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August 1, 2024

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Vol. 52, No. 2



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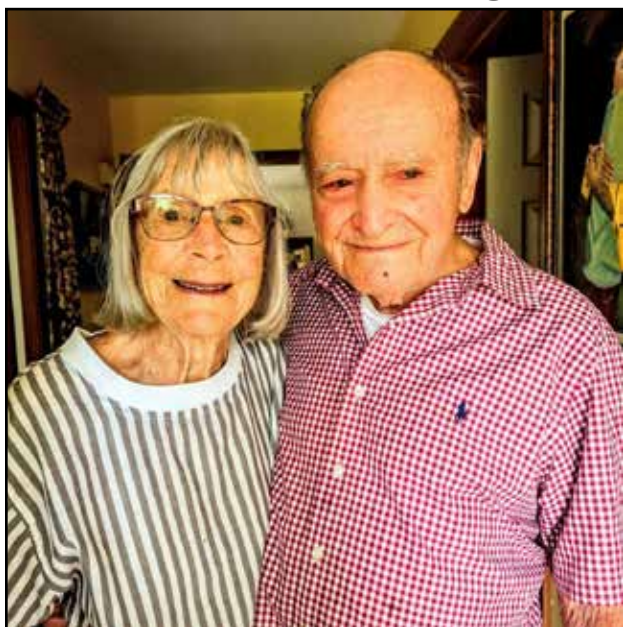
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The 131st Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Big Time Holds Crowning of This Year's Queen, Alexandra Martocci



Our Lady of Mount Carmel held their 131st Annual Big Time Celebration on July 24 through July 27th. The Coronation of the 2024 Queen Of The Big Time was held on Saturday Evening. This Year's Queen is Miss Alexandra Grace Martocci. The Court Queen's Court consisted of Aubrie LaBar, Anna Koehler, Francesca Reto, Dina Koehler, Victoria Parks, Alessandra Ilardi, Violet Farino, Maria Rose Giordano, Julia Goffredo, Anna Goffredo, and Mackenzie Hughes. This Year's Crown Bearer was Nicholas Martino. Flower Girls were, Liliana and Kylie Goyette, and the Page Boys were Joseph and Vincent Melchionna. Alexandra was crowned by the 2023 Queen Sophia Albanese. This year's Master of Ceremonies was the 2013 Big Time Queen, Ashley Jones. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Charles and Frances Muller Celebrate 74 Year's Together



Charles, 100 and Frances, 98, celebrated their 74th Wedding Anniversary with family on July 27th. Congratulations on many beautiful years together.

Fair Season Kicks Off with the 75th Annual Plainfield Farmers Fair



The 75th Annual Plainfield Farmer's fair took place on July 23rd to July 27th with Livestock Shows, Tractor Pulls, Demolition Derbies, Live Music, Fireworks and more! Mark your calendars for next year's fair starting July 22. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

ATTENTION

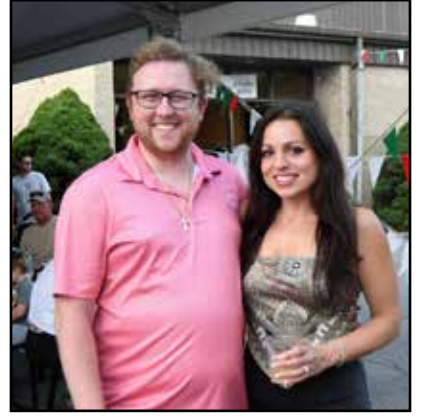


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131st Our Lady Mt. Carmel Big Time Celebration, Roseto, PA



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As of June 29th we have handed over the reins to brothers, Dennis and Jeffrey Losco. The Losco family is committed to keeping your customer experience the same, and you will still see familiar, friendly faces when you visit the store.

We hope that you will welcome the Losco family, and continue to support this local, family-owned hardware store that has been a staple of the Bangor business community for the past 69 years!

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For the seventh consecutive year, the Board of Governors for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) froze tuition for in-state undergraduates for the 2024-25 academic year. The tuition rate will stay the same at all 10 state-owned public universities. PASSHE schools serve the most in-state students of any four-year college or university in Pennsylvania, at the lowest price. Nearly 90% of PASSHE's 82,000 students are Pennsylvania residents, many from middle-income families. To make higher education more affordable, the Senate passed Grow PA – a package of bills that creates new programs to recruit the best talent to Pennsylvania schools in industries that will grow the state's economy while also expanding existing financial assistance programs that are already working. Read more about the scholarship and tuition waiver programs at <https://www.pasenategop.com/grow-pa-higher-ed/>

Sen. Brown Announces Agreement Between PennDOT and National Park Service on Rt. 611 Closure



Sen. Rosemary M. Brown (R-40) announced today that an agreement has been reached between the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the National Park Service to begin temporary work on Route 611 in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The agreement marks a significant step forward in reopening the roadway which has been closed since December 6, 2022, causing substantial disruption to residents, businesses and commuters.

