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YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR THE BETHLEHEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

DECEMBER 9, 2020

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NORCO

No tax increase for 2021

BY BERNIE O'HARE
Special to the Bethlehem Press

Northampton County Council Dec. 3 unanimously approved a no tax hike budget for 2021. The \$440 million spending plan for next year, which Executive Lamont McClure first introduced Oct. 2, is 11 percent lower than this year's budget. It comes at the end of over 20 hours of budget hearings. It keeps the tax rate at 11.8 mills, where it's been for the past seven years. A home assessed at \$75,000 will receive a tax bill next year for \$885. The budget is also balanced.

After the vote, Council President Ron Heckman said, "Well, council, you can pat yourself on the back. You just passed a budget."

Though council adopted some amendments to McClure's original spending plan, they were minor. The only real bone of contention was DA Terry Houck's \$100,000 request for participation in Lehigh County's Regional Intelligence and Investigation Center (RIIC).

At the final budget hearing Dec. 1, Northampton Council

See **NORCO** on Page A2

COVID-19

State update

'There are not unlimited beds, staff'

BY NATE JASTRZEMSKI
njastrzowski@tnonline.com

State Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine explained in a press event last week what measures are being taken by hospitals to respond to the worsening COVID crisis.

Specifically, she said everyone is working hard to avoid a scenario in which hospitals run out of intensive care beds. Some hospitals are converting regular beds into ICU beds, while others are closing small departments so staff can be re-purposed. These are not ideal decisions, she said, because there are not unlimited beds, staff and personal protective equipment.

Hospitals are stretch-

See **STATE** on Page A2

KEEPING THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT



PRESS PHOTOS BY DANA GRUBB

The Freedom HS Theatre Company will present a virtual performance of the Charles Dickens classic, "A Christmas Carol," which will be available as a rental online at www.showtix4u.com/events/FHSTC for viewing from Dec. 11 through Jan. 8. Use the code 'Christmas' if ordering before Dec. 11. Watch as the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future, who all hope to help him change his ways. "A Christmas Carol" is directed by Justin Amann. He is assisted by assistant director Natalie Parker, choreographer Joey Schubert, costumer Jodie Johnson, prop mistress Priscilla Salazar, stage manager Emma Ernst and student assistant director Katie Marakovits. **Above:** "God bless us everyone" says Tiny Tim (Samantha Marrero) as the Cratchit family gives a toast on Christmas.

FREEDOM THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS 'A Christmas Carol'



Ebenezer Scrooge (Michael Sheridan) listens as his nephew Fred (Trevor Mann) wishes him a Merry Christmas.



Martha Cratchit (Isabella Barberis) visits her father Bob Cratchit (Connor McClure) at work.



The ghost of Marley (Thomas Probst), informs his former business partner Ebenezer Scrooge (Michael Sheridan) that three ghosts will pay him a visit.



The first ghost, the Ghost of Christmas Past (Katie Marakovits), visits Scrooge (Michael Sheridan) to reveal shadows of things that have been.

PEOPLE SAY

BY DANA GRUBB

What do you think is the most important thing to remember at this time of year?



"It's a time to be kind to others because it's not always a happy time for others."
Kristy Christian
Bethlehem



"To remember to be kind, be grateful and your family."
Kristy Knox
Washington Crossing

PEOPLE SAY
Continues on A2

INSIDE TODAY
The Christmas Tree Trail
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Cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms?

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LVHN.org/virtualcare

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What do you think is the most important thing to remember at this time of year?



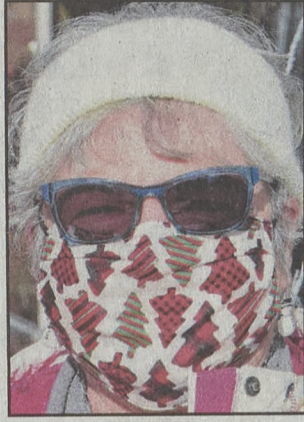
"Be kind."
Michelle Azgirey
Feasterville



"To hold those that you love really close."
Allison Markel
Bethlehem



"The importance of our community and to bring it all home."
Jeffrey Boerner
Bethlehem



"Be thankful for family and friends, as well as be concerned about them keeping themselves safe."
Carol Mineo
Easton

CORRECTION

In our story "What is that thing" in last week's issue, we spelled "TUG!" author Catherine McCafferty's name incorrectly.

STATE

Continued from page A1
ing resources as they can, but three markers have been set to determine whether a hospital must end all but the most necessary elective surgeries, such as a cardiac bypass or cancer biopsy, and reallocate resources. Some hospitals in the Southwest and Keystone regions already meet the trouble mark for staffing issues, but no hospital will face the most stringent cuts unless two of the three criteria are met.

"It is so important to remember that we all have a role to play in what is happening in the hospitals right now. It has a direct impact on your community and it has a direct impact on other healthcare services you

might need that are not related to COVID-19. The people who make the healthcare system work are relying on you to do the right thing. We are blessed with many freedoms in the United States, but since the founding of our republic, freedoms come with responsibility - to our families, to our communities, our state, our nation," Levine said. "This is why we are asking you over and over again to follow our basic guidelines."

As of Monday, the state has 394,455 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 11,373 deaths. Lehigh County has 13,455 confirmed and 401 deaths; Northampton County has 10,767 confirmed and 346 deaths; the city of Bethlehem has 3,048 confirmed and 85 deaths.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Through December 14

Penn State L.V. Alumni Chapter's Toys for Tots drive. Drop wrapped toys at Hotel B Ice Cream Shoppe, 462 Main St.

Through December 18

Northampton Community College's Alumni Association Craft Fair online. Visit www.northampton.edu/virtualcraftfair.

Thursday, Dec/ 10 to Sunday, Dec. 13

Huts on Main 2020, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Main Street Historic Downtown Bethlehem.

Colonial Industrial Quarter shopping, Thursday, Friday: 5 to 8 p.m.; Saturday: 2 to 8 p.m.; Sunday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. 459

Saturday, December 12

Luminaria Night, 6 to 10 p.m. City wide. Visit <https://bit.ly/2H1yeU> or <https://m.facebook.com/luminarianight/>.

Hanover Twp Norco Santa (on truck only- no personal contact) visits, 9 a.m. Streets and times, visit www.bethlehemtownship.org.

LV companies partner to develop oral vaccine

BY NATE JASTRZEMSKI
njastrzemi@tnonline.com

Two Lehigh Valley companies announced Dec. 3 that, with expansion funding from the state, they are developing oral and injectable COVID vaccines that may see approval and distribution early next year.

US Specialty Formulations and VaxForm, both Ben Franklin Technology Partners business incubator graduates, have partnered on oral vaccine development for years and retasked their efforts to meet the current health crisis.

VaxForm President Dr. Garry Morefield said while their work follows tried and true injectable methods other companies are now testing to meet worldwide need, their parallel oral vaccine research will aim for different markets.

The main challenge to effectiveness, he said, is to get the vaccine into the bloodstream before it is digested.

The target for initial human trials is February and it must then be approved by the Federal Drug Administration. But one advantage of using liquid and capsule form is that it won't require the cold chain infrastructure of the common injectable candidates - these vaccines need to be transported and stored in extreme freezing tem-



PRESS PHOTOS BY NATE JASTRZEMSKI

Oral vaccine research and development companies US Specialty Formulations and VaxForm began in the Ben Franklin TechVentures business incubator on the Lehigh University campus in Bethlehem.

peratures, which limits which hospitals and facilities will be able to carry them.

Morefield said, "This program actually started before COVID ... with the goal in the case of pandemics having a technology that wouldn't be as reliant on cold chains and medical professionals for administration that could reach not just large cities, but rural areas and third-world nations."

Their goal is a vaccine that is at least 95 percent effective, and to produce 300,000 doses per month

by March, USSF CEO Dr. Kyle Flanigan said, with priority being Pennsylvania markets. "I believe there will be many vaccines needing to be administered globally over the course of several years before the bulk of the population is vaccinated properly. So this is a clear need."

Flanigan said both companies anticipate the success of this technology and are preparing to expand their facilities and staff. His company, which produces clinical materials, currently employs 14

in Allentown; VaxForm, a medical research group, employs five at Ben Franklin TechVentures in Bethlehem.

Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Dennis Davin said, "DCED supports early-stage technology companies and established manufacturers as they help us innovate to recovery from COVID-19. USSF and VaxForm are outstanding examples of young companies that have responded swiftly and effectively to this pandemic."

NORCO

Continued from page A1

ty Council adopted Council member Lori Vargo-Heffner's suggestion to trim that contribution by \$50,000. Democrats Vargo-Heffner, Kevin Lott and Bill McGee supported this cut, along with Republicans John Cusick and Tom Giovanni. Opposed were Democrats Ron Heckman, Kerry Myers and Tara Zrinski.

Vargo-Heffner said she's concerned with "continuing bi-county ventures" and noted the county just built a "beautiful forensic center." She complained that municipalities who take advantage of the RIIC make no contributions. Lott added that he'd like to see the increase justified, and John Cusick suggested the DA could pay for it out of the drug forfeiture fund.

The RIIC has an annual budget of about \$1.6 million, and Houck noted Lehigh County already pays the "lion's share" of the expense.



PRESS PHOTOS BY BERNIE O'HARE
LEFT: District Attorney Terry Houck got \$100,000 for Regional Intelligence and Investigation Center. **RIGHT:** "I'm not trying to be Batgirl," says Lori Vargo-Heffner.



The RIIC is primarily a source of intelligence. It is a mega data base from which investigators can review incident reports, investigations and data from numerous local, state and federal agencies. It uses this intelligence to solve crimes.

The newly constructed forensic center performs a completely different role than the RIIC. In addition to being a place to store human remains, it has the capacity to perform

digital forensic tests that can help solve crime. It plays no role in gathering or disseminating intelligence.

Houck noted that dependence on technology and the related intelligence that comes with it, grows daily. "People walk around with their life in their front pocket," he said, in obvious reference to cell phones. This daily increase in information justifies the increased contribution. Houck dismissed the possibility of using drug

forfeiture funds to pay for this venture, noting that state law requires that the money must be related to drugs. He added this is no bi-county venture, because ongoing criminal activity knows no boundaries. He said it's unrealistic to expect a tiny borough like Roseto to help pay for a RIIC, but its police force benefits from it every day. Kerry Myers, who sponsored several forums on police-community relations, said the RIIC is needed especially for impoverished communities who feel the impact of crime more severely than more well-to-do areas. "He needs this to fight crime in my community," noted Myers. "They may not all be property owners, but they're innocent people."

Though Houck explained that increased technology justifies the increased contribution, Lott continued to complain about the increased cost.

"How much money is a life worth?" asked Kerry Myers.

See **NORCO** on Page A6

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BETHLEHEM

DAY CARE SUSPENDED: YWCA Bethlehem hopes to limit exposure risks by temporarily closing the Adult Day Services Center. This action was taken to safeguard the staff and those the center serves, as well as to help mitigate any risk due to an anticipated wave of COVID-19 over the holidays. The Adult Day Services Center will be temporarily closed Nov. 30 until Dec. 11 and then again Dec. 28 until Jan. 9, 2021.

We apologize for any inconvenience that may arise, but this is a necessary preventative measure to reduce the risk of exposure to our personnel and our clients to COVID-19.

During these periods of closure, center staff will continue to serve senior clients with a daily virtual activity program. All seniors in the community are welcome to participate. This program helps ease the symptoms of social isolation due to being home. Use the email address below or call to enroll. This program is at no cost to participants, but donations are welcome.

For further information, please contact Yvonne Toth at 610-867-4669, ext. 100 or by email, adsco@ywcabethlehem.org.

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

CORONER'S REPORT: As of Nov. 30, the Northampton County Coroner has reported 319 COVID-19 related deaths in Northampton County (285 residents/34 non-residents), An additional 68 deaths of Northampton County residents have been reported by the Lehigh County Coroner as of Nov. 30. Between the two counties, they have recorded 353 deaths of Northampton County residents from COVID-19.

DRIVE THRU TESTING: A COVID-19 drive-through testing site is available at 3100 Emrick Blvd. Bethlehem Township. Hours of operation are Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Tuesday/Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The site is open on every Saturday from 9 a.m. - noon. The drive-through testing center is located in the parking area to the rear of the Coordinated Health Building and is separate from patient parking and routine patient care.

PENNSYLVANIA

COVID VACCINE: MyBioSource.com, a biotechnological products distribution company, carried out a survey of 4,428 (ages 18+) to find out how much each person, hypothetically, would be prepared to pay to get vaccinated ahead of others. The poll revealed the average Pennsylvanian would sacrifice \$348 of their savings to get first in line (compared to a national average of \$460). It appears Oklahomans would be prepared to spend the most - a hefty \$936. This compares to South Dakotans, who would only be prepared to pay \$279 to get vaccinated first.

CAPITAL COMPLEX CLOSED: With the surge in COVID-19 cases continuing, starting Monday, Dec. 7, the Pennsylvania Capitol Complex is closed to the public until further notice. All operations of the Governor's Office and General Assembly will continue, but access to the Capitol Complex will be limited to employees and people with badge keycard credentials.

The cancellation of visits and events applies to all interior venues in the Capitol Complex and will affect rallies, school or group tours, choir performances, receptions, and other public gatherings. The Capitol Complex includes, but is not limited to, the Main Capitol Rotunda, East Wing Rotunda, Keystone Building Atrium, Forum Auditorium and The State Museum of Pennsylvania.

PLCB ENFORCEMENT: Pennsylvania State Police Liquor Control Enforcement Officers visited 306 licensed liquor establishments from Friday, Dec. 4 through Sunday, Dec. 6 to ensure businesses are abiding by COVID-19 mitigation requirements that include social distancing, masking, and other health and safety requirements of the liquor code.

Liquor Control Enforcement Officers issued 16 notices of violation and 21 warnings for failing to follow COVID-19 requirements. Complaints regarding licensees not complying with COVID-19 mitigation mandates may be directed to the BLCE at 1-800-932-0602 or reported through the BLCE's online complaint form.

