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Washington, NJ, Fire Department Mourns The Loss of Past Chief Charles F Wright



Photo & Article Courtesy Washington Fire Department Station 83 Facebook

The Washington Fire Department regrets to announce the passing of Past Chief Charles F Wright, known to all of us Charlie. Charlie was 89 years old.

Charlie joined the Washington Fire Department in January 1956. He still actively attended our meetings, relief association meetings, and

training drills. As recently as the spring of this year he presented a basic pump operations class for our members.

Charlie served as our Chief in 1980-81. Charlie also served our organization as Assistant Chief, Captain, and Lieutenant. He served many years as our relief association **CHIEF cont'd on pg 2**

Warren County, NJ, Commences Bicentennial Year With Gala



Transporting some 200 guests back 200 years, Warren County officially kicked off its Bicentennial Year with a gala that celebrated the November 1824 legislation that created the County.

Held at David's Country Inn in Hackettstown, the Nov. 12 gala featured music, a period dance de-

monstration, honors from federal and state officials, and an awards presentation, with many of the attendees wearing outfits that reflected the 1820s era.

"It was so exciting to kick off our bicentennial with friends and neighbors from around Warren County," Warren County

Commissioner Director James R. Kern III remarked. "As we look towards next year, I invite every resident to check out upcoming events so they can enjoy the festivities," Kern added.

Information about the County's history and **BICENTENNIAL cont'd on page 3**

Northampton County Parks & Recreation Awards \$625,000 in DCNR Grants to Gerald E. Seyfried Bear Swamp Park & Archery Complex and the Minsi Lake Corridor Greenway



Lamont McClure and the Division of Parks & Recreation announce the receipt of two grants

from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) totaling \$625,000.

\$500,000 for the Rehabilitation of Gerald E. Seyfried Bear Swamp Park and Archery Com-

plex.

This grant will be used for the replacement of the 7,975 sq.ft. boardwalk/elevated walkway, approximately 2,200 linear feet of accessible trails, 2,800 sq.ft of boardwalk crossing through the transmission right-of-way and a safe road crossing at Lake Minsi Drive. These improvements will provide direct access to the unique forest, wetlands and other areas which can be designated in a controlled manner for public interaction. Environmental studies and research opportunities, birding, hiking and other

passive outdoor recreation opportunities will be significantly enhanced through these safety and rehabilitation projects.

\$75,000 for Updating the Livable Landscapes Plan.

This grant will be used to update the Livable Landscape Plan which will guide the next 10 years of development, conservation and restoration of Northampton County's open space resources and create linkages between the County's vast natural resources. The scope of work for the Livable Landscapes Plan II includes future planning, **GRANT cont'd on pg 2**

GRANT

Continued from page 1

goals and implementation strategies for County Parks Inventory & Analysis, Greenway & Trail Connections, Environmental Education & Outdoor Recreation Programming, Climate Change Impact Analysis, Health & Wellness, Funding & Economic Development, Outdoor Recreation & Land Stewardship Priorities and Implementation of the Livable Landscapes.

"The County of Northampton thanks DCNR for these generous grants," says County Executive Lamont McClure. "Developing and maintaining our parks

and trail systems contributes greatly to the quality of life of our residents and the visitors who come here to enjoy outdoor recreation."

"We're very grateful for our great partnership with DCNR," says Bryan Cope, Superintendent of Parks & Recreation. "With these grants we look forward to continuing to improve our parks through development, conservation and restoration over the next ten years."

Funding for these grants comes from the federal Land, Water Conservation Fund and the state Keystone Recreation Park and Conservation Fund, Community Conservation Partnerships Program.

CHIEF

Continued from page 1

secretary, replacing his brother Fletcher.

Charlie was also the first person to serve as the Warren County Fire Marshall. He was a member of the New Jersey State Fire Chiefs Association. He was also a member of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors where he served as the President of the New Jersey Chapter. He taught extensively at both the Warren and Hunterdon County Fire Academies. He was the director of the Hunterdon County Academy for many years. He also taught at the Sussex County Fire Academy and Northampton County, Pennsylvania Fire School. He taught both Water Shuttle and Pump Operations at the New Jersey Fire College.



Photo & Article Courtesy Washington Fire Department Station 83 Facebook

Charlie was a member of the Washington Fire Department Exempt Fireman's Association. He was a Life member

of both the New Jersey State Fireman's Association and New Jersey State Exempt Fireman's Association.

Charlie followed a Wright family tradition in the fire service. Charlie's father, brothers, and son Jeff all served in our department. Charlie's wife Shirley and daughter Jolene both served as Presidents of the Washington Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary.

Charlie's service will be as follows:

Saturday, November 23rd at the Faith Discovery Church on Brass Castle Road in Washington Township.

Visitation for friends and firefighters from 9:30 to 12:00.

Funeral will begin at 12:00.

Charlie will be missed by all of us. Rest in Peace Chief.

His memorial can be found online at: warrenhillsmemorialhome.com/tribute/details/1673/Charles-Wright/obituary.html#tribute-start

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BICENTENNIAL

Continued from page 1

upcoming bicentennial events is available at www.warren200.com.

An act passed by the New Jersey Legislature on November 20, 1824, carved off the southern portion of Sussex County into a new entity named for Dr. Joseph Warren of Boston, one of the early advocates for independence from England. Commissioned as a General, Warren was killed in the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775 and was a revered figure in the early days of the United States.

The initial legislation appointed three commissioners to set and mark the new boundary by May 1 of the following year, and in the early months of 1825 Belvidere was selected as the county seat and the first Board of Chosen Freeholders – two from each of the initial seven townships – was elected.

Kern and Commissioners Lori Ciesla and Jason J. Sarnoski accepted a proclamation by the 23rd and 24th District Legislators who represent Warren County in Trenton, and a ceremonial copy of honors entered in the Congressional Record by U.S. Rep. Tom Kean, Jr.