"I am absolutely thrilled to share that after extensive discussions and collaborative ef-

orts, PennDOT and the National Park Service have agreed on a temporary solution to reopen Route 611," said Brown.

The work will involve the installation of a temporary rockfall barrier, which will enable traffic to open through a portion of the affected three-mile section. Once the permit is issued by the National Park Service, PennDOT expects the work will take roughly six weeks to complete.

"This is a critical step in restoring accessibility and alleviating the hardships faced by our residents and businesses," said Brown. "While this is a temporary

fix, it is an important move toward a permanent resolution. I will continue to advocate for a comprehensive, long-term solution that balances all interests."

Route 611, owned and maintained by PennDOT, runs through the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, which is managed by the National Park Service. The roadway was initially closed in April 2022 due to heavy rains washing out sections, and subsequent rockslides necessitated further safety measures.

"I want to publicly thank PennDOT for their persistence in collaboration," said Brown. "I am optimistic that this temporary solution will provide the necessary relief to our community as we continue to work toward a permanent resolution."

Updates will be provided as the temporary work progresses and plans for a long-term solution are developed.

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“Home” Means a Dream Come True for Single Phillipsburg Mom and Family

On June 15th, at 10:00am, Jaiden Fischer stood in front of her new home with her brother, Biagio, and son, Jedrek by her side. She was joined by almost one hundred members of the community: neighbors, fellow Warren County Habitat for Humanity (Warren County Habitat) Homeowners and their families, volunteers, staff, and other community partners. After over a year of hard work, 250+ hours she put into building her own home and juggling between two and four jobs at any given time, Jaiden received the keys to her own front door.

Jaiden and her brother Biagio are no strangers to change. Having been moved around very often as children, they were never in one “home” for very long. When she finally moved into her own apartment after having her son, and Biagio was still living in a group home, she would tell her brother, “If I had a house you could stay with me, but I just don’t have the room.” He had been going through his own hardships, and Jaiden became focused on a way to not only provide for her son, but her brother too. She wanted to be able to give them both a place to call their forever home.

Like other times in her life, Jaiden feels that her pain and struggles were times when



God was showing her his plans for her.

“When I was eight years old, [one of my older sisters and I] were staying away at a sleepaway camp to find God amidst our struggles and some suffering in a place we thought was home. We were so happy to get away and to be at this camp with people who were surrounded by love and devotion. During our stay here we were unfortunately taken away, [and placed] in foster care where we faced many feelings of hardship and defeat. But this is where I later learned that God was saving me.

During my time with Habitat for Humanity, I often felt like it was a nice little getaway from reality, kind of like how I felt when I was eight years old... ..I found myself surrounded by love and devotion again, and I thank everyone at Ha-

bitat and God immensely for being able to make this our forever home,” Jaiden shared at her Home Dedication ceremony.

Jaiden’s new home, the sixth home built on Beidleman Road in Franklin Township, NJ, is a testament to a four-year long journey for Warren County Habitat for Humanity. The plot of land that is now home to six Warren County Habitat Partner Families was donated to the organization by Franklin Township, and in 2020, work officially began. This became Warren County Habitat for Humanity’s first “Habitat neighborhood”, as the Habitat community affectionately calls it, and the organization is incredibly grateful for the chance to build not just homes, but a true Habitat community where children and families can grow and thrive together.

Little Sprouts Offers Preschool to Local NJ Students

Students ages 3 and 4 are invited to attend preschool at the Little Sprouts Early Learning Center. In addition to daycare and preschool, the Little Sprouts Early Learning Center offers care for children before and after school, as well as during the summer. Enrollment in the center’s daycare and preschool programs is currently underway. Interested parents are invited to schedule a tour of the facility by calling Little Sprouts, 973-940-3540, or by completing a form on the website, www.littlesproutsearlylearningcenter.org. The Little Sprouts Early Learning Center is conveniently located on the campus of Project Self-Sufficiency, across from Sussex County Community College, at 127 Mill Street in Newton.