PARK EVENTS CANCELED: The Pa. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has canceled all in-person events and programs organized by its staff and volunteers in all state parks and forests, as of Sunday, Dec. 6. This decision, affecting approximately 150 planned events, will be in effect until further notice. People who have registered for programs will be notified.

This action also includes a move away from DCNR's normally organized group First Day Hikes that were planned for New Year's Day, January 1, 2021. Instead, many alternatives for individual hiking that day in state parks and forests will be made available later by DCNR.

State parks and forests will remain open for use by the public. DCNR staff will be taking additional steps to offer self-guided programming only or virtual events. Check the Calendar of Events for scheduled programs.

Out of state visitors who are planning to stay overnight at state park and forest facilities must have a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of entering the commonwealth. If someone cannot get a test or chooses not to, they must quarantine for 14 days upon arrival in Pennsylvania before visiting a state park or forest.

Pennsylvanians visiting other states are required to have a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of their return to the commonwealth or to quarantine for 14 days upon return. Visitors who don't comply may be fined between \$25 and \$300.

QUARANTINE ALIGNMENT: The Department of Health was notified health care providers that, effective immediately, it has aligned its quarantine guidance for people exposed to COVID-19 with the new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced earlier this week that provides an option for a 10-day quarantine without testing or a seven-day quarantine with a negative test on or after day-five of quarantine. This guidance does not apply to health care settings or those living in certain congregate settings, such as nursing homes or prisons.



PRESS PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOSIE LOPEZ

Democracy For All members at a September 2020 voter registration event in Allentown. Democracy For All is a fairly new program meant to increase and expand public engagement in the democratic process, particularly in underserved communities, such as those with higher concentrations of black and brown, lower income residents.

'I did my part'

My autumn of activism in an election to remember

BY CHRIS HARING
Special to the Bethlehem Press

ANOTHER VIEW

Ask anyone who's ever worked in politics, particularly grassroots organizing and activism, and they'll tell you that it's nearly impossible to quantify the amount of hard work required, due to the complex nature of canvassing and engaging with the general public. With COVID-19 altering so much of our world over the last nine months, the recent election was bound to be even more hectic and uncertain than any presidential cycle in recent memory.

When I first saw that there were remote canvassing positions available within Democracy For All - PennFuture, despite my background, I had never heard of it or Regional Director Josie Lopez of Allentown. With a little research, I learned that PennFuture is a statewide environmental advocacy organization founded in 1998, while its subsidiary, Democracy For All, is a fairly new program meant to increase and expand public engagement in the democratic process, particularly in underserved communities, such as those with higher concentrations of black and brown, lower-income residents.

A mutual friend shared her post on Facebook in early September in which she called for interested parties to reach out about joining her growing team. Since I had been furloughed from my full-time warehousing job in the spring and had focused on freelance remote work such as journalism and data research through the summer months, a more stable, if temporary, position doing something I was passionate about seemed appealing to me.

With my interest piqued, I quickly reached out and scheduled an interview with Josie, and within five minutes of speaking to her, I knew her team was the one that I wanted to focus my efforts with. Since I'd been involved in politics locally

on a strictly voluntary level for the last few years, as well as having earned a B.A. in political science from Kutztown University over a decade ago, it felt somewhat serendipitous. The opportunity to do something that I would likely be doing anyway (and to get PAID for it!) was an easy decision.

As for the work itself, it seemed fairly straightforward, if somewhat tedious. We were to spend several hours a day phone and text-banking with the intention of helping to educate and inform potential voters about the upcoming election here in Pennsylvania. The fact that PennFuture was paying a living wage to do this - \$15 an hour, with the option of benefits including health insurance - felt almost too good to be true. I've worked just as hard for a lot less in my 20 years as a member of the labor force.

Lopez, a professional photographer by trade, never misled us about what we were signing up for. With COVID-19 and newly-implemented mail-in balloting ensuring that this would be a unique - and monumental - election in recent memory, it was never going to be without its challenges. Other than when she dropped off a tablet and headset to me when I first started, the entirety of the team's communication would be digital - through Zoom meetings, Slack chats and emails. There was no physical office and what little face-to-face work DFA would be doing was strictly voluntary.

Not surprisingly, I learned that spending seven to eight hours a day, four or five days a week, using an autodialer to call unsuspecting folks is wholly unglamorous and mostly thankless work. Being screamed at by rude, angry people in the middle of a highly-contentious election during a period of unprecedented partisanship was exhausting at times and certainly not for the

thin-skinned. While Josie never told us to put up with abuse - in fact, she strongly advised the opposite, to NOT to put up with it - the fact was, it was unavoidable. We often had group 'huddles' via Zoom during our shifts in which we shared 'horror stories' and vented about our experiences. These sessions would prove invaluable, especially as October rolled on and we got closer to the big day - Nov. 3.

Another aspect which kept us going during our worst moments, other than her leadership, was the composition of the team she assembled. Once our team disbanded after the election, I conducted interviews with Lopez and several of our coworkers and I asked her what she had been looking for during the hiring process. She said her goal was "to form a team that was not only a mirror of the world we live in, (but) a team that was filled with people who believe in change."

Our team of close to 20 canvassers was very much in line with her vision, with an extraordinarily wide range of ages, ethnicities, gender identities, education levels and more represented among us. It felt apropos that our team would truly look like America. As a middle-class, straight, white, cisgender man in his 30s, it was inspiring to meet these folks, many of whom came from positions nowhere near as privileged as mine. They were so passionate, intelligent and most of all, accomplished - some at such a young age, too.

It wasn't just the makeup of the team that was so different to me, it was also the way that it operated. Josie, a Kutztown alumnus like myself, made it clear that even though our work was extremely important, it was by no means to be our only priority for those months. She made it a point to be flexible with scheduling, especially with so many of us having multiple

See **PART** on Page A4

Historic Holidays

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Changes

Following the directives established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to limit public gatherings, several of the following meetings / activities might be changed, canceled, streamed or on-line. Check websites and social media as available.

Digital and virtual events

Banana Factory on-line digital exhibitions and more: www.bananafactory.org.
 Bethlehem Area Public Library: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsuAN4A6kV3Ql1us_WkWoQ featured for a variety of items. Bethlehem Area Public Library, 11 E. Church St. Visit www.bapll.org/events/categories/virtual-events/. Buildings currently closed but have touchless checkouts for books reserved online. General information: visit www.bapll.org (main) or at www.facebook.com/paBAPL or www.bapll.org/ssmain.htm (south side). YouTube channel: visit www.youtube.com/channel/UCsuAN4A6kV3Ql1us_WkWoQ featured
 Historic Bethlehem Museums and Sites digital programming: visit <https://historicbethlehem.org> or call 610-882-0450.
 National Museum of Industrial History virtual museum. 602 E. Second St. Visit <http://nmih.org/virtualmuseum>; call 610-694-6644 for schedules.

Wednesday, December 9

Historic Bethlehem (Virtual) 28th Annual Holiday Soiree & Auction, 5 to 8 p.m. 2020 Featured Artist Jim Lukens. Online via the Givergy app on a mobile device, tablet, or computer. For tickets: visit <https://historicbethlehem.org/holiday-soiree-auction/>

Saturday, December 12

NMHI hands-on electric locomotive engineer event. 20-minute timed entries under museum personnel supervision. Two adults or one adult and one child limit per session. Tickets are non-refundable except in the case of inclement weather or cancellation by the museum. Visit www.eventbrite.com/e/bethlehem-steel-locomotive-train-rides-tickets-126919149593 for tickets and www.nmih.org for information.
Luminaria Night: "Be the Light in Your Neighbor's Darkest Hour", 6 to 10 p.m. New Bethany Ministries. Visit <https://bit.ly/2H1yell> or <https://m.facebook.com/luminarianight/>.

The Bethlehem Press calendar listings are, to the best of our knowledge, correct at the time of printing. We are not responsible for the accuracy or reliability of information submitted by external parties.

MEETING BOARD

Bethlehem City Hall is open to the public. Employees are available to assist residents via phone at 610-865-7000 and by visiting www.bethlehem-pa.gov. Observe masking and social distancing.

Wednesday, December 9

CANCELLED: Special meeting City of Bethlehem Zoning Hearing Board, 6 p.m. City hall, 10 E. Church St. To view the application for a use variance request for 2105 Creek Road, visit www.bethlehem-pa.gov/calendar-planning-zoning.
Bethlehem Parking Authority Board, 4 p.m. Rescheduled from November. Join Zoom Meeting by visiting <https://zoom.us/j/95319475111?pwd=NEVhbmhNUE55QzRrTWI3NUVH0j12Zz09>; meeting ID: 953-947-5111; Passcode: 537627. Information: visit <https://bethpark.org/news>.
BASD reorganization, 6 p.m. Education Center, Edgeboro room. Snow date.
Bethlehem Twp. Municipal Authority, 5 p.m. Municipal building, 4225 Easton Ave.
Lehigh Co. Commissioners, 7:30 p.m. Public hearing room, Gov't. Center, 17 S. Seventh St., Allentown.
Hellertown Borough Water Authority, 7 p.m., 685 Main St.

Thursday, December 10

Northampton Co. General Purpose Authority, 8:15 a.m., Northampton Co. Courthouse, 669 Washington St., Easton.
Northampton County Council, 6:30 p.m. - live streamed Northampton Co. Courthouse, 669 Washington St., Easton.
Bethlehem Authority, 3:30 p.m. City Hall, 10 E. Church St.
Bethlehem Planning and Zoning, 5 p.m. City Hall, 10 E. Church St.
UNCONFIRMED Bethlehem City Planning Commission meeting, 5 p.m. Questions and comments may be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the hearing to planninginfo@bethlehem-pa.gov. Include name and phone number. To enter the meeting, visit <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/810063781> or by calling 1-571-317-3122. Use access code 810-063-7813#.

Monday, December 14

Historic Conservation Commission, 6 p.m. To join online, visit <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/177113429> or call 1-571-317-3122. Access code: 177-113-429.
Bethlehem Housing Authority, 4:30 p.m. Community Room, Monocacy Towers.
BASD Regular Board, 7 p.m. East Hills MS, 2005 Chester Road. Snow date: Dec. 16
Bethlehem Twp. Recreation Commission, 6 p.m. Municipal building, 4225 Easton Ave.
Fountain Hill Borough Planning Commission, 7 p.m. 941 Long St.

Tuesday, December 15

Bethlehem Council (via Zoom), 7 p.m. City hall.
Hanover Twp. NorCo Supervisors, 7 p.m. 3630 Jacksonville Road.

Wednesday, December 16

Bethlehem Zoning Hearing Board, 6 p.m. Join meeting online at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/199905741>; or by phone at (1) 872-240-3311. Access Code: 199-905-741.
Hellertown Borough Zoning Commission, 7 p.m., 685 Main St.
Lehigh Co. Commissioners, 7:30 p.m. Public hearing room, Gov't. Center, 17 S. Seventh St., Allentown.
Fountain Hill Borough Council, 7 p.m. 941 Long St.
NorCO Industrial Development Authority, 4 p.m. Northampton Co. Courthouse, 669 Washington St., Easton.

The Bethlehem Press calendar listings are, to the best of our knowledge, correct at the time of printing. We are not responsible for the accuracy or reliability of information submitted by external parties.

Send us your holiday photos

We invite you to send us photos from your event. Here's what we need:
 1. Well-lit and in focus photos only
 2. Send high resolution jpeg files
 3. A general caption answering the who, what, when, where, why and/or results of your event.
 4. A specific caption for each photo identifying those in the photo and what they are doing if it isn't obvious (3 and 4 may be combined if you send one image).
 5. You may not want to use last names of children.
 Send copy and images as email attachments to: gtaylor@nonline.com.

AREA DEATHS

Fred W. Hepner

truck driver



Fred W. Hepner, 84, of Bethlehem and formerly of Coplay, died Nov. 29, 2020, at St. Luke's Hospice, Lower Saucon Township.
 Born in Northampton, he was a son of the late Robert A. and Myrtle I. (Scheckler) Hepner.
 He was in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War era.
 He was a truck driver for the former Maslin Trucking, GPS Terminal Services and other trucking companies until he retired.
 He was a member of the Northampton American Legion.

He is survived by four daughters, Staci Eckhart and her husband Daryl of Bethlehem, Karen Stamps and her husband Wendell of Kansas, Linda Smith and Susan Stallings and her husband Steve, all of California; 11 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; and four siblings, Edgar Hepner of Nazareth, Sandra Gave of Towanda, June Peters of Coplay and Patricia Hepner of Maryland.
 He was predeceased by a daughter, Judy Marie Hepner; and companion, Nancy E. Lobach.
 Contributions may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, c/o Heintzelman Funeral Home Inc., P.O. Box # 196, Schnecksville, PA 18078-0196.
 Arrangements were made by Heintzelman Funeral Home Inc., Schnecksville.

Jennie M. Green

Hillers pitcher, ice dancer



Jennie M. Green, 97, of Bethlehem, died Nov. 23, 2020. Born in Fountain Hill, she was a daughter of the late Michael and Antoinette (DeCrosta) Cotugno. She was the wife of the late Robert L. Green.
 She worked at Keystone Mills prior to working as a homemaker.
 She was an ice dancer and a member of the Pen-

guin Club at Albeth Ice Skating rink.
 She was a star pitcher on The Hillers of Fountain Hill softball team.
 She is survived by a daughter, Janet M. Green-Dunstan; and a granddaughter, Denise Booth and her husband Daniel.
 She was predeceased by four siblings, Leonard Cotugno, Samuel Cotugno, Dorothy Selvaggio and Jean Burda.
 Contributions may be made to Second Harvest Food Bank or The Steel Ice Center of Bethlehem.
 Arrangements were made by Connell Funeral Home Inc., Bethlehem.

