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July 18, 2024

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Five-Week Long Walkway Closure Scheduled to Begin at Riverton-Belvidere Toll-Supported Bridge

Sidewalk Shutdown Needed on PA Side for Exigent Repairs to Underlying Wing Wall



(Photo courtesy historicbridges.org)

The Riverton-Belvidere Toll-Supported Bridge's pedestrian walkway is scheduled to be shut down July 22 so needed repairs can be made to bulging masonry wing walls on the structure's Pennsylvania side, the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission announced on July 11th.

Once started, the walkway closure is estimated to remain in place without interruption for up

to 35 days. Weather permitting, that means pedestrian access could be restored by August 25.

The bridge's 3-foot-7-inch-wide walkway is lightly used compared to other Commission river crossings with pedestrian access. The Commission is urging any impacted pedestrians at the Riverton-Belvidere location to make alternate plans while the walkway closure is in

effect.

The two-lane bridge is expected to remain open to motor-vehicle traffic while the wing-wall repairs are made. However, occasional alternating single-lane travel restrictions might be needed for some repair tasks.

The walkway must be shut down because the approach sidewalk on the bridge's Pennsylvania side rests partially on a stone-masonry retaining wall that is bulging to the point of becoming unstable and potentially dangerous. The retaining wall supports the approach roadway leading to and from the bridge. It's unclear how old the wall's stone-masonry portions are, but it's possible they date back to the first wooden bridge that opened at this location in 1836.

BRIDGE cont'd on pg 2

Pen Argyl Summer Sounds Presents "Waitin on Sundown" at Weona Park



The Summer Sounds concert series continued on July 14th with "Waitin on Sundown" taking the stage at Weona Park. Despite the heat, there was a great turn out. Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Fantasia's Five-Farm Preservation Bill Signed Into Law

Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia's bill funding preservation efforts at five farms in northwestern New Jersey is now law.

The bill (S2793/A3698) reallocates \$1.723 million from corporate tax revenue and a 2009 farmland preservation fund to the State Agriculture Development Committee, which oversees the state's Farmland Preservation Program. The committee will use the money for grants to help farmers pay for approved preservation projects.

"Preserving farmland throughout New Jersey, and especially in the northwestern part of the state, ensures that generations of residents will know

where their food comes from, how livestock is cared for, and the permanent value of our agricultural communities. We have to help farmers if we want to live up to our Garden State slogan and preserve a way of life that is cherished in New Jersey," Fantasia (R-Sussex, Morris, Warren) said. "I know these farms will put the funds to good use and they deserve this support."

The grants will go toward preservation efforts at two farms in Stillwater and Wantage townships in Sussex County, two farms in Delaware and Union townships in Hunterdon County, and a farm in Blirstown Township in Warren County.

BMCL Hosts Summer Story Time at Wind Gap and Weona Parks



Local children who attended the Blue Mountain Community Library's Summer Storytime at Wind Gap Park enjoyed a story about the Summer Olympics and games. Storytime will continue on July 24th at Wind Gap Park and on August 7th and 21st at Weona Park in Pen Argyl. If you are interested in attending, please call the library for more information.

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(Photo courtesy historicbridges.org)

BRIDGE

Continued from page 1

The repairs on the bridge's upstream wingwall will require removal of the approach sidewalk's steel safety railings and removal of some sidewalk sections.

The repairs – which will be made to both the upstream and downstream wing walls on the Pennsylvania approach — will include concrete and masonry work, structural backfilling, and drainage and waterproofing improvements.

The work is to be performed by the Mount Construction Company, Inc. of Berlin, N.J. under a job-order contract. Project-preparation activities are expected to begin near the bridge next week.

The Riverton-Belvidere Toll-Supported Bridge is

a four-span riveted-steel double-Warren truss structure constructed in 1904. It connects the Riverton section of Lower Mount Bethel Township in Northampton County, PA. with the Town of Belvidere in Warren County, N.J. The bridge has an 8-ton weight restriction and a 15-MPH speed limit. It carried an average 4,100 vehicles per day in 2023.

Note: A toll-supported bridge is free for the public's use, but the cost of operating and maintaining the bridge is funded by a portion of the tolls the Commission collects at its eight toll bridges.

Full article and updates on this matter can be found online at: www.drjtbc.org/2024/07/five-week-long-walkway-closure-scheduled-to-begin-july-22-at-riverton-belvidere-toll-supported-bridge.

Shapiro Administration Celebrates Historic Improvements to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the Susquehanna River as Commonwealth Leads Effort to Improve Water Quality in Pennsylvania

Governor Josh Shapiro joined Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley, Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn to celebrate significant improvements to the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay watershed.



The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's (UMCES) 17th annual Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card was issued today at the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) office in Harrisburg for the 2023/2024 period. The report measures the health of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, considering ecological, societal, and economic indicators. For the first time in the report's history, the Chesapeake Bay showed steady overall improvement, earning a C+ grade – the highest grade ever awarded to the overall health of the Bay since the report was created. The Upper Bay, which is fed by the Susquehanna River from Pennsylvania scored one of the highest grades among any area of the Bay – and posted a significant improvement from last year – showing how efforts in agency collaborations, strong partnerships, and sustained investments led to progress throughout the Susquehanna River watershed and beyond.

“Our Commonwealth's Constitution states that every Pennsylvanian has a right to clean air and pure water. My Administration takes serious-

ly our responsibility to protect that right, defend the freedom to breathe clean air and drink pure water, and create a better Commonwealth for our children and grandchildren,” said Governor Josh Shapiro, “This year, the Chesapeake Bay got its highest grade in 22 years, and the portion of the bay that the Susquehanna River flows into got the second-best grade of the entire watershed. Pennsylvania's portion of the watershed is significantly improving because we've brought people together and invested in Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. My Administration is proud of this progress – and we're going to continue to work to restore the Chesapeake Bay for years to come.”

“The improvements we are celebrating today – cleaner water, better habitat, and healthier watersheds – are the returns on the investments made by Pennsylvania over the last several years. That's why it's important to continue to invest, so we can continue to make progress,” said Department of Environmental Protection Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. “Pennsylvania will build on the momentum from the last five years, and we are committed to continuing this work for

years to come, as we work collaboratively to clean up Pennsylvania's local waterways, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.”