The Little Sprouts Early Learning Center features separate classrooms for each age group, from infancy through preschool. The center uses Creative Curriculum, the curriculum approved by the State of New Jersey and endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in all classrooms to help children learn important skills in math, literacy, science, social studies, the arts, and technology. Fully qualified teachers are available in each school room and the child-teacher ratio adheres to or exceeds state standards.

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

Each classroom has new equipment, as well as learning centers for dramatic play, computers, science, house-keeping, sand, and water play, reading, and music. The center also contains an all-purpose room for active indoor play and parent

presentations, as well as a sick room for those children who may fall ill during the day. The center is equipped with two separate playgrounds, one for younger tots and one for older children.

Little Sprouts Early Learning Center offers space for 83 youngsters, ages 6 weeks to 6 years. All types of subsidized daycare are accepted, including New Jersey Cares for Kids and Work First New Jersey. For more information visit the center’s website, www.littlesproutsearlylearningcenter.org or call 973-940-3540.



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For Bangor's Jennifer Rago, Cooking At The Chuck Wagon Is The Perfect Retirement

Jennifer Rago worked in the mental health industry for many years, helping individuals and families get through a crisis of one kind or another. You could say that Rago, now retired, has found her own version of mental self therapy. And it comes with a trip back in time.

Rago, longtime resident of Bangor, spends much of her summer at Wild West City in Byram Township, N.J., as a reanactor, often times cooking viddles and coffee over a fire at the Chuck Wagon.

Wild West City has been entertaining audiences for over six decades with live action-packed shows, train and stagecoach rides, demonstrations, historical exhibits, music, special events and an opportunity to mingle with cowboys and cowgirls in "Dodge City."

Rago has been doing plenty of entertaining herself as a reanactor, interacting with visitors who want to learn about the ways of the old west.

How did Rago making Wild West City her second "career"?

"I had first visited Wild West City when my daughter's elementary school class went there for a class trip," she said. "I have always loved American history, horses, and the American west/cowboys. When I retired I decided that I was going to spend my time doing things I loved but did not necessarily have the time to do when I was working. Being an avid fan of spaghetti westerns, 1950's westerns, and American history made joining Wild West City a natural choice."

It's a lot different than her last "career."

"I worked in the men-



tal health-field for 20 plus years as a counselor, executive director, and assistant vice president, in clinical," said Rago. "I retired early because of COVID and its negative effect on resources for mental health and addictions. Public and government healthcare funding was redirected to COVID reducing addictions funding and increasing death via addiction."

Wild West City is glad

to have Rago aboard."

"Jennifer has really taken on her role here with spirit, dedication and excitement," said Katie Benson, whose family has owned the park for over 60 years. "She is eager to share her knowledge of the old American west with others - and she makes a great cup of coffee too!"

Rago's family and friends were not surprised to see that she gravitated to Wild West City.

"My friends thought

it made perfect sense - my children and husband know all too well how much I love this genre and are glad I have found other people who love it as much as I do," said Rago.

Ironically, although she spends a lot of her time at the Chuck Wagon, Rago admits that it's been a learning curve in more ways than one.

"I'm not much of a cook but I have developed a real interest in pioneer cooking," she said. "I watch a lot of YouTube, read and ask a lot of questions. I love looking and reading about period specific clothing and accessories and of course pioneer food."

While others in retirement might not be unable to come up with a plan for retirement, Rago has seamlessly found something that suits her just perfectly.

"I love working with other people who love the history and traditions of the American west as much as I do," she said.

At Wild West City, Rago is just one part of a great day of family fun.

Wild West City's "Summer Stampede", which takes place through Labor Day Weekend, is where you can be part of the action helping the marshal track down the outlaws. Grab a lasso and mosey over to the newest attraction at Wild West City, the Cowboy Corral. Test your skills or learn how to rope like a cowboy on the range. Cool down with mouth-watering soda floats, ice cream and other sweets at Pilsner's Candy Shoppe.

In the Golden Nugget Saloon, there are plenty of eats for everyone, and for the adults, craft cocktails, at the authentic western bar.

Wild West City affords visitors a chance to see

what the wild west was all about up close and personal. Wild West City can also be an educational experience for those who want to simply learn about the history of the the American wild west.

Wild West City offers an array of special days through the season; among them Wild West City's National Day of the Cowboy and Cowgirl, Civil War reenactments, Native American events and more. And of course, train rides and stagecoach rides complete any trip to the park.