Joanne Joyce (Walbert) Barron

worked at Sabella's Corner Store

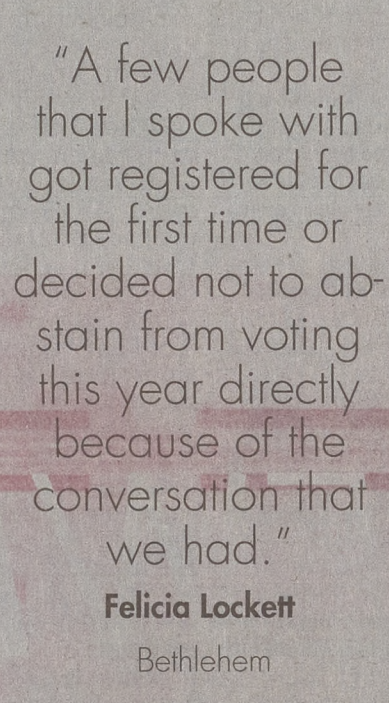
Joanne Joyce (Walbert) Barron, 81, of Bethlehem, died Nov. 21, 2020, at St. Luke's Hospice House. Born in Allentown, she was a daughter of the late Franklin A. Heintzelman Sr. and Dorothy Walbert. She was the wife of Francis "Frank" Barron for 58 years.
 She worked for many years at Sabella's Corner Store.
 She was a member of Saints Simon and Jude Parish, Bethlehem.
 In addition to her husband, she is survived by two sons, Bryan Edward and Gary Francis; a daughter,

Debra Ann (Barron) Arner and her husband Michael; a brother, Franklin Arthur Heintzelman Jr.; a sister, Esther Fay (Heintzelman) Lamonski; two sisters-in-law, Veronica Mary Heintzelman and Geraldine Lorraine Ulrich; two grandsons, Craig Michael Arner and Andrew Stephen Arner; nieces; and nephews.
 She was predeceased by a brother, Gerald Ralph Walbert; and three sisters, Dolores Mae Hartzell, Lillian Elaine Melendez and Sharon Louise Maldonado.
 Contributions may be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.
 Arrangements were made by Cantelmi Long Funeral Home Inc., Bethlehem.

PART

Continued from page A3

projects, school, childcare and more to juggle.
 "Understanding people's schedules and being flexible to individuals' lives really leads to a more productive workplace and morale," she said, and she backed up those words with her actions.
One of our Team Leads, Harlem-by-way-of-the-Poconos-native Shanyah Watts, is in her final year at historically-black Howard University in Washington, D.C. She, like many of us, has a "side hustle," as the kids call it these days. Called NHerBeauty, it is a lifestyle brand dedicated to community-building and empowerment of young women. Watts' experience especially helped her strengthen her multi-tasking skills, she said.
 "I did not know I was capable of record-keeping, sending emails, scheduling (observations) and managing trackers and important documents all while canvassing on the phone!"
Another teammate, Felicia Lockett of Bethlehem, is the executive director of Lehigh Valley Girls Rock, a nonprofit organization which offers several music and art related programs to female, transgender and non-binary folks, particularly youth. Founded in 2014, LVGR had just recently become secure enough financially for her to act as their only full-time employee.



which will likely come in handy as she finishes her master's degree in professional counseling and embarks upon her career.

While this election season was perhaps one of the most unique, challenging and contentious in American history, our team's shared experience gave us a sense of closeness, despite the temporary, remote nature of the gig and with our team members scattered across the eastern half of the state, from the Scranton area to the Philadelphia suburbs (and in Watts' case, outside Pennsylvania entirely). My former teammates and newfound friends one after another cited the culture in our team and the comfort our friendly, accepting members provided.
 "I developed a different level of love and respect for each of my coworkers, so when it ended I felt like our family was being split apart," Watts said. Another team leader, Jose Salas of the Hazleton area, added, "I felt it was a workplace in which you didn't have to hide your feelings or your character. It was very much encouraged for you to be your authentic self. That was a nice change of pace, especially during this pandemic when most folks are already stressed."
Fatherly also spoke highly of the camaraderie among our team and its familial qualities - in her case, quite literally, as her retired parents, Reginald and Theresa, were also members of the team. They provided a calming, mature presence at times when it was very much needed, and Reginald even lent his 'Morgan Freeman-esque' narration skill to a video produced by the team.
 Ultimately, with record turnout all across the country, Pennsylvania was no exception. Since driving turnout was the ultimate purpose of the venture, seeing the sheer volume of votes, regardless of who won, felt extraordinarily validating. While it might be

impossible to know how many people who otherwise wouldn't have voted wound up casting a ballot directly due to our efforts, it's safe to say that we made a difference, no matter how slim. Every time we were screamed and cursed at, accused of being part of some elaborate conspiracy or simply hung up on, the results felt worth it - far beyond the weekly paycheck it provided.
 My coworkers felt the same.
 "A few people that I spoke with got registered for the first time or decided not to abstain from voting this year directly because of the conversation that we had," Lockett said.
Salas said he was particularly proud of helping to enfranchise convicted felons who have since paid their debt to society but perhaps weren't aware that they are legally allowed to vote in Pennsylvania (which is not necessarily true in other states).
 "They (would) usually just try to get you off the phone saying that they aren't eligible to vote," he said. "It's what they have been told for a long time and no one let them know (otherwise)."
 Going forward, Lopez said that she intends to continue working with folks she met through DFA, albeit outside the organization, to prepare for the 2021 election cycle.
 "We contacted over 800,000 people; that's incredible," she said. "I have never worked with a better group of humans."
Some of my coworkers, like Saavedra-Mozo, Watts and Fatherly, have more education in their immediate futures. Lockett has plans to continue Lehigh Valley Girls Rock on a voluntary basis for now, with eyes set on resuming their annual Girls Rock summer camp program in 2021.
 Others, like myself, are a bit more undecided - after all, spreading awareness of the democratic process isn't treated much as an ongoing effort, particularly in 'off-cycle' years, despite the fact that there will be important elections in 2021 all across America. There will surely be nowhere near the amount of attention and funding directed toward those races as there was this year, and without them, far fewer paid positions in organizations such as Democracy For All.
Despite our best intentions, none of us truly know what the future may hold, but I feel pretty satisfied with what I did to help preserve and strengthen American democracy. Although I'm sure I won't necessarily look back on 2020 and describe the feelings it provided as overwhelmingly "hopeful," I can say that working with PennFuture, Lopez and the rest of these fantastic people kept my spirit afloat during some pretty dark days, and I'll always be extremely proud to say I did my part.

Dept. of Health strong-arms school districts; health experts weigh in

BY THERESA O'BRIEN
Special to the Bethlehem Press

BETHLEHEM AREA SD

The school board approved the updated code of conduct, changes to the high school program of studies, and several financial transactions – most routine – at its Nov. 23 meeting. The board also authorized the district to seek bids for summer 2021 facilities projects, including HVAC renovation at Farmersville ES, repairs at the Colonial Early Learning Center, and repairs to the garage at Broughal MS. All nine members were present; all measures passed 9-0, with one abstention regarding one bill payment.

Overshadowing the district's academic and facilities plans, however, was the specter of a state-mandated shutdown, despite the fact that BASD has not had any coronavirus spread in its schools.

Senior Network Director of Epidemiology and Strategy at St. Luke's Dr. Rajika Reed addressed the board first, followed by Bethlehem Health Bureau Director Kristen Wenrich and BASD health supervisor Dr. Kim Brannan.

Wenrich discussed new mitigation orders from the state Department of Health. "The Department of Health has moved away from leaving those recommendations up to local health departments and local school districts," she said. "The recommendation earlier had been to close your school if your

county was in 'substantial spread.' We looked at all the factors and confirmed that our schools did not have spread in the schools. The Department of Health said today that if your county is in 'substantial spread,' your school has to sign an attestation [...] agreeing to use the state's numbers for when to shut the school down." (The state's matrix of mandatory school closures is available online at www.education.pa.gov/Schools.)

This radical change in policy from Secretary Rachel Levine takes all decision-making power away from local school districts, and discounts to zero the advice of local public health experts. "Now," Wenrich said, "it doesn't matter that there's no evidence of school spread. If you're in a substantial spread county, you have to abide by that [matrix]. Otherwise the Secretary of Health will shut the school down."

Because the state's matrix includes mandatory shutdowns for varying numbers of days, and differing among building sizes, BASD now faces the risk of complete school shutdowns with extremely short notice, for periods of varying duration.

Superintendent Dr. Joseph Roy expressed his concern. "Parents can't deal with that – they have to have childcare. And the other

enormously important fact is this: Our kids need school." He focused on the work that the district's health partners have continued to do in creating and maintaining a safe environment in schools: "An arbitrary number – to say that if you hit that, school has to close – that really is missing the point as far as what we're supposed to do for these kids. Because of our close partnership with the health bureau, we are much more sophisticated in the way we are conducting contact tracing [and other practices] than other districts."

Brannan detailed the step-by-step process that her team uses to investigate each person – staff or student – who tests positive for the coronavirus, including an in-depth interview about where the person has been for the past several days, where the student has spent time within and outside school buildings, whether the student talked to anyone at lunchtime, and other factors. Videos of cafeterias are used to track

down all lunchtime contacts.

The ongoing coronavirus situation also threatens the financial stability of the school food service program. Wage costs for dining services employees are fixed, but income depends on the number of students choosing a school lunch.

This year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is reimbursing districts for all meals served, regardless of whether students' families meet need requirements that have applied in other years. There has been some confusion among families who think that their child packing a lunch means that more food is available for other children; however, the fact is that every student who chooses a school-provided lunch brings revenue into the program, making it sustainable for the children who need it most. More information on how to pick up free breakfast and lunch for all students (kindergarten through 12th grade) is available on the district's website (<https://www.basdschools.org/Page/1383>).

RIGHT: New orders released unilaterally Nov. 23 by Secretary of Health Rachel Levine state that schools in counties with "substantial spread" (defined as more than 100 positive tests per 100,000 residents) may be forced to close for three to seven days if they have a few individuals test positive within one school building, even if local health authorities verify that the cases are unrelated.

Recommendations for Small (<500 Students) Pre-K to 12 School Buildings Following Identification of a Case(s) of COVID-19

It is important to note that a significant and/or widespread outbreak may require moving to a more remote-based instructional model more quickly. DOH will provide proactive consultative assistance to school entities should such an outbreak occur.

Level of Community Transmission in the County	Number of Cases of COVID-19 Within a rolling 14-day period:	Number of Cases of COVID-19 Within a rolling 14-day period:	Number of Cases of COVID-19 Within a rolling 14-day period:
	1 student or 1 staff	2-4 students/staff in same school building who are not household contacts	5+ students/staff in same school building
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School does not need to close Clean area(s) where case spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close school(s) for 3-5 days* Clean area(s) where cases spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close school(s) for 14 days* Clean entire school(s) Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School does not need to close Clean area(s) where case spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close school(s) for 3-7 days* Clean area(s) where cases spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close school(s) for 14 days* Clean entire school(s) Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine
Substantial†	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School should consider altering schedule to significantly decrease number of students on site Clean area(s) where case spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School should consider altering schedule to significantly decrease number of students on site Close school(s) for 3-7 days* Clean area(s) where cases spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School should consider altering schedule to significantly decrease number of students on site Close school(s) for 14 days* Clean entire school Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine

* If case investigations, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfecting can be accomplished in a faster time frame, the length of closure time may be shortened.

†DOH and PDE recommend a Full Remote Learning Model for all schools in counties with substantial level of community transmission. Schools that choose to pursue in-person instruction or other models in which school buildings are utilized by students and/or staff should follow the recommendations here.

GRAPHIC COURTESY PA. DEPART. OF HEALTH

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Lehigh Valley Health Network
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NORCO

Continued from page A2

For five members of county council, the answer appeared to be \$50,000.

But that was Dec. 1. Two days later, council members restored the funding. Vargo-Heffner was the sole council member still willing to reduce Houck's request.

Houck made clear that the \$100,000 requested is the "amount of

funding that I feel is important to keep us safe. ... That's really what this is all about." Since the inception of home rule in 1978, no county council has ever turned down a budget request from the district attorney.

Council members John Cusick and Kevin Lott had suggested that Houck use the drug forfeiture fund to pay for the RIIC, but that is arguably illegal. Under state law, a District At-

torney "shall not anticipate future forfeitures or proceeds therefrom in in adoption and approval of the budget for the district attorney." Council member Peg Farraro made this point during the discussion.

Vargo-Heffner, who is up for re-election next year, denied she was cutting Houck's budget. "I'm not telling you how to fight crime," she said. "I'm not trying to be bat girl."

Houck disputed Var-

go-Heffner's denial. "I asked for \$100,000, and that is not in my budget," he retorted.

Council spent most of the meeting discussing \$50,000, which is 0.01 percent of a \$440 million budget. This is the third budget in a row that Executive McClure has proposed that calls for no tax hike, while fully funding open space. No county contribution was needed at Grace-
dale.

What you need to know about COVID-19

Prevention

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- If you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

Symptoms

Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs: Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms, including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Bluish lips or face

Note: This list is not all-inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

If you are sick

- Stay home and call your doctor
- Call your health care provider and let them know about your symptoms. Tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help them take care of you and keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- If you are not sick enough to be hospitalized, you can recover at home. Follow CDC instructions for how to take care of yourself at home.
- Know when to get emergency help
- Get medical attention immediately if you have any of the emergency warning signs listed above.

