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April

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NORTHERN CONNECTION

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Lent & Easter at MPC



Palm Sunday Services
Saturday, April 1, 6:00 PM
Sunday, April 2, 9:00 AM & 11:15 AM



Maundy Thursday
Communion Service
April 6, 7:00 PM



Good Friday
Open Prayer Time
April 7, 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM



Family Easter Celebration
April 8, 9:30 AM



Easter Services
April 8, 6:00 PM
April 9, 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, & 11:15 AM

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Saint Aidan Parish Easter Triduum

Holy Thursday, April 6

Mass of the Lord's Supper 7:00 p.m. – Saint Alphonsus
Altar of Repose after Mass until 11:00 p.m.
(at both churches)

Good Friday, April 7

Celebration of the Passion of the Lord
1:00 p.m. - Saint Alphonsus
2:00 p.m. - Saint Alexis

Holy Saturday, April 8

Easter Basket Blessing 12:00 p.m. – both churches

Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 8

8:30 p.m. - Saint Alexis

Easter Sunday Masses, April 9

7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. - Saint Alphonsus
8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. - Saint Alexis

*Please note there is No Evening Mass On Easter

For more information, visit

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MOVER & SHAKER OF THE MONTH

April is Autism Acceptance Month

Honoring those on the spectrum

By Paula Green

April is Autism Acceptance Month. We appreciate everyone who has autism syndrome disorder (ASD). There are approximately 70 million recognized cases of autism worldwide. According to the CDC, 1 in 36 children in the US has been identified with ASD, and more than 2% of adults have it.

Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the world.

So, chances are by now, you know someone who is on the spectrum.

One could say that a person with autism is wired differently. Their brain's nerve cells and synapses are organized differently, so they process information uniquely. The word "autism" is derived from the Greek word *autos*, meaning self. The literal meaning of autism is alone. From firsthand experience, I can tell you that autism can be lonely but also frustrating and complex. My 20-year-old son, Nathan, has autism, so I see what he goes through daily. Therefore, treating these individuals with respect and accepting them as they are is essential.

In 1972, the U.S. launched a grassroots effort to raise awareness of autism. It was called National Autistic Children's Week, which subsequently evolved into Autism Awareness Month. It was commemorated in April. In 2021, the name was changed to Autism Acceptance Month to foster acceptance and ignite change.

In 2008, April 2 became officially recognized as World Autism Awareness Day. The goal has been to help improve the quality of life of those with autism. On that particular day, folks are asked to don the color blue in their honor. So, it is appropriate that the blue "forget-me-not" flower represents autism awareness.

Autism can be challenging, but many people on the spectrum have achieved great heights. Here are famous people diagnosed with ASD - Dan Aykroyd, Susan Boyle, Dr. Temple Grandin, Darryl Hannah, Anthony Hopkins, Courtney Love, and Elon Musk. It is suspected that Emily Dickinson, Albert Einstein, and Wolfgang Mozart also fell on the spectrum. Look on the web, and you'll be surprised at the names that come up!

No matter what traits of autism you or your loved one may have, a person with autism has unique strengths and abilities. It is sometimes a good thing to be on the spectrum. Remember, all these folks want is to be loved and accepted. Remember Blue on April Two! ■



Sources: thecaregiverhub.com/blog/20-famous-people-with-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/



Shannopin Country Club— Enhancing Your Life

By Janice Lane Palko





There are myriad things that detract from your life—traffic, social media, being chained to a desk, the daily grind of life, but at Shannopin Country Club, it's all about enhancing your life and making lasting memories.

Nestled in the picturesque, wooded hills of Ben Avon Heights, just minutes from downtown Pittsburgh, Shannopin has been a sanctuary from the stress of daily life since it was incorporated as a private club in 1920. The club was founded by three local friends who wanted to take up golf again after World War I. The trio purchased Jackman Farm and the adjacent lands and construction commenced. The founders decided to name the country club after the Lenape tribe's Chief Shannopin, who is thought to have found sanctuary with his tribe in these hills as the expansion moved westward.

Shannopin's golf course was designed by famous course architect and Oakmont native, Emil Loeffler, who was a professional golfer, World War I veteran, and prominent golf course superintendent. Over its century of existence, Shannopin has responded to the maturing needs of its membership by adding a swimming pool area, and most recently, a new racquet complex and state of art fitness facility. The club also offers a wealth of events, making it the place to be for fun, friends, family, and food.

Mike Meissner, Shannopin's General Manager has been on staff for three years, and he is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations around the entire campus—everything from clubhouse dining to the golf course and in between.



Mike Meissner

"I am also responsible for helping to build and lead our team. We have wonderful team members here at Shannopin, and they all deserve recognition. I also assist our Board of Governors to build and implement a strategic vision to keep Shannopin a premier destination for recreation here in the North Hills," said Meissner.

The outstanding, dedicated staff at Shannopin makes Meissner's job easier. "Essentially, it is the people that we have here at Shannopin, both the members and employees, that set Shannopin apart. Just in my time here, we have grown so quickly and have made so many improvements. Of course, there have been growing pains along the way, but I see the excitement from everyone when we talk about the possibilities that the future holds for us," said Meissner.



Brian Geisler

"Shannopin is like a family," said **Brian Geisler**, the country club's Food and Beverage Manager, who oversees all dining services, including the banquet department, dining rooms, men's grill, Tiki bar and snack bar. "I started working here when I was 14 years old as a caddy, and I've done everything from bus tables to shine shoes. I was working as the food and beverage director at a hotel in the city when COVID started, and I was laid off. Rico, the men's locker room manager, called me and told me to come back, so I did. I returned in August of 2020, and it was like coming back home. Then I was promoted to food and beverage manager here last December and it has been great! We have many staff members who have been here for decades, and they'll likely all retire from here. It's that special of a place."

One of the aspects that makes Shannopin unusual is that it is member-owned. "We're not corporate-owned. Here, the members own the club," said Geisler, "which means I have 500 bosses, but that's fine because I love what I do. We've got a great mix of people from carpenters to corporate executives to professional athletes. And they keep on coming here because we go above and beyond to make them happy."

"Everything here from the food to the amenities is



provided to please the membership. It's a collaborative effort. When you walk in the building—the staff, membership—they're like family. The better we tailor our services to our memberships' needs, the more we are hearing that Shannopin is the place to be," said Geisler.

As with most things in life—weddings, vacations, a dinner out—these moments can be spectacular...especially if the food is extraordinary. At Shannopin, your dining experience will be nothing short of perfect. **Bill Radder** is the country club's Executive Chef, and he has worked everywhere from dive bars to 3-Star Michelin restaurants in Manhattan. Chef Bill and team assures every dish at Shannopin is exceptional.

"We are all about fresh ingredients, using seasonal products that are locally sourced if possible. We change our



Bill Radder

menu approximately every 6-8 weeks to reflect that. We take the food people love and make micro-seasonal changes. For instance, in late October, persimmons come into season, and we reflect that in our menu," said Radder.

Radder credits Executive Sous Chef Zachary Galante and their staff with the ability and drive to uphold the highest standard of food on all occasions. "We have a dedicated staff, and we all work together to please our members," says Radder, adding, "and all of our meats and seafood are fresh, nothing is pre-made. Even the sauces and dressings we serve are made from scratch. Chef Radder and Zachary Galante use their creativity and passion to introduce new menus incorporating unique flavors with a variety of dishes to please everyone.

Being a private club, the expectation to make every experience enjoyable is taken very seriously. During Covid, staff faced many challenges but successfully came out on top. The club had to follow the state restrictions and forgo many social functions, but members took to the golf course in large numbers. No wonder, the 18-hole par 71 course roams over 6401 yards of rolling hills, providing a challenging round for all skill levels. The course also showcases breathtaking views of the skyline of downtown Pittsburgh.

Not only is the golf course a peaceful, serene escape for golfers, it's also a beautiful, scenic backdrop for banquets and events. The views are unlike any other in Pittsburgh. When the sun sets in the evening and bounces off the downtown skyscrapers, you can't help but become entranced by the beauty of our city and forget about the daily stresses.

"We help people celebrate life," said **Jacquie Ricketts**, Shannopin's Banquet Manager for more than three decades, who helps members to host baby showers, wedding showers, First Communion parties, graduations and anniversary parties as well as weddings. "I think I've overseen more than 600 weddings, and 2021 and 2022 were a bit crazy as we played catch up for a lot of weddings that had to be postponed due to COVID. We are already booking weddings for 2024."

"We host athletic banquets, church events and fundraising events here too," said Jacquie, who speaks proudly about the way her, and her staff handle everything so that you don't need to engage an event planner. "We handle the details, and



Jacquie Ricketts



we don't force you to work with certain vendors. You can bring in your own entertainment, centerpieces, and cakes. And yes, we accommodate the beloved Pittsburgh cookie table."

