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March 13, 2025

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Vol. 52, No. 34



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## Bangor Boys Compete Against Bonner & Prendergast Catholic High School in the Boys Basketball PIAA, 5A Regional First Round



Bangor took on Bonner & Prendergast Catholic High School in the Boys Basketball PIAA, 5A Regional First Round on March 7th. Bangor lost. 67 to 55. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## Pennsylvania Game Commission Applauds Sunday Hunting Bill

Legislation that could fully repeal Pennsylvania's Sunday hunting ban has been reintroduced in Harrisburg.

Sen. Dan Laughlin, R-Erie, this week reintroduced Senate Bill 67, which would end the state's prohibition on Sunday hunting and allow the Game Commission to include Sundays when establishing hunting seasons annually. The bill picked up momentum last year, when it passed the Senate and gained preliminary approval in the House of Representatives before time ran out in the legislative session.

The bill now has a fresh start, and a broad base of support behind it. Many sportsmen's groups back the initiative, as does the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. The Game Commission looks forward to working with this coalition to get the bill across the finish line, an outcome that would benefit hun-



ters and help ensure the future of wildlife management.

Game Commission Executive Director Steve Smith expressed the agency's support for the proposal.

"Hunting takes time, and a lack of time is one of the biggest reasons cited by hunters who stop hunting," Smith said. "Repealing the Sunday hunting ban and allowing the Game Commission to fully

regulate Sunday hunting is an opportunity to provide hunters more time, which will help keep them engaged and carrying out their vital role in managing key wildlife populations. This legislation is beneficial to hunting's future and the future of wildlife management in the Commonwealth. We support it, and thank Senator Laughlin for again championing this important issue."

## Bangor Girls Go Head To Head With Strath Haven in PIAA, Regional First Round Basketball Game



The Bangor Girls Basketball team took on Strath Haven in the PIAA Regional, First Round on March 8th. Bangor lost, 66 to 36. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## Bill That Establishes School Counseling Liaison Passes Committee in New Jersey

Students continue to face mental health challenges that schools are increasingly tasked to address. A bill that establishes a state school counselor liaison in the state Department of Education and professional standards for school counselors to meet those challenges advanced from the Assembly Education Committee Monday.

"Five years later, students are still struggling with the effects of school closures and socialization limits that have negatively impacted their academic performances, social interactions and

emotional needs. Families and educators are leaning more on counselors to address those struggles and help students be their best in and out of school," Assemblywoman Michele Matisikoudis (R-Union), the bill's sponsor, said.

School counselors must complete a master's degree or higher with 48 graduate semester hours in counseling and related studies from an accredited college or university. This bill (S1784/A3424) requires that programs at regionally accredited institutions incorporate national- or state-

STATE cont'd on pg 4

## New in the Bangor Public Library:

February 28, 2025 to March 6, 2025

**Adult Fiction:** Battle Mountain: A Joe Pickett Novel by C. J. Box; The Charlie Method by Elle Kennedy; ; I Was Anastasia: A Novel by Ariel Lawhon; Show Don't Tell: Stories by Curtis Sittenfeld; Close Your Eyes and Count to 10 by Lisa Unger; The Dearly Beloved: A Novel by Cara Wall

**Adult Non Fiction:** Mornings on Horseback by David G. McCullough

**Easy Fiction:** Mostly What God Does is Love You by Savannah Guthrie; Chooch Helped by Andrea L. Rogers

**Easy Non Fiction:** Harry Houdini by Ma Isabel Sanchez Vegara

**Easy Reader Fiction:** Vacation: Three-and a-Half Stories by Ame Dyckman

**Junior Fiction:** Swing It, Sunny! by Jennifer L. Holm; Sunny Rolls the Dice by Jennifer L. Holm

**Junior Non Fiction:** Dinosaur Infosaurus by Katie Woolley; New Hampshire by Kate A. Conley; Virginia by Moira Rose Donohue; North Carolina by Doris Edwards; South Carolina by Jamie Kallio; Mississippi by Bonnie Hinman; Oklahoma by Lynn Ternus; Missouri by Samantha Bell; Nebraska by Lynn Ternus; North Dakota by Lynn Ternus; Nevada by Richard Sebra

**Young Adult Fiction:** Brave by Svetlana Chmakova; Crush by Svetlana Chmakova; Enemies by Svetlana Chmakova; Wings of Starlight by Allison Saft

DVDs: Gladiator II

## Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach, REALTORS®, Morris County Regional Sales Office, Proudly Welcomes Maureen Donohue-Conway To Their Team

Michele DiBenedetto, vice president and sales leader of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach, REALTORS® Morris County Regional Sales Office, welcomes Maureen Donohue-Conway as a highly experienced Broker Sales Associate. With a passion for historic homes and deep expertise in Morris, Hunterdon, Warren, and Sussex Counties, Maureen brings over 20 years of real estate expertise, delivering unmatched knowledge and dedication to every client.

"We are thrilled to welcome Maureen to our office. Her extensive experience, passion, and dedication to top-tier client service makes her a perfect addition to our team. We look forward to seeing her continued success in helping buyers and sellers find their dream homes," says DiBenedetto.

What sets Maureen apart from other real estate professionals is a commitment to hands-on client support and rapid response times.



**Maureen Donohue-Conway**

"I'm always there to guide my clients every step of the way. My ability to respond quickly and be available makes a real difference in today's fast-paced market," she explains.

As a licensed Broker, Maureen also holds a prestigious certification from the National Trust for Historic Preservation—one of the most informative and enriching experiences in her career. She is also a member of the New Jersey MLS further broadening her footprint in the market.