The Commissioners then presented four awards:

- Mackey's Orchard in White Township, honored as Warren County's longest continually operated farm and business. In the early 1700s, the Mackey Family was among the first settlers of White Township and in 1846 William Mackey

established a farm there. The farm now features an orchard, farm stand, bakery, cider, and ice cream. Farm owner Devlen Mackey, his daughter Hannah, who is the ninth generation involved in the operation, and her partner, Aiden Nelson, accepted the award.

- First Presbyterian Church of Oxford at Hazen, located just outside of Belvidere, was recognized as the oldest church in Warren County – and Sussex, too – that is on its original site. The first log church was built in 1734, followed by a wooden church in 1806, while the current brick structure which stands today was constructed in 1856. The adjacent burial ground is one of the oldest in Warren County with many historically significant people buried there, including: Mary Croxall, daughter of Robert Morris, signer of the Declaration of Independence; John Blair, patriarch of the Blair Family; Captains John Craig, Joseph Mackey, and John McMurtrie, Revolutionary War Veterans; William White, the namesake of White Township; Major Robert Hoops, a founder of Belvidere; and numerous Native Americans and enslaved people. Susan Marsh and Janet Rasely received the award on behalf of the congregation.

- David Detrick was honored as the County's longest currently serving volunteer. Born and raised in Warren County, Detrick first began volunteering on the Coun-

ty's Morris Canal Committee 42 years ago, in 1982. He continues to serve as an active member on that committee as well as on the Warren Heritage Scenic Byway Committee. He has also served on the Warren County Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee, which recommends preservation grants for towns and nonprofits; the Warren County Solid Waste Advisory Council, which develops and implements the county's solid waste management plan; and he was a long-time, instrumental member of the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners, which helps oversee the county's open space preservation efforts and parks management.

- The final award recognized long-time public servant Garabed "Chuck" Haytaian as Warren County Citizen of the Bicentennial. Haytaian was informed of the award and had planned to attend, but died on Nov. 1 at age 86. His legacy in public service began with his election to the Mansfield Township Board of Education in 1972. He served as a Warren County Freeholder and in the New Jersey State Assembly, where over 14 years he held many roles, including Minority Leader, Majority Leader, and ultimately Speaker of the Assembly in 1992. Born to immigrants of Armenian descent, one of his most impactful contributions was advocating for legislation that mandated the teaching of the Holocaust, Armenian Genocide, and other genocides in public schools—a testament to

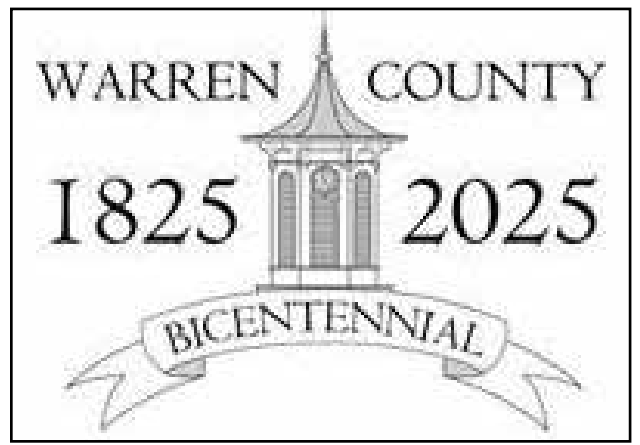
his dedication to remembrance and education.

The awards portion of the evening ended with a contest to recognize the participants who wore the best period costumes, as determined by applause from all attendees. The winners took home a container of specially printed commemorative M&M candies provided by Hackettstown-based Mars Wrigley, manufacturer of the world-renowned confection.

"The bicentennial gala was all I hoped for plus more. I cannot thank the committee for pulling this beautiful event together and truly helping us transport our guests back to 1824," said Commissioner Ciesla, who serves as liaison to the Bicentennial committee. "Many thanks to everyone who attended as well. To see so many people in period costumes was amazing," she added.

Ciesla gave special thanks to David's Country Inn; Classic Ballroom Dance Studio of Hackettstown for their dancing demonstration; DJS.C.3 Entertainment; strolling musicians Brian Kathenes and Peter Taney of The Muskrat Ramblers; Mars Wrigley for providing the bicentennial branded M&Ms that all attendees received; Belvidere FFA for providing floral centerpieces; and photographer Cathy Miller for documenting the event. "Most of all, thank you to my fellow commissioners for agreeing to underwrite the majority of the cost for this truly magnificent kickoff to our 200th birthday!" Ciesla remarked.

Commissioner Sarnoski gave particular thanks to all who volunteered to make the bicentennial kickoff a success, as well



as to county government employees and to all those who volunteer to help make Warren County a great place to live.

The gala venue, which dates to the County's earliest days, was initially a log structure built in 1787 and named The Warren House in honor of Dr. Warren. The existing frame structure was constructed in 1840 and served as an inn for decades. Decorations that evening included posters that told the history of the County's formation, with images of the founding legislation and minutes of the first Board of Chosen Freeholders meeting, while another provide information about namesake Joseph Warren and a third reproduced the first map of Warren County in 1825, which also adorned the sheet cake the Commissioners ceremonially

cut before it was served. A large poster showing a map of Warren County and its current municipal boundaries was displayed and attendees were asked to autograph the poster for posterity.

More events are being planned to celebration Warren County's bicentennial, including a Community Day event on Saturday, June 28, to be held at Warren Community College; a parade; and the annual Explore Warren History Trail the first weekend in November. Municipalities and organizations are being invited to plan their own commemorations of the county bicentennial, which will lead into the national celebration of the 250th anniversary of the United States of America declaring its independence in 2026.