Jacque will custom design a menu for your event, and one advantage of hosting your event at Shannopin is that you are assured of great service. "We can accommodate weddings of 225 guests. We have one server for every 20-25 guests, whereas many other places have one server for every 50 guests. From the setting to the service, food, and amenities, we always receive great reviews on the popular wedding planning site The Knot." Shannopin has hosted a wide variety of events from people all over the Pittsburgh area. Event sponsorship is required and can be accommodated for outside parties.

This year, Shannopin built a new racquet complex that features four paddle tennis courts, two regular tennis courts, and pickleball courts. The club will soon unveil a new Racquets Lounge on the first floor of the new, state-of-the-art Fitness Complex. There, members will find a spacious area to lounge, socialize, and host events.

"Shannopin is full of unique individuals and families that all have the same common goal. They want to be here to relax, enjoy, make lasting memories and connections," said **Katie London**, Director of Membership and Development. "The membership is what defines Shannopin and I am proud to say that we have the best community of individuals around." Katie has been at Shannopin since 2012 and has seen a lot of changes over the years but says one thing remains consistent. "In today's world full of technology, people still need to feel a personal connection. At Shannopin, we recognize that and strive to make sure each time a member or guest enters the club, they feel valued and receive that personal connection that cannot be found anywhere else." This holds true on the banquet/event side as well. Each party, event, and banquet is unique and Shannopin staff want to make sure every special moment is memorable and exceptional.

Shannopin offers a variety of social events every year. From Nine with wine golf events to PJ's & Pancakes Gingerbread House build, Shannopin offers unique events for every age and family dynamic. "One of my favorite events is the Fourth of July celebration. We bring in a band, petting zoo, pony rides, face painting, and of course, FIREWORKS!" The Independence Day Picnic is just one of the many events Shannopin Staff plans every year for the enjoyment of members and their guests. In the service industry, no one does it better than Shannopin Country Club.

On a sunny, hot summer day, there's nothing better than sitting around a beautiful pool, and Shannopin certainly has that and more. In addition to a clean, crystal-clear competitive-size pool, there is a Splash Pad and baby pool for the little ones, as well as poolside food and beverage service, a Snack Bar, and a Tiki Bar.



Katie London

New this year at Shannopin is a completed racquet complex & lounge, new bunkers, additional social events, and a kids summer camp. Camp Shannopin, which in collaboration with KE Camps, will provide children entering grades 1-6 with the highest quality summer camp experience. Each week's activity schedule will include arts & crafts, fun with Foods, STEM activities, group games and service projects. In addition, campers will participate in golf twice a week and enjoy daily swim periods.

"We're all about adding value to your life," said Katie. "And we have various levels of membership to suit your needs." London has brought in more than 150 new families to Shannopin over the last three years. Membership at Shannopin is attracting more young families looking for amenities to suit all ages. "Families are looking to spend more quality time together and want to be more involved in social activities. Quality time with family and friends is precious and Shannopin will help make every visit a memorable one." Katie, as well as all Shannopin Staff, has a passion for people and strives to make Shannopin a Home away from Home for all members and guests.

"I see Shannopin as being the premier family country club in the North Hills. I think for a long time, Shannopin has been known as a "best-kept secret" in our area that was really about the golf and dining experience. While these areas of focus will never go away, we are quickly adding a full line of family-focused amenities that will guarantee our future as the top community-focused country club in our area," said Meissner, who invites people to come see for themselves just how special Shannopin is.

For more information on Shannopin Country Club, visit the website at shannopincc.com or to arrange a visit, contact Katie London at (412) 761-2900. ■





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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

RPM Woodworks

By Janice Lane Palko

Aside from the holiday season, this must be the second-most popular time of the year for giving gifts. When you get that bridal shower, wedding, anniversary, or birthday party invitation in the mail, one of the first things to cross your mind is: What do I give for a gift? You want your gift to be special, and if you give a gift from RPM Woodworks, your gift will certainly be one that is one-of-a-kind and one that will certainly be cherished forever.

Ron McCloskey is the craftsman behind RPM Woodworks, and he has been creating quality custom furniture and home décor for about 30 years. “It all started in my high school woodshop class. I made a chess set and table that I was really proud of, and I’ve been working with wood ever since,” said Ron who lives north of the Pittsburgh area but can ship his pieces anywhere within the Continental United States.



In addition to live-edge and epoxy charcuterie boards, end-grain cutting boards, custom furniture such live-edge and epoxy desks and tables, he has the capability of laser engraving gift items such as the charcuterie and cutting boards, wooden and slate coasters, and to transfer photos into custom-engraved wooden keepsakes.

“I work mostly with walnut and maple that is locally sourced,” said Ron, “but I also use exotic woods such as Purple Heart and Blood Wood.”

Some of his most popular items are the live-edge and epoxy charcuterie board and the 3-D end-grain cutting boards. “Engraved slate coasters (\$20/set of 4) have also been in high demand,” said Ron, who says that his customers typically give them as unique wedding, birthday, housewarming and holiday gifts. “They are versatile enough to suit any occasion. Also, other customizable items can be given as bridal shower, baby shower, and wedding favors.”

On average, custom boards can take about three weeks to make, depending on availability of the wood requested. The charcuterie boards start at \$165, cutting boards start at \$185, and custom furniture depends on each project and



materials used. The charcuterie boards are finished with Odie's™ all-natural, food-safe, solvent-free oil, while the cutting boards are treated with his own signature mineral oil blend, which he includes with each cutting board purchase. Engraving is extra. For other custom gifts, it depends on the scope of the project and materials used.

His custom furniture is built with care according to dimensions and specifications purchasers provide, type of wood and finish desired, and can include colored resin elements.

"Each gift is one-of-a-kind and crafted with the highest quality materials and attention to detail," said Ron, who also noted that when people purchase from him, they are also supporting small businesses and their local economy.

Orders can be placed through the RPM Woodworks site at: www.rpm-woodworks.com. On the website you can also browse some of the unique and exquisite creations Ron has made and read testimonials from satisfied customers.

If you are interested in commissioning a custom-piece, you can either contact Ron through the website or at his email address, which is rpm@rpm-woodworks.com. ■

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Love Is In The Air!

By Sofya Stearns

April is the beginning of the wedding season. Personally, I love weddings! I love everything that screams wedding! Gowns with bling, flowers with bling, venues with bling, and of course, a multi-tier cake with bling. Every time I'm at a wedding, I feel the romance flowing through the air. Anywhere you look, people are smiling, laughing, hugging and dancing. People get reconnected, reacquainted and some even find love. I just want to sing, "Love is in the Air."

When the pandemic hit, so many brides, including my own stepdaughter, grooms, their families, were forced to postpone, cancel, and then reschedule their weddings. At one point, we and, I bet, other families, thought this wedding would never happen, but happily it did. For my family, the wedding turned out to be even more special than anyone could have imagined. The bride's sister was able to fly in from overseas with her newborn baby, and everyone met the little one for the first time. More friends from out of town decided to join the couple on such their long-awaited day. Even the weather turned out to be on its best behavior. That would not have been the case on the original date.

And for me as a total fashionista, the fashion since pandemic has changed. The brides are still favoring white, but they are also embracing patterned textiles, florals and even prints. Just imagine a few rosettes or butterflies spread out through the fitted bridal gown. Just stunning! And now more and more, the bridesmaids are stepping away from all looking the same, offering the bridal party a bit of pizzazz.

You already know that my other obsession is food. Grazing boards and charcuterie have even started to make appearances at weddings.

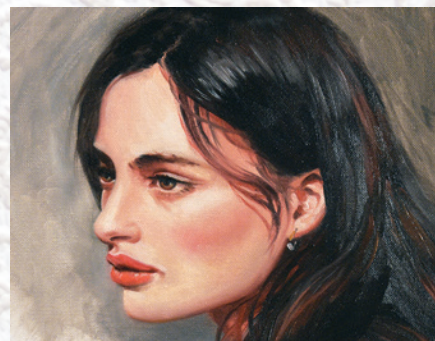
When it comes to cakes, I have a rule: no matter how full I'm feeling, I always take a bite because in my book, it's for good luck. Just imagine utilizing pressed flowers and greenery on the cake or using hand crafted sugar art to create flowers.

So, from what I have learned, the 2023 wedding industry is as strong as ever. I say cheers to all the happy couples! A toast to all the parents who are paying for it! Blessings to all guests who have been invited to one of the most life-changing ceremonies there is. Love is in the air, and I love it. ■

Sofya

Sofya Stearns is the proud owner of Izabella's Gourmet Chow and the mother of a young daughter, and she is brimming with tips and ideas to share with other moms, step-mothers, grandmothers and moms-to-be to make their lives easier. Sometime, being a mom is difficult, and she hopes that she can help to connect others as they care for and raise the little ones in their charge.