Looking ahead to the fall, Wild West City's Fall Harvest brings out the colors of the Skylands Region with more great events each weekend such as Cowgirl Day and Scouts Weekend. Visitors can enjoy indulging in mouthwatering pumpkin delights, fall crafted bar beverages and sip warm apple cider or fall crafted beverages in the Golden Nugget.

Haunted Wild West, held weekends in October, has become one of the most popular annual attractions in Northwest Jersey. The Spooky Wild West Fest features classic Wild West City shows with a Halloween twist. Meet characters like the Wicked Witch and Headless Horseman. When the sunsets at Wild West City things get a little scary. The Haunted Train Ride and Haunted Walking Trail are theatrical haunts and scares featuring a storyline along with jump scares set in an eerie western town.

Tickets for any Wild West City day can be purchased in advance online. Groups are also welcome. For more information about Wild West City and to view its special event schedule visit wildwestcity.com. You can also LIKE Wild West City on Facebook.

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You may also stop by the station during our weekly drills on Mondays at 7pm.
 Our station is located at 517 S. Northampton St. Bangor, PA.

Roseto Big Time Crowning of the Queen

Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



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The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has unveiled a new standard license plate for vehicles. The new plate, showcasing Pennsylvania as the birthplace of America, will be available in 2025. It features the Liberty Bell and the text, "Let Freedom Ring." Military, special organization, special fund and specialty plates without legislatively mandated designs will also be updated with the new design. If you would like to be one of the first to get the new license plate, sign up for updates. You will be notified when the license plate is ready to order. When the plates become available, fee information will be included with replacement instructions on PennDOT's website and will vary based on plate type and any optional personalization. The department and its partners will use all existing standard issue license plate inventory before transitioning to the new plate design.



Blairstown airport is one of the nicest old time airports that has kept its charm for nearly 100 years. It was built by a local farmer, W. K. Dickson on 151 acres. It currently has a flight training center for powered aircraft as well as gliders. A small cozy restaurant aptly called the Runway Cafe sometimes becomes a stop for pilots to grab a bite on VFR days. The airport also became a Landing zone stop for medical helicopters to assist local first responders to speed those who need transport to a trauma center. It has one 3000 foot runway. So come sit outside at one of the picnic tables and go back in time. Photo by Bob Halberstadt/The Free Weekly Press

PUBLIC REAL ESTATE AUCTION

- This real estate auction is to Settle the Estate of Charlotte Longyore -

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Land of Make Believe Named One of US Best Amusement Parks



The Land of Make Believe finds itself among some pretty big names around the country according to a recently published national story.

The family-owned Land of Make Believe, in Hope, N.J., was recognized as the state's Best Amusement Park in an article posted on msn.com that highlighted the best parks in every state in America. In 2022, Land of Make Believe was named the Most Iconic Amusement Park in the U.S.

In the article, it is noted that "Land of Make Believe merges classic amusement with water park fun. The park's pirate-themed water area, Pirate's Cove, excites young adventurers, while the roller coasters and Ferris wheel delight thrill-seekers. It's a nostalgic experience

with modern twists."

With this distinction, Land of Make Believe finds itself in the company of some major amusement park players including Florida's Disney World, California's Knotts Berry Farm, Virginia's Kings Dominion, Texas's Six Flags over Texas, New York's Coney Island, Dollywood, Hersheypark, and Missouri's Siver Dollar City.

Under the leadership of owner Christopher Maier the Land of Make Believe has become a 5 Star award winning regional Amusement and Water Park recognized nationally on numerous occasions.

"Just amazing to be included with the likes of Disney World, Knotts Berry Farm and Hersheypark is something to be very proud

of," said Maier. "We've always strived to be 'wholesome, safe and affordable' and something unique and special. Knowing that others recognize us for that is truly a great feeling and something our staff should be commended for."

For the full story, go to <https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/tripideas/the-best-amusement-park-in-every-american-state/ss-BB1p4ikM?ocid=msedgntp&pc=HCT-S&cvid=3bd21d9a2db44fd399143ab997a44cac&ei=31#image=31>.

For more about Land of Make Believe, which remains open daily through Labor Day Weekend (and the following weekend), our visit www.LOMB.com or its Facebook page, Land of Make Believe NJ.