Beyond real estate, Maureen is deeply invested in the local commu-

nity, preferring to give back on a personal, one-on-one basis. Staying engaged through local Facebook and Next-Door groups, as well as frequenting local restaurants, wineries, and shops, helps Maureen remain connected with the neighborhoods she serves.

Maureen's passion for working with people led her to real estate, where she found her true calling—helping clients navigate one of the most significant decisions of their lives.

Reflecting on her career shift two decades ago, she shares, "Real estate gives me the opportunity to guide and support my clients through an exciting and life-changing journey."

For buyers and sellers looking for an experienced real estate professional who understands the nuances of the local market, contact Maureen Donohue-Conway at 908-283-3073 or SellBuyNjHomes@gmail.com. For more information visit her website at SellBuyNjHomes.com.

## Applications Being Accepted for Warren County Community College Trustee Board

The Warren County Community College Trustee Search Committee is seeking persons interested in serving as Trustees of the Warren County Community College.

Applicants shall have been residents of Warren County for at least four years, and cannot currently hold any elected public office or be employed by Warren County or Warren County Community College.

College trustees must be available approximately 20 hours per month.

Trustee duties include: fiscal and operational oversight of the institution; setting policies and procedures to be implemented by the college administration; evaluation of the college president and appointment of other staff; determination of the educational curriculum and programs consistent with the institution's mission; development and approval of master planning concepts; and preparation of reports to New Jersey Higher Education, the Warren County Board of

County Commissioners and the community in general.

Interested applicants are required to submit resumes, a letter outlining their interest and ability to fulfill the role of WCCC trustee, and any other pertinent material by Friday, April 11, 2025. Please send applications to Chairperson, Warren County Community College Trustee Search Committee, c/o Board of County Commissioners Office, 165 County Route 519 South, Belvidere, NJ 07823.

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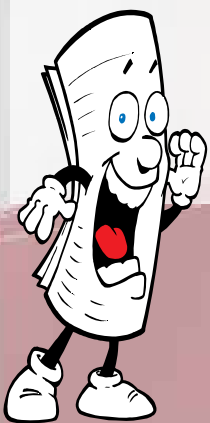
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### Project Self-Sufficiency Hosts Unique Event for Expectant and New Parents

Pediatrician Dr. Christian Canzoniero will headline a special Pregnancy & Infancy Summit at Project Self-Sufficiency, Saturday, March 15th, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. This unique event will spotlight important issues faced by expectant and new parents during pregnancy and through a child's early years; free baby items, prizes and giveaways will also be offered.



Participants at Project Self-Sufficiency's Pregnancy & Infancy Summit can receive one-on-one coaching sessions with trained parenting experts, learn about online resources for tracking their child's development, and get up-to-date information about car seat safety, breastfeeding, nutrition, childbirth, doula services, pediatric occupational therapy, and more. Professional photos will be taken by photographer Julian Huarte.

"The Pregnancy & Infancy Summit invites expectant parents and mothers and fathers of young children to gain valuable information about pregnancy and child development, along with expert advice about health and wellness," explains Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. "We are excited to be able to offer an opportunity for these families to gain the information and resources they need to become successful parents."

In addition to pediatrician Dr. Christian Can-

zoniero, representatives from several organizations will be on hand to offer additional information to mothers and parents of young children, including Project Self-Sufficiency's Nurse Family Partnership team, occupational therapist Barbara Chevront, nutritionist Karla Hamal, lactation consultant Jacquelyn Potter, Macaroni Kids, NJ Safe Kids, and the Partnership for Maternal Child Health. Free and reduced cost activities for families and other topics related to early childhood health, safety and education will also be explored. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided. The Pregnancy & Infancy Summit supplements Project Self-Sufficiency's robust programs for pregnant women and parents of young children, including home visitation programs, Baby Beginnings events, Mommy Parties, and Parent Cafes. To register for the Pregnancy & Infancy Summit, to discuss your parenting needs, or to find out more about other programs and services available at Project Self-Sufficiency, call 973-940-3500.

### Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia Responds to Democrat Misinformation About Crisis Pregnancy Centers

From the desk of Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia, New Jersey's 24th Legislative District.

Once again, the radical left is using fearmongering and misinformation to attack organizations that exist solely to help women in need. Assemblywoman Jessica Ramirez's editorial is nothing more than a regurgitation of Planned Parenthood's talking points, designed to prop up the abortion industry while vilifying crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) that dare to provide alternatives to abortion.

Let's be clear: Crisis pregnancy centers serve women. Planned Parenthood serves an agenda.

The Real Reason They Want to Silence CPCs

The so-called "consumer protections" in Ramirez's bill, A5418, are not about transparency. They are about intimidation. The left knows that when women are presented with the truth—when they see an ultrasound, when they receive support, when they are given real choices—they are far more likely to choose life.

Planned Parenthood and its allies cannot afford for women to have second thoughts because abortion is a billion-dollar business. That's why they rely on dehumanizing language like "pregnant people" and "reproductive healthcare" to mask what they're really defending—the intentional destruction of an unborn child.

The Hypocrisy of the Left's "Health Standards" Ramirez claims that CPCs mislead women and provide inaccurate information, yet she con-



veniently ignores the fact that Planned Parenthood has been caught on record lying to women about the risks of abortion, covering up sexual abuse, and even trafficking in fetal body parts.

If we're talking about accountability, where is the left's outrage over the utter lack of oversight in New Jersey's abortion industry? Under Governor Murphy, we now have some of the most extreme abortion laws in the nation—no gestational limits, no parental notification for minors, and no requirement that abortions be performed by doctors.