“Pennsylvania is making unprecedented investments to support farmers who are changing the way they operate to create healthier soil and cleaner water,” said Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. “Since 2019, those investments have accelerated our progress toward reducing pollution in the Bay nearly two and half times that of the previous 10 years. Since the Shapiro Administration began, \$154 million to 700-plus projects through the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program is multiplying the millions invested through PA Farm Bill Conservation Excellence Grants, and Resource Enhancement and Protection tax incentives even further. The data in the Bay Report Card just serve to show that supporting farmers is an effective way to get stuff done for all of us.”

“Pennsylvania has been hard at work increasing funding and technical assistance with new staff, investments, and partnerships in planting streamside forest buffers, leading all Bay states in buffers planted and ac-

counting for 60 percent of the total amount of buffers planted in the watershed since tracking began in 1996,” said Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. “This work helps Pennsylvanians who live and recreate in the watershed with cooler waters, less risk of flooding, and better habitat, as well as helping those down-

stream.” Since 2021 Pennsylvania has invested more than \$580 million into supporting farm conservation, restoring watersheds, and other on-the-ground projects to improve local water quality. This includes more than \$61 million in Growing Greener grants, more than \$92 million in farmland preservation and conservation projects, and nearly \$9 million to plant forest buffers and restore urban tree canopy.

The Susquehanna River is the largest tributary of the Chesapeake Bay, playing a critical role in the overall health and ecology of the Bay. This significant milestone for the Susquehanna River represents the ongoing work to restore Pennsylvania's watershed through strategic partnerships and funding. Since 2004, DEP has restored approximately 967 miles of streams and more than 28,000 acres of public lakes. The Shapiro Administration will continue to work towards a vibrant and resilient watershed.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, please visit the website, or follow DEP on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn.

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State Lawmakers Stand with Taxpayers as New Stadium Lease Looms in PA

Pennsylvania's Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released studies on the economic impact of the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Philadelphia Phillies on their respective cities.

After reviewing the reports, Reps. Tim Bonner (R-Mercer/Butler) and Jim Gregory (R-Blair) say the Pirate's organization needs to step up to the plate to ensure that its fans and taxpayers across the Commonwealth get the return on their investment they deserve.

In the early 2000s, the Pittsburgh Pirates received \$75 million in state grant funding for the land and construction of PNC Park. Allegheny County tax funding amounted to approximately \$147 million. The Pirates' organization contributed approximately \$40 million for a total cost of \$260 million.

In exchange for its investment, the public is entitled to economic benefits in their local economy, the representatives said.

In 2030, the current lease on PNC Park will run out, leaving economic and lease renewal decisions to be made by both the Pirates and the Allegheny County Sports and Exhibition Authority.

While the Pirates represent some benefit to the local economy, they fall proportionately behind their cross-state counterparts, the Philadelphia Phillies, in many economic factors:

- Pirates drive \$254 million in 2023 net direct spending; the Phillies drive \$525 million.

- Pirates drive \$546 million in direct spending; the Phillies drive \$970 million.

- Pirates support approxi-



mately 3,000 jobs; the Phillies support 5,450.

- Pirates generate \$22 million in tax dollars for the state; the Phillies generate \$45 million.

Even with the contrast of population size taken into consideration, the differences of financial output from the Phillies compared to the Pirates is vastly different.

As part of these reports,

the IFO reviewed the relationship between team payroll, wins and attendance. Unsurprisingly, the IFO found a positive relationship between both team payroll and wins, as well as wins and fan attendance.

Over the past 30 years, the Pirates have had the worst record in the National League and the second worst record in all of

baseball. They have only had four winning seasons in those 30 years. During this time, no team has spent less on free agency signings than the Pirates.

It is past time for the Pirates to become more competitive. Pirates' ownership has seen the value of the team explode to \$1.32 billion according to Forbes Magazine. Revenue sharing among the teams and from television partners has greatly increased the Pirates' profit margins. Yet, the Pirates' payroll regularly ranks in the bottom five in baseball.

The reports also include findings determining that if the Pirates were to increase their win total on average by just three games, the team would generate an estimated additional \$76 million in total fan spending, of which \$31 million would occur outside of PNC Park and directly support the local economy.

The findings of the IFO's reports show the kind of economic impact that a sustained, reliably successful Pirates team can have

on the local economy. When taxpayers are asked to invest in stadiums, the taxpayers are made a silent partner in the operations of the organization, according to Bonner and Gregory.

"I've waited to see this data for as long as anybody to show what we thought was true is real and now quantified for taxpayers, hospitality businesses, critics of the 1999 stadium funding deal and supporters," Gregory said. "Philly will be pleased, and Yinzers will point out the Bucs need to do better."

"If the taxpayers are going to put money into the stadium, the Pirates need to also invest in PNC Park, as well as put a worthy product on the field," said Bonner. "Taxpayers deserve more than the bare minimum, and the report demonstrates how sustained on-field success can increase fan attendance, which is how a stadium drives the local economy."

To read the IFO's reports for both the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Philadelphia Phillies, visit www.ifo.state.pa.us.

Clinton Wildlife Management Agency Named - WMA of the Month - Clinton, NJ

The Clinton Wildlife Management Area near Clinton, NJ is one of the best known and most heavily used WMAs in New Jersey. This Hunterdon County area, acquired with Hunter/Angler and Green Acres funding, is home to 2,064.17 acres of wooded areas, creek bottoms, mountain streams, planted habitat fields and agricultural fields. The WMA abuts Spruce Run Reservoir and Spruce Run State Park.

The Clinton Wildlife Management Area is most visited for:

Fishing: Anglers can fish the Mulhockaway Creek, a trout production and stocked feeder stream that replenishes the Spruce Run Reservoir. Clinton WMA Pond can be fished for Large-mouth Bass and sunfish. The WMA also provides multiple access points to Spruce Run Reservoir.

Shooting Ranges: A shotgun range, centerfire rifle range and archery range can be found at this WMA with ample parking at all locations. A valid hunting license

is required to use the ranges.

Upland Hunting: The pheasant fields are maintained by the Bureau of Land Management annually for the stocking of pheasants and chukar. A dog training area is available off Van Syckels Road and is a great place to work with a new pup. In recent years, the area has seen an increase in woodcock sightings and harvest. The WMA is in Turkey Management Zone 8, and turkey hunting can vary from good to excellent depending on the mast crop for the year.