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Commissioner Jill Space & Frankford Mayor Dave Silverthorne Launch Sussex County Commissioner Campaign

Sussex County Commissioner Director Jill Space and Frankford Township Mayor Dave Silverthorne today announced their intention to run as a team in the 2025 race for Sussex County Commissioner.

“As a local business owner with generations of family who call Sussex County home, I am deeply committed to the county’s future prosperity and that of its residents,” said Director Space. “Providing competent, responsive government to our residents while keeping costs as low as possible has been the Republican Commissioners’ Board mantra for years.”

As a Member of the Budget Committee, Space helped direct \$100,000 earmarked for the County College to Sussex Technical High School to save a popular shop from cuts. She also played a key role in appointing three new members to Sussex Tech’s School Board allowing for a new President and Vice President who are committed to growing the school and taking it in a positive direction.

Space has also played a leading role in creation of a Veterans’ Support Group in the county; the acquisition of two new buses for the County’s “Skyline Ride” fleet; and supported the approval of grant funding for struggling small businesses in the county – providing over \$2 million in relief and

\$440,000 to local first responders after the pandemic. She also served as an elected 2016 Trump delegate and represented New Jersey on the platform committee.

On the ticket this year, Commissioner Space is thrilled to be joined by Frankford Township Mayor Dave Silverthorne.

“In Frankford Township, we have shown that a common-sense conservative approach to governance works,” said Mayor Silverthorne. “I look forward to bringing that experience to the Sussex County Board of Commissioners and building on their recent good work.”

As Mayor and a member of the Township Committee, Silverthorne has implemented conservative fiscal policies to pay off all outstanding municipal debt; utilized shared services with neighboring municipalities and county government to lessen the local tax burden; and called for a 10% waste cut from municipal department heads.

In addition, Silverthorne provided results for Frankford and surrounding towns. He led a joint project that corrected a stormwater flooding issue that affected both Branchville Borough and Frankford by utilizing mostly state grant funding. He also organized and oversaw a meeting with the New Jersey State



Police Barracks Commander, Sussex County Sheriff and mayors and/or municipal officials who utilize the NJ State Police for primary law enforcement, fostering

increased level of communication between all parties to keep local communities safe.

The Space-Silverthorne ticket also announced endorsements from:

Senator Parker Space, Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia, Assemblyman Mike Inganamort, Sheriff Mike Strada, County Commissioner Chris Carney, Franklin Mayor John Sowden, Fredon Mayor Glenn Dietz, Hampton Township Mayor Tim Dooley, Hardyston Mayor Frank Cicerale, Hopatcong Mayor Marie Galate, Lafayette Mayor and County Commissioner-elect Alan Henderson, Montague Mayor George Zitone, Ogdensburg Mayor George Hutnick, Sandyston Mayor George Harper, Stanhope Mayor Gene Wronko, Stillwater Mayor Lisa Chamings, Sussex Borough Mayor Robert Holowach, Vernon Mayor

Anthony Rossi, Republican State Committeeman Billy Marotta, and County Republican Chairman Joe LaBarbera.

“Commissioner Director Space and Mayor Silverthorne have proven themselves to be effective leaders who not only defend, but also propel forward our Sussex County conservative values,” said LaBarbera, in personally endorsing the team.

Space and Silverthorne, who called themselves longtime supporters, also expressed excitement about the recent election of Donald Trump as our 47th President and pledged to their part in helping him make America great again.

Topper Elected House Republican Leader, Announces New House Republican Caucus Leadership Team

Rep. Jesse Topper (R-Bedford/Fulton) announced he was elected Pennsylvania House Republican Leader Tuesday as the caucus reorganized its leadership team for the coming legislative session.

“First and foremost, I want to thank the people of Bedford and Fulton counties for trusting me to be their representative in Harrisburg. I also want to thank my House Republican colleagues for instilling their faith in me to serve as their caucus leader,” Topper said. “While we are frustrated and disappointed to be in the minority in the Pennsylvania House

of Representatives, it is clear the people of Pennsylvania are ready for a new dawn. I will lead our caucus with the kind of core Republican principles that have made our party successful on the statewide and national level.”

According to Topper, the new leadership team reflects the caucus’s commitment to strong conservative principles that put Pennsylvania families first through limited government and lower taxes, while representing generational and geographical change in the House Republican leadership structure.

The new leadership

team consists of: Leader: Rep. Jesse Topper (R-Bedford/Fulton); Whip: Rep. Tim O’Neal (R-Washington); Appropriations Chair: Rep. Jim Struzzi (R-Indiana); Caucus Chairman: Rep. Martina White (R-Philadelphia); Caucus Secretary: Rep. Clint Owlett (R-Tioga/Bradford); Caucus Administrator: Rep. Sheryl DeLozier (R-Cumberland); House Republican Policy Committee Chair: Rep. David Rowe (R-Snyder/Union/Mifflin/Juniata).

“This new team of leaders is a battle-tested, cohesive group from across this Commonwealth that is ready to hit the ground

running to advance principles that put Pennsylvania families first and positions Pennsylvania to capitalize on its significant potential,” said Topper.

“With abundant natural resources and a prime geographical location, Pennsylvania should be second to none when it comes to economic development, career opportunity, and educational achievement. This new team of leaders is poised and ready to harness the untapped potential of Pennsylvania’s greatness while drawing a stark contrast to any policy that will hold us back from success,” he added.

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Education Receives Major Victory in Pennsylvania, Says Rep. Stephanie Scialabba



Rep. Stephenie Scialabba (R-Butler) announced today the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is rescinding guidelines on its Culturally-Relevant and Sustaining Education (CR-SE) Standards following a successful lawsuit filed in 2023 by Scialabba, and Tom King and Tom Breth of Dillon McCandless King Coulter & Graham L.L.P. in Butler. Mars High School, located in Scialabba's legislative district, was one of several plaintiffs in this legal challenge through the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania.