That's right—in New Jersey, a non-doctor can perform an abortion on a minor girl without parental consent, but somehow, it's CPCs that are the danger?

Planned Parenthood's Privacy Double Standard Ramirez also falsely claims that CPCs lack confidentiality protections. The irony is rich. Planned Parenthood has been caught covering up sexual abuse and failing to report predators—yet New Jersey's Attorney General Matt Platkin has never lifted a finger to investigate. Where is the accountability for women who have been

harmed under the state's radical abortion laws? In fact, OPRA records prove collusion between the NJ Attorney General and Planned Parenthood when drafting their joint sham "consumer alert".

Women Deserve Real Choice, Not Political Censorship

The left's war on CPCs isn't about "truth in advertising"—it's about eliminating competition. Women in crisis deserve to know that they have options, and CPCs provide exactly that: free ultrasounds, baby supplies, counseling, and real support.

The abortion industry and its political enablers like Ramirez don't want women to have that choice. They only want one outcome: abortion, on demand, for any reason, at any stage of pregnancy—because that is what funds their movement.

The people of New Jersey deserve better than this blatant attack on faith-based and community-driven organizations that exist to support life. I stand proudly with crisis pregnancy centers, and I will fight against any attempt to silence them with political censorship disguised as "consumer protections."

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### BANGOR (36) VS STRATH HAVEN (66) GIRLS BASKETBALL PIAA 1ST ROUND PLAYOFF



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# BANGOR (55) VS BONNER & ARCHBISHOP PRENDERGAST (67) BOYS BASKETBALL PIAA 1ST ROUND PLAYOFF



Photos By Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## STATE

Continued from page 1

recognized counseling models into that training. Counseling has evolved from helping students navigate academic and post-secondary-school choices to dealing with more mental health issues

such a depression and anxiety, which can lead to self-harm, including suicide. The proposal to create a state school counselor liaison will see that person coordinating with local school counselors to implement mental health services in schools, such as suicide prevention, crisis-intervention, trauma-

informed counseling practices, and cultural competency and responsiveness. "It's vital that school counselors ensure that these needs are adequately addressed, and programs are implemented that provide support while promoting a positive school climate," Matsikoudis added.



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# Northampton County Donates 2018 Dodge Van to Greater Shiloh Church to Support Community Initiatives

The Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) is proud to announce the donation of a 2018 Dodge Van 5749 to the Greater Shiloh Church. This generous gift underscores the county's commitment to enhancing community resources and providing essential services to its residents.

The van, previously utilized by Children and Youth Family Services (CYF), had exceeded its lifecycle and was fully depreciated according to CYF's operational policy. Recognizing the value of giving back to the community that originally funded the vehicle, Northampton

County has decided to repurpose the van, ensuring it continues to serve the residents of the county and those in need.

Funding for this donation was made possible through a grant from DCED, which utilized Community Development Block Grant administrative funds to cover the CYF reimbursement.

"We are thrilled to see this van continue its journey of service within our community," said County Executive Lamont G. McClure; "The Greater Shiloh Church has a proven track record of supporting individuals experiencing homelessness and providing vital re-

sources. We are excited to see the positive impact this van will have for years to come."

The Greater Shiloh Church plans to use the van primarily to transport guests to its warming shelter, which provides a safe and welcoming refuge for individuals experien-

cing homelessness. The warming shelter offers essential services, including shelter, meals, showers, and access to vital resources that help individuals get back on their feet.

Additionally, the church is exploring opportunities to use the van to assist residents of Shiloh Manor

through its food pantry partnership, allowing them to expand their outreach and enhance services for those in need.

The Northampton County DCED is proud to support initiatives that foster community growth and well-being. This donation is a testament to the county's

ongoing commitment to improving the lives of its residents and ensuring that no one is left behind.

For all media inquiries related to this announcement, please contact Jessica Berger, Deputy Director of Administration at 610-829-6250 or JBerger@norcopa.gov.

## Letter to the Editor: Be Proactive, Not Reactive

By: State Rep. Darisha Parker

Recently, I was honored to stand in solidarity with students, teachers represented by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, Service Employees International Union, Teamsters from the Commonwealth of School Administration and their dedicated President, Dr. Robin Cooper, for a Day of Action to protect Philadelphia students and their constitutional right to a free and efficient education.

I'm disheartened by the injustices looming over our children's future. I'm overwhelmed from seeing the strides and progress we have made struck down with the vindictive stroke of pen, but at the same time, it's reassuring to see people across the country standing up to make their

voices heard.

The Day of Action, facilitated by the American Federation of Teachers, was a national movement where leaders all over the country stood up and made our point clear: We won't step down, there's too much at stake for apathy and inaction. These movements show our strength and resilience, but the most profound effect of collective action is igniting a spark that motivates spectators to stand with us.

Many people are walking on eggshells because of the uncertainty we face as a country and while it's imperative to be informed and engaged with the political sphere, we have to act strategically. If you haven't already, register to vote. Remember that elections happen every two years on the local level, and

mid-term elections are so important because change can only happen from the bottom up.

Take time to find out who your elected leaders are – from city council members to state lawmakers, all the way to the federal government – we elect these people to be our collective voice – let's be informed voters and elect people who truly represent our common values.

I urge everyone to be proactive and not reactive to the chaos happening around us. We cannot sit in silence, passively watching our country regress until it affects us or someone we love personally. Cohesion is key right now because these attacks against historically marginalized groups are an attack against all of us who want to build a bet-

ter life – both for us and our children.