Deer Hunting: Being in Hunterdon County, the WMA is well known for deer hunting. The topography and abundant food supply make this an important wintering habitat for a very large whitetail population, despite significant hunting pressure. The entire WMA is in Deer Management Zone 7.

Access: To access Clinton WMA and parking areas, take Interstate 78 West to exit 13. Continue down Route 173



West and the sign for the Centerfire Rifle Range is located on the right-hand side, followed by a sign for the Northern Region Office where the archery and shotgun ranges are located. To access the parking lots on the northern side of the WMA, continue down Route 173 West. Make a right onto Charlestown Road and then turn right onto Van Syckels Road. Several parking lots are available along Van Syckels Road to access Clinton WMA.

Owned by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Fish & Wildlife, the Wildlife Management Area System is comprised of more than 360,000 acres in 122 areas throughout

the state, which is more than 44% of New Jersey's state-owned public open space. WMAs are maintained and supported with funding from license sales, the Federal Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and the Wildlife Habitat Supporter Program.

Support the maintenance of New Jersey's Wildlife Management Areas by becoming a Wildlife Habitat Supporter! Donate now and get your Second Edition sticker:

WMAs are patrolled by NJ Fish & Wildlife Conservation Police Officers to ensure public safety. If you see violations while visiting a WMA, please call the 24-hour DEP hotline at 877-WARN-DEP (877-927-6337).



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In Loving Memory of Benjamin N. Giralico



Benjamin N. Giralico, 85, of New Tripoli, PA passed away peacefully at home on July 13, 2024, with his loving wife by his side. He was the husband of Susan E. (Gehring) Giralico. Born in Roseto, PA, he was the son of the late Nazareno and Mae "Mamie" (Denicola) Giralico. Ben worked as a manager for various garment factories in Bangor and Millersburg for many years.

He was a member of Roseto Presbyterian Church. Ben greatly enjoyed antique cars and trucks, especially his 1931 Ford Model A, which he lovingly built using original parts. He also loved to travel. Ben was a member of the Lehigh Valley Model A Club and the EAA Flying Club in Slatington, PA. Ben was known by many as a very kind man who was always willing to help others. He will be greatly missed.

In addition to his wife, Susan, he is survived by his son, Benjamin C. (Leslee) Giralico of Nazareth, PA; daughters, Julia (Jeffrey) Buzzard and Michalyn (Brian) Ott, both of Bangor, PA; six grandchildren; sister, Rosella Lomerson of Roseto, PA; two nieces and one nephew. There will be a private graveside service held at the convenience of the family at Roseto Presbyterian Cemetery in Roseto, PA. Rev. Barry Eng will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are requested to be sent to the American Cancer Society at: P.O. Box 6704 Hagerstown, MD 21741.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the Nester Funeral Home, Inc. in New Tripoli, PA. Online condolences recorded at www.nesterfuneralhome.com.

The Time Thief Affecting More Than Half of Americans: Poor Mental Health

(NAPSI)—The latest GeneSight® Mental Health Monitor survey shows that nearly half of Americans feel they have lost time in their lives due to poor mental health.

Courtney Nugent suffered a decade-long struggle with anxiety. At first, medication helped manage her anxiety. However, after a surgery, she found her medication was no longer keeping her anxiety in check. She began a trial-and-error journey of seven different medications to try to get back to "normal."

"I had to call off my wedding to focus on my mental health," said Nugent. "My mental health crisis was six months on paper, but for every second of every day, I was fighting to stay alive. That's time I can't get back."

Of those diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression, 50% said they have lost years of their lifetime because of poor mental health—and 12% said they've lost decades.

About a third of those with anxiety and/or depression said they've missed significant events



due to ineffective mental health treatments. The "treatment as usual" approach to mental health conditions, like depression and anxiety, is often associated with medication trial-and-error, which can also add to lost time. The GeneSight test is a tool clinicians can use to inform mental health medication treatment plans and may help shorten their patients' road to wellness.

"Patients who have lost time due to depressive episodes or periods of anxiety often feel a sense of loss, which further complicates their mental health situation," said Sharon Philbin, Advanced Practice Registered

Nurse.

A person's genes may play a role in their outcomes to certain mental health medications. Practitioners like Philbin order the GeneSight test (a simple cheek swab) to help patients understand how they may metabolize or respond to several mental health medications based on their individual genetics.

"GeneSight has been one of the tools I've used to help my patients feel better and take control of lost time so that those living with anxiety and depression can enjoy their lives," said Philbin.


Courtney was prescribed a new medication based partly on her GeneSight test results and began to feel like herself again. "I have a new job and a new lease on life. I do not think I would be alive without the GeneSight test," said Courtney.

It wasn't until her clinician personalized her mental health medication treatment with the help of the GeneSight test that she got back on track. Learn more at <http://genesight.com/mental-health-monitor/>.

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Tips For Homeowners: Outdoor Power Equipment Helps Weather A Storm or Power Outage

(NAPSI)—Storms are growing more powerful and frequent, so having the right outdoor power equipment on hand and using it safely is important, says the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). Home and business owners should think ahead before foul weather or a power outage occurs.

“Any season can be storm season now,” says Kris Kiser, President & CEO of OPEI, an international trade association representing manufacturers and suppliers of outdoor power equipment, small engines, battery power systems, portable generators, utility and personal transport vehicles, and golf cars. “It’s smart to invest in portable and whole house generators and to have other outdoor power equipment on hand,



such as water pumps and chainsaws to handle water damage or flooding and damage from fallen trees.”

He notes that outdoor power equipment is evolving all the time. “There’s a power source for every need including battery/electric, propane, solar and gasoline,” he says, noting each has different maintenance and care requirements. “It’s

important that you know how to safely operate your individual equipment. And, remember, always read and follow the manufacturer’s manual and never disable safety features.”

To get ready for inclement weather, homeowners should follow these tips.

1. Before a storm identify which equipment could be needed.

Chainsaws or pole saws can trim and clear limbs and shrubs that may break off or get damaged by high winds. String trimmers, pruners and chainsaws can remove other material from around your home that may make it vulnerable to wildfires.

A portable generator powers key appliances and charges cell phones when utilities go down. A whole house generator can keep the lights and appliances on and running. Before an outage, plan where the generator will be set up (never in a home or garage, and always away from your home and any air intake) and determine how to secure it if needed. Buy and install a carbon monoxide detector. Get outdoor-rated extension cords for portable generators and consider adding an ap-

proved generator cover for rainy weather.