Do you have an idea for a feature in an upcoming MOM2MOMS article or looking for more healthy tips? Feel free to send an email to me at izabellagourmetchow@gmail.com



Painted Portraits

by Tim Kostilnik

412-427-0568 • PortraitsbyTim.com

Portraits.TimKostilnik@verizon.net





You're a Real Gem Trivia

Songs and Famous People With Gemstones Names

By Paula Green

The birthstone for April is a diamond. We'll look at songs and famous people with gemstone names to commemorate this precious jewel. Singer-songwriter Neil Diamond has been entertaining audiences since 1962. Lou Diamond Phillips is a Filipino-American actor. A baseball field is referred to as a diamond. In Ligonier, the town's centerpiece is named "The Diamond." A deck of card contains diamonds.

We've heard glimmery songs that add shine to our day. *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend* is a jazz hit introduced by Carol Channing in the Broadway production *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. There's the controversial Beatles' tune *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*. Rhianna released the song, *Diamonds*. Other rhombus tracks include *Black Diamond*, *Buy Me Diamonds*, *Diamonds Are Forever*, *Diamond Dust*, *Diamond Dogs*, *Diamond Ring*, *Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes*, *Dirty Diamonds*, *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*, and *White Diamond*. In the 1950s, there was a fabulous foursome called The Diamonds.

From celebrated diamonds, we move on to persons named Pearl. American novelist Pearl S. Buck is known for the bestselling book *The Good Earth*. Pearl Bailey was an American actress, singer, and author. There's the rock group Pearl Jam. A few other renowned celebrities with sparkly names include songstress Crystal Gayle, actress Crystal Bernard and actor Billy Crystal.

The birthstone for March is the lustrous aquamarine. There was a film released in 2006 called *Aquamarine*. There is an album soundtrack for the film, which also bears the same name. Another radiant blue gemstone is the sapphire. Kate Middleton's engagement ring is a sapphire, which once belonged to Prince William's mother, Lady Diana.

The birthstone for May is the radiant green emerald. As far as songs, Thin Lizzy released *Emerald*, and Fleetwood Mac came out with *Emerald Eyes*. Other green beauties include Blood and Emeralds and Emerald's Shatter. Seattle, Washington is nicknamed The Emerald City. There have also been two Emerald Records companies. Another luminous green gemstone is Jade. A few famous ones are Jade Goody, Jade Lopez, and Jade Esteban Estrada.

Onto a few final gemstone classics, The Rolling Stones sang *Ruby Tuesday*, Eric Clapton crooned *Ruby*, Styx released *Crystal Ball*, and Roxy Music resonated with *Mother of the Pearl*. Since we've flashed by some unique gemstones, we must now shimmer through this jewelry query. So get set to don those thinking caps because it's time to get a little trivial.

1. Name the actress who performed the song *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend* in the 1953 film *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*.
2. This small area in Honolulu, Hawaii experienced a tragic event on December 7, 1941.
3. These two sisters are political commentators; one recently passed away this year.
4. Which singing duo released the hits *Diamond Girl* and *Ruby Jean*?
5. This singer and songwriter sold 30 million albums worldwide; her last name is Kilcher.
6. Name the former pro basketball player who played for 21 seasons in the National Basketball Association (NBA). His nicknames are "KG" and "Big Ticket."
7. The female comedian who performed at the Grand Ole Opry wore hats with a price tag attached.
8. What is the name of the Major League Baseball (MLB) team based in Phoenix?
9. Who sang the song *Diamonds and Pearls*?
10. In 1975, Glen Campbell released this hit about a country fellow struggling to make it big.
11. Which movie classic contained a pair of ruby red slippers and an Emerald City?
12. In 1978, this country singer released *Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town*.
13. ZZ Top introduced us to this ivory tune from their 1981 album *El Loco*.
14. What is the gemstone named beach in coastal North Carolina?
15. This 45-carat blue gemstone is believed to be cursed as it was stolen from a Sita idol in India. It can be found in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

Sources: ongfacts.com/category-songs-with-jewelry, rateyourmusic.com/songs-with-precious-metals, ranker.com/list/the-best-songs-about-jewelry, rrindex.com/topics/precious/stones.html, playlistresearch.com/jewelry.htm

Answers: 1. Marilyn Monroe 2. Pearl Harbor 3. Diamond & Silk 4. Seal & Croft 5. Jewel 6. Kevin Garnett 7. Minnie Pearl 8. The Arizona Diamondbacks 9. Prince 10. Rhinestone Cowboy 11. *The Wizard of Oz* 12. Kenny Rogers 13. Emerald Isle 15. The Hope Diamond



The Woodlands

They say, do what brings you joy! Karl Pamer finds his joy in music. His fervor for song and dance became evident when he was 13 and began participating in The Woodlands Music Ensemble. At the young age of four, Karl battled leukemia followed by three years of chemotherapy. A decade later, he was diagnosed with Catatonic Regression associated with Down Syndrome which brought on a period of considerable regression. It was as if he'd gone away. In the fall of 2021, he experienced another bout of regression, only this time it was during the pandemic and recuperating came


with many challenges. The enthusiasm and upbeat personality he was known for had diminished. Thankfully, Karl's return to The Woodlands Music Ensemble was just what he needed to help him find his way back.

Over the years, Karl has made many friends at The Woodlands and has found a place where he can feel comfortable. "No judgement, just love and encouragement" said his mom, Judy Pamer, who credits the Music Ensemble for helping to give her son back his joy. "Music Ensemble, led by veteran instructor Kory

(Continued on page 16)



Kori Antonacci and Karl Pamer



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THURSDAY, JUNE 22 – WATER ROCKETS!

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For more information, visit
www.oaklandcatholic.org/admissions/summer



PREVAIL

The Woodlands is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of children and adults with disability and chronic illness. Our fully accessible 52-acre campus provides year-round overnight and day camps for all ages.



134 Shenot Road | Wexford, PA 15090
724.935.6533 | mywoodlands.org
United Way Contributor Choice #933107

2023 SUMMER CAMPS GUIDE



Young Writers Institutes
Summer 2023

YWIs are for young people who like to write, and who want to develop their craft in a community of writers.

Wexford:
Incoming Grades 5-8
July 19-23 • 9am-noon
Held at Sing, Sing, Sing (Pine Tree Shoppes, Wexford)
Questions? kathyanngiegel@gmail.com
To register: atlasartpress.com/shop/ywi-2023

Oakland:
July 17-28 • 10am-3pm
Throughout the Oakland area
Application will be available April 1. To gain access and more information, please email wpwp@pitt.edu

Western Pennsylvania Writing Project is a partnership between University of Pittsburgh School of Education, the National Writing Project, and local districts to improve literacy learning and teaching.

Antonacci, has become one of The Woodlands' most beloved programs. In a supportive environment, our musicians collaborate with one another through singing, instrumentation and choreography. The joy is palpable, and the campus is always rocking every Monday evening!" according to Kristen Link, The Woodlands Director of Music and Art.

Music Ensemble is an extension of The Woodlands' one-of-a-kind camp, The Notes from the Heart Music Program, where campers aged 14 and older are provided with a comprehensive experience of exploring the universal expression of music, finding joy in the art of making music and the accom-

plishment of participating in a culminating musical performance. The highlight of one of the 2022 Music Ensemble showcases, was Karl ROCKING a solo like no other. Karl's family and friends were brought to tears of joy to witness this jubilant performance, and The Woodlands community saw the Karl they all know and love shine so brightly!

For more information on The Woodlands musical programming, please visit <https://mywoodlands.org/programs/music-arts/> and don't miss the Music Ensemble Spring Performance at The Woodlands, 134 Shenot Road in Wexford on Monday, April 17, 2023 at 6:30PM. ■

HOW WE ENGINEER

Equipped with only pencils and rubber bands, eighth graders compete to design and construct the strongest catapult. By following supply and time constraints, students embrace efficiency and creativity in the engineering process.