Movements such as the Day of Action and other protests around the country are a testament to our society's ability to put minute differences aside and come together for a common goal. All of us have unique issues and priorities that are dear to our heart and feelings about policies that directly affect us or people we love, but the ability to see a bigger picture with results that will ripple throughout future generations must be paramount.

It's time to have hard conversations even if they make people uncomfortable, because the truth isn't always easy to digest. Let's approach these conversations with an open mind and willingness to compromise on our minute differences so we can work together to be on the right side of history.

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## Mid-Atlantic Mother's Milk Bank Dispensary at St. Luke's

The St. Luke's Baby & Me Support Center in Bethlehem is proud to announce it is now a depot and dispensary for the Mid-Atlantic Mother's Milk Bank.

The Mid-Atlantic Mother's Milk Bank provides safe, ethically-sourced donor milk for inpatient and outpatient babies with medical needs. By partnering with the Mid-Atlantic Mother's Milk Bank, the St. Luke's Baby & Me Support Center can accept and dispense donor milk to Lehigh Valley families.

Human milk benefits all babies but can be especially critical for medically vulnerable infants. When a mother's milk isn't available, pasteurized milk from donors who undergo thorough screening is the next-best option.

"The St. Luke's Baby & Me Support Center is dedicated to helping families in our community raise healthy babies," said Dr. Rima Strassman, MD, FABM, NABBLM-C, St. Luke's Medical Director, Lactation Services. "Our relationship with the Mid-Atlantic Mother's Milk Bank allows us to provide safe human milk to babies in our community who need it

the most."

"This service is the latest example of the outstanding support we provide through the St. Luke's Baby & Me Support Center," added Rima, who is the region's only physician board certified in lactation medicine. "We're thrilled to add it to the region's most comprehensive pre- and post-natal support program."

Donating milk can be a rewarding experience, with donors knowing they are improving the health and well-being of families in the area. Anyone interested in donating milk can learn more about the simple screening and donation process by visiting <https://midatlanticmilkbank.org/donate/>.

The St. Luke's Baby & Me Support Center provides mothers, fathers, support persons and family members with serviced they need before, during and after pregnancy. We have locations in Bethlehem, Center Valley and Palmerton.

For more information on the St. Luke's Baby & Me Support Center's services, visit <https://www.slhn.org/pediatrics/services/baby-and-me-support-center>. The phone number is 484-526-2229.

## UGI Accepts Additional Renewable Natural Gas Injections

UGI Utilities, Inc. is now accepting renewable natural gas (RNG) from a third landfill facility and is fueling homes and businesses with it. Archaea Energy, a subsidiary of bp, and UGI Energy Services, LLC, formed the Aurum Renewables joint venture to develop and own an RNG plant. The facility is adjacent to the Commonwealth Environmental Systems landfill in Hegins, Schuylkill County. The plant joins two other Pennsylvania landfills, in Dunmore and Wayne Township, that supply RNG to UGI's distribution system.

"Growing the available RNG supply on the UGI system in a managed and responsible manner provides customers with increased options for using these lower-carbon alternative supplies while continuing to maintain safe and reliable service to all customers," said UGI Utilities President Hans Bell.

"Pennsylvania is a critical state for Archaea and it is playing a pivotal role in the energy transition. The state's robust infrastructure and commitment to sustainable development make it an ideal location for advancing RNG technologies. This is the third RNG plant we've brought online in the Keystone State, and we look forward to opportunities for further



development," Archaea Energy CEO Starlee Sykes said. RNG is created by the decomposition of organic waste. It offers many environmental and economic benefits, as well as increases American energy security by diversifying domestic energy production. RNG also relies on existing infrastructure, which increases its appeal as a renewable energy source.

"We are pleased to see Aurum Renewables come online through our partnership with Archaea Energy," says Joseph Hartz, President of UGI Energy Services. "UGI is investing in differentiated and innovative energy solutions, which includes RNG. With the help of our partners, we are creating clean energy for Pennsylvania while helping our customers achieve their own sustainability goals."

The Aurum Renewables plant can process up to 9,600 standard cubic feet of landfill gas per minute (scfm) into RNG – enough gas to heat more than 39,000 homes annually, according to the EPA's Landfill as Energy Benefits calculator.

Renewable natural gas is fully interchangeable with pipeline natural gas.

Before it is injected into the distribution system, it goes through a thorough cleansing and purification process to meet UGI's gas quality requirements. An additive called Mercaptan is added to the RNG at very low concentrations to give it the sulfur-like smell needed to help detect leaks and maintain safe operations.



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# DEP Provides Update on Lancaster County Plane Crash Cleanup

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) continues to monitor the cleanup effort in the aftermath of Sunday's aircraft accident in Manheim Township, Lancaster County. Shortly after takeoff, a single engine aircraft crashed into a parking lot of the Brethren Village. The crash caused the plane and several cars to ignite and burn. One of the 12 vehicles involved was a hybrid that has a lithium battery.



Crash photo from countryrebel.com

DEP sent an emergency response team to respond, and staff have been on site since yesterday to monitor fuel runoff. The plane had a maximum capacity of 120 gallons of Jet A fuel. Thirty gallons

of fuel was recovered from one of the wings. While some of the fuel likely burned in the fire, an unknown amount discharged with the fire-fighting runoff to a nearby storm drain, traveled through stormwater pipes, and discharged into a stormwater basin.