Water pumps can get water and muck out of basements and homes. Be sure you know how to operate the pump. Never pump substances that your equipment is not designed to cope with. Pay attention to avoid overheating and follow all safety precautions.

A utility type vehicle can transport people and supplies quickly in an emergency. Keep the vehicle stable and drive slowly. Do not turn mid-slope or while on a hill. Consider taking a UTV safety course.

2. Always read and follow the safety and usage recommendations provided by outdoor power equipment manufacturers. Never disable safety features. Practice how to operate equipment before you need it. Follow all recommended safety measures on the product as well as in the owner’s manual.

3. Have the right fuel on hand and charge batteries ahead of bad weather. Most gasoli-

ne-powered equipment uses E10 or less fuel and most manufacturers recommend adding a fuel stabilizer. Fuel that is more than 30 days old may phase separate and cause running problems, so it’s important to purchase fuel just ahead of a storm. Store fuel safely and only use an approved fuel container. Only use manufacturer-recommended batteries.

4. Pay attention to your energy level and health. Preparation for bad weather, a power outage and storm cleanup can be taxing. Do not operate power equipment when tired or overly fatigued. Drink plenty of water and take regular breaks. Always use safety gear such as chaps, gloves, eye protection and hearing protection when operating equipment.

5. Always keep children and pets away from operating outdoor power equipment. Outdoor power equipment are not toys, and should never be used in a manner not intended by the manufacturer.



Muggy and in the 90’...What does Knowlton Township Fire & Rescue do for drill night when it’s scorching hot? Water movement shuttle time! Utilizing Tanker 41-71 and her 3,000 gallons of cool water and Engine 41-63’s 1,000 gallons working together to synchronize 2 portable pools while shuttling loads of water. KTRF is always looking for new members to join their department! There is a need for firefighters, EMT’s, and members who want to just help with fundraising. Stop by the station on Monday nights at 7pm if interested in joining. Photos courtesy Knowlton Twp. Fire and Rescue Company #1 - Station 41

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Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

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Warren County Tech's New Drone Training Program Takes Off

The new drone training curriculum within the engineering program at Warren County Technical School (WCTS) has made major advances, gaining top-place finishes in a leading student drone flight competition and a new key certification for its program and students.

The program has also continued to build its close connection to the Warren County Community College drone training program, WarrenUAS, which is gaining a reputation as one of the best courses of study for unmanned vehicles in the country and has helped develop the two-year-old WCTS department.

"These were very important steps for our students and this program," said Sean McGeough, who heads the WCTS drone training department, which enrolls 21 students. "We're clearly making strides when we see our students compete so well in an important competition while having access to this sort of training. Drones are going to be used in nearly every field, and these students are learning valuable skills that give them the foundations to step into these positions."

In March, two senior engineering students at WCTS, Grace Seijas and Elijah Lindner, were awarded a gold medal and two junior engineering students at WCTS, Dylan Schulze and Adrian Chan, were awarded a bronze medal in the statewide SkillsUSA Commercial sUAS (Drone) competition held at Gloucester County Institute of Technology in Sewell, NJ.

"We spent a huge amount of time flying drones on a course made specifically to train us for the competition," Seijas said. "The classes in the engineering shop with Mr. McGeough were very informative. I could not have hoped for a teacher and program more involved in our success."

The competition featured a real-time flight assessment on a course with various obstacles and required precise communications between the pair. The two seniors got the best scores on a written exam about drone flight, maintenance and safety. They went on to a national competition in



Atlanta.

The WCTS program got off the ground and grew in part thanks to the support from WarrenUAS, which among other things provided \$10,000 worth of equipment for the drone program and other STEM fields. Experts at WarrenUAS have also consulted with McGeough about establishing and building the program.

"It is so great to see students are Warren County Technical School become so accomplished so quickly," said Warren County Community College President Will Austin, who has been a champion for drone training through WarrenUAS and for support of drone training at WCTS. "The program is providing students with an education which can lead them directly to jobs working with drones or to our program for certifications or a two-year degree or other higher education opportunities."

McGeough teaches a four-year engineering course. In the freshmen year they are introduced to the Recreational UAS Unmanned Aircraft Systems Safety Test (TRUST), which provides education and testing on important safety and regulatory information.

The sophomore year he introduces students to fundamental programming concepts and autonomous flight with drones. The junior and senior classes are combined and involve preparation for the Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration.

McGeough completed the Part 107 training recently so that he could add that certification to the mix of material the students are exposed to in the WCTS program,

which is part of the school's engineering department.

"The avenues for use of drones are growing all the time," he said. "We are seeing their use repeatedly in the military in Ukraine, but they are also steadily more often used in agriculture, real estate and land use, law enforcement, entertainment, environmental studies and utility maintenance," he said. "With this course work students are able to get entry-level positions and grow with this new industry."

He noted that the SkillsUSA gold medal award winner Grace Seijas earned her Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate so she can earn money flying drones for a real estate firm.

"In addition, many of the students in our program will go on to WarrenUAS to get one of the certifications they offer or a full two-year associate's degree," he noted.

Students in the at WCTS are enthusiastic about the program.

Seijas says she hopes to find work in the real estate or construction industry, or "any other business interested in pictures taken from previously unreachable angles".

"I'm interested

in drones because of the opportunities that they present for new operators and drone technicians," she said. "The drone industry is growing and many businesses have begun to take a new interest in the benefits that drones can provide."

"The fact that we now have the technology to fly in the air with just a little piece of metal and plastic is just amazing to me," said Adrian Chan. "I would like to turn it into a side career and eventually maybe develop my own company."

His partner in the competition, Dylan Schulze, said the the first time he flew one of the WCTS drones was memorable.

"It was an amazing experience being able to see the world from 100-plus feet in the air with a high-quality camera. The effort which Adrian and I put into Skills USA also has stuck with me a lot. I recognized the importance and value in working as a team."

He says the broad application of the technology interests him most, and he hopes to work with drones as an extra way to support himself or as a primary career.

Junior Richard Hoyd has plans to attend War-

renUAS and make a career in the drone industry.

"The career path and its choices give me chances I only could dream about," he said.

McGeough said that he wants to continue to build the program with more advanced technology and a broader array of projects, including practice working with local farmers or working on projects related to inspection of the school's large solar array. He also believes design and maintenance of drones is a field where many more technicians are needed – and wants to provide students with a broader understanding of the mechanics of the equipment and applicable software.