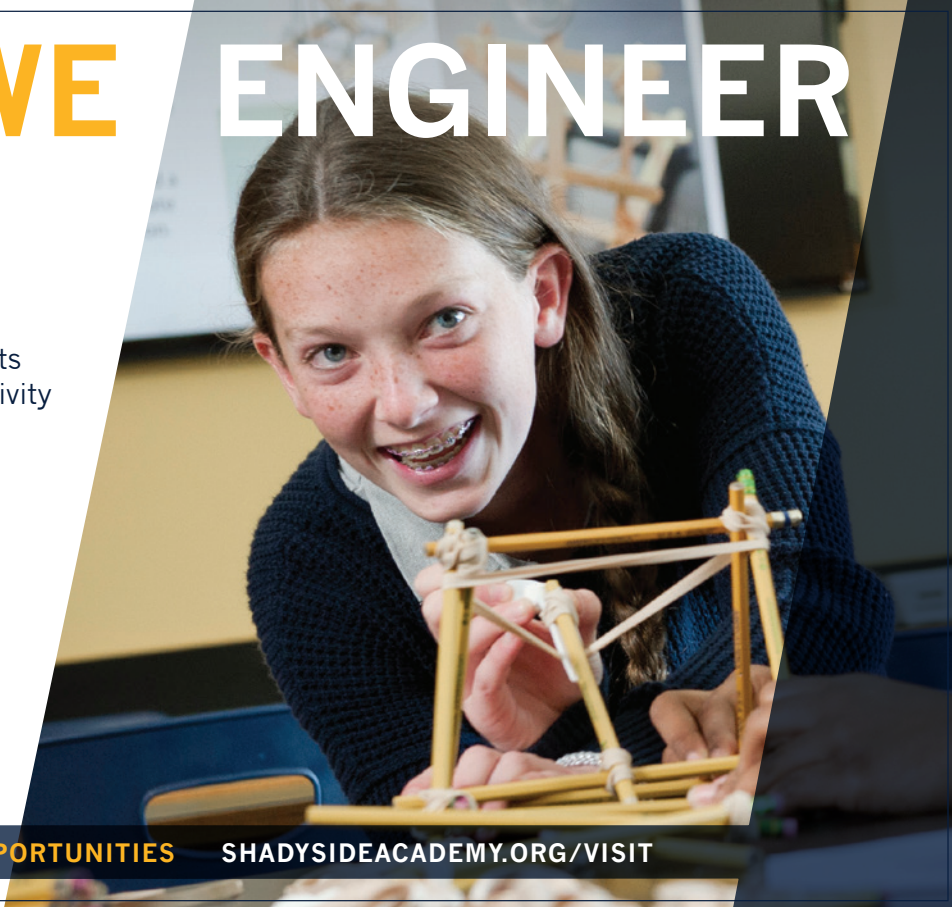
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Ages 7 & up

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Wexford Acting Studio

Is there anything more fun than creative play when you're a child? Summers are meant for exploring new things, trying out new activities, and making new friends! If your child has ever thought about being on stage, singing, dancing, and acting, Wexford Acting Studio provides a wonderful opportunity for kids to participate in putting a show together and performing a musical in front of an audience.

No prior performance experience is necessary to join our two-week summer musical theater camp. You are joining Wexford Acting Studio to LEARN what it is to perform, and how to enjoy doing it. It's all about rehearsing a show, memorizing music, dances and lines in a trusting and supportive environment. After one week at the studio, we travel to the COMTRA Theatre to rehearse, adding sound, lights, costumes, makeup and props. In less than two weeks, we will perform two shows for parents, family and the community on July 15 and 16.

Our show is *Annie, Jr.*, a favorite with actors and audiences alike. One reason this show is a great choice for Wexford Acting Studio's summer schedule is that there are so many roles to fill and chances to shine in the ensemble and as a featured player. Don't miss this opportunity to join our cast of stellar performers, counselors and teachers, making friends and happy memories all along the way.

Sarah McGraw Krushinski has owned and operated Wexford Acting Studio for the past 17 years. Her background includes performing professionally in musicals for over 25 years and directing and teaching musical theater since 2004. Helping young people thrive and begin their journey on the stage has been her ultimate goal for almost two decades.

But Hurry! Register for Wexford Acting Studio's Musical Theater Camp now, because we will have to cap the number of campers when we hit capacity. The camp runs from July 3-16. Please go to WexfordActingStudio.com for the camp registration form and more details. See you at the studio! ■



Sarah McGraw Krushinski
Wexford Acting Studio

Space is Limited!
REGISTER TODAY!

Wexford Acting Studio

Summer Musical Theatre Camp

July 3-16

Live Performances of *Annie Jr.*
at the Comtra Theatre
Saturday July 15 and Sunday July 16

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www.WexfordActingStudio.com

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SUMMER CAMPS July 17 - 21 | July 24 - 28

The week of July 17

History Camp: 9 - 12
Art Camp: 12:30 - 3:30

The week of July 24

Art Camp: 9 - 12
History Camp: 12:30 - 3:30

Member Rates:

History Camp: \$50
Art Camp: \$50
Both Camps: \$100

Non-Member Rates:

History Camp: \$60
Art Camp: \$60
Both camps: \$120

*Discount for children from same household.

To register for camp contact David Miller at
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Ages 8 - 12



July 10 - 20
Ages 10 - 16



July 24 - Aug 3
Ages 10 - 18

CLO ACADEMY DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH



June 19 - 23 July 10 - 14
Ages 12 - 18



July 5 - 7
Ages 5 - 6



July 26 - July 7
Ages 13 - 18



July 17 - 28 July 24 - Aug 4
Ages 11 - 15 Ages 8 - 12



June 19 - 30
Ages 6 - 10



July 5 - 7
Ages 3 - 4



July 10 - 21
Ages 6 - 10



July 31 - Aug 4
Ages 8 - 12



REGISTER
TODAY!

TRIPLE-THREAT BOOT CAMPS

June 13 - 15
Ages 10 - 13 and
Ages 14 - 18

Aug 8 - 10
Ages 10 - 13 and
Ages 14 - 18

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School Movers & Shakers

ECWPA



The **Enrichment Center of Western Pennsylvania** had three-chapter winners for The Daughters of the American Revolution annual essay contest submitted by the Kuskushkee Trail chapter of the DAR. The winners were Jack Davison, Sadie Jasper, and Finn DesLauriers. Sadie also won the Pennsylvania level, and her entry is being judged

at the Eastern level. Pictured is **Jack, Sadie**, and Finn along with their teacher **Mrs. Ruth Butler**.

Providence Heights Alpha School

KDKA-TV Meteorologist **Mary Ours** visited *Providence Heights Alpha School* on Wednesday, March 15. Mary shared her knowledge of weather and her love of science with both elementary and middle school students in two separate presentations. Students wore weather-themed headbands and performed a song for her.

Aquinas Academy

Aquinas Academy of Pittsburgh received the Rob Zellers Award for Excellence in Arts Education from the Pittsburgh Public Theater during their Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Competition's Showcase of Finalists on February 27.

Aquinas Academy of Pittsburgh eighth grade students earned awards at the Region 7 Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) Competition. First place awards were given to **Katie Tarquinio, Aarona Casas Amedos, Claire Urban, Matthew McGrath, Aurora Predis, Samantha Falcon, Zach Schellhaas, Carly Bezila, Alice Dingle, Katrina Kedzierski, Thomas Pellathy, Tess Austin, Kay Chufo, Lucy Keverline, Tabitha Ridings, and Jack Stanton**.

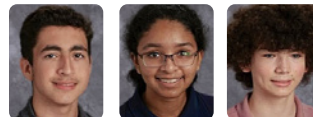
Shady Side Academy



Ella Gardner

Emma Gardner

Elaine Gombos



Michael McCoy

Savita Thompson

Alexander Todd

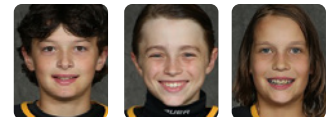
Six members of the *Shady Side Academy* Class of 2023 were named finalists in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. The SSA finalists are **Ella Gardner, Emma Gardner, Elaine Gombos, Michael**

McCoy, Savita Thompson, and Alexander Todd.

Seneca Valley

Seneca Valley's senior swimmers captured the WPIAL Class 3A title in the 200-yard individual medley at the University of Pittsburgh's Trees Pool. In the 200-freestyle relay, **Haihan Xu, Gavin Blazer, Connor Seeley** and **Frankie Walton** were victorious as the Raiders won the crown for the second straight season.

Mars Area



James Halliday

Jack Carlson

Joseph Costa

Four *Mars Area Centennial School* students **James Halliday, Jack Carlson, Joseph Costa, and Owen**



Gulnac

Gulnac competed as members of the 2011 Pittsburgh Penguins Elite Hockey (Hannan) Team. The Hannan Team and is ranked No. 1 in the nation and No. 3 in the world, outscoring opponents 333-97 this season. The team had 22 wins against the Top 10 U.S. teams and 6 wins over the Top 10 Ontario teams.

Mars Area Centennial School students **Elizabeth Shaha, Katherine Kazanov, Brooklyn Lasch, Chloe Kivlan, Lilliana Elliott, and Alexis Harrington** received special awards at the school's 2023 Science Fair, held March 9.

North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools

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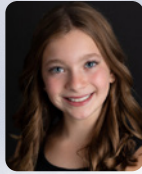
2023 Registration Opens Mid-March

We are excited to announce that the NHRCES is planning its first ever Summer Camp for 2023! While we don't have all the details yet, we are hard at work designing programs throughout our North Hills campuses. This experience promises to be educational, physical, spiritual and most of all FUN!

Scan the QR Code to ensure you receive an email when registration opens.

(412) 837-1056 | www.nhrces.org | info@nhrces.org

Mars Area Centennial School fifth-grader **Alena Salvini** earned an Individual Performance Award at the Junior Theater Festival (JTF) West 2023.



Alena Salvini

Colleen Hinrichsen, Mars Area Elementary School STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Art Mathematics) teacher, was named the 2023 Mars New Year Martian of the Year.



Colleen Hinrichsen

Pine-Richland



Pine-Richland/Mars Area U.S. Air Force JROTC (Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp) Drill Teams took first place overall in the Parkersburg JROTC Drill Meet, held Feb. 18 at Parkersburg South High School, West Virginia.