An environmental contractor is cleaning up the fuel in the stormwater system. Firefighters estimated they used 2,000 gallons of water with non-PFAS foam. No surface waters were affected. The environmental contractor provided initial con-

tainment overnight to prevent any further fuel runoff. Once investigators clear the scene, the contractor will proceed with long-term cleanup efforts. DEP staff will continue to monitor and provide updates on the environmental clean-

# Bill That Ensures Dealerships Fairly Compensated for Recall Repairs Advances



A bill ensuring auto dealers are paid a fair retail rate for parts and labor on recall and warranty repairs advanced from the Assembly Consumer Affairs Committee recently.

Manufacturers often reimburse dealers at lower rates than what they charge retail customers, forcing dealers to absorb the cost difference. By ensuring fair retail reimbursement rates, the bill prevents financial strain on dealerships and helps them continue providing quality service to consumers without unfair losses.

"Ensuring that both dealers and consumers are made aware of recalls, and those repairs are made, keeps our roads safe for everyone," Assemblyman John DiMaio (R-Warren), the bill's sponsor, said.

The bill (A4380) further requires that the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission review recall notices on the National Highway

Traffic Safety Administration website when a motor vehicle is registered. The MVC must give notice and options to resolve that issue to those owners if their vehicle is subject to an open recall, at manufacturer expense.

Vehicles are most often recalled over minor equipment or electrical system problems. However, major defects such as faulty brake systems or airbag explosions have also led to recalls. Manufacturers issued more than 1,000 recalls in 2023 alone; in New Jersey, nearly 10% of the state's 6.65 million registered vehicles have been recalled.

"It's incumbent upon us to hold manufacturers accountable for safety recalls and not burdening dealers or consumers by delays in either promptly providing parts or covering repair costs," DiMaio added.

The NJ Coalition of Automotive Retailers supports the bill.

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## Stroke Patient Saved by 2nd Opinion at St. Luke's



Michole Pignato with her sons, Dominic and Rocco Pignato.

Michole Pignato, a teacher, credits St. Luke's physicians with saving her life when an artery in her brain was on the brink of rupture.

Pignato, 43, of Northampton, was out to dinner with her teenage children when, after feeling a snap in the back of her neck, the room seemed to spin. She couldn't stand or walk without assistance. She went to a hospital (not St. Luke's) and for more than a month, she struggled with recurring symptoms.

That's when her friend Dr. Francis Burt, who happens to be a doctor at St. Luke's, urged her to seek a second opinion at St. Luke's – specifically, from neurologist Dr. Daniel Ackerman, the Network's Interim Chief of Neurology.

Dr. Ackerman saw her

very quickly, and he immediately identified an arterial dissection, or tear. He then referred her to St. Luke's neurosurgeon Dr. Martin Oselkin. Upon review of her scan, Dr. Oselkin called Pignato the same day and urgently instructed her to check in for surgery. He performed the procedure the following day, placing two stents to repair a pseudoaneurysm, a potentially life-threatening condition involving blood collection inside of a vessel wall that can lead to rupture.

Her operation was on Nov. 15, 2023. While she did make a full recovery, her strokes left her with challenges such as learning how to read again and regaining ability to use her left hand. Miraculously, she was back in the classroom

just a few weeks later, shortly after Thanksgiving.

This month, the American Heart and Stroke associations nominated Pignato to participate in the Go Red for Women movement's 2025 Woman of Impact fundraising competition. For more information, go to <http://www2.heart.org/goto/donatetomichole>.

"This experience made me realize that strokes—and heart disease—don't discriminate," she says on her fundraising webpage. "They don't care if you're fit, active, or take care of yourself. They can hit anyone, at any time." She wants to use her experience as a platform to advocate for women, especially young moms, to make time to take care of themselves mentally and physically.

## Northampton County Invites The Community To Celebrate Earth Day

Northampton County is excited to announce the Earth Day 2025 Festival, set to take place on April 26th from 11 AM to 5 PM at the Northampton Community College Main Campus Quad. This family-friendly event is free to the public and promises a day filled with fun, education, and celebration of our planet!

Join us for a fantastic day featuring:

- Free Admission and Parking
- Delicious Food Trucks
- Local Vendors
- Live Entertainment

- Exciting Activities for All Ages  
- And Much More!

The Earth Day Festival is a perfect opportunity for families to enjoy a day outdoors while learning about sustainability and environmental stewardship. With a variety of engaging activities and entertainment, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

"We invite the community to come together to celebrate our planet and learn how we can all contribute to a healthier environment," said Lamont G. McClure, County Executive;

"This festival is a wonderful way to engage families and individuals in meaningful discussions about sustainability while having fun."

Mark your calendars and join us for a day dedicated to celebrating our Earth!

For more information about the Earth Day 2025 Festival, please contact Dawn Tomaino at 610-829-6309 or Debi Rice at 484-239-4925.

For all media inquiries related to this announcement, please contact Jessica Berger, Deputy Director of Administration at 610-829-6250 or [JBerger@norcopa.gov](mailto:JBerger@norcopa.gov).

## Middle Creek To Lift Access Restrictions

Beginning Saturday, March 8, visitors to Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area again will have regular access to the property.

The Game Commission in early February closed public access to several locations at Middle Creek, including the popular wildlife-viewing area Willow Point, due to concerns about highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), which at the time was being detected in increasing numbers of wildlife species and locations statewide.

The HPAI outbreak is ongoing nationwide, and the Game Commission continues to respond to reports and detect new cases in wild birds across the Commonwealth. However, there have been no mass mortality events in Pennsylvania approaching the scale seen

in early January, when upward of 5,000 dead snow geese were removed from two sites in the Lehigh Valley. With limited HPAI reports and detections occurring within Middle Creek and its immediate surroundings, the Game Commission is comfortable lifting the access restriction previously put in place.