"This is a major victory for teachers, students and parents in our great Commonwealth," said Scialabba. "It is a relief to know school entities no longer need to fear loss of funding over these standards. Today's result is a win for the First Amendment and reaffirms the conservative commitment to providing

students with a quality, no-nonsense, factual education that is free of ideology. I am overjoyed to see this result."

According to the signed mediated settlement agreement, a portion of the win reads as follows:

"The Department hereby rescinds the previously issued Culturally-Relevant and Sustaining Education ('CR-SE') Program Framework Guidelines. School entities (public schools, school districts, intermediate units, area career and technical schools, charter schools, cyber schools, and independent schools) have no legal obligation to implement or comply with the (CR-SE) Program Framework Guidelines."

According to Scialabba, these standards threatened to withhold funding from all school entities unless they fully adopted and incorporated the guidelines into their trainings and cur-

riculum. They also were designed to withhold teaching certifications for new and existing teachers until the accompanying trainings were satisfactorily completed. She added that the trainings were rooted in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) agendas, going so far as to state that "equity requires a passport to discriminate" and requiring teachers and curriculum to "believe and acknowledge that microaggressions are real."

Teachers were also mandated to:

Actively counter deficit-based and invalidating behavior in themselves and others by engaging in affirming practices.

Challenge their own beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and behaviors regarding the knowledge and backgrounds of dominant and non-dominant social groups, thinking critically about the nuances of culture, identity, and other social markers, and how they manifest themselves in curricula and other education materials.

Know and acknowledge that biases exist in the educational system, and disrupt harmful institutional practices, policies, and norms by advocating and engaging in efforts to rewrite policies, change practices, and raise awareness.

Engage in critical and difficult conversations with others to deepen their awareness of their own conscious/unconscious biases, stereotypes and prejudices.

According to the agreement, PDE will be sending formal notice to each school entity to notify them of the official rescinding of the standards.

YMCA Opens Warming Station for Seventh Season, Providing Shelter from The Cold



River Crossing YMCA opened the Allentown Warming Station for its seventh year on Friday November 15. Located at the YMCA branch at 425 15th St. in Allentown, the Warming Station provides overnight shelter, showers and meals in a safe place through April 15 for those experiencing homelessness in the community.

The YMCA Allentown Warming Station, which can accommodate 60 guests per night from 7:00PM-7:00AM, welcomes guests to arrive 7:00PM-9:00PM seven nights a week. The Warming Station is the only

shelter in the city. The Warming Station is also the only place in Allentown that offers free supper meals for adults every evening, including Sundays. Guests are also offered weekly health services provided by Valley Health Partners' Street Medicine Program, Treatment Trends and Valley Youth House's Project Silk. These partners offer physical and mental health services, as well as resources for support.

"River Crossing YMCA's Allentown Warming Station exemplifies what is possible when nonprofit organizations, governmental business

partners and faith-based groups come together to provide community solutions," shared Kate Cohen, VP of development for River Crossing YMCA's Lehigh Valley region. "We are very grateful to our collaborative partners for the services they offer Warming Station guests, as well as our foundational community partners for essential funding required to operate the Warming Station."

Foundational community partners include City Center of Allentown, City of Allentown, County of Lehigh and First Presbyterian Church of Allentown.

During the 2023-2024 season, the Y's Allentown Warming Station served 287 unique individuals and over 5,700 total meals to unhoused neighbors. To donate items needed for Warming Station guests, please visit the Y's in-kind donations wish list on Amazon. For additional information, please visit <https://ymcarivercrossing.org/pathways/allentown-warming-station> or call 610-351-9622.

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Local Businesses and First Responders Join Forces to Stuff a Boat Full of Toys

The eleventh annual "Stuff the Boat" toy drive coordinated by Branchville business Off Shore Marine to benefit Project Self-Sufficiency's Season of Hope Toy Drive has been launched. Area residents are encouraged to bring gift cards, funds, and new, unwrapped toys to fill a 23-foot Barletta Lusso boat at the dealership, which is located at 357 Route 206 in Branchville. A wide range of first responders and area businesses and organiza-

tions are gathering toys to Stuff the Boat on behalf of the Season of Hope Toy Drive, including members of the Branchville Hose Company, the Blue Ridge Rescue Squad, Frankford Township Fire Department, Sandyston Township Volunteer Fire Department, Sussex Fire and Emergency Medical Service, and the Ladies Auxiliary of the Sussex Fire Department, along with the Kiwanis Club of Sussex and Royal Buick GMC of Sussex. A spe-

cial Community Drop Off event will be hosted at Off Shore Marine, Saturday, December 7th, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.; toys will be accepted at Off Shore Marine through Thursday, December 12th.

Those who drop off toys at the Branchville dealership on December 7th, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., will also be treated to photos with Santa. "This year marks the eleventh annual Stuff the Boat collection for Project Self-Sufficiency's Season of Hope



Toy Drive," remarked Off Shore Marine owner Sherri Cecchini, who was inspired to launch the effort after dropping off a bag of toys and touring the non-profit agency years ago. "We are invested in our community; we have built our business and raised our family here. Putting goodness into the world is the right thing to do, and if we each contribute where and what we can, together we can make a real difference." "This unique collaboration between local businesses and area first responders perfectly demonstrates the true spirit of giving during this holiday season," commented Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of

Project Self-Sufficiency. "Now more than ever, we are grateful for this community's steadfast commitment to our neighbors in need. Thousands of families will be helped by this initiative." The Season of Hope Toy Drive is coordinated by Project Self-Sufficiency to benefit thousands of children in Sussex and Northern Morris and Warren counties. Toys, gift cards and monetary donations will also be gratefully received at Project Self-Sufficiency, 127 Mill Street in Newton, Monday - Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. or Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. To donate online, or for more information, visit www.projectsufficiency.org or call 973-940-3500.