Who to call

LVHN: Call the MyLVHN Nurse Information line at 888-402-LVHN or complete an LVHN Video Visit by downloading the MyLVHN app. St. Luke's: 866-STLUKES (785-8537), option 7, or coronavirus@sluhn.org

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2010 Toyota Camry

Stock #P01447A



BSR A/C, STEREO CD, PWR PKG **\$9,000**

2007 Toyota Corolla LE

Stock #23324B



AT-AC-CD-PWR PKG **\$6,000**

2005 Toyota Camry LE

Stock #23266B



AT-AC-CD-PWR PKG **\$6,500**

2005 Toyota Prius Pkg 6

Stock #P01455A



GPS-6 CD PLAYER-ONLY HYBRID BATTERY **\$6,500**

2005 Toyota Corolla LE

Stock #23469B



1OWNER-CLEAN CARFAX-ONLY 67,618 MILES **\$7,500**

2011 Toyota Corolla LE

Stock #23479B



AT-AC-PWR PKG-ONLY 68K MILES **\$11,000**

2012 Toyota Corolla S

Stock #P01471B



CLEAN CARFAX-AUTO-PWR PKG-ONLY **\$12,000**

2013 Nissan Altima S

Stock #23597A



AT-AC-CD-ONLY 57K MILES **\$11,500**

2014 Toyota Corolla LE Plus

Stock #23384A



AT-AC-CD-PWR PKG-ONLY 68K MILES **\$12,500**

2015 Toyota Corolla S Premium

Stock #23593A



1 OWNER CLEAN CARFAX-P/ROOF-GPS-PWR PKG **\$12,000**

2015 Toyota Corolla LE Premium

Stock #23460A



GPS-P/ROOF-P/SR-HEATED SEATS **\$13,000**

2016 Hyundai Sonata SE Hybrid

Stock #23157A



1OWNER CLEAN CARFAX-AT-AL-LOYS-PWR PKG **\$11,000**

2016 Chevy Cruze Limited LS

Stock #23291A



AT-AC-CD-ONLY 34,007 MILES **\$13,500**

2008 Toyota Highlander Limited

Stock #23565A



CLEAN CARFAX 1 OWNER-GPS-H LEATHER-P/MOONROOF **\$12,000**

2012 Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo

Stock #23361A



CLEAN CARFAX-6CYL-AUTO-PWR PKG-ONLY **\$13,000**

2013 Toyota RAV4 Limited

Stock #23169A



GPS-PROOF-H LEATHER **\$16,500**

2013 Lexus RX 350

Stock #23400B



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Animals are available for adoption at the Center for Animal Health & Welfare no-kill shelter, 1165 Island Park Road, Easton. The shelter is working to end pet overpopulation by running a clinic so animals can be spayed or neutered before they go home. For more information, call 610-252-7722 or visit www.healthyanimalcenter.org.



Callisto is a 4-year-old Bengal-mix looking for a home of his own where he can share his very detailed stories. After being found as a stray in October, Callisto would prefer to be a solo actor in order to have your undivided attention. Although he does tolerate other felines, this upcoming star would prefer to have only human audiences.



Bentley is a 3-year-old shar-pei/pit bull-mix who found himself looking for a new home after being surrendered by his owner. He is a very sweet boy, but he does need some time to warm up to new people. Bentley would do best in an active adult-only home. In his previous home, Bentley lived with three cats and another dog.

Callahan objects to walking bridge study

BY DOUGLAS GRAVES
Special to the Bethlehem Press

"It's disgusting," said Bethlehem City Councilman Bryan Callahan as he argued against approval of a feasibility study for a pedestrian bridge from Sand Island across the Lehigh River into south Bethlehem.

"I supported this years ago, in part, when the economy was good," said Callahan. But he said, "It presents a bad image" for the city to spend \$40,000 on a feasibility study for a "bridge to nowhere that isn't going to be built until years from now."

Callahan urged the public to contact the city clerk to forward messages to council members to express opposition to spending \$40,000 on the study.

"The walking bridge is a luxury," said Callahan. "If you guys can't see that, it boggles my mind."

"You're throwing \$40,000 away in the middle of a pandemic." Other council mem-

BETHLEHEM COUNCIL



bers were quick to object to Callahan's position on the feasibility study. "This is in the budget which you just voted for," said Councilman William Reynolds. Councilman Michael

Paige Van Wirt objected to Callahan's "outrage."

"This Callahan outrage is very misplaced," said Van Wirt. "He voted [earlier this year] to spend [thousands] on the golf course."

Under the plan, the feasibility study will cost \$140,000, which will be funded by \$40,000 from the City of Bethlehem, \$60,000 from a grant from Northampton County, and \$40,000 from a grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Council President Adam Waldron pointed out that the money in question for the feasibility study is in the budget's Capital Fund, thus cannot be used for salaries. He was responding to Callahan's previous objections to planned staff reductions in the police force and the fire department.

Council approved the pedestrian and bicycle bridge feasibility study 6-1, with Callahan casting the negative vote.

VOLUNTEERS

A full calendar appears on the Bethlehem Press website

NORTHEAST COMMUNITY CENTER, Bethlehem needs tutors at the center for their Virtual Support Program 9 a.m. - noon Tuesday through Friday to assist children with assignments, homework, school projects, reading and math and can participate as little as one time per week or as often as the program meets. Background checks and facemasks are required, along with daily temperature checks. Contact Jackie Jimenez, 610-691-3355, jimenez@neccbethlehem.org.

SHARECARE FAITH IN ACTION, Bethlehem needs many volunteers to help with taking non-COVID-19 clients to their vital appointments. All volunteers will have to attend on-line orientation, provide criminal background check and proof of insurance. Cloth masks and hand sanitizer provided to volunteers. All clients will sit in back seat and wear a mask as well. Call Lynn Heiney, 610-867-2177, sharecare8@aol.com.

Volunteer Center to receive a brochure listing agencies in need of volunteers at 610-807-0336 or e-mail: vc@volunteerlv.org. Visit our website www.volunteerlv.org for a larger listing of volunteer opportunities.

Board: In-person classes to resume

BY CHRIS HARING
Special to the Bethlehem Press

Saucon Valley School Board named a new president and vice president at its annual reorganization meeting Dec. 1.

Incumbent President Dr. Shamim Pakzad nominated former president and current Vice President Susan Baxter to reclaim her former role, while board member Michael Karabin nominated Pakzad to

SAUCON VALLEY

serve as vice president. Both were confirmed unanimously.

There were no new members to seat, as there were no school board elections held in the district in November.


Upon the commencement of the business meeting, Superintendent Dr. Craig Butler went on to express his

thanks for the positive response from the community regarding the district's preemptive move to all remote instruction for one week immediately following Thanksgiving. The district had previously announced that, due to the anticipated family gatherings, travel and other potential COVID-19-spreading activities

over the holiday, they would temporarily suspend in-person classes, which the district has offered five days a week since the beginning of the school year in August.

However, despite the precipitous rise in new COVID cases over the month of November, which necessitated a labeling upgrade from 'moderate' to 'substantial' community spread See **BOARD** on Page A11

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Jefferson verbally commits to attend Eastern

BY KATIE MCDONALD
kmcdonald@tnonline.com

When Freedom senior guard Kayla Jefferson weighed her college choices this fall, it was her observation of a basketball practice at Eastern University that convinced her to commit to Eagles' women's basketball coach Eric Houston on Nov. 24.

"I called him when I knew for sure, and he was really happy," said Jefferson. "A few minutes after my verbal commitment, some girls from the team texted me, saying welcome to the family. It felt really great."

Jefferson had also considered Houghton College in Houghton, N.Y., saying it was a hard decision, but felt she fit in better with the dynamic of the team at Eastern.

"They're very fast, defense-oriented, a lot of fast breaks, a lot of steals," Jefferson said.

In October, the future health science major toured the Eastern University campus and met with Coach Houston.

"He's very down-to-earth, and I feel like he'll be a good coach for me," Jefferson said. "He said I play very similar to them—fast, aggressive."

But it was that basketball practice in November that won Jefferson over.

"And after practice, the girls introduced themselves, and then some of them took me to a smoothie place near campus. It felt like a close-knit family, and I loved the energy and how close they were," she said.

In addition to playing for Freedom, Jefferson also plays for Lehigh Valley Fever, an AAU Team.

"Coach Cait (Kessler), I really liked her. She was a big part of my confidence and becoming a better player, and I told her that this summer," said Jefferson.

While waiting for the See **FHS** on Page A10



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Freedom's Kayla Jefferson verbally committed to Eastern.



EPC teams like Liberty and Northampton will have to wait until at least January 15 to get their seasons underway.

EPC delays start of winter season

BY PETER CAR
pcar@tnonline.com

The East Penn Conference will have a winter season, it just won't start until January 1.

In a move that follows similar footsteps to what the conference did with fall sports, they announced on Friday that the winter league schedule will now be pushed back a month from an official start date of December 15 to January 15 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In a release sent out on Friday, the league announced that the conference's board of principals voted by a 17-1 margin to postpone the season.

"This difficult decision was made after review and consideration

of additional data and advice relating to the current pandemic from both St. Luke's University Health Network and The Lehigh Valley Health Network," Whitehall Principal and EPC President Nate Davidson said.

The winter scheduled is slated to be released by December 11 and will probably feature a 10-game schedule for basketball, wrestling and swimming, based on divisions, just like they had for sports like soccer, field hockey and volleyball in the fall. That would give each school in the six team divisions, home and away contests with their county alignment. The original winter proposal had teams playing each

other three times within the division for a total of 15 games.

The conference currently has six schools (East Stroudsburg South, East Stroudsburg North, Stroudsburg, Freedom, Liberty and Northampton) that have yet to start winter practices.

For the remaining 12 schools in the conference, it will now be up to them to decide if they want to schedule independent matches, even if it means playing schools within the EPC, possibly the Colonial League if dates are available, or out of the area teams.

Those decisions will come down to the school district or in the case of Catholic schools, the school administration.

Wrestling deals with COVID adversity

BY PETER CAR
pcar@tnonline.com

This wrestling season was always going to be different coming into the year thanks to the coronavirus pandemic, but with the news of the East Penn Conference delaying the start of the season last week until January 15, it'll leave plenty of down time for programs that are currently gearing up for the winter season.

Bethlehem Catholic head coach Jeff Karam is the lone team in the city that is currently preparing for the season, as the Hawks have gone about their business as usual.

With Liberty and Freedom barred from practicing in all sports until January 11, Beca-hi has kept at it in the meantime.

"We try and approach everyday as normal as possible," said Karam. "I know we preach to the guys everyday about the importance of being smart in and out of the room, that we have

goals for this season and it's on all of us to keep everyone safe and healthy. It's a challenge, but when we're in here [the practice room], our guys are dialed in."

The pandemic has brought extra precautions for Karam and his staff, as all wrestlers get temperature checks before entering the room, and masks have become the new norm in practice, outside of live wrestling.

An added emphasis on disinfecting the mats each day is now common, but all the safety protocols are part of the new norm.

"Our team managers do a fantastic job making sure the mats are scrubbed everyday," he said. "We have safety guidelines in place the school has put forth and we just go day-by-day. That's all I can really plan for right now."

The Hawks are now looking to schedule matches throughout December with the EPC



Dante Frinzi and the Hawks are hoping to get in some matches before the start of the EPC season on January 15.

conference schedule news coming out last week.

So far, the only official competition date on their calendar is the Powerade Tournament on December 28-29 in Monroeville, PA, which is located just outside of Pittsburgh.

The Hawks have a dual meet scheduled



Maddy Drager and the Liberty Hurricane swimmers are on hold right now.

LHS swim year on hold

BY KATIE MCDONALD
kmcdonald@tnonline.com

Nine months ago Coach Reik Foust and some of the Liberty Hurricanes swim team were wrapping up their season at the PIAA State Swimming & Diving Championships at Bucknell University when the meet was suddenly shut down amid a coronavirus outbreak.

Now a pandemic, Liberty's swim team was just starting up practices in November when the Hurricanes were suddenly shut down again.

"They banned us from the pool," is how Coach Foust described the Hurricanes' current situation.

One hour before practice was supposed to begin on Nov. 10, Foust learned that Bethlehem Area School District was suspending its winter sports through Jan. 11.

"Fred Harris called (Liberty's athletic director) and said he had some bad news. The school district was shutting everything down," Foust said.

At that point, Foust had less than one hour to contact the swim team to cancel practice and break the news of the suspension.

Then, on Dec. 4, the East Penn Conference voted to suspend its winter sports season until Jan. 15 while planning to release a new meet/game schedule on Dec. 11.

"It's very frustrating for me, but more for the kids," he said. "I haven't seen them. I'm not happy, but what else are we going to do?"

While the Hurricanes are prohibited from practice sessions and dual meets, some are swimming with club teams and others are participating in virtual training.

"We'll get something to work," Foust said, "but I don't know what, and I don't know when."

[Matt] Veres to see if there's something we could work out."

While the Hawks are practicing and preparing, Freedom head coach Dante Terenzio can only sit back and wait.

"We're in a tough position because some other teams are still getting practice and mat time, and we are not," said Terenzio. "At this point last year, most of our guys had 30-40 off-season matches, which would've been extremely beneficial for us this year due to our youth. A postponed start to our season doesn't help matters because the bulk of our team are underclassmen with a strong need for development."

"What makes it tougher is knowing this year's team has a solid work ethic and they want more than anything to be on a wrestling mat right now. It's hard to stay optimistic, but there's no other choice."

See **MAT** on Page A10

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Hornets' Camire, Central's Johnson named Lehigh MVPs

BY PETER CAR
pccar@tntonline.com

While there weren't many crossover games in the East Penn Conference this year, the Lehigh Division came home with their own batch of awards from this year's all-star list, as Emmaus running back Brandon Camire was named offensive MVP and Central Catholic defensive tackle Lavon Johnson took home the honors on the defensive side of the ball.

Camire led the league with 15 touchdowns, rushing for 556 yards and 11 scores, and compiling 212 yards receiving yards and three touchdowns. He also had kickoff return for a TD.

Johnson helped lead Central to the District 11 4A title with 59 tackles, four sacks, a forced fumble and an interception. The rest of the Lehigh division all-stars are below:

FIRST TEAM OFFENSE

Tight End: Christian Spugnardi (Sr., Allentown CCHS).

Wide Receivers: Jack McGorry (Sr., Allentown CCHS); Jayden Booth (Sr., Dieruff); Jameel Sanders (Sr., Emmaus).

Tackles: Michael McCambridge (Sr., Allentown CCHS); Justin Roman (Sr., Emmaus).

Guards: Carter Hudak (So., Whitehall); Tyler Keller (Sr., Emmaus).

Center: Jakob Koren (Sr., Parkland).

Quarterback: Quinn Wentling (Jr., Whitehall).

Running Backs: Brandon Camire (Sr., Emmaus); Jayden Williams (Allentown CCHS).

Offensive Athlete: Matt Rauscher (Sr., Allentown CCHS).

Placekicker: Connor Fenstermaker (Sr., Whitehall); Alex Orlando (Sr., Emmaus).

DEFENSE

Ends: Dylan McHugh (Jr., Emmaus); Garrett Fitzgerald (Sr., Parkland).

Linemen: Lavon Johnson (Jr., Allentown CCHS); Justin Roman (Sr., Emmaus).