The Engineering Advisory Board at WCTS includes Austin and Joseph Tinervia, a recent WarrenUAS graduate, whose drone service company, Joe Drones On, offers an array of services. Board members are providing assistance in developing and promoting the program, he noted, and assisting in special training for students.

"In two years, this program has really taken shape," Austin said. "We have learned at WCTS

and WarrenUAS how much this technology really engages students and leads them into good-paying careers. The opportunities are growing every day."

WarrenUAS itself has grown rapidly in the seven years since its birth, next fall enrolling 80-100 students who will have an opportunity to work with its \$5-million worth of drone and robotic equipment, including the latest technology such as advanced multispectral sensing, aerial robotic spraying and treatment, and data processing through artificial intelligence.

Additional advancements in research capacity, equipment, and the ability to design, fabricate, and program unique one-of-a-kind robotic drones are expected this year thanks to Congressional Appropriation from New Jersey's U.S. Senators, Austin noted. It has been the recipient of a significant amount of state and federal funding – and support from local jurisdictions.

Austin points out that two of Warren's 2024 graduates are already working prior to graduation at starting compensation of \$110,000 using what they learned at WarrenUAS.

It's also collaborating with other colleges, along with building connections to a variety of other organizations in the field and in the community. Students and faculty are working in a number of ways with the leading aeronautical university in the country, Embry-Riddle, based in Daytona Beach, FL. The schools are working together on projects ranging from law enforcement training to spotting the some 300,000 pythons living in the Everglades.

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A Veterinarian's Top Tips for a Safe, Fun Summer With Your Pets

by Dr. Whitney Miller, DVM, MBA, DACVPM, Chief Veterinarian at Petco

(NAPSI)—Longer, warmer days often mean pets and pet parents are spending more time together outside. Whether you're hosting a pool party, traveling or exploring the great outdoors together this summer, there are a few important things to keep in mind to ensure your pet is happy and healthy all season long:

Keep up with routine care and protect against pests: No matter their age, pets should see their veterinarian for routine wellness exams for preventative care, early detection and intervention. More time outside means a higher chance of bug bites and exposure to tick-borne illnesses. Maintaining a consistent flea-and-tick prevention routine is essential all year long but particularly during warmer months.

Your veterinarian can help you choose the best preventative medications, shampoos and tools for your pet. For diseases such as heartworm, a single bite from an infected mosquito can transmit the disease to your pet. To help identify, treat and prevent heartworm in pets, from June 2 through 29 Petco is offering a free* heartworm test with the purchase of select flea, tick and heartworm protection prescription medication at Vetco Vaccination Clinics and Vetco Total Care hospitals nationwide.

Be aware of surroundings: Warmer weather also means animals such as snakes are more active. Consult your veterinarian to determine if your pet should receive the rattlesnake vaccine. Particularly in high-risk areas, keep dogs on a non-retractable leash so they remain close by and stay aware of your surroundings. Positive reinforcement-based training can help teach your pet to be alert and stay by your side. In the event of a bite or other emergency, be sure to know where the closest emergency veterinary hospital is located and how to get there as fast as possible. Treatment plans vary based on the severity and location of the snake bite, so call ahead to ensure the hospital has the



availability and proper tools to care for your pet. Beat the heat: It's always important to look out for and prevent overheating and dehydration in pets, especially during the summer. Keep pets protected from the sun with a hat or tent and ensure they always have access to fresh, clean water. When out on walks, remember that hot asphalt can burn

your pet's paws—if it's too hot to hold your hand on the ground for seven seconds, it's too hot for your pet. On hot days, I recommend changing your route to include cooler surfaces such as dirt or grass or invest in a pair of booties for extra protection. To prevent your pets from getting a sunburn, avoid excessive sun exposure and apply a pet-safe sunscreen to their ears, nose and anywhere else they have bare skin or thin fur. In addition, pets with thick coats should have a regular grooming schedule to remove excess fur. Petco offers grooming add-ons to a full-service bath or groom including the summer grooming package now through July 6, featuring a tropical-scented spritz, shampoo, seasonal bandana and more.

Include pets in summer fun: For many, a summer pool party or barbecue is not complete without furry friends. Supplies

such as a pet pool, cooling vest, splash pad, ice tray, slushy treats and cooling toys help keep pets cool all summer long. For pets that enjoy splashing around, suit up in a stylish swimsuit or flotation vest. Always supervise pets around the pool, especially if they cannot swim or are older and tire easily.

Travel safely: Pet parents planning to bring their pets along on travel and adventures should make sure they have everything they need for the journey. An airline-approved carrier or seat belt extender will keep your pets safe and secure, while a travel bowl and calming chews and toys will help make sure they are happy and comfortable while in transit. Petco's fashion and lifestyle brand, Reddy, brings a new "On-the-Go" collection with a trendy lilac crossbody bag, complete with a waste bag dispenser and carabiner that can be easily attached to a matching lead, collar and treat bag.

Plan for the unthinkable: One in three pets becomes lost at some point in their lifetime.** Pet parents should keep pet ID tags and microchips up to date and register their pets on Petco Love Lost, a free national lost-and-found database that uses patented image-recognition technology to help reunite lost pets with their families.

For more information on summer tips, products, services and savings, visit a Petco pet care center, petco.com or the Petco app.

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Route 46 Westbound Closed, Detoured To Last Approximately One Month In Knowlton Township, NJ

Route 46 westbound is scheduled to be closed and detoured beginning Friday night at the exit ramp to I-80 eastbound and Route 94 northbound as a pavement preservation project advances in Knowlton Township.

In addition, the Route 46 westbound ramps to I-80 westbound and CR 611 are scheduled to be closed and detoured tonight.

Beginning at 9:00 p.m. Friday, July 12, until 6:00 a.m., Saturday, July 13, the Route 46 westbound is scheduled to be closed and detoured at the exit ramp to I-80 westbound and Route 94. In addition, the Route 46 westbound ramp to I-80 westbound and the Route 46 westbound ramp to CR 611 are scheduled to be closed for milling and paving.