BC3

An Elk County resident who stays in a 28-foot-long camper near *Butler County Community College's* main campus to avoid a round-trip commute of four hours as she pursues an associate degree from BC3 has received a \$500 scholarship from an academic consortium. **Alexis Krug**, of St. Mary's, has a 4.0 grade-point average as a student in BC3's physical therapist assistant career program.



Alexis Krug



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Take the Trip: Strengthening Bonds Through Travel

By Maura L. Johnson, LCSW, PMH-C

Growing up, I was incredibly fortunate to have a large group of friends in my neighborhood, ones who remain in my life to this day. Many of us met in Kindergarten and continued our friendships through graduation from high school, with more friends coming along as the grades progressed.

My closest childhood friend, Sarah, and I met at the DuBois YMCA while being on their swim team as six and seven year olds. Despite us being a grade apart and at different schools, we very quickly became inseparable. Once we both finished college, I moved to Pittsburgh for graduate school and she moved, as well, exploring different locations throughout the U.S. When she settled in Three Rivers, California, over ten years ago, we often discussed vague plans for a visit, though the timing never seemed ideal. After reflecting on how suddenly life can change and the value in prioritizing friendships, I decided to make the trip in June of 2022, with my then six-year-old daughter, Sloane, in tow.

One thing that had always been a barrier to making this trip was the somewhat complicated travel to her location. Three Rivers is a beautiful resort town at the base of Sequoia National Park, about two hours from the nearest (and somewhat smaller) airport. Most of us know how difficult it can be to find any measure of direct flights from our airport, which meant the most efficient route was through Los Angeles. Sloane and I landed around 11 p.m. and then drove about half of the three-hour distance before stopping at a hotel. By the time we reached Sarah's house the next morning, we were beyond ready to begin the "vacation" part of the trip. Sarah greeted us with her two daughters, ages five and eight, and it truly felt like no time had passed since we last saw one another. There's something so wonderful about picking up right where you left off with the friends who know you best. The security in these types of friendships does wonders for our emotional health and well-being.

During this trip, we toured Sequoia National Park, which was absolutely incredible. The enormity of the trees, the way the temperature went down with each loop



upwards in the drive, the hiking and mountain views were just amazing. We talked and watched the kids climb different rock formations, with me noticing how similar Sloane and Sarah's eldest daughter looked like the two of us as kids. We spent our time doing touristy things but also much of it was spent talking and laughing about old memories, watching the kids play and participating in many of their day-to-day activities. On our last evening, we attended both girls' swim meet, which was such a full circle moment in our friendship.

The morning we left was bittersweet, as it's difficult to gauge when we will see Sarah or her family again. However, I left feeling a renewed sense of closeness within the friendship and so grateful I made the choice

to "take the trip." I had booked the redeye back to Pittsburgh so Sloane and I could have a beach day. We spent the day at El Matador Beach in Malibu, exploring different shops and driving along the Pacific Coast Highway. Looking back, I'm often surprised I did all of this alone with a six-year-old. While there were definitely some stressful moments (such as recovering from the red eye and driving in LA traffic), the extra day we took was also a wonderful bonding experience for us.

The last three years have been incredibly difficult and altered life in ways we could not imagine. Most of us experienced either the loss of loved one(s) or a significant decline in the frequency we could see those closest to us. If it's feasible for you to take the trip you've been putting off, consider making it happen. It's understandable that we allow friendships to take a backseat during the different seasons of life. When it comes to juggling our own familial, work and personal needs, this can seem like a daunting task. Many clients, particularly the mothers I see, report at least one friendship they wish to prioritize more frequently. This isn't always easy; however, prioritizing our friendships and nurturing them pays us back in immeasurable ways. ■



Maura Johnson is a licensed clinical social worker currently in practice at Cranberry Psychological Center. She is a certified perinatal mental health provider, as well as a contributing staff member with Postpartum Support International. While her primary focus is treating PMADs, she also treats a variety of conditions and clients of all ages. She resides in the Pittsburgh area with her husband, Brendan, daughter, Sloane, and dog, Max.

SAVE THE DATES

**MAY
6-7**

Dick's Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon

Join Passavant Hospital Foundation's Fundraising Team and help us hit our goal of raising \$5,000 to support our Cancer Care Fund, which helps qualified UPMC Passavant oncology patients afford medicine, food, shelter and transportation during their treatment. Contact Amanda Posa at Passavant Hospital Foundation at posaaa@upmc.edu or 412-748-6641.

**JUNE
5**

36th Annual Golf Outing

Enjoy a day on the links at Treesdale Golf and Country Club while helping Passavant Hospital Foundation raise money for its mission.

**AUG
11-12**

11th Annual 4K & 8K Run/Walk and NEW Family 5K Run/Walk

Passavant Hospital Foundation's 4K and 8K Run/Walk will take place on Friday evening, Aug. 11 at the North Park Pool Loop. An all-NEW Family 5K Wellness Run/Walk will be held the next day, on Aug. 12, at the UPMC Passavant Sportsplex at Graham Park in Cranberry Township.

**SEPT
21**

8th Annual Legacy of Caring Gala

More than 400 participants attended last year's gala and helped Passavant Hospital Foundation raise more than \$130,000 for its mission. The next gala will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Pittsburgh-Cranberry.

**OCT
20**

4th Annual Purse & Tool Bash

Join us virtually on Facebook Live and Microsoft Teams on Friday, Oct. 20 to bid on a vast array of power tools and designer purses, handbags and backpacks!

For details on all upcoming events, go to PassavantHospitalFoundation.org/Events

PASSAVANT HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Making a vital impact on the health of our community

Passavant Hospital Foundation's mission is to advance the health and wellness for all in our community through education, outreach and grant making. This month, we invite you to two free educational offerings.

Every year, Passavant Hospital Foundation partners with Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) North Campus to provide a variety of health and wellness education programs for all members of the community. Each class is led by physicians, clinicians, researchers, and other experts on the specific topic, with ample time for questions and answers. All programs are FREE, but registration is required by calling 412-788-7546.

Tick-Borne Diseases in Western PA
Tues., Apr. 11, 2023 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Learn about Lyme Disease, anaplasmosis, and other looming tick-borne diseases in the area. We'll review epidemiology and you'll learn about presentation and treatment options. This course is led by Libby Ernhart, MPAS, PA-C, Infectious Diseases.

Join Passavant Hospital Foundation for a new education program called "Wellness Works." Each class, led by physicians and clinicians, provides up-to-date medical information with time for questions and answers afterwards. The sessions will be held at the Northland Public Library and are FREE but registration is required by calling 412-366-8100, extension 113.

Gardening Thyme: Avoid Aches and Pains While Gardening

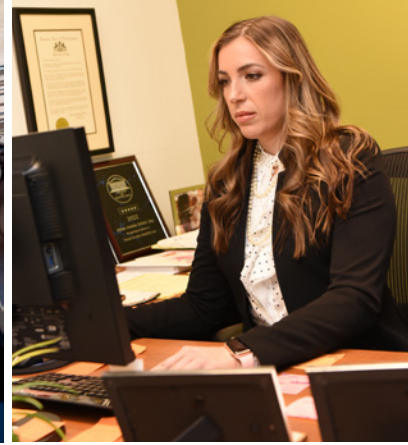
Thurs., Apr. 27, 2023 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Join our physical therapist, Taylor Tisa Docherty, PT, DPT, OCS, CSCS, to discuss how to enjoy gardening with less pain and stress to your body. Learn about proper lifting techniques and the best tools to use. Anyone performing outdoor chores will benefit from this class!



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New Data Shows Long COVID Keeping as Many as Four Million People Out of Work

Robert Peirce & Associates, PC

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down, forcing us to navigate a long-lasting impact on our lives.

Today, while science has made medical advances to get us through the depth of the pandemic, challenges linger. Many people continue to suffer with severe symptoms associated with post-COVID infection. Unfortunately, many post-COVID complications have put the medical community in uncharted waters, leaving those with long-COVID symptoms searching not only for adequate medical care but also often resulting in the harsh reality that their symptoms have caused disability.

A recent Census Bureau study found 16 million people of working age suffer from some form of long post-COVID related issues. Of that number 2 to 4 million people are currently out of work and face potentially devastating financial, emotional and physical instability. Long COVID can be quite severe and can include a wide range of health problems. Common symptoms related to long COVID include, but are not limited to:

- Tiredness or fatigue that interferes with daily life
- Symptoms get worse after physical or mental effort
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fast beating or pounding heart
- Ringing in ears
- Dizziness
- Difficulty concentrating

Similar to autoimmune disorders, long COVID is very difficult to diagnose and treat. However, due to the extensive number of people experiencing severe medical conditions associated with COVID, the issue must be addressed by the medical

community and the Social Security Administration. If you are experiencing debilitating, long-term symptoms of COVID-19, making it impossible for you to work, you could be eligible for Social Security Disability Benefits. For more than 40 years, the law firm of Robert Peirce & Associates has been helping individuals that can no longer work obtain the benefits they deserve.