Inside linebackers: Leroy Johnson (Sr., Allentown CCHS); Jared Grollier (Jr., Emmaus); Connor Neith (Sr., Parkland).

Outside linebackers: Jayden Sanchez (Sr., Parkland); Mason Maxsim (Sr., Allentown CCHS).

Cornerbacks: Jameel Sanders (Sr., Emmaus); Tanner Ritter (Sr., Emmaus).

Safety: Chad Newhard (Sr., Emmaus); Isiah Rico (Sr., Parkland).

Defensive athlete: Josh Carrion (Sr., Allentown).

Punter: Ty Tremba (Jr., Parkland).

Special Teams Player: Brandon Camire (Sr., Emmaus).

Offensive MVP: Brandon Camire (Sr., Emmaus).

Defensive MVP: Lavon Johnson (Jr., Allentown CCHS).

SECOND TEAM OFFENSE

Tight end: Chad Newhard (Sr., Emmaus).

Wide receivers: Tommy Buskirk (Jr., Whitehall); Bryce Bashore (Jr., Whitehall); J.T. Siggins (Sr., Parkland).

Tackles: Anthony Saed (Jr., Whitehall); Ivan Nieves (Sr., Allen).

Guards: Garrett Fitzgerald (Sr., Parkland); Brock Boyer (Jr., Parkland).

Centers: AJ Colon (Sr., Allentown CCHS); Nick Davidson (Jr., Emmaus).

Quarterbacks: Jake Fotta (So., Emmaus); Matt Rauscher (Sr., Allentown CCHS); Ty Tremba (Jr., Parkland).

Running backs: Nigel Linton (So., Whitehall); Isiah Rico (Sr., Parkland).

DEFENSE

Ends: Brock Boyer (Jr., Parkland); Christian Spugnardi (Sr., Allentown CCHS).

Linemen: Marcus Loch (Sr., Parkland); Anthony Saed (Jr., Whitehall).

Inside linebacker: Connor Carter (Sr., Emmaus).

Outside linebackers: Jaden Delgado (Jr., Emmaus); Tommy Buskirk (Jr., Whitehall).

Cornerbacks: J.T. Siggins (Sr., Parkland); Bryce Bashore (Jr., Whitehall); Josh Carrion (Sr., Allen).

Safeties: Quinn Wentling (Jr., Whitehall); Jayden Booth (Sr., Dieruff).



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Avid birders may want to register for the National Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count Dec. 14 - Jan. 5.

Outdoors: You can participate in the Christmas Bird Count

BY NICK HRONIAK
Special to the Press

If you're an avid birder, then this is your time of year to apply your birding expertise.

The National Audubon Society's (NAS) 121st annual Christmas Bird Count gets underway from Dec. 14 to January 5.

For those new to the count, it's an early-winter bird census where thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada, and many countries in the Western Hemisphere, go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds in their area. According to the NAS, your local count will occur on one day between those dates. And you may participate in as many counts as you wish.

So how does the count work?

NAS says there is a specific method to the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). All participants must make arrangements to participate in advance with the circle compiler within an established circle, but anyone can participate. To register, check the NAS website then click on the area of their map to see who is the count compiler. In our area it's Laurie Goodrich at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. She can be reached at goodrich@hawkmountain.org. If she's

not within your area, she could point you to another compiler.

Each count takes place in an established 15-mile wide diameter circle, and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specific routes through a designated 15-mile diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally as all birds are counted, and it gives an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day.

And if you're a beginning birder, you'll be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher.

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you've made prior arrangements with the count compiler.

Some birders may wonder if they can do their own CBC and send in their data. NAS says no since each CBC is a real census, and since the 15-mile diameter circle contains a lot of area to be covered, single-observer counts (except in unusual circumstances) cannot be allowed.

But there is an alternative. Birders can get involved in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) organized by Audubon along with

Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It takes place President's Day weekend each February wherein you can count the birds each day in your backyard/community and then enter the results online.

WATERFOWLERS
Local goose hunters get their third of fourth goose hunting season when it reopens Dec. 14 - Jan. 16. The last segment runs Jan. 29 - Feb. 20.

Since many farmers have harvested their corn and soybean fields, geese are feasting on corn and bean remnants that the harvesting machines dropped. As of last week, two large flocks of geese were hitting the cornfields off Mauch Chunk Road in South Whitehall, the land owned by GES Chemicals (Trojan Powder Company for us old-timers). Smaller flocks have also been spotted in fields in Upper and Lower Macungie Townships and several farms near Leaser Lake.

And it won't be long before snow geese show up. A lot of farmers are growing winter wheat which the snows love and can decimate a small field in short time. Look for many of them to overnight on a quarry in Fogelsville and one on Route 329 on the outskirts of Northampton.

MAT

Continued from page A9

While Terenzio is disappointed his team isn't on the mat, he knows the factors leading the way are more important.

"I understand the precautions because the kids health is most important," he said. "I definitely feel for these kids. I can't imagine be-

ing a teenager and have sports taken away in any capacity."

Liberty head coach Brandon Hall wishes his team was able to practice right now, but shares similar sentiments to his Terenzio.

"I think everyone who cares about the sport is frustrated right now," Hall said. "We all want to get in the room

and scrap. That frustration is multiplied knowing other teams are out there working out, but our staff has a great deal of respect for this administration and the difficult decisions they have to make. I trust they have the best interests of the school and community in mind."

FHS
Continued from page A9
high school winter sports season to begin, Jefferson has allowed herself

to think about next year as well.

"I'm looking forward to the next step in my basketball career, and getting to know the team

better," she said. "I'm looking forward to playing with different people, but playing with people like me."

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Salisbury senior wide receiver Chad Parton capped a record-setting season and career with a two-touchdown performance in the Falcons' season-ending win over Saucon Valley. Parton, who is Salisbury's all-time leader in receiving yards and touchdowns, caught six passes for 130 yards against the Panthers, including one for a touchdown. He also threw the first touchdown pass of his career in the game. On defense, Parton forced and recovered a fumble late in the game to help seal the win.

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BOARD

Continued from page A8 in Northampton County according to the Pa. Department of Health, like some other local districts, Saucon Valley has resisted a transition to hybrid or online instruction, and indicated that students would return to their regular schedules as of the week of Dec. 7.

The board also voted to amend some language in the district's Health and Safety Plan in order to reflect changing guidance from the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Health to

allow in-person instruction to continue despite the increase in cases. "Some of the changes in the (plan) refer to continuing with in-person instruction under 'substantial,' 'moderate' and 'low'... it does give us the leverage to continue," Butler said. "In several spots in the document, we've updated the masking and travel orders to be consistent with the Nov. 23 (guidance)." The motion passed unanimously.

Otherwise, the meeting was largely a standard one, with personnel and fiscal issues handled. Athletic Direc-

tor Robert Frey also provided a brief update on student athletes' compliance with the new guidance, which dictates that athletes must be masked at all times, regardless of which sport they're participating in. He indicated that it was going "fine" thus far in basketball, with the wrestling team facing some challenges during practices. The guidance was clarified so that members of the swim team do not have to wear masks while in the pool, which was initially a strong point of contention, Frey said.



Superintendent Dr. Craig Butler addresses the board. **PRESS PHOTO BY CHRIS HARING**

DID YOU KNOW ...

STUDENT LOAN DEBT: Since 2012, student loans have had the highest delinquency rate of any form of consumer debt. And while recent data from the New York Fed suggests that student loan delinquency rates have declined during the COVID-19 pandemic, this data actually reflects the effect of government forbearance programs. While a large share of student loans are currently in forbearance due to COVID-19 aid programs, students - many of whom might struggle to find work in a depressed economy - will be put in a precarious situation when aid programs end. How the new administration tackles the student loan crisis will be critical for many degree holders struggling to make their payments.

Student loan debt in Pennsylvania totals \$70.6 billion. The average student loan debt balance in Pennsylvania was \$33,400 per borrower. Here is a summary of the data for Pennsylvania:

- Average student loan debt per borrower: \$33,400
- Share of borrowers 90+ days delinquent: 13.5 percent
- Total number of borrowers: 2,114,800
- Total number of college graduates: 3,071,204
- Total student loan debt (billions): \$70.6

WORKING FROM HOME: The average employee in the Keystone State rates their happiness

to work from home at just 6.3 out of 10, below the national average of 6.6/ out of 10. It appears the real winners are South Dakotans, who sound like they never want to set foot in an office again: they rate their happiness at a weighty 9 out of 10. Those clearly champing at the bit to get back to the watercooler are in West Virginia, where the WFH happiness factor is only 4.5 out of 10. Perhaps points were deducted for frustratingly small workstations, or screaming neighborhood kids in the background, or feelings of cabin fever brought on by WFH.

Source-Cherry Digital Content

CELEBRATING NEW YEAR'S EVE: After spending numerous months in social isolation, are Pennsylvanians willing to risk it for the sake of sending 2020 into the past with three cheers and some beers with friends? DrugAbuse.com, a provider of drug and alcohol addiction treatment resources, conducted a survey of 3,260 respondents to gauge partygoers' optimism ahead of what is usually one of the biggest parties of the year. However, the current mood across the Keystone State is reflected in the survey results, which revealed that just 1 in 5 (17 percent) have hopes that they will be out celebrating this NYE, despite the current pandemic circumstances.

Source-Cherry Digital Content



Chris Schmidt, Podiatrist, Keystone Running Store, TREXLERTOWN

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Dates and times are 5 to 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays; 2 to 8 p.m. Saturdays; and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays at 459 Old York Road.

For more information and tickets, visit https://store.historicbethlehem.org/2020-christmas-in-the-quarter/?utm_source=HBMS&utm_medium=CITQ%20Ticket%20Page&utm_campaign=CITQ. Discounts are automatically applied at checkout.

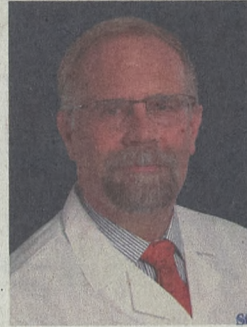


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- Current alarms on the market employ different types of technology including multi-sensing, which could include smoke and carbon monoxide combined.
- Today's smoke alarms will be more

technologically advanced to respond to a multitude of fire conditions.

- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
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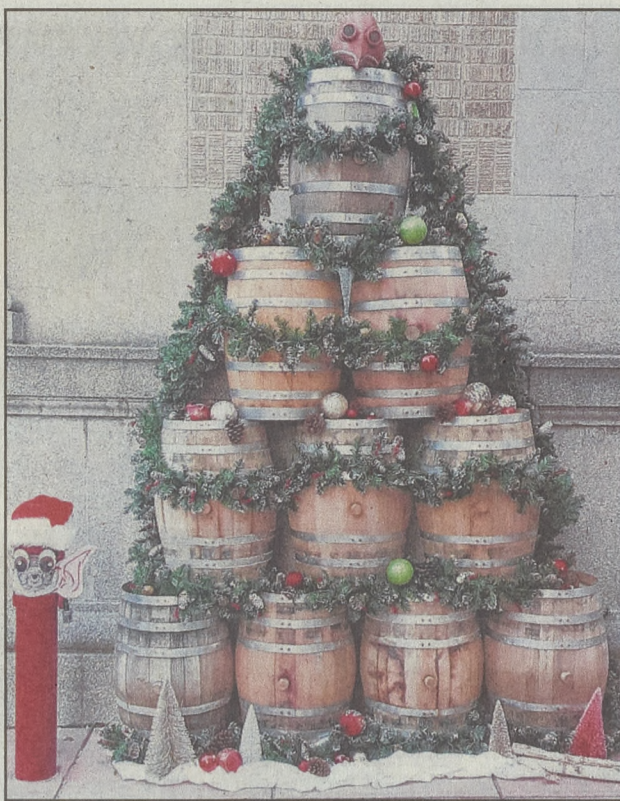
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PRESS PHOTOS BY LANI GOINS



A Month Before Christmas

BY BRENDA SCIASCIA

'Twas a month before Christmas,
And all through the town,
People wore masks,
That covered their frown.

The frown had begun
Way back in the spring,
When a global pandemic
Changed everything.

They called it corona,
But unlike the beer,
It didn't bring good times,
It didn't bring cheer.

Contagious and deadly,
This virus spread fast,
Like a wildfire that starts
When fueled by gas.

Airplanes were grounded,
Travel was banned.
Borders were closed
Across air, sea and land.

As the world entered lockdown
To flatten the curve,
The economy halted,
And folks lost their nerve.

From March to July
We rode the first wave,
People stayed home,
They tried to behave.

When summer emerged
The lockdown was lifted.
But away from caution,
Many folks drifted.

Now it's November
And cases are spiking,
Wave two has arrived,
Much to our disliking.

Frontline workers,
Doctors and nurses,
Try to save people,
From riding in hearses.

This virus is awful,
This COVID-19.
There isn't a cure.
As of yet, no vaccine.

It's true that this year
Has had sadness quite plenty,
We'll never forget
The year 2020.

And just 'round the corner -
The holiday season,
But why be merry?
Is there even one reason?

To decorate the house
And put up the tree,
When no one will see it,
No one but me.

But outside my window
The snow gently falls,
And I think to myself,
Let's deck the halls!

So, we gather the ribbon,
The garland and bows,
As we play those old carols,
Our happiness grows.

Christmas ain't canceled
And neither is hope.
If we lean on each other,
I know we can cope.

EXPLORING THE Christmas Tree Trail

BY LANI GOINS
Special to the Bethlehem Press

Would you like to win \$100 toward your favorite Downtown Bethlehem merchant? Visit the Christmas Tree Trail, and see 15 uniquely decorated Christmas trees. Vote for your favorite on the website, and you will be entered to win a \$100 gift card.

There is an upside-down tree, a pizza box tree, a tree made of hangers, and more. The tree at the National Museum of Industrial History features a long "ribbon" made from a donated piece of deformed steel. All of the trees are either outdoors, or positioned indoors close to a window, so if you don't want to go indoors, you don't have to.

The festivities began with the Christmas Tree Trail lighting Nov. 28. Tree #1, next to the New Street Garage, was the site of the celebration. Santa stopped by to visit, and guests were treated to a perfor-



Follies Clown Sam Beedle winks at the camera.

mance from the Touchstone Theater Christmas Follies. Roasted provided free hot cocoa and cookies. Masks with the South Side Arts logo were also given away.