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



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Pfbc Encourages Anglers And Boaters To Safely Enjoy Fall And Winter Opportunities, Proposes Changes To Commercial Fishing Practices On Lake Erie, And Moves To Simplify Regulations At Fish Cleaning Stations During Quarterly Meeting

During its quarterly business meeting today, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) encouraged anglers and boaters to take advantage of the many fall and winter fishing and boating opportunities available across the Commonwealth and reminded everyone to make safety a priority while enjoying the water. Board Vice President and District 2 Commissioner John Mahn, Jr. reminded anglers and boaters about the annual cold weather life jacket requirement that begins on November 1, 2024, and lasts through April 30, 2025.

“Especially during this early portion of the cold weather months, when many people are still active with the scenic fall foliage as a backdrop to

their fishing and boating adventures, we want safety to be top-of-mind,” said Mahn. “I encourage you to spend time along your favorite river, lake, or stream, go for a paddle, and enjoy some of the best fishing of the year for bass, walleye, catfish, wild and stocked trout, and steelhead that are beginning their annual run on the Lake Erie tributaries. This winter, many anglers will seek ice fishing opportunities while others will enjoy some waterfowl hunting from a boat. Wherever you go, and however you enjoy the water and ice, have fun. If there is one thing you remember -- please wear your life jacket. It’s the law this time of year on all kayaks, canoes, and boats under 16 feet.”

In his report to the

Board, Executive Director Tim Schaeffer reminded the public that the application period remains open for the PFBC’s popular Boating Facility Grant Program. Applications for the program are due by November 30, 2024. Information about the program, including application materials, can be found on the PFBC website (Fishandboat.com).

Law Enforcement: Commissioners voted to approve the publication of a notice of proposed rulemaking pertaining to regulations for fish cleaning stations (58 Pa. Code § 63.15a Opens In A New Window). Following comments from the public regarding the current requirement to leave a 2-inch by 2-inch piece of skin on processed fillets at noncommercial

officially recognized fish cleaning stations, PFBC staff conducted a review that included internal discussions, a meeting in Erie in September with interested stakeholders to hear and discuss their feedback, and consideration at two Law Enforcement Committee meetings. As a result of this process, staff determined that resource conservation goals could be achieved by eliminating the 2-inch by 2-inch piece of skin requirement in favor of requiring that fillets remain fully intact. If adopted on final rulemaking at a future meeting, the amendments will go into effect upon publica-

tion in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

Boating: Commissioners voted to give final approval to changes pertaining to boat rental businesses, also known as liveries. Under these changes, customer safety and education at liveries will be improved through several changes to 58 Pa. Code § Chapter 117 Opens In A New Window (Boat Rental Businesses). Changes will include new responsibilities for livery operators to provide accurate business information to the PFBC, deliver safety orientation to all renters, possess a Boating Safety Education

Certificate if conducting the required safety orientation for motorboat rentals, and properly display boat registration or use permits on rental boats for the access areas on which the rental boats will be used. In addition, livery operators will be required to document the names of renters who have been provided with boating safety orientation. These changes will go into effect on January 1, 2025.

Full article and additional information can be found at: www.media.pa.gov/pages/fish-and-boat-commission-details.aspx?newsid=613

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Flood Announces Over \$1.2 Million in Grants Awarded for Conservation and Recreation Projects in Northampton County

Rep. Ann Flood (R-Northampton) is pleased to announce more than \$1.2 million in grant funding from the 2024 Community Conservation Partnerships Program have been awarded to Northampton County to support a variety of recreation and conservation initiatives in the 138th District.

“These grants bring transformative opportunities to our community by preserving our natural spaces and creating vibrant parks and trails that foster both recreation and environmental stewardship,” said Flood. “Each project speaks to our commitment to enhancing community spaces where families can connect with nature and enjoy our region’s incredible outdoors.”

Projects in the 138th District receiving funding include:

Bear Swamp Park in Upper Mount Bethel Township – \$550,000 will be used for the rehabilitation of Bear Swamp Park, with plans for a new internal loop trail, boardwalk, interpretive signage, ADA

access, landscaping and other site improvements. Upper Mount Bethel Preserve – \$600,000 will fund the renovation of trails, construction of walkways, overlooks, a pavilion, and various stormwater management measures to enhance the preserve’s accessibility and sustainability.

Bushkill Creek Restoration – \$185,000 will go to the Wildlands Conservancy for stream restoration in Easton, which includes dam removal, streambank stabilization, and the installation of riparian forest buffers to improve water quality and ecosystem health.

Comprehensive Recreation Plan for Northampton County – \$75,000 will help update the county’s long-term Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan, providing a roadmap for future recreational development.

These grants will assist in expanding public parks, improving outdoor spaces and protecting natural resources to enhance quality of life for residents across the region.

The Community Con-

servation Partnerships Program is funded through various state and federal sources, in-

cluding the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, the Environmental Ste-

wardship Fund, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, supports projects that protect,

restore, and enhance Pennsylvania’s natural and recreational resources.

Brown’s Legislation to Bolster EMS and Fire Funding Flexibility Becomes Law

Sen. Rosemary Brown (R-40) announced that her legislative package to strengthen funding flexibility for emergency medical services (EMS) and fire companies has been signed into law. The new laws amend Pennsylvania’s municipal codes to support EMS and fire funding, addressing longstanding financial challenges in staffing and operations.

“These laws give local governments the flexibility they need to ensure EMS and fire services can meet growing demands,” Brown said. “Lifting outdated restrictions allows municipalities to allocate funds more effectively, particularly for staffing – enabling us to better support the essential personnel who protect our communities.”