The following detours will be in place for approximately one month: Route 46 westbound to Columbia Detour:

Motorists on Route 46 westbound wishing to continue on Route 46 westbound to Columbia will be directed to take the ramp to I-80 eastbound/Route 94 northbound/New York City/Blairstown, which is before the ramp to Columbia; Stay left to continue to I-80 westbound/Route 94 northbound/Delaware Water Gap/Stroudsburg PA/Blairstown; Stay right to continue on Route 94 northbound/Blairstown; Stay left to take the U-Turn jughandle to I-80 eastbound/Route 46; Stay left to continue to Route 46 eastbound/Columbia/Portland PA; Stay right to continue to CR 611/Columbia/Portland PA; Take the ramp to Columbia; Route 46 westbound to I-80 westbound Detour:

Motorists on Route 46 westbound wishing to take the ramp to I-80 westbound/Delaware Water Gap will be directed to take the ramp

to I-80 eastbound/Route 94 northbound/New York City/Blairstown, which is before the ramp to I-80 westbound

Stay left to continue to I-80 westbound/Route 94 northbound/Delaware Water Gap/Stroudsburg PA/Blairstown; Continue following signs for I-80 westbound; Route 46 westbound to CR 611 Detour:

Motorists on Route 46 westbound wishing to take the ramp to CR 611/Portland PA will be directed to take the ramp to I-80 eastbound/Route 94 northbound/New York City/Blairstown, which is before the ramp to CR 611. Stay left to continue to I-80 westbound/Route 94 northbound/Delaware Water Gap/Stroudsburg PA/Blairstown; Stay right to continue on Route 94 northbound/Blairstown; Stay left to take the U-Turn jughandle to I-80 eastbound/Route 46; Stay left to continue to Route 46 eastbound/

Columbia/Portland PA; Stay right to continue to CR 611/Columbia/Portland PA; Take the ramp to CR 611/Portland PA

The work is part of the \$14.5 million federally funded pavement preservation project that will reconstruct approximately one and a half miles of Route 46 between I-80 and Walnut Road in Knowlton Township.

In addition, the project will upgrade drainage and guiderail throughout the project limits, as well as install Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) at the Route 46/Route 94 and I-80 interchanges.

The project is expected to be completed in fall 2025.

The precise timing of the work is subject to change due to weather or other factors. Motorists are encouraged to check NJDOT's traffic information website for construction updates and real-time travel information.

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Important Updates From PA Board of Game Commissioners Recent Meeting

The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners met on July 12th at the agency's Harrisburg headquarters, hearing public comment, considering staff reports and conducting official business. Highlights from today's meeting follow.

Adults Could Accompany Additional Hunters: The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners today gave final approval to a measure that will allow mentors hunting with a mentored youth to accompany up to two additional hunters, be they mentored youth, junior hunters or mentored adults.

Previously, no additional junior or mentored hunters could accompany a mentor hunting with a mentored youth. There was a required one-to-one mentor/mentee ratio. That limit has now changed to three. The requirement that limits mentors and mentored youth from possessing only one sporting arm between them remains. The mentor must carry the sporting arm at all times while moving. Junior hunters and mentored adults may possess their own sporting arms while accompanied by a common mentor.

This change will become effective after publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, usually within 60 days, and in time for the fall hunting seasons.

Prior to a vote, the Game Commission had evaluated relevant safety data and determined the amendments would not create an unreasonable safety risk.

Since its inception in 2006, the mentored hunting program gradually has grown and expanded to include new hunting opportunities and groups eligible to participate. With each progressive expansion, the program has come into closer alignment with the Game Commission's traditional hunting license structures.

Game Lands System To Grow By Nearly 5,300 Acres: The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners today approved acquisitions that would add nearly 5,290 acres to state game lands.

That involves the purchase of 13 properties. They are:

- Roughly 195 acres in Coolspring Township, Mercer County, adjoining State Game Lands 294. Acquiring this property will fill in gaps between two separate tracts of State Game Lands 294.

- Roughly 660 acres in Cherry and Clay Townships, Butler County, adjoining State Game Lands 95. A heron rookery located on a freshwater pond on the property provides a unique wildlife habitat feature.

- Roughly 1,153 acres in

Northampton Township, Somerset County, near State Game Lands 82. The property contains critical and unique habitat, including the headwaters of Brush Creek, a high-quality cold-water fishery.

- Roughly 10 acres in Buffington Township, Indiana County. This is an indenture to State Game Lands 79.

- Roughly 1,747 acres in the City of St. Marys, Elk County, adjoining State Game Lands 14. This property is in the core of the elk range and is the headwaters of numerous tributaries to high-quality trout streams.

- Roughly 7 acres in Beccaria Township, Clearfield County, adjacent to State Game Lands 60. This parcel contains critical and unique riparian habitat.

- Roughly 7 acres in Beccaria Township, Clearfield County, adjacent to State Game Lands 60. This is a separate parcel from the one above.

- Roughly 210 acres in Howard Township, Centre County, adjacent to State Game Lands 323. This parcel will provide critical access to game lands and adjacent partner lands that are open to hunting.

- Roughly 578 acres in Logan and Frankstown townships, Blair County, near State Game Lands 166. This property contains unique habitat that will benefit several species



of greatest conservation need, and will be managed to provide high-quality grouse habitat.

- Roughly 504 acres in Middle Paxton Township, Dauphin County, adjoining State Game Lands 211. This parcel will provide critical access to a remote portion of State Game Lands 211.

- Roughly 73 acres in East Penn Township, Carbon County, adjacent to State Game Lands 217. This acquisition protects critical and unique habitat on Kittatinny Ridge, a Globally Important Bird Area.

- Roughly 139 acres in Heidelberg Township, Lebanon County, and Elizabeth Township, Lancaster County, near State Game Lands 46. This game lands is heavily used by hunters and non-hunters and this acquisition would increase the opportunity for these groups to enjoy the outdoors.

- Roughly 7 acres in Nockamixon Township, Bucks County, an indenture to State Game Lands 56.

Hunters and other users of Pennsylvania's state game lands system should be aware that none of these additions are yet final. Some are

contingent upon third parties receiving funding through grants or other means. What's more, the Board of Commissioners' approval of the agreements is but one step in the land transfer process.

When that process is completed, and the properties are officially game lands, the Game Commission will post signs to that effect, stating that they're now available for public use.

In other action, the Game Commission acquired a one-half interest in roughly 2,271 acres of subsurface oil, gas and mineral real estate located in and under State Game Lands 66 in Sullivan and Wyoming counties. The agreement with Wespeth Benefits and Investments and the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church will give the Game Commission greater control over any possible future resource development efforts that would impact the unique habitat on this game lands.