The festivities will continue on weekends. The tree contest will continue through Dec. 19.

Every Saturday, free two-hour parking will be provided by the Lehigh Valley Health Network. Look for the meters with the green bags over them. Parking is always free on Sundays.

Some of the upcoming events include a Holiday Mart at Lit Coffee Roastery and Bake Shop from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 12. There will be a Naughty or Nice Cookies and Cocktail Crawl Dec. 12 and 19.

For more information, a Christmas Tree Trail map, and to vote for your favorite tree, visit <http://www.southsideartsdistrict.com>. Scroll through the events to find the tree contest and the other events.



Follies Dolls Jessica Boothe and Julianna Lanning, and Bill George, right, perform for the crowd. Julianna's xylophone rests on the back of Follies Caroler Matt Prideaux.



Tree #13, at the National Museum of Industrial History, 602 E. Second St. The "ribbon" is a donated piece of deformed steel. Two of the museum's attractions, TUG and the locomotive, are in the background.



Tree #7, at Lara Bly Designs, 321 S. New St.

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By Neha Skandan

Groundbreaking virtual research

For the past three months, Moravian Academy has remained open full-time. Students have a flexible daily option of either attending school in-person or virtually. Whether it be on campus or through Zoom, students at Moravian Academy have quickly jumped into action by making the most out of current circumstances.

The reopening of school was ushered in with another historic fall sports season. The boys soccer team secured their seventh consecutive District XI Championship by scoring an impressive 6-0 win in the finals. The girls soccer team won three consecutive district tournaments, and advanced to the state quarterfinals for the first time in the program's history. Moravian's girls tennis team also competed at state finals, and the varsity field hockey team earned a district silver medal. The boys and girls cross country teams raced to the podium, placing second and third, respectively, at districts.

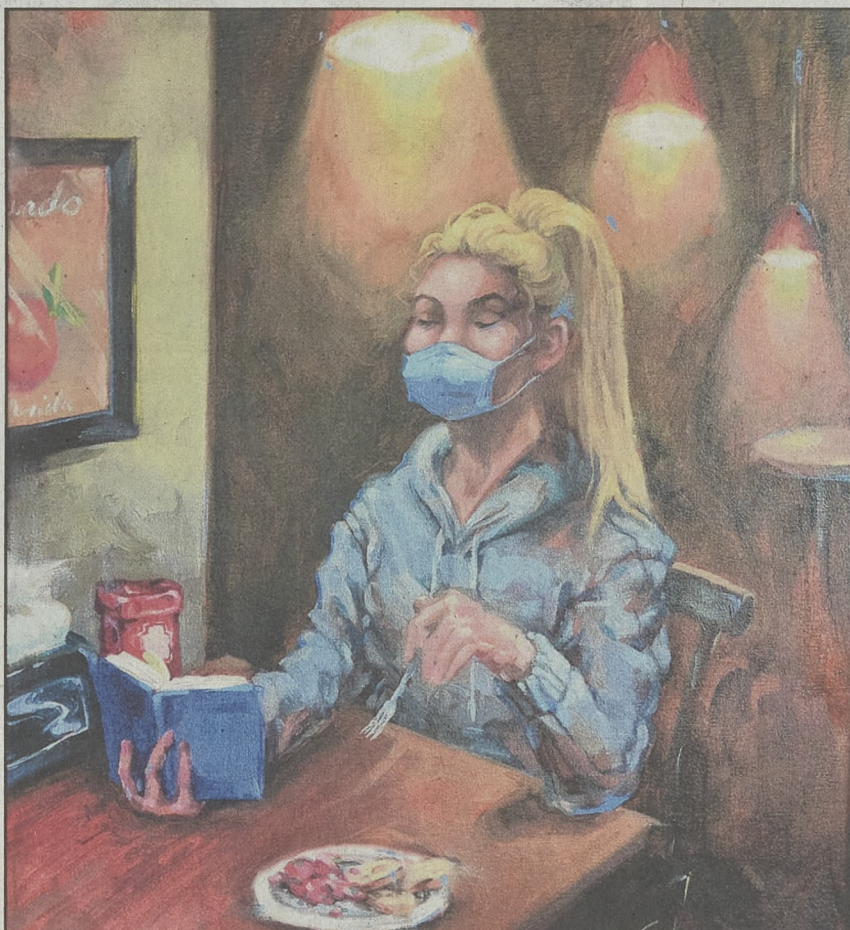
Apart from sport teams sprinting on grassy fields and clay courts, both in-person and virtual students regularly engage in large video conferencing sessions for clubs and assemblies. Moravian's Business Club is currently preparing for the virtual Pennsylvania DECA state event in February, and the Speech and Debate team will compete at a virtual Pennsylvania-New Jersey State Invitational in January. Moravian Academy also upholds treasured traditions in a virtual setting. From music to mixed media presentations, students are submitting pre-recorded acts for the annual variety show, Coffeehouse, to be streamed at the end of December.

In addition to group activities, students at Moravian Academy also consider applied research opportunities. See **NOTES** on Page A16



Skandan

Charter Arts virtual art exhibit opens



PRESS PHOTO COURTESY CHARTER ARTS HS

The Lehigh Valley Charter HS for the Arts (Charter Arts) presents its annual winter art exhibit virtually this year. This impressive exhibition features more than 100 student works that include a wide variety of mediums. Students and faculty of the school's visual arts department adapted and embraced a remote learning environment this school year and have produced another exemplary exhibition. The exhibition kicked off Dec. 4 as part of South Bethlehem's First Friday celebration and will be on display through Dec. 30. A link to view the exhibition is available on the school's website, www.CharterArts.org. **Left:** "Solitude" by Abigail Lichtenwalner, one of the works on display in the virtual exhibit.

Sidewalks deferred, member welcomed

BY LANI GOINS
Special to the Bethlehem Press

Due to technical difficulties, the Nov. 12 city planners meeting started about a half hour late, but commissioners had only two cases to consider – both requests for curb and sidewalk deferrals.

The first was 634 Apollo Drive. The request was quickly approved, as the neighborhood does not have sidewalks (The zoning ordinance requires curbs in residential districts, unless a deferral is granted).

BETHLEHEM PLANNERS



PRESS PHOTOS BY LANI GOINS
Apollo Drive, the site of new construction.

The second request was for The Lehigh Valley Health Network Muhlenberg, 2545 Schoenersville Road. This was merely a temporary request, as curbs and sidewalks will be added later. This request was also approved, pending future construction of the sidewalks and curbs.

The newest member of the Planning Commission is Heriberto Cruz Burgos. He is a Bethlehem resident and alumni of Bethlehem Catho-

See **PLAN** on Page A15

ICE-COLD

An online tool to compare cometary ices and disk models



As part of her work, Claudia Hernandez of Moravian Academy designed a web interface and graphic visualizer named "ICE-COLD" and presented her findings to NASA last month.



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HOLIDAY MEMORIES

from our
Readers



Do you have a favorite holiday memory and want to share it with Lehigh Valley Press? In 200 words or less, write us about your special holiday memory and we may publish it in our upcoming special pages, "Holiday Memories" on December 23 & 24, 2020.

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All entries considered for publishing must be received by Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Please include your name, hometown, phone number and email address.

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IRS, Treasury hit small businesses with an unpleasant surprise

As if life is not tough enough these days for small business owners, the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Treasury Department are warning them that expenses associated with forgivable loans through the Paycheck Protection Program are not deductible.

This is a shocker, because the assumption was that since the loan itself was tax-free, the expenses associated with putting the mechanics of the loan into action would be deductible.

Regrettably, while this may make perfect logic to you and me, it has somehow eluded the powers that be at the IRS and Treasury, and, after all, these are the only powers that count.

So on top of everything else that these businesses have endured because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in this troubling year, being unable to deduct the costs would make a business's income seem higher on paper, which would increase its tax bill.

When the PPP was rolled out at breakneck speed back in the spring, it had some flaws, but Congress clearly intended for recipients of these tax-free loans to be able to deduct expenses associated with the loans for tax purposes.

The IRS and Treasury have brazenly weighed in to contradict Congressional intent and announced that borrowers who expect their PPP loan to be forgiven cannot deduct those expenses on their federal tax returns.

This could well result in a horrible surprise of thousands of dollars for some small business owners. This is money that would further impact their bottom line, and, in some cases, could put businesses over the edge.

Business organizations have launched a campaign for owners and officials of the affected companies to contact their members of Congress asking them to support legislation which has been introduced to correct the oversight of the original bill.

Senate Bill 3612 has been introduced by John Cornyn, R-Texas, and House Bills 6821 and 6754 have been introduced by George Holding, R-North Carolina, and Lizzie Fletcher, D-Texas, respectively.

These bills, which undoubtedly will be melded into one, will make sure the recipients of qualifying PPP loans are provided with the full benefits intended in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

PPP loans required that 60 percent of the proceeds be applied toward a business's payroll expenses to qualify for forgiveness.

As the year progresses, tax professionals have been giving clients an option – either deduct the business expenses and potentially pay less in the last estimated tax payment due by Jan. 15, 2021, or don't deduct but wind up paying more in the event that Congress is not able to pass the corrective legislation.

Of course, for a business owner who has the wherewithal to pay higher quarterly taxes with the knowledge that relief may be coming down the road, the choice is not that significant, but many small business owners are cash-strapped, living on the edge, and every dollar is important.

Without clarity on forgiveness and deductibility, tax professionals will be wrangling with business owners' returns well into 2021.

Guidance from legislators would also go a long way toward helping owners see how their cash flow will be looking going into the new year.

Passing this legislation as soon as possible will allow small business owners more certainty as they focus on end-of-year planning.

We strongly urge passage of this legislation to fulfill legislators' original intent, and we want our readers to give these small businesses a boost by contacting their local legislator urging her to support the legislation.

Susan Wild, D-7th, is the member of Congress who represents Lehigh and Northampton counties.

You can contact her at 1607 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC, 20515 or by calling 202-225-6411.

MAMA'S MUSINGS

'She-session' hurts all

I heard the most onerous economic term the other day. "She-session." A loss of 865,000 female workers in September. Let that sink in. The latest economic downturn disproportionately affects women.

I wish I could say I'm surprised.

But no, I am not. One of the biggest points of contention in my marriage was my spouse's assertion that I did not work "real" jobs.

After my eldest son, Erick, was born with significant health issues, I did work part-time jobs. A lot of this was to have the flexibility to both pick my older daughter up from school, and to stay home with Erick when he was too sick for school or to take him to doctor's appointments. However, those part-time jobs provided paychecks. Real paychecks. Not that my significant other agreed. If I with my college degree made less than he did, my income was considered irrelevant.

In a small way, that ridiculous perception had some basis in reality. Child care often consumed much of "my" paycheck.

This is a reality that faces too many families today. Women have been major players in the workforce for over 80 years. But due to the high cost of child care, our position is tenuous.

There is childcare assistance available for the lowest income earners, but most people are on their own. And if you are on your own, paying for child care can be a killer.

So it's not all that surprising that there are 865,000 fewer women working now.

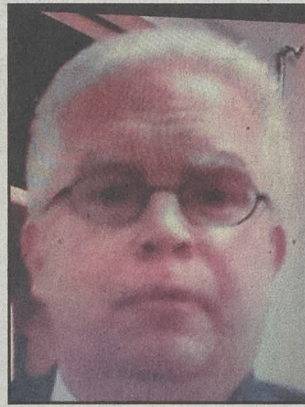
I am fortunate that I have two jobs now, and that Erick, his grandmother and even my soon-to-be-ex are helping care for our youngest son, James, during the hybrid schedule. Many people are not so fortunate.

The pandemic presently has no end in sight, and it's getting worse. So who knows what the future holds.

What I do know is there should be a substantive discussion about how child care is managed in this country, and how it could be structured to make it affordable for all parents, because when 865,000 people drop out of the economy, everyone suffers.



By Lani Goins



Jeffrey Dutt, a teacher in the Allentown School District, would like to see an "enhance curriculum to improve the county work force."



Nathan Mercer said he wants a "chance to serve the community," and expressed support for farmland preservation.



Diana Inglis said serving on the board is "an opportunity to take her desire for community service to higher level."



Joe Vichot said he is a member of the Lehigh County Republican Committee and that he "is able to work well with everybody."

Four interview for 5th district seat

BY DOUGLAS GRAVES
Special to the Bethlehem Press

Lehigh County Commissioners last week interviewed Republican candidates to replace recently-resigned Nathan Brown in the 5th District.

The Governance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Geoff Brace, conducted the interviews. He was expecting five candidates to appear via the internet meeting program Zoom, but one, Vince Tucciarone of Coopersburg, did not show for the interview.

Wanda Mercado-Arroyo of Center Valley applied, but later withdrew her name from consideration.

The candidates interviewed were Nathan Mercer, a 10-year resident of Center Valley, Diana Inglis, an engineer from Bethlehem, Joe Vichot, a pilot from Upper Saucon Township, and Jeffrey Dutt, an Allentown School District teacher and resident of Emmaus and former commissioner for Whitehall Township.

Mercer said he wants a "chance to serve the community," to see "that people have a voice," and expressed support for farmland preservation. He said he wants "to see the whole [Lehigh] county proper."

Mercer submitted his resume to the county in which he said, "I have a growing interest in politics and feel this would be a good opportunity to serve my neighbors in the Lehigh County. I believe I can make unbiased decisions to help improve the quality and prosperity of the citizens in the Lehigh County."

"I have lived in Lehigh County for over 10 years and worked in and around the Lehigh County for over 15 years. I would like to be able to help make a difference in Lehigh County.

"I continue to educate myself and strive to do the best at anything I put my mind to. I also work well with other people regardless of their polit-

ical affiliation. After all, it is not just about the political party in the Lehigh County, it is the citizens we choose to serve. Mercer is pursuing a BS at DeSales University.

Candidate Diane Inglis said she sees serving on the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners as "an opportunity to take her desire for community service to higher level."