Visitors to the site, and Pennsylvanians everywhere, are advised to:

- Always view wildlife from a safe distance
- Avoid wildlife feces, and
- Never handle sick or dead wildlife

Sick or dead wild birds, or any wild animal behaving abnormally or causing concern, should be reported to the Game Commission at 1-833-PGC-WILD (1-833-742-9453).

The Pennsylvania De-

partment of Agriculture continues to advise domestic bird and poultry owners to maintain heightened biosecurity and, if possible, keep poultry indoors to safeguard their health. Any questions regarding domestic animals should be directed to the Department of Agriculture at 717-772-2852.

Those with questions about visiting Middle Creek can call the Visitor Center at 717-733-1512.

The Wildlife Drive, which is closed seasonally and remained closed in recent weeks, will reopen on Saturday, as well. Visitors are reminded that certain areas of Middle Creek are regularly closed to the public throughout the year to prevent disturbance of wildlife, and remain closed. Please adhere to posted signs indicating these areas.

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## Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



**Mary E. Stone**  
Stone Associates  
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Hello, fellow readers. I enjoyed an outing to Papermill Theatre with Marty Carson a while back. Our pre-spring jaunt allowed me to brain-pick my design colleague and dear friend about her favorite summer flowering bulbs to plant in the spring. I learned her favorite is technically a corm.

Marty favors Freesia, a corm, which is similar to bulbs. Both are underground storage units, as are tubers and rhizomes. But bulbs are bulbous and layered like onions,

whereas corms are flatter underground stems that are solid. When you dig up corms in the fall, spent ones are withered up, each clinging to the new corm. Crocus and Gladiolus are also corms. Bulbs are made of the plant's stem and layers of modified leaves called scales. Tulips, Lilies, and Daffodils are bulbs.

Dahlias are tubers formed from swollen stems or roots with thick skins, nodes, and buds. Begonias, Anemones, and Potatoes are also tubers. Then there are rhizomes, which are horizontal underground stem-like structures. Bearded Iris, Canna Lilies, and Calla Lilies are rhizomes.

Hardy in zones 9 to 10, like Dahlias and most Gladiolus, Freesia must be dug up each fall in our Zone 5b to 6 and stored over winter. That's an unlikely routine for me to embrace, I admitted to Marty. Over the years, I've had Dahlia-loving clients with stunning gardens packed with these beauties. Their passion



for caring for their Dahlias is like tending to a beloved pet. A flowering pet – I get that :^)

Freesia is a popular cut flower with its sweet smell and long-lasting blooms. Each twelve to fifteen-inch stem showcases a dozen trumpet-like flowers. They come in various colors, including lavender, purple, orange, red, pink, white, cream, and yellow.

Planted in the spring, Freesia will provide a glorious late-summer display. Be sure to plant them in groups of eight to ten about two inches apart for a beautiful presentation. Better yet, why not grow them in pots so lazy Mary (that would be me) can merely bring them into the garage to store over winter? Brilliant idea! But when planting them, be sure the containers are tall, as Freesia have long taproots—big feet, as dear old momma who gave me my garden start would say.

Another lazy Mary tip— Why not plant the stunning, deer-resistant Crocosmia corms come

spring? They're hummingbird magnets with bright orange, red, or yellow arching flowers. They stand tall, about three feet, with sword-like foliage and won't require digging up in the fall as they happily overwinter here. Native to Southern Africa, authorities may consider some varieties invasive in your area, so check before planting. Crocosmia 'Lucifer,' hardy in zones 5 to 9, is not as ambitious as others.

And there's Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*) corms—a North American native that attracts butterflies. Plus, they are excellent cut flowers. They bloom late in summer and look lovely with Rudbeckia, which is Black-Eyed Susan, and Mums or Dahlias if you are the kind who likes to have pets that you dig up each year (smile). Like Crocosmia, Blazing Star can stay in the ground in our neck of the woods, and it'll come back year after year.

I asked Marty about using bone meal as a



squirrel deterrent when planting bulbs, corms, and other such plants. Bone meal also serves as fertilizer.

"I used to use bone meal, but dogs love it," she said.

Translated, your canine kids will likely dig up bulbs and corms soon after planting them when using bone meal. Instead, Marty uses Pro Start, 2-3-3, by North Country Organics. She mixes it with the soil and plants her bulbs to ensure healthy root development.

The phosphorus, also in bone meal, encourages happy roots, and there's nothing more wonderful than having happy roots and dear friends.

Garden Dilemmas? AskMaryStone.com (and your favorite Podcast App.)

Sidenote: Detering squirrels lead to Kelleen's Funny Corncob Robber story featured in Episode 197 of the Garden Dilemmas Podcast. I invite you to tune in on AskMaryStone.com Podcast Page or your favorite Podcast App.





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The Blue Mt. Community Library will be holding a "Spring Silent Auction" at the library. Items such as cookware, bakeware, travel bags, charging station muscle massager, car emergency kit and more are on display on the first floor of the library and are posted on our website and social media. The bidding will start April 1, 2025, and continue through April 26. There is no limit to the number of times you may bid on an item(s). Stop in the library to place your bids or call the library at 610-863-3029 during open hours. The library is located at 216 S. Robinson Ave., Pen Argyl, PA. Please consider purchasing one or more items to help support the library.