Game Commissioners also approved a non-surface oil and gas cooperative agreement with JKLM Energy LLC. (JKLM) involving roughly 3,459 acres of State

Game Lands 37 in Tioga Township, Tioga County. Proposal Would Decrease Minimum Age For Falconers

The state's falconers would be able to get their start at a slightly younger age, based on a proposal the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners preliminarily approved.

The commissioners voted to decrease the minimum age for a general class falconry permit from 18 years old to 16 years old, which is the minimum age established by federal regulations. The Game Commission has not identified any biological or safety concerns that would result from lowering the minimum age.

This proposal, which was requested by the Pennsylvania Falconry and Hawk Trust, will be brought back to a future meeting for final consideration and potential adoption.

Amendment Would Affect Recent Name Change: Formerly considered a single species, goshawks in Europe and North America were split into separate species last year by the American Ornithological Society, due to their differing genetics and behavior. As a result, European goshawks retained the name Northern Goshawk, while those in North America were renamed American Goshawk. That change soon could be reflected in state regulations.

The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners gave preliminary approval to amending Title 58 of the Pennsylvania Code to incorporate the recent name change. The measure would be brought back for final consideration at an upcoming meeting. Adoption of the name change would not affect the protection or management of goshawks within the Commonwealth.

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Sen. Lisa Boscola Applauds Budget Investments in Economic and Workforce Development, Disappointed in Lack of Significant School Property Tax Relief in PA

Sen. Lisa Boscola (D-Northampton) shared her views on the passage of the State budget as it heads to the Governor's desk.

A longtime advocate for school property tax reform, Boscola said, "while every school district in the 18th received increased funding, I am disappointed this budget missed out on providing significant property tax relief for homeowners." School districts in the 18th Senatorial District received nearly \$19 million in increased funding, with over \$2.3 million of that being reimbursement for district's Cyber Charter payment obligations. However, the budget failed to offer property tax relief for homeowners through any meaningful programs. Boscola plans to continue her push for property tax reform.

Sen. Boscola also praised the passage of the State budget for its investments in Pennsylvania's economic future and workforce development.

"The SPEED program, net-operating-loss carry forward, historic preservation tax credit, and PA SITES program repre-

sent our commitment to economic development across Pennsylvania," said Sen. Boscola. "These initiatives are good for business and will make our state more competitive in attracting businesses and fostering growth."

The Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development Program (SPEED) will expedite business projects through enhanced permitting processes, supported by additional staff and third-party reviews. The net-operating-loss (NOL) carry forward increase from 40% to 80% over four years provides critical financial stability for start-up businesses, encouraging innovation and growth.

Additionally, the expansion of the Historic Preservation Incentive Tax Credit and the infusion of \$500 million through the PA SITES program will improve infrastructure readiness, positioning Pennsylvania as a prime location for business expansion.

Regarding the budget's focus on workforce development, Sen. Boscola focused on initiatives such as the Employer

Child Care Contribution Tax Credit, which offers businesses a tax credit for childcare expenses paid towards an employee's eligible child-care costs. Additionally, the Grow Pennsylvania Scholarship Grant Program supports students who stay and work in PA with grants up to \$5,000 annually.

"As we invest in programs like the Child Care Tax Credit and the Grow Pennsylvania Scholarship, we are not only supporting working families but also ensuring that Pennsylvania retains its talented gra-

duates in high demand fields," Sen. Boscola emphasized. "These initiatives are crucial for building a robust workforce that will drive our state's economy forward."

"Alongside a number of important investments, this budget underscores our commitment to fostering economic growth while investing in our workforce," Sen. Boscola added. "By supporting businesses and educational opportunities, we are laying a foundation for sustainable prosperity and competitiveness across Pennsylvania."



The Senate unanimously approved legislation to establish in law the PA VETConnect program to help Pennsylvania veterans access programs, services and benefits in their communities. Senate Bill 447 would establish in law the PA VETConnect program, which is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and helps the commonwealth's more than 700,000 veterans access services in their communities. The database of resources enables local veteran advocates - including staff at county veterans affairs offices - to point veterans to information, resources, programs and services in their area and across the commonwealth.

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Smart Lighting Solutions to Combat Eye Strain from Screen Time

(NAPSI)—Research shows that remote workers spend over half of their day—13 hours on average—looking at screens. This much time spent looking at a computer can produce digital eye strain, also known as Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS).

How To Help Your Eyes - It's estimated that digital eye strain affects 60 million people worldwide, and over 70% of computer users. Resulting symptoms include headaches, blurry vision, neck and eye pain, double vision, delay in shifting focus, and more.

Sound familiar? If you're experiencing digital eye strain from spending countless hours in front of a screen, you will be glad to know, BenQ's tech-driven smart lights can offer a solu-

tion.

Digital eye strain is often caused by differences in light—screen glare, light reflection, screen brightness and contrast are all contributing factors. Renowned for its pioneering lighting solutions—including the world's first monitor light bar, the ScreenBar—the company boasts a full line of smart lights that help reduce digital eye strain. Designed based on extensive research by a team of optical professionals and backed by EU IEC/IR 62778 and IEC/EN 62471 dual certifications for blue light hazards, these smart lights bring tech-driven eye comfort to computer users everywhere.

Reimagine Laptop Lighting - For someone needing a portable solution to mitigate insufficient computer light,



BenQ's new LaptopBar (<https://bit.ly/4arLWb2>) is ideal. This compact light bar attaches to your laptop via a non-damaging magnetic patch, and through an innovative process involving 20 million beam simulations, creates a CIRCUM-Light™ 3D-surrounding illumination that brings together central brightness and ambient light to alleviate eye strain.

The light bar also of-

fers:

- A personalized auto-dimming feature, which remembers your specific lighting preferences and intelligently adapts to changes in environmental light.

- A foldable arm offering height adjustability for your smart light, letting you choose between a limited or wide field of light.

Weighing less than an iPhone 15 Pro, the LaptopBar is easy to

transport and intuitive to use. A built-in battery can maintain 100 minutes of operation at 100% brightness and 160 minutes at 50% brightness, so you can use it anywhere.

Tech-Driven Lighting Solutions - An innovator of eye-comforting light for your monitor, BenQ's ScreenBar Halo (<https://bit.ly/3Rxgn6R>) securely clamps onto most monitor models to distribute light around your workspace. It features:

- BenQ's first immersive back lighting mode, which lets you switch among three lighting modes to balance any contrasting light between your computer screen and its surroundings.