The legislative package – consisting of Senate bills 1132, 1133 and 1134 – enables munic-



palities to use a greater portion of existing local EMS and fire taxes for personnel costs without raising taxes. Previously, only half of EMS tax revenue could be allocated to personnel, limiting municipalities’ ability to address the staffing shortages facing both EMS providers and fire companies.

Brown credited Deb-

bie Kulick of Bushkill Emergency Service for her input on the legislation, highlighting the vital role of community feedback in shaping effective legislation. “This is exactly how government should work: people voice their concerns, and we make the necessary adjustments. The best laws come directly from the people,” Brown said.

These new laws empower local governments to prioritize and maintain critical emergency services, enhancing both the speed and reliability of responses without placing additional financial burdens on residents.

For a full list of Brown’s enacted laws, visit her website at senatorbrown40.com/accomplishments/.

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Vinny Vega a 15 year old from East Bangor completed his Eagle Scout Project this past weekend. Pastor John Vidal from John Wesley Covenant Church announced the official opening of the "Little Free Food Pantry." The pantry is self serve and runs off of donations of non-perishable goods from the community. Vinny has been a volunteer serving free community meals with the John Wesley Covenant Church for over 3 years and chose them as the beneficiary for his Eagle Scout Project. His project included a picnic area, new flower beds, and the free pantry. He used his summer break to design and build 100 birdhouses to sell to the local community to fundraise for this project. Vinny is proud to say that the pantry has already been very active with donations coming and going. He hopes to complete his Eagle Scout rank before the end of the year and that this Pantry can serve the community for many years to come. The John Wesley Covenant Church is located at 19 West West Street in Wind Gap. Pictured above is Pastor John Vidal and Vinny Vega of Troop 41

Pennsylvania House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler Wishes New House Republican Leader Success

Pennsylvania House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) Tuesday wished Rep. Jesse Topper (R-Bedford/Fulton) success as he begins his service as Pennsylvania House Republican leader.



"I wish Rep. Topper nothing but success as he takes on this important responsibility for the caucus and the Commonwealth," Cutler said. "His success means the Pennsylvania House Republican Caucus and the people of this Commonwealth will be better positioned for their own achievement."

Cutler noted Topper possesses a unique set of skills that put him in a position to move the caucus further and advance Republican principles during the upcoming legislative term.

"Throughout his legislative career and even more recently as House Educa-

tion Committee Republican chairman, Rep. Topper has shown the ability to work for the benefit of the members and put those Pennsylvanians in need first and foremost in his priorities," Cutler said. "I have no doubt he will continue his model of servant leadership for not just members of the House Republican Caucus, but when prioritizing policy for the people of Pennsylvania."

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Deficit Reduction Requires The Opposite Of Progressive Proposals; Fantasia Points To UPENN Analysis

New Jersey Policy Perspective released a report Wednesday calling for higher taxes to address the state's budget deficit.

These increases would impact low-income residents through higher sales taxes, adding to the state's affordability crisis. The proposal primarily targets businesses, potentially placing New Jersey at a competitive disadvantage compared to lower-tax states like Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia said this is why America thinks Democrats were on the wrong track in the presidential election, and pointed toward an April study by the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business on reducing the federal deficit.

"New Jersey Policy Perspective and the Democrats who are promoting higher taxes and increased spending need more than a hard look in the mirror after this last election," said Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia (R-Sussex).

"They need to take an Economics 101 class. Higher taxes don't help - they drain the social surplus and create dead-weight loss."

The current budget deficit for fiscal year 2025 is projected to be \$2.1 billion. The 2024 deficit was \$3.2 billion, up from the projected \$1.5 billion - the same amount as pork spending that year. Multi-billion dollar deficits are expected to continue for the next several years, according to Rowan University's Sweeney Center for Public Policy.

The Wharton School's study found that the least effective of three plans to reduce the federal deficit was to raise taxes, which would also slow economic growth. The most effective deficit reduction plan was to reduce spending and marginally raise taxes, and the best for economic growth with deficit reduction was to cut spending.

"New Jersey keeps trying to tax and spend their way to prosperi-

ty. Economics doesn't work that way," Fantasia asserted. "Democrats have a spending problem and the people who live in New Jersey have a tax problem. Stop spending and lower taxes. It's that simple. Especially when all of the unnecessary pork spending only helps Democrats and their friends."

Pork spending increased by nearly 1600% from fiscal years 2020 to 2024.

In each of Murphy's budgets, pork has been a growing issue. In FY19, his first budget, pork increased by about \$60 million to \$98 million, in FY20, it was \$89 million, in FY21, \$126 million, in FY22, \$425 million, and in FY23, it was \$638 million. Altogether, pork spending was \$2.9 billion in those years, and more than half was in the FY24 budget.

Pork spending was more than \$720 million in fiscal year 2025, increasing the total to \$3.6 billion with Murphy and Democrats in full control of state government.

The East Bangor United Methodist Community Church will offer a 4-week Advent Bible Study focusing on the profound exchange of gifts between God and humanity. This study will be on Mondays, November 25 - December 16 at 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. The church is located at 136 W. Central Ave. (Rt. 512), East Bangor, PA. FYI 610-588-4453; www.ebumc.org.

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The new regulations go into effect for calendar year 2025 licenses, which will go on sale December 2, 2024.

When a returning angler and a new angler (Buddy Team) purchase the Buddy Fishing licenses together in the same transaction, both customers will receive a substantial discount.

This same discount also applies to two new anglers (Buddy Team) who purchase their Buddy Fishing Licenses together in the same transaction.

Eligibility requirements:

A Buddy Team may consist of either - One Returning Angler and One New Angler purchasing together or Two New Anglers purchasing together.