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### Warren County Invites Community Input on Complete Streets and Road Safety

How can Warren County roads be improved for people who walk or bike? What kinds of safety improvements would you like to see? Warren County is taking steps to create a safer, more connected transportation network for all road users with its Connect Warren County, a collaborative effort with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). In addition, the County is working with the NJTPA to create a Local Safety Action Plan (LSAP), which aims to identify and address roadway safety concerns to help reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

To share progress and gather feedback, Warren County and the NJTPA are inviting the public to a joint meeting on March 13, 2025, from 1:30-3:00 p.m. at the Warren County Library – Southwest Branch, located at 404 Route 519, Phillipsburg, NJ. This meeting will present draft recommendations for both plans and provide an opportunity for community members to offer their input on how to create a safe and complete transportation network for everyone.

Complete Streets is a planning approach that prioritizes the needs of all travelers, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and those making deliveries. The Connect Warren

County plan will focus on rural and small-town strategies and will provide guidance for adopting and implementing Complete Streets policies across the county. The final plan is set to be completed by June 30, 2025.

Local Safety Action Plans (LSAPs) are designed to help local governments identify and prioritize safety improvements to reduce fatal and serious crashes. The goal of these plans is to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and injuries. Public input is crucial to developing effective solutions that meet local needs. The LSAP for Warren County will also be finalized by June 30, 2025.

Both projects are funded in part by the NJTPA, the federally authorized Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 13-county northern New Jersey region. Each year, they oversee over \$2 billion in transportation improvement projects and provide a forum for interagency cooperation and public input. The Connect Warren County project is led by the Warren County Planning Department, with support from consultants NV5, MBO Engineering, and Heyer, Gruel & Associates. The LSAP plan is being led by the NJTPA, with support from Jacob's Engineering and FHI Studios.

### Shapiro Administration Holds Energy Transfer Accountable for Contaminating Drinking Water with Pipeline Leak

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issued an order (opens in a new tab) to Energy Transfer to provide water to residents in Upper Makefield Township affected by a leak in Energy Transfer's 14-inch pipeline. Energy Transfer will be required to install point-of-entry-treatment systems to over 100 homes in the Mt. Eyre neighborhood and remediate the affected areas.

"Today's order will ensure that these residents have safe drinking water, the contamination is cleaned up, and the community has a direct line of contact with Energy Transfer to express their concerns," said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "Clean, safe drinking water is one of the most important resources we have, whether that is from a public water supplier or a private water well. Pennsylvanians have a constitutional right to pure water and we will work to ensure that right is protected in Upper Ma-

kefield Township."

DEP already had insisted on water testing at impacted homes, and so far, under DEP oversight, a third-party contractor has taken 447 samples of well water for petroleum contamination. To date, treatment systems have been installed at 42 residences, six of which had results above drinking water standards for petroleum products, with detectable contamination at other residences. Energy Transfer has agreed to install at least 102 more treatment systems at the request of homeowners. The point-of-entry treatment filtration systems that have been installed are designed to remove all contaminants from drinking water.

DEP is conducting stream assessments and water chemistry sampling of three nearby streams: Dyers Creek, Houghs Creek and an unnamed tributary. DEP also is overseeing hydrology testing to characterize the subsurface affected area and better un-



derstand groundwater flow, which will help inform the longer-term remediation plan. More details can be found on DEP's community webpage for Upper Makefield Pipeline.

In addition to requiring temporary relief such as bottled water, DEP's Order requires Energy Transfer to submit an enforceable schedule for completing its environmental investigations and submitting cleanup plans to address the impacts of the leak.

Governor Josh Shapiro also sent a letter (opens in a new tab) to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), calling on federal

leaders to hold Energy Transfer accountable under their authority. The federal government has primary jurisdiction related to operation of the pipeline itself under the Pipeline Safety Act. As Attorney General, Governor Shapiro negotiated a settlement with Energy Transfer to resolve violations associated with the construction of the ME2 pipeline. As part of the settlement agreement, Energy Transfer was required to pay \$10 million toward dedicated projects that improve the quality of watersheds and streams along pipeline routes, including projects in Southeastern Pennsylvania.



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# Northampton County Executive Lamont G. McClure Celebrates Passage of \$35 Million Bond Ordinance for Critical Infrastructure Upgrades

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in partnership with The College of New Jersey and Sustainable Jersey, today announced the availability of \$4.5 million in grants for tree plantings at New Jersey public school districts, county colleges, and state colleges and universities through the Trees for Schools grant program.

The program will award competitive grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$250,000 to fund the tree plantings and cover costs associated with planning, site preparation, tree purchases, planting, watering, monitoring, and maintenance over a three-year period. Schools located in overburdened communities seeking to expand their tree canopy are encouraged to apply.

Those interested can review the grant appli-

cation and apply at [bit.ly/TreesforSchools](http://bit.ly/TreesforSchools). Previous recipients of Trees for Schools grants are ineligible. Applications are due May 13 for spring 2026 plantings.

“The Trees for Schools plantings beautify school grounds and expand tree canopies to provide shade on hot days, filter the air, soak up stormwater, and reduce greenhouse gases that drive climate change,” said New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette. “We encourage schools to apply, not only to enhance their campus, but inspire their students to cherish and protect one of our most valuable resources.”

An informational webinar about the Trees for Schools grant program will be held on Wednesday, March 19. Register for the webinar



at: [www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/grants/trees-for-schools/](http://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/grants/trees-for-schools/).

Program Roots Spread Across New Jersey Schools

Since its launch in 2023, the program has supported the planting of nearly 3,000 trees at

33 educational institutions across New Jersey. The program is funded through New Jersey’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a multi-state, market-based program that establishes a regional cap on carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel power plants. Proceeds from cap auctions are used to fund programs to benefit the environment.