- An ASYM-Light™ asymmetrical optical design that prevents reflected glare on the screen and reduces digital eye strain; and

a real-time auto-dimming feature with a built-in light sensor detects ambient lighting and supplements illumination of the desktop as needed.

The wireless controller lets you switch lighting modes from your desktop and customize the lighting for a range of environments.

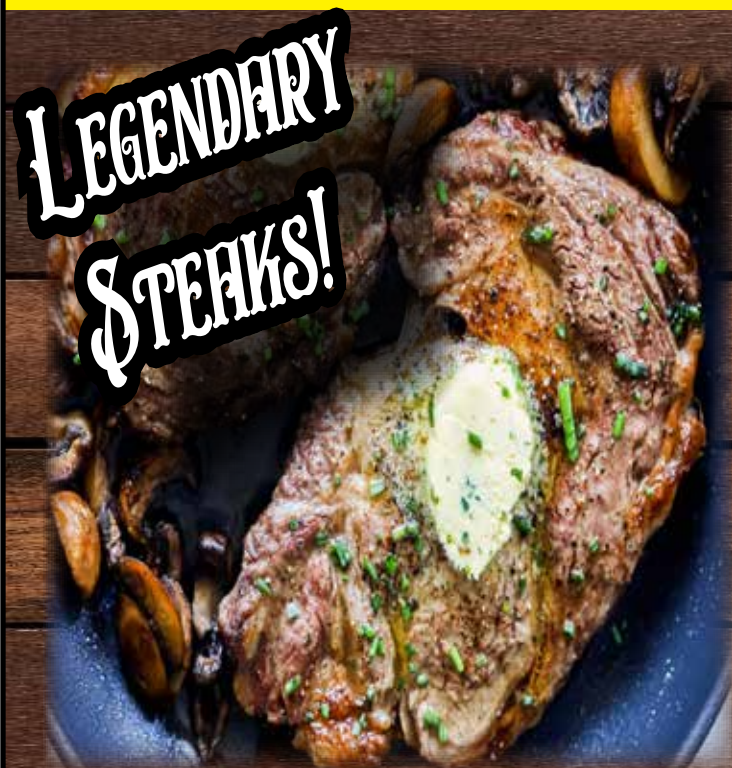
Taking Control of Your Eye Care

You can take care of your eyes by supplying the light relief they need. Your screen time likely won't be decreasing any time soon, but with smart lighting solutions like BenQ's LaptopBar and ScreenBar Halo, you can decrease eye strain and promote eye comfort no matter how much time you spend in front of a screen.

For additional information and resources on improving eye health, visit: <https://www.benq.com/en-us/lighting.html>.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Monday, August 5th, 7pm

Frelinghuysen Will Hold Their Land Use Board Meeting At: 139 Lincoln Laurel Road, Blairstown, NJ

Decisions And Public Comments Will Be Made Regarding The Installation Of An Industrial Cannabis Factory In Frelinghuysen, NJ, On Rt. 94 Near The Elementary School

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Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



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Hello, fellow readers!

I have a long-standing client who considered using Roundup to tend to the weeds in his walkway. Instead, I provided safe alternatives

to harmful weed killers. But the best part is sharing life stories.

A few years back, I dug in with Andrew of Sparta, NJ, who wished to enhance his gardens in time for hosting pre-prom photos for his daughter. I recall how Jessica came home from school fifteen years ago when I first worked with Andrew and grabbed her play trowel to join me in planting perennials. She got a special kick out of tickling the roots – loosening them with her fingertips to encourage them to spread widely in their new home.

While planting with Andrew, we chatted about our life experien-

ces. Both of us had gone through a heartbreaking divorce. We shared lessons learned and the healing and growth that has occurred since. I asked if he knew the parents who were coming for pre-prom.

“Not really. Maybe we met on a soccer field, but I don’t socialize much. With work and caring for things around the house, I’d rather be with the kids.”

I admire Andrew’s commitment to his children; all three have grown solid roots.

As we ended our day, he mentioned buying Roundup to spray the joints in his walk. Roundup has already been banned or restricted in many countries.

You may know the history of Roundup developed by Monsanto in the 1970s; the primary ingredient is the now-controversial Glyphosate. In the late 1990s, Monsanto developed genetically modified seeds (GMO) immune to Roundup. Since then, they built an enormous international business selling Roundup and GMO seeds so food producers could spray their crops to kill the weeds but not the harvests. In recent years, billions have been awarded in lawsuits for



Roundup allegedly causing cancer.

Instead of rattling what I’ve read, I recommended the people and pet-safe Burnout Weed Killer by Bonide, a mixture of citric acid and clove oil. There are also homemade recipes like 1 gallon of household white vinegar and 1 cup of table salt mixed with one tablespoon of liquid dish soap. Or a 1-gallon vinegar, 2-cup Epsom salt, and a quarter-cup dish soap potion a few North Warren Garden Club members swear by.

With or without salt, vinegar is nonselective in what it kills, including desired plants. Household vinegar will only kill the foliage, though added salt gives a one-two punch. However, the salt will remain in the soil, which is not good in the garden, as you can tell by plants impacted by road



salt.

There’s a 20 percent horticultural-grade vinegar that will kill roots and foliage, but it’s especially caustic if inhaled or in contact with your skin or eyes, so wear protection. Some say adding one cup of orange or citrus oil to a gallon of horticultural vinegar is far more effective.

I’d only consider using salt with vinegar or horticultural vinegar for persistent weeds in gravel driveways and paths or gaps in walkways. To be effective, they should be applied on a sunny, above 70-degree dry day with no rain in the forecast. Then, keep pets away for a few hours until the application dissipates.

I met with Andrew again this spring, and he told me his plans to remarry. He wished to spruce up his landscape

with some rejuvenation pruning in the spirit of combining his life with his soon-to-be bride.

The day before leaving for his wedding, I stopped by to check on the project. His youngest daughter Jessica, now 22, was there. She will join her siblings to witness the father’s commitment to his new bride. Life is a journey of hardships followed by joy —if we trust and live in gratitude even during challenging times.

Bayer is fighting hard to defend and preserve the ongoing use of Glyphosate and Roundup, so it’s up to food producers and consumers to choose differently. I’ll pick the safer remedies and buy non-GMO foods. How about you?

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