Inglis described herself as a moderate Republican, saying "partisanship (sic) is in my blood." She was referring to the fact that her father was a former mayor of Bethlehem. She said she learned from her father that "working across the party line leads to progress." She said her husband is a supervisor in Upper Saucon Township.

Inglis said she opposes tax increases because increases will add to [the COVID-19] burden. She said she would support responsible residential and commercial development.

According to her resume, she has "been a registered Republican in Pennsylvania since 1985 and a resident of Upper Saucon Township, Lehigh County since 2001. I am a lifelong Lehigh Valley resident, growing up in Bethlehem and attending Lehigh University. After graduating from Lehigh with a BS in chemical engineering, I began working at Fuller Company (which became FLSmidth in 2001).

Inglis said she has "been very involved in our community through volunteering at St. Luke's Hospital and Health Network, Southern Lehigh School District, the Saucon Rail-Trail Advisory Commission and serving on the Board of Directors at the Southern Lehigh Public Library since 2016."

Inglis has a BS in chemical engineering

from Lehigh University. Commissioner candidate airline pilot Joe Vichot, a resident of Upper Saucon Township, said he moved to Lehigh County in 2017.

Vichot, a former USAF fighter pilot, said he is a member of the Lehigh County Republican Committee and that he "is able to work well with everybody."

He said taxation is an important issue for him as is "limited government."

"Balancing the budget is the job we need to do," said Vichot.

Vichot expressed a concern with the "integrity of the election system." He, a member of the Lehigh County Republican Party, said he had testified in the case of Democrat Enid Santiago versus Democrat Peter Schweyer in which Santiago lost the primary to Schweyer, a result that Santiago challenged. When Commissioner Dan Hartzell (D) asked about the nature of Vichot's testimony, Vichot said he testified "to help her (Santiago) get her concerns addressed."

Vichot said he could "bring fresh insight" to the job of commissioner. He assured the interviewing commissioners that his international travel schedule could be managed to ensure he would have the time necessary to devote to the commissioner's job.

Vichot has a BA in industrial engineering and a master's degree in management from the University of Tennessee.

Candidate for commissioner Jeffrey Dutt, a teacher in the Allentown School District, said he would like to see Lehigh County school districts come together to "enhance curriculum to improve the Lehigh County work force."

Dutt said he is not concerned with the fact that he has lived in the 5th District for only one year, because he has

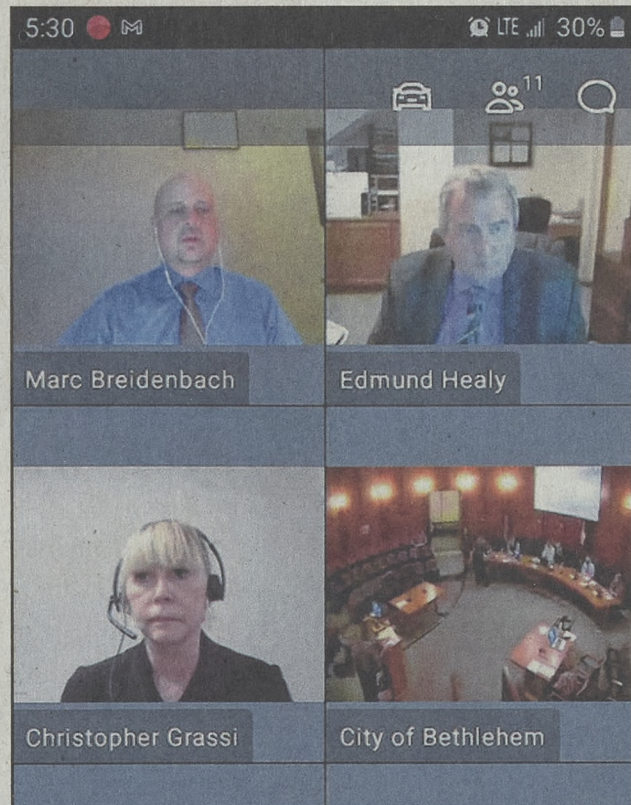
family in Vera Cruz and is getting acquainted with the citizens.

According to his resume, which he submitted with his application, "In 2015, I was elected to the board of commissioners in Whitehall Township. During this election, I was able to unseat a twenty-year incumbent. During my time on the board, I was the only Republican, but effectively and cooperatively worked with my colleagues to pass three 'no tax increase' budgets, legislation to start a senior center in Whitehall, and secured a grant to begin the process of preserving historic Hokendauqua. I also sat on many committees during my tenure as commissioner. I was the secretary of the Whitehall Veterans Memorial committee, a member of the MacArthur 75 committee, a member of the Fall Festival committee, and eventually president of the Whitehall Active Community Center.

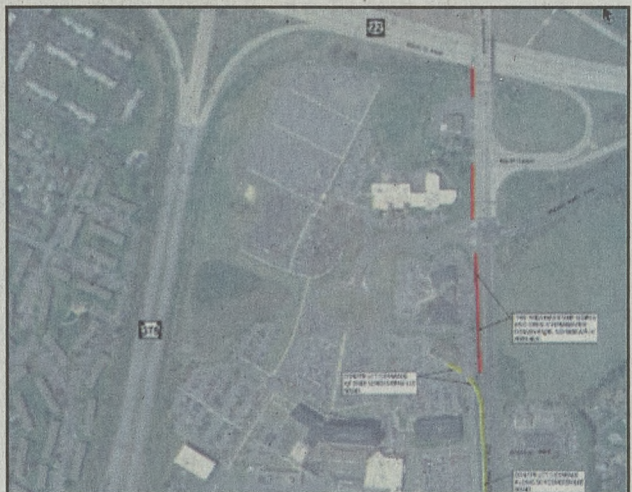
"I will bring a dedication to representing my constituency and a long history of hard work to the position. Currently, I am a social studies teacher at Louis E. Dieruff HS in Allentown. I have been a high school teacher for 18 years and work very hard to provide my students with the best classroom learning experience. I am able to listen and see both sides of an issue before making an informed decision regarding the best course of action."

Dutt has a bachelor's degree in social work from Mansfield University in Mansfield, and a master's degree in special education from Lehigh University. He is a former adjunct professor at Lehigh Carbon Community College and at DeSales University.

The committee voted to forward all names without recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to consider and vote Dec. 9.



Most of the Planning Commission met in the City Hall Rotunda, while the rest of the commission and the property owners, their representatives and witnesses joined the meeting online.



The Lehigh Valley Health Network complex on Schoenersville Road. A temporary sidewalk deferral was requested for new construction.

PLAN

Continued from page A14

lic HS. His term on the commission will expire in 2025. Burgos says, "First of all, I want to thank [Bethlehem City Councilmember] Olga Negron for referring me to the Planning Commission. The people in the

commission welcomed me, and filled me in on what goes on with developers and projects. I'm very eager to learn what the ins and outs are with the Planning Commission."

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for Dec 10.

YOUR LOCAL WEATHER

7 Day Forecast	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Few Showers	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny
	40 / 31	49 / 29	48 / 34	51 / 38	49 / 34	48 / 35	47 / 32
	5-10 mph WSW	5-11 mph W	2-6 mph SSW	3-8 mph SE	7-9 mph WSW	10-14 mph WSW	4-14 mph WNW

FORECAST FOR LEHIGH VALLEY PENNSYLVANIA

Today we will see mostly cloudy skies with a high temperature of 40°, humidity of 60%. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. The record high temperature for today is 66° set in 1980. Expect mostly cloudy skies tonight with an overnight low of 31°. West southwest wind 7 mph. The wind chill for tonight could reach 28°. The record low for tonight is 7° set in 1989. Thursday, skies will be partly cloudy with a high temperature of 49°, humidity of 66%. West wind 5 to 11 mph. Thursday night, skies will be mostly clear with an overnight low of 29°. West northwest wind 2 to 5 mph. Friday, skies will be partly cloudy with a high temperature of 48°, humidity of 70%. South southwest wind 2 to 6 mph. Friday night, skies will be mostly cloudy with an overnight low of 34°. Light winds.

Weather Trivia

When is the Pacific typhoon season?

Answer: There is none. Typhoons can occur anytime during the year.

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Merry Christmas

NOTES

Continued from page A14

as an integral part of their education, even if conducted virtually. Junior Mikail Jaffer connected with CovidScan.AI, a Texas-based company that harnesses artificial intelligence to detect and classify severe COVID-19 cases through radiological imaging of the lungs. Mikail has specifically contributed from a business standpoint, hoping to bring it to the market.

“AI detection for many illnesses, diseases and medical conditions has already been made, and we hope to take the initiative to commercialize it,” Mikail said. “We want to make this technology available to everyone, including those in areas that lack resources.”

Senior Claudia Hernandez took her research from Earth to outer space, as she landed a Planetary Spectrum Generator internship under NASA researchers Dr. Geronimo Villanueva, the scientist who discovered Mars’ ancient ocean, and Dr. Sara Faggi. As part of her work, Claudia designed a web interface and graphic visualizer named “ICE-COLD” and presented her findings to NASA this past month. The novel interactive tool, which will serve as a NASA repository, analyzes comets by composition for scientists to utilize as they research possibilities of life in other parts of the solar system.

“The work initiated by Claudia will ultimately per-

mit the general community to effectively relate and compare cometary abundances to our extensive NASA Goddard molecular database,” Dr. Villanueva explained. “Such a tool is of great value when discerning the origin and evolution of comets and small icy primordial bodies. Comets are cryogenically preserved relics of the early times of our Solar System, and they can help provide key insights regarding the origin and evolution of life on Earth and in the Solar System.”

“It was absolutely incredible and exciting to know I was creating something that NASA scientists would use regularly in their research,” Claudia said. “Luckily, programming is something that is easily shared in a virtual setting. The main drawback was not being able to enjoy being there and meeting with the whole team in person.”

“There are many opportunities and I would love to continue research along these lines,” Claudia added. “I’ve already been contacted by some interested parties to have me work on another tool utilizing machine learning to study clouds on Mars. I find it fascinating and hope to be a part of making some groundbreaking discoveries about our solar system and beyond.”

From a successful sports season to individualized research with professionals in the industry, students strive to embody Moravian Academy’s mission skills: perseverance and creativity to pursue our passions, even if it takes place online.

COVIDSCAN.AI



Junior Mikail Jaffer connected with CovidScan.AI, a Texas-based company that harnesses artificial intelligence to detect and classify severe COVID-19 cases through radiological imaging of the lungs.

BRIEFLY

BETHLEHEM

Yard waste facility reopens Jan. 4

The City of Bethlehem yard waste facility, 1480 Schoenersville Road, is closed through the remainder of December.

The facility will re-open Jan. 4, 2021.

For information, visit www.bethlehem-pa.gov/Community-Economic-Development/Recycling/Yard-Waste-Facility

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Sleighing it

Allentown Symphony

'Holiday Pops Concert'

just the ticket for the season

CLASSICAL VIEWS

By Diane Wittry



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

It's that time of year again when the stores are filled with holiday music, Christmas decorations and lights adorn lawns throughout the Lehigh Valley and everyone is running around shopping and getting ready for the gift-giving season.

Because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic shutdown, I was able to get my Christmas decorations up sooner, and I feel like this year, I'm going to have a little more time to really enjoy the holidays.

All of our lives are different this year, and we regret that the Allentown Symphony Orchestra has not been able to perform live concerts for all of you. But there is still much to be thankful for.

Christmas and the holidays are about traditions. For some, their tradition centers around watching "It's a Wonderful Life," the classic movie starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed.

For others, their tradition might be attending the "Nutcracker" ballet or the play "A Christmas Carol."

Others might celebrate this time of year by going to Christkindlmarkt, Bethlehem, or attending a church performance of the "Messiah."

In a normal year, all of this would be available to us. But as we all know, this is not a normal year.

Even so, at the Allentown Symphony, we wanted to start a brand-new tradition of presenting a "Holiday Pops Concert" every year.

Ron Demkee, Allentown Symphony Orchestra Associate Conductor and Conductor of the ASO "Pops Series," plays tuba for the ASO "Holiday Pops Concert," streaming 7:30 p.m. Dec. 12.

We were planning on starting this tradition next year, but decided to move it up because we felt "We need a little Christmas" right now!

Since we can't present in-person concerts because of Pennsylvania Department of Health coronavirus pro-

ocol limiting the number of persons at indoor events, our new holiday concert will be filmed in Miller Symphony Hall, Allentown, and streamed online, 7:30 p.m. Dec. 12, to all of you in your homes. I can't

See **VIEWS** on Page B3



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY HUB WILLSON

The Bach Choir of Bethlehem sings at Little Pond, Moore Township, for "Opening Up Our Hearts: The Music and Inspiration of Christmas" concert, streaming 4 p.m. Dec. 13.

Cathedral in the woods

Bach Choir of Bethlehem goes to the great outdoors for Christmas concert

BY KATHY LAUER-WILLIAMS
 Special to The Press

On a crisp October afternoon, 65 members of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem climbed up a hill in Moore Township and, standing a socially-distanced 10 feet apart, removed their face masks and lifted their voices together in glorious song.

It's a sight that has become rare in these days of coronavirus (COVID-19) quarantines.

Audiences will get to hear and see the Bach Choir perform "Opening Up Our Hearts: The Music and Inspiration of Christmas," its first-ever virtual Christmas concert, 4 p.m. Dec. 13.

"I think this is something people are really longing for," says Bach Choir of Bethlehem Executive Director Bridget George. "People care so much about the music of the season and what the Bach Choir brings to it."

The idea for the concert grew out of the Bach Choir's virtual "Bach at Noon" programs, which have featured small groups of singers and in-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY HUB WILLSON

Bach Choir of Bethlehem Artistic Director and Conductor Greg Funfgeld conducts Bach Choir singers at Little Pond, Moore Township, for "Opening Up Our Hearts: The Music and Inspiration of Christmas" concert, streaming 4 p.m. Dec. 13.

strumentalists in online concerts once a month.

"Bach at Noon" has been a wonderful connection with our audience, but it didn't involve the choir as a whole," George says. "The singers felt so deprived and wanted to sing together."

Bach Choir of Bethlehem Artistic Director and Conductor Greg Funfgeld and George brainstormed different ideas.