Barbara Manna, EDPNA, has worked for Robert Peirce & Associates, PC for over 30 years as an Accredited Disability Representative. "People are facing complex, chronic illness after having COVID, and we are here to help them determine if they have a case to file for disability," said Manna. "We will assess your case based on the limitations associated with your medical impairments, as documented by your medical records and will help to build your case," said Manna.

Attorney Adrian DeGori has been helping clients file Social Security Disability claims at Robert Peirce & Associates for the past 10 years. "As of now, there is no clear path for people suffering from long-term medical conditions associated with COVID," said DeGori. "Most people do not realize that if you are unable to work, for any reason, you may qualify for Disability Benefits."

If you are experiencing debilitating symptoms after being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, let the legal team at Robert Peirce & Associates help you maneuver through the complicated disability determination process. Our team of legal professionals will walk you through the process every step of the way. The overall goal is to win your case so you can receive the benefits you deserve. This is a long and complex process and your

legal team from Robert Peirce & Associates will be with you every step of the way providing the following professional services:

- Completing the initial application
- Submitting all forms and required documents
- Organizing details of the case
- Contacting and providing witnesses
- Securing and submitting all necessary medical records and evidence
- Meeting all required deadlines
- Filing an appeal when necessary

The legal representatives at Robert Peirce & Associates have extensive experience in these cases and often help clients identify additional pieces of evidence that make your case even stronger. We can make all the difference in filing a successful claim, and there is no fee unless we win your case.

For over 40 years, Robert Peirce & Associates has been providing supportive and compassionate legal representation. Let the dedicated Social Security Disability Team at Robert Peirce & Associates guide you through this process in order to make the strongest claim possible. ■

To make a no obligation appointment, contact Adrian DeGori at 412-281-7229 or visit www.peircelaw.com.

Data Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/new-data-shows-long-covid-is-keeping-as-many-as-4-million-people-out-of-work>

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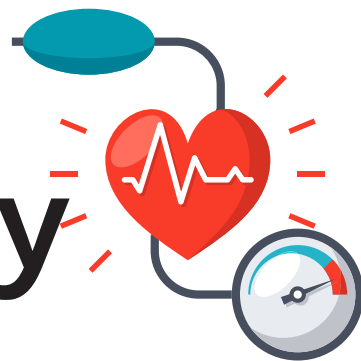


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Silent But Deadly

By Belinda Burchick, RPh, BPharm



In this case, I am talking about high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, which is a condition where blood flows through blood vessels at a higher-than-normal pressure, pushing against the walls of the arteries.

Most people who have high blood pressure don't even know it. This silent condition can lead to damage of the blood vessels, causing further injury to the heart, kidneys, eyes and brain. Over time, if high blood pressure goes untreated, it can lead to heart failure, kidney failure, vision loss and vascular dementia.

As your blood pressure rises into higher levels, symptoms may begin to present, such as, irregular heart arrhythmias, changes in vision, headaches, nosebleeds and ringing in the ears. As hypertension gets extremely high, one can experience chest pain, anxiety, fatigue, nausea, confusion and even muscle tremors.

About 1 in 3 adults have high blood pressure, with only half that have it under control.

Some risk factors that can lead to high blood pressure:

- Being overweight
- Diabetes
- Sleep Apnea
- Metabolic Syndrome
- Smoking
- Family history

It is important to keep an eye on your blood pressure. The first step is to measure it at the same time every day, and not after eating or physical activity. It is a good idea to take your blood pressure in both arms because a significant difference in the reading can indicate other heart-and kidney-related issues. Today, blood pressure monitors are inexpensive and more accessible. Also, it is important to have a yearly physical, which includes checking your blood pressure.

Before you get started, it is necessary to understand your blood pressure reading.

Top number is the systolic pressure

(blood pressure when heart is beating).

Bottom number is the diastolic pressure (blood pressure when heart is resting between beats).

You can check the levels and meanings online, using the search phrase "Blood Pressure Chart." When measuring, you will see your blood pressure fluctuate based on time of day, activity or even after eating a meal. This is fine as long as it returns back to normal.

Safe ways to lower blood pressure:

- Breathing exercises that slow your heart rate and promote relaxation (look up exercises online, key phrase "breathing exercises")
- Lay down in supine position and rest for 10 to 15 minutes
- Eat a healthy diet with vegetables and whole foods
- Lose or maintain healthy weight
- Do regular exercise and move more, doing such things as, gardening, walking, biking, swimming, even shopping
- Increase fiber in your diet
- Add Omega 3 foods, such as, eggs, fish, spinach, brussels sprouts, nuts and seeds
- Increase water intake
- Perform de-stressing activities, such as, mindfulness, yoga, walking, listening to music, and meditation
- Eat dark chocolate
- Get quality sleep
- Eat garlic if you can tolerate it
- Eat high-protein foods, unless you have kidney disease
- Eat more potassium-rich food (unless on some blood pressure medication that also increase potassium, which can be dangerous if too high, check with health care provider)
- Take blood pressure lowering supplements

(unless you are on blood pressure medications. Check with health-care provider first)

- Take magnesium supplement (first, check for magnesium deficiency with health care provider)
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco
- Cut down on salt or sodium intake, sugar, and processed foods
- Cut back on caffeine
- Limit foods high in saturated fats and trans fats

Habits are hard to change; so, if the list is too long, start with the ones that are easy for you to do. Even if you do not have high blood pressure, this list promotes everyday general health and will make you feel better.

If you find that your blood pressure is consistently high, check with your health care provider. They may start you on blood pressure medication. After starting this lifestyle change, you may notice a consistent decrease in your blood pressure, so talk with your health care provider because they may want to decrease your dose or consider stopping the medicine at some point.

Take the first step to a healthier you, and get your blood pressure checked. ■



Belinda Burchick, RPh, BPharm, has focused her career on geriatric pharmacy and automated dispensing systems to promote patient safety and improve health outcomes. For the last 10 years, she has served as Chief Pharmacy Officer (CPO) for a long-term care pharmacy, servicing the geriatric population in nursing homes, assisted living, independent living, and the senior day programs, such as, Pennsylvania's LIFE programs and the PACE programs in multiple states. Belinda oversees the pharmacy operations in three pharmacies, located in Denver, Philadelphia and headquarters in Pittsburgh.



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JFilm Celebrates 30 Years

The film festival will present 24 screenings of 23 films this year.

By Janice Lane Palko

"JFilm began in 1994 as a volunteer-run Jewish film festival under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. I came on board in 2001 and had just four months to plan my first festival! Luckily, we had a strong base of volunteers, so we pulled it off. The support of really dedicated volunteers has carried us through the years, and we're so grateful for them," said Kathryn Spitz Cohan, executive director, Film Pittsburgh (presenter of JFilm).

This year JFilm is celebrating its 30th anniversary. "Things have really changed since the early days. In 2005, we started expanding our programming by showing some of JFilm's Holocaust films to area

middle and high schoolers. That program, Teen Screen, has since been expanded to include films about social justice, human rights and other culturally relevant topics to encourage tolerance and understanding and is hugely popular with area teachers," said Spitz Cohan.

In 2015 they went out on their own and became Film Pittsburgh, a stand-alone nonprofit. That gave the group the resources needed to add even more events over the years, including a short film competition and three other film festivals: Three Rivers Film Festival, Pittsburgh Shorts and Script Competition, and ReelAbilities Pittsburgh, a festival that celebrates people living with disabilities.

"JFilm has expanded too," said Spitz Cohan. "The audience has steadily grown to more than 4,000 a year, though Covid has certainly affected that. But even in



2020 when we had to screen all films online, we had more than 8,000 viewers.”

This year JFilm will present 20 films in person at three theaters across the Pittsburgh region: The Oaks, AMC Waterfront, and CMU’s McConomy Auditorium, and stream four films virtually.

“We have so many great things planned. One film I’m particularly excited about is the festival premiere of *Jack L. Warner: The Last Mogul*. It’s a newly updated movie about the founding father of the American film industry and his New Castle roots,” said Spitz Cohan.

The film features interviews with Hollywood royalty and great, insider stories about Hollywood’s heyday. “And we’re thrilled to have Jack Warner’s grandson, Gregory Orr, who wrote, directed, and produced the film, along with editor/co-producer Donald Priess, at the theater for a talk-back with the audience afterwards. I can’t wait to hear their stories,” said Spitz Cohan.

This year’s films are all incredible and will appeal to everyone – you don’t have to be Jewish to enjoy them. There are dramas, comedies and a musical romcom, *Our Story*; documentaries like the powerful *Cure for Hate*,



which is a deep dive into how young men get into – and out of – hate groups, and the beautiful ballet film, *Finding Light*, that’s followed by a talk-back with dancers and the new artistic director of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

“It’s Q&As like that and other fun events like our Film Schmooze discussions and bagel brunches that make JFilm an integral part of the local film scene. In fact, *Pittsburgh Magazine* recently rated JFilm as one of the top-three film events in Pittsburgh. And it’s the largest Jewish cultural event in the region, so it’s a must-see for many reasons. I hope everyone can join us April 20-30,” said Spitz Cohan.

