission is

a local non-profit that is 100% non-government funded. It thanks all donors, supporters, and anyone considering supporting its Mission in the future.

The Allentown Rescue Mission, a 501c3, 123 bed non-profit homeless shelter has been providing shelter for homeless men since 1900. In addition to emergency shelter services (365 days a year), the Allentown Rescue Mission offers a residential life skills program, and transitional employment on the Clean Team Workforce that's available for hire to the community. The Clean Team Workforce pays the men above PA state minimum wage—helping them save a nest egg to transition back into the community. In a typical year, the Allentown Rescue Mission provides shelter services for over 946 men per year, and serves over 42,000 meals a year to men in need.

To refer someone to the Allentown Rescue Mission for services or to learn ways you can help make a difference please visit [www.allentownrescuemission.org](http://www.allentownrescuemission.org)

*Never confuse a single defeat with a final defeat. - F. Scott Fitzgerald*

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### Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



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Hello, fellow readers,  
A few weeks ago, I shared the folklore and fun of forcing Paperwhite bulbs to bloom in water and how to keep them from flopping by giving them a cocktail. I received a gift of an Amaryllis bulb already in bud. Watching the alien-looking beefy blooms open is such fun, but it's causing the stems to bend badly, making me wonder if Amaryllis bulbs also like to party. And it turns out they do, though they tend to be less floppy, so their need for an alcoholic drink isn't as great.

To grow an Amaryllis bulb in water, layer 3 inches of stones, place the bulb, then add stones alongside to stabilize it. Maintain the water slightly below the bulb to not touch, causing the bulb to rot. Then, begin offering al-

coholic drinks after two inches of growth emerge. Pour out the water and begin a 7-to-1 ratio of water-to-spirits. You can use any hard liquor (vodka, tequila, whiskey) or rubbing alcohol. Skip the wine or beer, though, as they're too high in sugar.

Both Paperwhite and Amaryllis bulbs can only flower once in the water and won't survive if left in the ground outside in our zone, though they can in zones 9 to 11 and zone 8 if protected. But Amaryllis bulbs can bloom annually for up to forty years in a potting mix inside, as can Paperwhites for about two years.

To get them to rebloom, whether growing them in soil or water, cut the flowers as they fade to an inch above the bulb. Then, transplant the bulb into a pot, leaving half of the bulb above the soil. Plant the Paperwhite bulbs in tight groupings to support each other and prevent flopping. But Amaryllis bulbs like to stand alone unless you have a large trough-type pot where a few bulbs will fit.

Be sure the pot is deep enough to accommodate six or so inches of soil below the bulb for root space. Giving it plenty of sun will allow the long strap-like leaves to grow as a houseplant



until after the spring frost risk. Then put the pot outdoors, protected from the hot afternoon sun, keeping the soil moist, not soggy. And fertilize it monthly to keep the foliage growing strong.

Come Fall, bring the bulbs into the garage or other protected spot where temperatures stay above freezing and stop watering them so they will go dormant once it cools to 55 degrees or less. Sometimes, our garage drops a bit below 32 degrees for a few days, and that's fine, but certainly, it can't get to a deep freeze, or it will destroy the bulbs.

After two to five months of rest, again without water, you can rotate when you bring your bulbs inside to en-

joy an extended period of blooms. They say it is best to repot the bulbs in fresh potting mix, which is likely wise due to the possibility of bringing in outside critters. But I usually forgo repotting, call me lazy, and place them in a bright spot isolated from other houseplants until I notice that nothing is emerging other than new growth. Water them thoroughly, then sparingly until the bulb sprouts. Once it does, maintain the moist soil and enjoy the new blooms to come.

Don't serve your bulbs alcoholic drinks, though, because they-

're grown in soil. That's only a trick for water-grown bulbs. So, you see, you can save the spirits for yourself (smile). But please keep the spirit of your loving care going forward for your plants, wildlife, and all you come across, which makes such a difference. Loving care and

kindness exponentially spread when shared in our communities and amongst our neighbors like the lovely ripples in a pond—Wishing you a Happy New Year of growth.  
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# Santa Touches Down at Blirstown Airport



**In Case You Missed It:** It was a cold snowy day with a tricky cross wind as the red Cessna touched down on the runway of the Blirstown airport. It wasn't an ordinary pilot at the stick it was Santa. He made this his last stop here in Blirstown, NJ, on his way to the North Pole before the busy night ahead on December 24th. As he taxied the blacktop to his spot in front of the cafe, the children saw the white beard and knew right away it was Santa. He stepped out with a bag of goodies to the delight of the crowd. He made his way to the gate where Mrs Claus was waiting and through the snowy ground to his seat in front of the Christmas tree to greet the children and listen to their requests for presents. Geoffrey and Vincent Orlandi have been bringing Christmas magic to the Blirstown community by flying Santa from the North Pole and then back since 2015. Guests of all ages enjoy this unique event and have made it a family tradition to attend. Bob Halberstadt/ The Free Weekly Press

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# Blairstown Rotary Project Overview - "Kids Bags" For Food Pantries



Bob Halberstadt/The Free Weekly Press



A local study has shown that one in three households with children experience what is referred to as "child-level insecurity". This means that a child was hungry, skipped a meal or did not eat for a whole day. The Blair-

stown Rotary club has become aware of this and has addressed this situation by gathering their local club members to prepare "KIDS BAGS".

Our club members met on December 19, 2024, to prepare "Kids

Bags" that were distributed to our local pantries (First United Methodist of Blairstown, Blairstown First Presbyterian, Evangelical Free Church, St. Jude's Church and Knowlton United Methodist). Based on feedback from

the pantries we learned approximately 200 children pass through the pantries per month. We assembled 250 bags for distribution during the month of January 2025. Each bag provides joy and kid-friendly meals, snacks and

beverages for a child aged 12 and under. The bags work to make each child feel special and bring a positive vibe to their food pantry trip. Once we completed our assembly line all the participants gathered to share a holiday

meal prepared by Roman's Pizzeria.

Blairstown Rotary sends a huge shout-out and thank you to the following organizations and volunteers to make this project a huge success:

1. Blairstown Ambulance Corp for permission to use their meeting room and kitchen
2. Blue Star Mom's Club members for assistance on the assembly line
3. North Warren Regional Interact Club (11 students) for decorating and filling the bags
4. North Warren Regional Wrestlers decorating and fill the bags (1 student and Coach Lascari)
5. Killian Donnelly and Joey Diguiseppi for set up and assembly.

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