Limiting the Use of Smartphones in Schools

Legislation to improve student mental health, academic performance and social skills by limiting student smartphone use in schools has been signed into law. The measure allows schools the option of using dedicated school safety funding for secure, lockable smartphone bags in which students deposit their mobile devices until the end of the school



day. Senate Bill 700, now Act 55 of 2024, amended the School Safety and Mental He-

alth Grant Program to allow for the purchase of these smartphone bags as an eligible use of funding. As part of the grant program, school districts receive an automatic base grant of \$100,000 and each intermediate unit, area career and technical school, charter school, regional charter school or cyber charter school is provided an automatic base grant of \$70,000.

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ATTENTION

PUBLIC NOTICE

Monday, August 5th, 7pm

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

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

75TH PLAINFIELD FARMER'S FAIR



Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



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August thunderstorms are masterpieces of bluster and bombardment. And sometimes August is bone-dry and full of dust, and we would gladly swap the whole of it for one rainy March week end. ~ Hal Borland

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75TH PLAINFIELD FARMER'S FAIR CONTINUED



Scholarship Winners: Shyanne Ackerman, Brooke Bowie, Alex Allen, Daniel Eyer, Hailey Hoagland, Eliana Koehler (Not Pictured), and Aidia Wagner (Not Pictured)



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Looking For Live Music This Weekend?

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The Harlan Tucker Band

COUNTRY, ROCK & BLUES

Check us out on  at The Harlan/Tucker Band

Music Will Be Outside at 6:30pm, Weather Permitting - Bring a Chair!
(NOTE: Music Indoors at 8:30pm, If Raining)

The Allentown Rescue Mission's Clean Team Workforce June Employee of the Month

The Allentown Rescue Mission's Clean Team Workforce announces its Employee of the Month for June, Justin C.

Justin started a photography and music business in 2022, but he bit off more than he could chew. To keep up with the demands of his time, he began using drugs to stay awake and alert. Eventually, drug use destroyed his business and personal relationships. Justin checked himself into the hospital for help.

After his release, his sister told him about the Allentown Rescue Mission, and he decided it was the best place for him to go. Justin joined the Transformation Program in

April of 2024 and ever since has dedicated himself to bettering his life. He began to heal and was able to focus because he wasn't dependent on drugs. Justin initially stated that he "didn't have faith that he would succeed in the program." Still, he continued one day at a time until eventually, the eight-week program ended, and he proudly graduated.

The Monday after Justin graduated from the Transformation Program, he began working for the Clean Team Workforce. Justin is eager to learn, and he receives feedback well. He says it's because he "just wants to get better." He is a positive leader and



encourages others to succeed. Justin credits the Transformation Program for giving him meaning in his life and revealing how much he enjoys hel-

ping others.

Justin has been working hard on mulching and landscaping jobs for the Clean Team Workforce. For most of his

life, he worked in a warehouse and is enjoying the opportunity to work outdoors. Justin is excited about his future. His goal is to save money for a place that he can call home and to help others in some capacity.

The Allentown Rescue Mission congratulates Justin on his newfound happiness and determination to make a better life for himself and others.

The Allentown Rescue Mission, a 501c3, 123 bed non-profit homeless shelter has been providing shelter for homeless men since 1900. In addition to emergency shelter services (365 days a year), the Allentown Rescue Mission offers

a residential life skills program, and transitional employment on the Clean Team Workforce that's available for hire to the community. The Clean Team Workforce pays the men above PA state minimum wage—helping them save a nest egg to transition back into the community. In a typical year, the Allentown Rescue Mission provides shelter services for over 946 men per year, and serves over 42,000 meals a year to men in need.

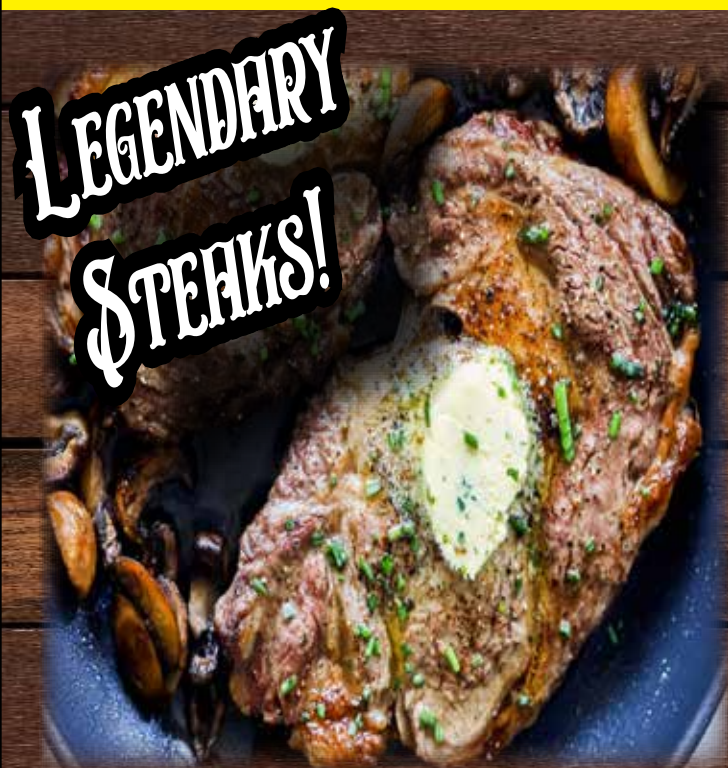
To refer someone to the Allentown Rescue Mission for services or to learn ways you can help make a difference please visit www.allentownrescuemission.org