“Planting and caring for trees provide students with hands-on learning about ecosystems and the essential role trees play in our environment,” said

Randall Solomon, Director of Sustainable Jersey. “By providing schools, colleges and universities with the resources to expand their campus tree canopy, this program supports both environmental sustainability and student engagement.”

Manasquan Public School District, in partnership with the Manasquan Shade Tree Commission, added 178 trees to their schools’ campuses after receiving a Trees for Schools grant. “Our school tree planting was a massive success,” said Brian Mallin, Chair of the Manasquan Shade Tree Commission. “Not only did it beautify the landscape immediately and for generations to come, but it has spurred more tree-centric education and programs in the school as well as being the catalyst for more tree planting throughout town. Trees are the answer.”

Philip’s Academy Charter School in Newark added 31 shade trees along several city streets leading to the school after receiving a Trees for Schools grant. “Trees for Schools provided us with the opportunity to beautify and enhance the environment of our

school property and the surrounding areas,” said Natalie Guy, Chief Operating Officer at Philip’s Academy Charter School.

The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) is a highly selective institution that is consistently recognized as one of the top comprehensive colleges in the nation. The Sustainability Institute at TCNJ administers Sustainable Jersey.

Sustainable Jersey is a non-profit organization that provides tools, training, and financial incentives to support communities as they pursue sustainability programs. Sustainable Jersey participants (municipalities and schools) have successfully implemented and documented more than 27,900 sustainability actions. Sustainable Jersey has provided more than \$8.1 million in grants to municipalities, school districts and schools for community-based projects.

Sustainable Jersey is a certification program for municipalities, and Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a certification program for public schools. For information from Sustainable Jersey, contact Kristy Ranieri, (973) 762-1510.

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Pen Argyl, PA 18072  
**610-588-3383**

**Miracle Ear Center**  
201 Strykers Rd.,  
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865  
**908-954-7997**



\*Hearing aids do not restore natural hearing. Individual experience may vary depending on severity of hearing loss, accuracy of evaluation, proper fit and ability to adjust to amplification. A Miracle Ear representative can determine which model and options may be right for you. Hearing test and video otoscopic inspection are always free. Hearing test is an audiometric test to determine proper amplification needs only. These are not medical exams or diagnoses, nor are they intended to replace a physician's care. If you suspect a medical problem, please seek treatment from your doctor. 5128ROP c>FS Marketing Services, Inc.

## Spring Clean Your Air: Six Ways To Manage Allergens

(NAPSI)—As the warmer seasons unfold, a host of allergens and irritants become more prevalent, potentially disrupting your daily life and health—especially if you have asthma and allergies. According to the Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America (AAFA), millions of people are affected by allergies, and understanding how to control your environment can significantly improve your quality of life during this beautiful but challenging season. Here are effective strategies and types of products that can help reduce allergens and irritants in your home:

1. **Prioritize Indoor Air Quality**  
**Air Purifiers**—Invest in a good air purifier. Devices



with HEPA filters are especially effective at trapping allergens such as pollen, pet dander, and dust mites. To maximize their effectiveness, put air purifiers in commonly used areas such as bedrooms and living rooms.

**Humidity Control**—Maintain indoor humidity

levels between 30% and 50%. Humidifiers can add moisture to dry air, while dehumidifiers can help control mold growth and dust mites by reducing excess moisture. Both tools are essential in creating a balanced indoor environment.

2. **Keep It Clean**  
**Regular Cleaning**—Weekly cleaning can significantly reduce the presence of allergens. Use

a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter to capture the fine particles that traditional vacuums may recirculate into the air. Remember to wear a dust mask while cleaning to avoid inhaling allergens.

**Bedding and Upholstery**—Encase mattresses and pillows in dust mite-proof covers. Wash bedding weekly in hot water to kill dust mites and remove allergens. Additionally, consider washing or replacing curtains and deep cleaning upholstery where allergens can linger.

3. **Filter and Ventilate**

**Replace HVAC Filters**—Regularly replace the filters in your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Opt for filters with a high MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) rating that can capture smaller particles, thus improving

indoor air quality. Check with your manufacturer to ensure you're using the right MERV rating for your system. Using a filter with too high a rating for your system can cause more harm than good, taxing your system and shortening its lifespan.

**Enhance Ventilation**—Improve your home's ventilation by opening windows when the pollen count is low or using exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathrooms to reduce moisture and cooking fumes, which can exacerbate asthma symptoms.

**Air Duct Cleaning**—Consider having your air ducts cleaned by a NADCA-certified professional. Over time, dust, mold, and other allergens can accumulate in your duct system, affecting the overall air quality and efficiency of your HVAC system. Cleaning your air ducts can help ensure that these irritants are removed, providing cleaner, fresher

airflow throughout your home.

4. **Create a Pollen-Free Zone**

Keep windows and doors closed during high pollen days. Use air conditioning in your home and car to keep pollen out. Remove shoes at the door and shower after being outdoors to wash pollen off your skin and hair.

5. **Control Pet Dander**

If you have pets, groom them regularly to reduce the dander they shed. Also, establish pet-free zones, especially in bedrooms, to minimize allergy exposure while sleeping.

6. **Consider Indoor Plants**

Some plants can help improve indoor air quality. However, it's important to choose wisely, as some plants can also be sources of mold or pollen. Spider plants and ferns are good options for improving air without increasing allergens.

By integrating these strategies and using effective products, you can significantly reduce the impact of allergens and irritants during the allergy and asthma season. Living with allergies and asthma can be challenging, but with these tips from Breathing-Clean.com, you can enjoy the season without the sneeze.



You and ME

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