You can get more info about the films and tickets at FilmPittsburgh.org. ■



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April Plantings and Celebrations

By Ron Eichner

Hey folks, April is the first whole month of spring and a month of preparation for one's yards, gardens and outdoor projects. Seeing and hearing birds and the budding of spring flowers and bushes, along with sunny warm days is good for our souls after three months of winter.

For people worldwide, especially in North America and Europe, April 1, April Fool's Day, is celebrated by the playing of practical jokes. It's a time to play pranks on your friends, parents, kids and grandkids and even in the workplace. A great trick to play on kids or grandkids is "donut seeds." You get a small Ziplock bag, place a handful of Cheerios in it, and label it "donut seeds." Then maybe have some full-size donuts on hand so they can see what their "donut seeds" will look like when they're all grown.

There is a saying, "April showers bring May flowers." The Big Box stores and greenhouse industry try to compete for April sales, and it can set up gardeners for failure. Each year for two months, I promote myself as a "gardening angel" because many local greenhouses want to compete with the box stores and sell a lot of flowers and vegetable plants way too early. There are good reasons why, for generations, the tender flowers and vegetable plants should be planted in late May around Memorial Day. There are four "w" words, and as a "gardening angel," there is a fifth "w" word. They are who, what, where, why and when.

For decades and generations, gardening was done with a plan. The early spring days with the warmth of the sunshine are the time to clean up the gardens and yard for another growing season. We are amending the soil using fertilizer, manure, or mushroom manure to feed the gardens and yards for the coming season.

The threat of frost in May can be challenging on delicate flowers and vegetable plants and sets you up for failure. Cold rains throughout May can hamper or injure the tender plants. Just because we get some warm days in a row, and the soil temperature increases, cold rain strips the temperature gains of the soil and can hamper or injure the tender plants. These are all why our gardening ancestors in Western Pennsylvania held back planting too early.

Explaining what cold, damp soils are like is like trying to relax in your living room, watching your favorite TV program with your feet in a cold bucket of water. However, you can plant

hardy spring flowers like pansies, violas, dianthus, snapdragons, dusty miller and perennials. Early vegetables from seed can be peas, red beets, carrots, and vegetable plants like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, brussels sprouts, kale and lettuce.

We have had summer-like weather early, and that prompts customers to want to plant their impatiens. So, I said, "Do a trial and plant half of them mid-May, and plant the other half at the end of May or early June, and tell me what you see. To their surprise, even though May could be frost-free, the late May or early June impatiens planted outperformed the impatiens planted two or three weeks earlier.

The highlight of April is Easter. Easter week starts with Palm Sunday, and commences with Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. It's genuinely a sacred, busy week that culminates with a message of hope. Interestingly, we hear of all the anxiety, depression, and fears today. Yet, they don't measure up for the sacrifice Jesus made with his death on the cross for all of us. Of course, Jesus could have taken an easier path to heaven, but what would be the lesson for all of us? Easter is celebrated in the United States and falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the spring equinox, which is always between March 22 and April 25.

Our friends and customers of the Eastern Orthodox faith follow the solar Julian calendar, which typically means that their Easter holiday falls later.

Passover is the Jewish holiday commemorating the leading of the Jews out of slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses. For 2023, Passover goes from April 15 to April 23. Folks, whatever way you celebrate, may God bless you.

If an Easter ham is on your menu, we offer fully-cooked semi-boneless, super-lean hams—half and whole. All you have to do is serve and eat. Advance orders are welcome. Our laying hens are all busy producing high-energy eggs that can even be used for Easter eggs for the Easter bunny to hide for the kids and grandkids. Remember that we close our farm market and greenhouse from noon to 3:00 p.m. on Good Friday. Diane's homemade cookies, cut-outs, and Easter candies are available by the dozen. So, feel free to stop by Eichner's Whole Farm and Greenhouses at 285 Richard Road, Wexford, and get "the rest of the story." ■



Wain & Wiltrot Partners in Life and in Business

By Bronwyn Wain

Phillip Wain is the owner and founder of Wain Landscaping, which he started in 1993. The company provides not only landscaping services to both residential and commercial properties, but also hardscaping, maintenance and winter services.

While in college working towards two teaching degrees, he was landscaping so he could support his family. After the business began to grow, he changed his career from teaching to landscaping full time. For Wain, working 16-hour days was the norm.

"I would start early to do office work and then go out in the field all day long," Wain said. "I would get home at dark and unload the trucks, then do office work again."

Cathy Wiltrot is the owner and founder of The Sign Shop +, a business she started in 1992. She makes a variety of custom signs and just about anything the customer can think of.

She started learning her craft as early as high school, while working in the graphics department for her parents' magazine in Ohio. She then landed a job for a large exhibit company in Pittsburgh where she did all of the sign work that went into the exhibits.

"My daughter Myriah being born was the big thing that pushed me to go out on my own," Wiltrot said. "I always remember how old my business is because it's the same age as my daughter. I didn't want Myriah to be raised by someone else in child care that I could barely afford, so I made it work."

"When Cathy and I married and moved to our house in 2009, we both moved our businesses here. I only had eight employees at the time; however, we have grown out of this space and have decided to build a new warehouse for

Wain Landscaping at a separate location," said Wain.

The warehouse will have brand new offices and storage space—something that the employees are looking forward to. This new warehouse will allow for more space for not only the employees, but also the vehicles and equipment.

Wain and Wiltrot also chose to have a warehouse built because they wanted more privacy at their home.

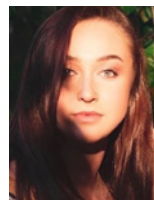
"We are looking towards the future when we retire and sell the business," said Wain. "Having its own land and building allows that."

While Wain and Wiltrot own two entirely different types of businesses, working together as a team comes easily.

"With Cathy's expertise, she is the Wain Landscaping marketing director," Wain said. "She does all the sign work which saves us a fortune."

Wain and Wiltrot also enjoy being able to have a flexible schedule and spend time with each other.

"We find that having a partner that also owns their own business gives us a better understanding of one another and allows us to work together as a team," Wiltrot said. ■



Bronwyn Wain is a 2022 graduate of Kent State with a bachelor's degree in journalism and a minor concentration in political science. She especially enjoys writing about music and politics, and currently resides in Butler, Pennsylvania.

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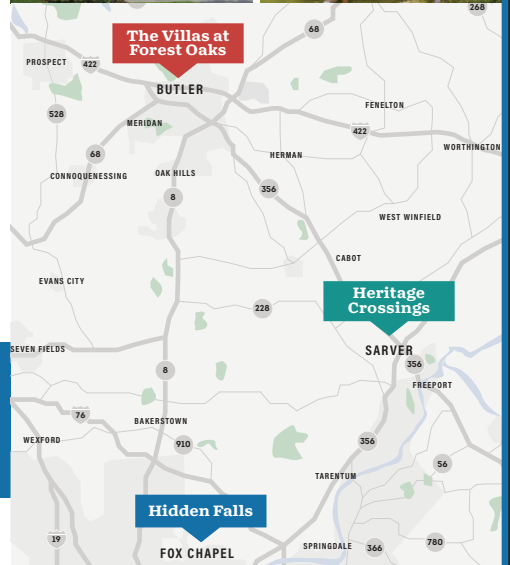
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April Events

Beaver Valley Spring Artists Show, opening 1-4 p.m., Apr. 30, at the Merrick Art Gallery, 1100 5th Avenue, New Brighton. Awards presented at 2:30 p.m. The show is exhibited until 7 p.m., May 11. For info, beavervalleyartists.org.

Butler VA Health Care System is seeking caregiver applicants for its new Medical Foster Home (MFH) Program. Medical Foster Homes are private homes in which a trained caregiver provides services to one to three individuals. MFH provides a choice for veterans who are unable to live independently and prefer a family setting. For details, www.va.gov/butler-health-care/programs/medical-foster-home-program, or call 878-271-6723.

Children's Home & Lemieux Family Center Shake Your Booties Gala, 6-7 p.m. Apr. 22, at Acrisure Stadium. The event promises to be "far out" with entertainment from the band Dancing Queen and emcee, Aditi Kinkhabwala. For details and ticket info, visit: <https://bit.ly/SYGB2023>.

Cranberry Artists Network featured artist for April is Doris Dumrauf. Her work will hang in the Back Hall Gallery at the Cranberry Township Municipal Center, 2525 Rochester Rd., Cranberry Twp. Artist's reception 2-4 p.m., April 15. For info, visit www.cranberryartistsnetwork.com.