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Hello, fellow readers,
Last week, we spoke about Early Acorn Drop – Lessons of Letting Go. Acorns aren't the only thing that seems to

be dropping early. While walking on Sunday on the Paulinskill Rail Trail, I meandered further and landed at our local airport. While offering water to my canine kid, I witnessed a little girl gathering fistfuls of pinecones, bringing her such happiness. Grand Norway spruces shade the outdoor eating space at the Runway Cafe. As I watched, I dictated the scene as it was unfolding to share with you...

A little girl is picking up pinecones and putting them on a picnic bench where her mom sits with two other ladies, and there's a baby bassinet on the table. The gals are engaged in conversation



while the child scouts for her treasures, collecting them with such happiness. She's talking to herself as she approaches the pinecones. She finds one, then two. I hear the little girl's voice counting them: three, four, five. Her hands are full. How can she hold any more; she is so adorable in her blue sundress, pink Crocs, and pigtails.

Now, she's sitting on the ground to reach another pinecone under a nearby picnic table. As she picks it up, others in her hand drop; she gathers them back up and returns them to her mom. Her fists are crammed with her treasures, all the while she talks to herself. She's putting them on the

bench beside her mom. There must be a dozen or so by now. Mom and her friends don't seem to engage in the finds.

She's heading off, prancing towards more. Mom calls for her. I'm looking for something, the little girl says. We have to go, Mom says in return.

Come, come, come, Jolee, come. Jolee, come, come, come on here. That's me calling Jolee. She's walking around the vast Norway Spruce I'm sitting under—the trunk, hiding her from view. Maybe she's looking for pinecones, too, to nibble on, but there are none here. Perhaps the little girl snagged them all before we arrived.

My mind drifts to when I picked daffodils from my mom; I'd say I was about five. Mom and our neighbor were chatting away. The punchline is they were the neighbor's daffodils. Mom was upset that I picked something not ours to pick. I thought I was doing something kind; it made me very sad. Children remember these things.

Watching the little girl's happiness unfold and her wonder about the pinecones under the trees brings me joy. There's a quote by Henry David Thoreau in the book Walden: "Every child begins the world again." Isn't that true? They're leaving now,

and the little girl wants to take her pinecones. Her mom explains that we can't; they only allow you to take a few. The precious child accepts the logic, grasping one pinecone in her left hand and holding her mom's hand in her right.

It's understandable how the cycles of nature unfold, fascinating a child. And to us, they often go unnoticed. But we can change that. May we all cherish our fistfuls of treasures, living with gratitude for the beautiful gifts in our lives. That is my wish for you.

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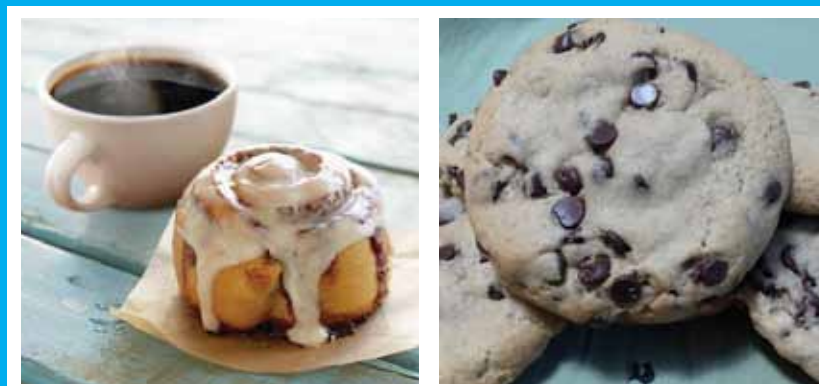
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