For the purposes of a Buddy Fishing License, the following definitions apply: Returning Angler - A returning angler is someone who has purchased at least one NJ resident or non-resident

fishing license in the previous five years from the date of purchase. NJ Residents must be 16-64 and be eligible for a regular resident fishing license and not qualify for any of the already discounted licenses. Non-Residents must be age 16 or older.

New Angler - A new angler is someone who has never purchased a NJ fishing license before, or someone who has had at least a five-year lapse in purchasing and does not have a NJ fishing license on file for any of the previous five years. (2020-2024)

Detailed Purchasing instructions can be found here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/fishing/freshwater/fishing-buddy-licenses/>

Licenses can be purchased online or at license agents but both licenses must be purchased in the same transaction.

Save more and fish more in 2025! Get your reduced-price fishing license by purchasing with a buddy.

PA House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler Makes Statement on Counting of Illegal Ballots Defies the Rule of Law

Pennsylvania House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) Friday made the following statement on litigation by Sen. Bob Casey and decisions by Philadelphia, Bucks, and Centre counties to count illegal ballots to try and unseat Sen.-elect Dave McCormick from his newly-won U.S. Senate post:

“Throughout his entire career, Sen. Casey has publicly called for the enforcement of the rule of law and the upholding of

judicial norms. However, in the reckless pursuit of his own ‘Big Lie,’ Sen. Casey is doing nothing but showing his true colors as a progressive D.C. swamp creature who will go to any lengths, including breaking the law to overthrow the results of a democratic election, to cling to his delusions of grandeur and power.

“The facts and the law are clear: the election was free and fair, Dave McCormick is our new U.S. senator; a costly, sta-

twide recount is unnecessary and duplicative; and Democrat-controlled counties are now openly defying the courts and the plain language of the election law to try and overturn a legal election result.

“It is not too late for Sen. Casey to concede and save Pennsylvanians the cost of unnecessary litigation, recounts and questions about the legality of the 2024 election. I call on him to do so immediately.”

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DNA Answers Research Program Helps Pennsylvania Woman Understand and Address Her Cancer Risks

When Tina Bollinger of Slatington decided to have her blood drawn as part of St. Luke's community health research program DNA Answers, she mentally prepared herself for what she might find out.

Even so, the test results took the 49-year-old St. Luke's Physician's Group director by surprise.

"I was flagged for a BRCA1 gene mutation, putting me at a high risk for breast and GYN [ovarian] cancer," she said. Though not the news she wanted to hear, she said she is grateful to

have been made aware. In December, St. Luke's launched the community health research study, DNA Answers, in partnership with Helix, a California-based leading population genomics company. One of the goals of this joint initiative is to offer, at no cost to the participants, the opportunity to participate in research and have access to the latest screening techniques that support what is referred to as precision medicine.

"Through insights gleaned from patients' unique genetic make-up, precision medicine ena-

bles 'individually tailored' health care - from early disease diagnosis to individualized treatment," said St. Luke's Senior Vice President of Clinical Integration, Dr. Aldo Carmona.

The initial goal of DNA Answers is to enroll 100,000 participants over four years.

"The individuals who participate in the research study will be provided, at no cost, with important health information about their potential risks for serious health conditions such as a certain type of cardiovascular disease and different types of cancer," explained Dr. Christopher Chapman, the Principal Investigator for DNA Answers, who also serves as Chairman of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and Medical Director for Precision Medicine at St. Luke's.

With this knowledge, patients such as Bollinger are empowered to make proactive decisions with their healthcare providers to potentially delay or even prevent related disease and illness from occurring later in life.

"According to the National Comprehensive

ve Cancer Network® (NCCN®), it is estimated that women with a BRCA1 mutation have a 60-72% lifetime risk for breast cancer," explained Corrine Fillman, a St. Luke's Genetic Counselor. "Women also have a 39-58% lifetime risk for ovarian cancer, while both women and men have an equal to or less than 5% lifetime risk for pancreatic cancer (NCCN, 2024). Additionally, men have an increased risk for prostate and male breast cancer (NCCN, 2024)."

Upon learning her test results, Bollinger spoke with Fillman, a genetic counselor on St. Luke's Precision Medicine Team. During this appointment, they reviewed the cancer risks, screening and medical management recommendations associated with a BRCA1 mutation. Together, they developed a plan for Bollinger and referred her to the appropriate specialists to discuss breast cancer surveillance and preventive surgery.

"She was very good at explaining the many details of the results, which could be overwhelming," Bollinger said of her genetic counselor.

NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®) provides screening and medical management options for individuals with BRCA1 mutations. For breast cancer screening, such individuals may begin screening at the age of 25 with an annual breast MRI (NCCN Guidelines®, 2024). Starting at the age of 30, individuals may have both a mammogram and MRI annually (NCCN Guidelines, 2024). Women may also elect to have their ovaries and fallopian tubes removed before developing cancer (NCCN Guidelines, 2024).

Although her family has a history of breast cancer, Bollinger's mammograms have always been negative, and her Pap smears and gynecologic exams normal. After consulting with a gynecologic oncologist, however, she has decided to undergo a risk-reducing surgery to remove her ovaries and fallopian tubes. Studies estimate that this surgical procedure will reduce the possibility of developing ovarian or fallopian tube cancer by over 80% (Finch et al., 2014).

Additionally, Bollinger's plan to prevent

breast cancer includes having regular "watchful waiting" breast ultrasounds or breast MRIs, alternating every six months to monitor her breast health. Should there be abnormal findings in either diagnostic test, she and her health care provider will explore further treatment options.

Identifying a BRCA1 mutation can be helpful for family members, as well. Bollinger and her genetic counselor discussed the 50% chance that first-degree relatives (parents, siblings, and children) inherit this mutation. Her daughter, age 30, and son, age 24, may also seek genetic testing to learn their risk.