Cranberry Township 55+ Club meets 1 pm the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Cranberry Township Municipal Center. Members must be residents of Cranberry Township. The club features activities, social opportunities and visits to nearby points of interest. For info, contact Bill at (724) 776-1933.

Dinosaurs of Antarctica film, beginning Wed., April 6, The Rangos Giant Cinema at the Carnegie Science Center. For details, visit CarnegieScienceCenter.org.

Do you like to knit or crochet? You're invited to join the Busy Hands group at the Olive Branch Fair Trade Store in Wexford. We meet the first and third Monday of each month from 9:15-11:15 a.m. to make items for charity. For more information, call the store at: (724) 299-8700.

Free Matinee Movies on Mondays: 2 p.m., Apr. 3, *Downtown Abbey: A New Era*; Apr. 10, *Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris*; Apr. 17, *Marry Me*; Apr. 24, *Redeeming Love*; at the Legacy Theatre at Cumberland Crossing in McCandless Twp. For details, visit TheLegacyLineup.com.

Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Roundtable meeting, 7 p.m., Monday, April 17. Michael Rupert will

present, Osborn's Artillery at Gettysburg. Lecture is free and open to the public. Call Marge at (724) 625-2329 for the location.

Ingomar Garden Club monthly meetings 10:30 a.m., meeting, light lunch and guest speaker, March through November at Northmont Church, 8169 Perry Highway, Pittsburgh 15237. For details, visit www.ingomar-garden-club.com for additional information.

North Hills Community Outreach will provide free tax help for qualified households. Information can be found at www.nhco.org/free-tax-preparation.

Northland Library's Garden Gala will be held on Saturday, April 22 at the library and, weather permitting, outside in the Learning Garden. For tickets, visit: www.northlandlibrary.org/foundation/garden-gala.

Northland Library has numerous events scheduled for April. For a complete list of events, visit northlandlibrary.org.

Northland Spring Book Sale, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday, May 5, & Saturday, May 6 & 1-4 p.m. Sunday, May 7, \$5 Bag sale on Sunday (Northland supplies the bag), Northland Library, Cumberland Rd., McCandless Twp.

Pacifica Quartet, 7:30 p.m., April 24, Pittsburgh Playhouse, downtown. For info, visit chambermusicpittsburgh.org.

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Perseverance, 8 p.m., April 15 & 2:30 p.m., April 16, April-May 7, recorded live streaming. Tickets go on sale, mid-April, Prime Stage Theatre. For details, visit primestage.com.

Pittsburgh Youth Chorus Summer Singers Day Camp, 9 a.m.-3p.m., June 26-30, Duquesne University School of Music. For details, visit pittsburghyouthchorus.org.

Prime Stage High School Drama Awards for schools in Southwestern, PA. The awards ceremony will be held on April 24, at the New Hazlett Theater Center for the Performing Arts. For info, visit primestage.com.

Rummage Sale, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., Apr. 1 & 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Apr. 2, St. Matthew Parish at St. Aloysius Church, Mt. Troy Rd., in Reserve Twp. Huge selection of kitchen items, jewelry, books, seasonal items, clothing etc. Bake goods available on Saturday. If you have furniture to donate, call Deb at (412) 337-1713 or Claire at (412) 360-9866.

Sealarks Women's Group meeting, 1 p.m. April 12, at Memorial Park Church, 8800 Peebles Rd, Allison Park. This group provides Christian fellowship and social activity for women alone – widowed, divorced or never married. All women alone are welcome to attend. For info, call Edie (412) 487-7194.

Shady Side Academy Summer Programs, 30 programs and classes are available. Learn more at www.shadysideacademy.org.

Shake Your Booties Gala sponsored by The Children's Home & Lemieux Family Center, 6-11 p.m., Apr. 22. Learn more at childrenshomepgh.org.

Sojourner House Victorian Tea Fundraiser, 2-4 p.m., April 16, at the Omni William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh. For details, visit www.sojournerhousepa.org.

"Springtime in Paris" Fashion Their Future, Apr. 27, at Fox Chapel Golf Club. Support Pittsburgh's Children Women's Board of Pittsburgh 2023 Benefit. For tickets, visit Paris2023.givesmart.com. For info on the Women's Board of Pittsburgh, visit www.wbpggh.org.

St. Aidan Over 50 Tours: Moses, July 25-26, at the Sight & Sound Theatre, trips include two Amish meals; \$550 pp/dbl or \$645 single. Seneca Niagara Casino Resort, Oct. 16-18, optional trip to Buffalo Creek Casino. \$335 pp/dbl or \$475 single. For details, call Dave at (412) 719-3172 or Lois at (412) 400-4516.

UPMC Passavant Hospital Auxiliary

Membership Opportunities, are you looking for a stimulating opportunity for social interaction with other dedicated people in support of our community hospitals – UPMC Passavant McCandless and Cranberry? Join the Passavant Hospital Auxiliary's long tradition of caring. The Auxiliary meets the 2nd Monday of each month, 10 am Sept. through June. New members are welcome. For info, contact Nicole Kaib at (412) 748-6640 or kaibn@upmc-edu.

Vintage Market is a non-profit store in Shaler that benefits The Blessing Board. Open 10 a.m.-3 p.m. every Th/F/Sat in the Shaler Plaza, 880 Butler Street & Rt. 8 (look for the gray door between Rite Aid & Planet Fitness).



I Don't Know How Not to Do That

By Janice Lane Palko

I was blessed to have my Grandma Gert until I was nearly 40, and I was very close to her. She liked to tell me stories about her life growing up, and I think that is one reason why I like history. She made history personal and made me realize that headlines happen to real people.

She told me stories of things like what it was like when her younger brother was missing in action for a time after crossing the Rhine River into Germany during World War II. She also told me about skating on Lake Elizabeth in the Allegheny Commons Park on the North Side as a girl, but one thing she told me stuck in my mind all these years later. She was a kid during The Depression, and she told me that times were so dire back then that one night there was nothing for them left to eat but one hard-boiled egg for their family of four, and it was only through the kindness of their neighbor, who would bring home spoiled fruits and vegetables to them from his store that enabled them to survive. Her father lost his job, and their family lost their home, and they would never own a home again.

I never went hungry as a kid or missed a meal, but from her stories, I always knew that fortunes can change in an instant, that jobs aren't always easy to come by and that life can be hard sometimes and not to take anything for granted. It was also my upbringing and my Catholic school education that taught me that you had an obligation to do your best whether it was in school, at home or on the job. I was taught to give your all. I don't know how to not do that.

I don't know if you've heard, but there are several movements afoot that run counter to all of that. "Bare Minimum Monday" is a trend among the Tik Tok generation where workers ease into the work week, giving less of an effort on the first day of the work week as a gesture of "self-care." Then there is the concept of "Quiet Quitting" where an employee puts no effort into their work than is absolutely necessary.

Obviously, workers with the above-mentioned attitudes have never gone hungry or been out of work. I don't wish misfortune on anyone, but those types of attitudes are detrimental to not only society, but them. You've got to it your all in life, or life may not give you a thing in return. ■



Military Affairs – Purple Up! Tele-Audiology for Veterans A “Run to Remember” and Hall of Valor Inductees

By Paula Green

April is a month where we honor military children. One specific day makes the celebration even more colorful; April 15 is Purple Up Day. Worldwide, military children play a significant role in their schools, youth organizations and communities. To show our support, wear purple in their honor. We let them know we support them in all branches of the military – Army, Navy, Marine, Coast Guard, Air Force, and Space Force.



Duquesne University is hosting a “Run to Remember” on Sunday, April 25. The event is sponsored by veteran and ROTC students. Fifty percent of the memorial run/walk proceeds will go to the Sgt. Ryan Lane scholarship fund, which honors fallen service members. For more information, visit www.raceentry.com/duquesnes-run-to-remember/race-information.

In other military developments, The Butler VA’s Connected Care Department is using virtual technology to help veterans. Tele-Audiology, is a new telehealth service for Veterans at the Butler VA’s Lawrence County Community-based Outpatient Clinic. With Tele-Audiology, Veterans can “meet” virtually with an audiologist at the main Butler facility and receive complete audiology services, including hearing aids, molds, fittings, testing and minor repairs. The main benefit of this new program is it saves veterans time and travel to the main Butler VA facility.

Another recent military event occurred on March 26; Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall inducted four veterans into the Joseph A. Dugan Jr. Hall of Valor. Since 1963, more than 700 heroes have been honored with this prestigious recognition. This year’s inductees were US Army Specialist Four Henry Caruso Jr., who served in Vietnam, and received the Silver Star; US Air Force Captain John Elsey, a Vietnam veteran, who was bestowed with the Distinguished Flying Cross; US Army Sergeant Daniel Koon, who served in Vietnam, and received the Silver Star; and US Marine Corps Reserve Technical Sergeant, Harry Lee, World War II veteran, who was honored with a Distinguished Flying Cross.

Northern Connection magazine congratulates and salutes the four veterans inducted into the Hall of Valor last month. Thank you for your bravery and service to our country. ■

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