Bollinger said that she is sharing her story to encourage her family, coworkers, and others throughout the community to enroll in DNA Answers as "an ounce of prevention," and that she is thankful St. Luke's has made this program available at no cost to participants.

"I absolutely have no regrets that I got tested, and I hope people across the Lehigh Valley and in New Jersey will take advantage of this service that will save lives."

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Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



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Hello, fellow readers, A few weeks ago, we spoke about an honorable harvest, sharing tidbits from Robin Wall

Kimmerer's beautiful book Braiding Sweetgrass and mentioning the plentiful late-season baby zucchini still in the garden after a summer yield of only one squash.

Sandy, a long-ago client, asked, "Is it true you only had one zucchini in your summer garden? We usually have a million zucchini in the summer, but no more garden for us."

Vegetable garden, that is, Sandy still has her lovely perennial gardens and sent a few photos. They grew tired of deer and squirrels managing to grab every bit of their harvest despite two layers of deer netting.



"The tipping point was watching a squirrel sit on the fence post as if gloating while eating a ripe tomato," Sandy said. Maybe her critters didn't get the memo on an honorable harvest:

"Never take the first. Never take the last. Take only what you need. Take only that which is given. Never take more than half. Leave some for others." (Excerpt from Braiding Sweetgrass.)

Yes, it's true, Sandy. I think our overly humid summer impacted the lack of squash as the flowers and foliage became riddled with fungus, many going to mush. A spring nearby may have permeated that portion of the vegetable garden, making it overly wet. Plus, zucchini have separate male and female flowers on the same plant, unlike many vegetables with self-pollinating flowers (each flower containing both male and female parts that re-

dily pollinate in a gentle breeze.) And so, the few viable flowers had less chance of being pollinated.

It made me think about a story early in the twelve years of our weekly chats. A woman and her husband pulled over in their black sedan, recognizing me from the column photo. She came running out, a charming lady with an Italian accent, and asked me why her zucchini were not bearing fruit. She went on to say there are many flowers that are delicious fried, but there's no squash. Of course, you must have flowers to have zucchini, though I didn't say that then. Instead, I asked a few more questions about how she planted them, and it turned into the column I adore—the Birds and Bees of Zucchini Flowers.

During the drought, my second crop of zucchini prolifically bloo-

med and produced abundant baby fruit as if to make up for lost time. What a delight to pick them the eve before the first hard frost, when temps drop below 28 degrees for four consecutive hours. Each zucchini was about six inches long and an inch wide. A few smaller ones still had blossoms on the fruit. They were delicious. I also picked a half-dozen green peppers. Plus, a few tomatoes made the color shift. One ripened ever so slowly; such fun to watch. We'll see if the others ripen; if not, I'll toss them outside for the wildlife.

This rare late-season harvest brings pleasure, perhaps more so than in mid-summer when we anticipate abundance. Never take anything for granted. All of life is a marvel and a gift. We pray the life-sustaining rain returns and we receive it with gratitude.

As I picked the last vegetables, I thanked the plants for the bounty and removed the netting for the deer to enjoy their harvest of the remaining plants.

Thanksgiving is when we give thanks for the gifts of life. Of family and friends, those here, and those who have passed on. We give thanks for the bounty of food and shelter—and love. And for the beauty and lessons of nature. Let us give thanks every day. Happy Thanksgiving. Garden Dilemmas? AskMaryStone.com and your favorite Podcast App.

There's more to the story in the Garden Dilemmas Podcast, including a personal story (Downsize and Do Over) from my forthcoming book, The Lesson of the Leaf. Thank you, kind readers, and our weekly paper for your support and encouragement all these years.

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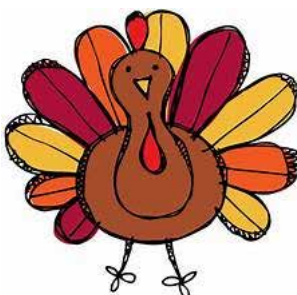
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Thanksgiving Menu

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First Course:

(Family Style)

Not Available Ala Carte

HOUSE SALAD

MIXED GREENS | CUCUMBERS
ONION | TOMATO | CARROT |
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CUP OF SOUP (\$9):

BUTTERNUT SQUASH
BEEF BARLEY

Second Course:

(APPETIZERS)

Clams Casino - \$16

Stuffed Mushrooms - \$12

Sausage | Spinach

Jumbo Shrimp Cocktail - \$19

Cocktail Sauce

Swedish Meatballs - \$15

Garlic Cream Sauce

Gorgonzola Bruchetta - \$12

Crostini's | Tomato Bruschetta | Gorgonzola Sauce

Pretzel Antipasto - \$20

Giant Prtzel | Beer Cheese | Beer Mustard

Assortment of Italian Meats | Mozzarella & Tomato

Third Course:

(ENTREES)

Butternut Squash Ravioli- \$24

Sundried Tomatoes | Pecans

Spinach | Sage | Olive Oil

Thanksgiving Ham - 24

Sliced Virginia Ham | Pineapple Glaze

Baked Sweet Potatoes & Stuffing | Mixed Vegetable

Young Tom Turkey - \$27

Mashed Potatoes & Stuffing | Green Beans

Gravy | Cranberry Sauce

Jail Island Salmon - \$30

Gratin Potatoes | Sauteed Spinach

Grainy Mustard Sauce

Oven Roasted Prime Rib - \$40*

(*Adds \$9 to Per Person Charge*)

Baked Potato | Vegetable | Au Jus Sauce

Fourth Course:

(DESSERT)

Apple Pie - \$10

Pumpkin Pie - \$10

*Menu Items Are Available To Order Ala Carte...See Menu for Pricing**

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