"We wanted to do something really special to create the spirit of Christmas," George

says.

Funfgeld felt very strongly that having the choir sing via an online platform like Zoom would not have the same impact as the whole group singing in the same space.

They came up with the idea of recording the choir singing outside where they could be socially-distanced.

They felt the perfect spot for the project would be "The Great Circle" at the 32-acre Little Pond Arts Re-

See **BACH** on Page B3

'Christmas Carol' to benefit Bucks Playhouse

BY KATHY LAUER-WILLIAMS
 Special to The Press

Bucks County Playhouse is streaming a filmed stage version of Charles Dickens' holiday classic "A Christmas Carol," starring Tony Award-winner Jefferson Mays.

The event, which will benefit Bucks County Playhouse and other community, amateur and regional theaters in the United States, is available to stream through Jan. 3.

The filmed version is based on the acclaimed 2018 production which had its world premiere at Los Angeles' Geffen Playhouse and also starred Mays. It is directed by two-time Tony Award-nominee Michael Arden and was filmed live on stage at New York's United Palace theater earlier this year.

CURTAIN RISES

Mays, who received a 2004 Tony Award for best actor for the solo piece, "I Am My Own Wife," performs more than 50 roles in the virtuosic version of the timeless tale of Ebenezer Scrooge. Mays was nominated for Tony Awards for the musical comedy, "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder," in 2014, and the drama, "Oslo," in 2017.

The one-man show was adapted by Mays, Arden and Susan Lyons, who directed Mays in the national and in-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY CHRIS WHITAKER

Jefferson Mays (Scrooge), "A Christmas Carol," Geffen Playhouse, Los Angeles.

ternational tours of "I Am My Own Wife" and is married to Mays.

"A Christmas Carol" was

my first experience of living theater," says Mays. "My mother and father would read it out loud every year.

"My father would tell the story with clarity and humanity, while my mother, eyes ablaze, would transform into the characters, from the tortured Jacob Marley, to little Fan and the entire Cratchit family.

"Both, in their ways, created magic. And now here we are, aspiring to bring this magic to people across the country during this challenging time," Mays says.

Tickets: www.bucks-countyplayhouse.org/achristmascarol

"Curtain Rises" is a column about the theater, stage shows, the actors in them and the directors and artists who make them happen. To request coverage, email: PaulWillistein@tmonline.com



The Mouse Before Christmas

This Allentown Tradition to bring joy during Covid-19

Pip the Mouse will joyfully share his 2020 puppet show from a window on the PPL Plaza, 9th and Hamilton Streets, like his Hess's debut back in 1962. Pip is asking his outdoor audience to wear masks and be socially distanced on the Plaza.

610-435-2412 or email: info@libertybellmuseum.org

At the Liberty Bell Museum, 622 West Hamilton, the new exhibit "WWII: Remembering 75 Years Ago" opens. Adhering to Covid-19 indoor guidelines, reservations are required to visit this exhibit in the festive Museum.

Puppet Show Times -
 Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays
 November 27th to December 27th
 12:00 1:00 2:00 3:00

PLUS Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve: 1:00 1:30 2:00 2:30
 No Shows on Christmas Day
 Parking is free in Allentown on Saturday and Sunday

Holiday cards a welcome greeting more than ever

Dear Jacquelyn, Can you offer some guidance for mailing holiday cards this year? I won't be visiting most of my friends and family this holiday season. Is a holiday card an appropriate gesture? It seems like such a small gesture that is no replacement for an actual, in-person celebration. Also, with the mail being slower than normal, when should I mail out cards to ensure they arrive on time? Dear Reader, This year, more than ever, it's essential that we keep in touch with our friends and family through holiday cards. In a time when all that



RESPECTFULLY YOURS By Jacquelyn Youst

most people have been able to do is talk to loved ones via a phone or computer screen, sending something that you've held in your hands is a personal extension of yourself. Sending holiday cheer is a timeless tradition, but this year be aware of the many people that have been personally affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It would be best to consider sending out more traditional holiday cards. While humor is great,

be mindful of the fact that some people on your list might have had a tough year. To make the greeting more personal, be sure to include a handwritten heartfelt holiday message. For example: "I miss you so much! I hope this card finds you well and we can exchange big hugs soon!" As a rule of thumb, the United States Postal Service typically takes three to seven days to deliver domestic mail. During the holiday season the number of people using the U.S. Mail increases and it tends to slow down mail delivery times. Ideally, you want to mail your holiday cards no later than Dec. 10. The earlier you get them out, the

less chance there is that your cards will get lost in the holiday shuffle. A little boost of festive joy is always welcome during the holidays. Not to mention that holiday cards are always a great way to remain connected with loved ones, near and far. Respectfully Yours, Jacquelyn Have a question? Email: jacquelyn@ptd.net. Jacquelyn Youst is owner of the Pennsylvania Academy of Protocol, specializing in etiquette training. She is on the board of directors of the National Civility Foundation. All Rights Reserved © 2020 Jacquelyn Youst

Home sweet home

I've been giving some deep thought lately to a simple word, an important word, yet one that seldom resonates with us. That word is "home." It's a little word that seldom jumps out at us when we say it. We say, "I'm going home," or, "I'm staying home." The action in those two examples focuses on what we are doing, not what the word home represents. There's a big difference when we refer to our house or our home. We don't say, "I'm going to clean my home." We say we are going to clean our house. Our house is a building, a structure of some kind. Our home, on the other hand, has deeper shades of meaning, even though we seldom think about it. We can be proud of our house and can appreciate where we live. But a home is much more than a building structure. It's our "home" that gives us creature comfort. It's our home that welcomes us, soothes us after a hard day, and wraps us in a comfortable familiarity. Comfortable familiarity says it all. Most of all have had plenty of times when, after a long, hard day, we were comforted by the familiarity of the place we call home. Poets and songwriters don't write glowing verses about a house. But though the years we have had an avalanche of feeling poured into poems and songs about the simple word "home."

WARMEST REGARDS By Pattie Mihalik newsgirl@comcast.net



When I moved in my friend Linda Koehler painted one of the shingles from my former Pennsylvania house with the words "Answered Prayer." That plaque hangs in its place of honor in my dining room. I've always felt that Florida home is an answered prayer, even though I was never smart enough to pray for this little slice of paradise. I often call my home "humble," and it certainly is, depending on one's frame of reference. One friend insisted my home is quite nice, not humble. It's both. When I was looking at homes in Florida, as soon as I saw the little cottage flooded with sunlight and surrounded with a beautiful water view, it spoke to my heart. My Realtor insisted I buy a bigger place, saying I could get more home for just a bit more money. I didn't want bigger. I wanted the cute little home I could continue to afford in retirement. While I do complain about lack of storage, I've never been sorry. I still continue to say, "Thank you, God" several times a day. From the time I open my eyes in the morning I am soothed by my peaceful surroundings and by the sunlight flooding through the rooms. It's a happy abode and I am forever grateful. But with COVID-19 raging out of control in our tourist-filled area, I've had to pull back from nonessential excursions, including getting my hair cut and going for the medical message that helps my back pain. The hardest thing has been cutting back from the few social friends I've been enjoying. Unlike me, they have no qualms about crowded airports and flying back and forth while the number of local COVID cases are escalating out of control. One friend said I am putting myself in a self-imposed prison. That's true. COVID-19 keeps narrowing my world. But we all have to do what is best for our particular circumstances. For many, that means improving homes that are now also work places, school settings and yes, prisons, if you choose to look at it that way. While I too hate confinement, I continue to be grateful for my home, for the wildlife around it and the incredible weather in my little piece of paradise. Home sweet home is still something to cherish. Contact Pattie Mihalik at newsgirl@comcast.net.

Fun ideas for daughter's virtual birthday party

Q. My daughter is going to be seven-years-old in January and I am not sure how to celebrate it. We usually have had a birthday party, but this year it doesn't seem like a safe idea. Do you have any ideas on how to make it a fun day for her? There are a variety of ideas for making the birthday fun and memorable, while following coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic safety guidelines. An organized vehicle drive-by greeting by friends, family, neighbors and classmates was suggested by panelist Chad Stefanyak. Well-wishers could drive by at a designated time and offer their congratulations from their vehicles. They could place cards and presents in a bag or box with a designated person at the meeting site. No one is to get out of a vehicle. "Guests" will each be handed a bag of goodies or prizes. If the family wants a birthday cake to give out at the drive-by or for a small group party

THE FAMILY PROJECT By Carole Gorney



at an outside facility, cupcakes are a simpler and safer choice, panelist Erin Stalsitz recommended. A number of places that provide birthday parties include the do-it-yourself ceramic place along Third Street in South Bethlehem, according to panelist Joanne Raftas. "They can book guests so that there is safe social distancing. Everyone would be expected to wear an appropriate pandemic mask." The Lehigh Valley Zoo, Schneeksville, was mentioned as a place to hold a small group celebration during the evening Christmas lighting display. There is ample physical space to maintain social distancing. "Some movie theaters are open," Raftas said. "The parents may be able to rent a small theater at a reasonable price to watch a movie." Panelist Pam Wal-

lace recommended a Zoom birthday party or a Zoom sing-along. It could include the birthday child blowing out candles and the Zoomers singing "Happy Birthday" in unison, Wallace said. Raftas suggested giving the children disposable cameras to take photos to post online, or to make up a story with the photos, with each child telling part of the story on Zoom. Stefanyak proposed making the child's favorite meal followed by a movie night at home, or going for a day drive somewhere, saying, "It depends on what the girl is interested in." Stalsitz said doing any of these suggestions would require the parents to facilitate arrangements well in advance. "It's also a good idea to talk to the other parents to determine what they would be comfortable doing," Stalsitz added. This week's panel: Pam Wallace, program coordinator, Project Child, a program of Valley Youth House; Denise Conti-

nenza, extension educator; Joanne Raftas, Northampton Community College, independent counselor, and Chad Stefanyak, school counselor. Have a question? Email: projectchild@projectchildlv.org The Family Project is a collaboration of the Lehigh Valley Press Focus section and Valley Youth House's Project Child. The Times News, Inc., and affiliates (Lehigh Valley Press) do not endorse or recommend any medical products, processes, or services or provide medical advice. The views of the columnist and column do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Lehigh Valley Press. The article content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician, or other qualified health-care provider, with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

Labyrinthitis: It's all a question of balance

Q. I have had some nasty allergies all of my 72 years. Usually, my head gets clogged up. Recently, my ears became involved and I experienced vertigo for the first time. Is this common? We have to define terms first. Vertigo is the feeling that either you or your surroundings are spinning. It is more than being just lightheaded or dizzy, because you are subjected to the illusion of movement. If you feel your body is moving, you have subjective vertigo. When you sense that your surroundings are moving, you have objective vertigo. If you are experiencing vertigo, you should see a doctor for a check-up. Vertigo can be a symptom of a serious health problem. About one in 10 people over 65 experience difficulty with balance. More than 40 percent of Americans will go to a doctor complaining of

HEALTHY GEEZER By Fred Cicetti fred@healthygeezer.com



dizziness. Getting older is only part of the problem. Inner-ear disturbances are the primary cause. The inner ear consists of a system of fluid-filled tubes and sacs called the labyrinth. The labyrinth serves two functions: hearing and balance. Labyrinthitis is an ear disorder that involves swelling of the inner ear. If you get labyrinthitis, the parts of the inner ear become irritated and inflamed. This inflammation disrupts the transmission of sensory information from the ear to the brain. This disruption causes vertigo, dizziness and difficulties with balance, vision and hearing. The following raise your risk for labyrinthitis: allergies, viral illness, drinking large amounts of alcohol, fa-

tigue, smoking, stress and some drugs. Labyrinthitis usually goes away within a few weeks. Medications that may reduce symptoms include antihistamines to reduce inflammation, compazine to control nausea, meclizine to counter dizziness, and sedatives. There are other causes of balance problems. Here are few major ones: * Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV). With BPPV, one of the most common causes of balance problems, you get vertigo when you change the position of your head. You may also experience BPPV when you roll over, get out of bed, or when you look on a high shelf. BPPV is more likely in people over 60. * Ménière's disease, which also can give you intermittent hearing loss, a ringing or roaring in the ears, and a feeling of fullness in the ear. * Blood-pressure medications and some antibiotics. If you are taking

any drugs in these categories and feel off-balance, it's worth discussing with your doctor. Have a question? Email: fred@healthygeezer.com. Order "How To Be A Healthy Geezer," 218-page compilation of columns: healthygeezer.com All Rights Reserved © 2020 Fred Cicetti The Times News, Inc., and affiliates (Lehigh Valley Press) do not endorse or recommend any medical products, processes, or services or provide medical advice. The views of the columnist and column do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Lehigh Valley Press. The article content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician, or other qualified health-care provider, with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

There's nothing about a building that can beckon us, regardless of how grand it is. We don't get warm, fuzzy feelings about a structure. "Home" isn't a structure. It's a feeling, a place in your heart. Yet, many of us take our home for granted. We are more likely to focus on what home improvement we want rather than on a keen sense of appreciation for the place we call home. It's irony that the more we have, the more we take for granted. Way back in 1823 John Howard Payne penned these words for a song in the Maid of Milan opera: "Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." When the song was relaunched in 1852, it became a hit as the words "Home Sweet Home" were immortalized. The quote found its way to inclusion in several movies, including the unforgettable closing scene in "Over the Rainbow." The words also continue to find their way in the hearts of many of us who, at one time or another, have been giv-

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VIEWS

Continued from page B1

think of anything nicer than enjoying a concert featuring members of the Allentown Symphony on your own TV, while sitting sipping hot chocolate and warming yourself in front of a fire. The concert is available for just \$15, and it is free for ASO concert series subscribers.

The "Holiday Pops Concert" features our wonderful ASO Brass Section, led by Principal Trumpet Omri Barak.

Omri joined the Allentown Symphony a few years ago, when he was a 19-year-old student at the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia. He beat out all the other auditioning trumpet players. He is an amazing player and we are so lucky to have him in the orchestra.

Joining Omri is ASO Trumpeter Jerry Serfass, Principal Horn Jonathan Clark, Principal Trombone Gilles Bernard, and our beloved Tuba player Ron



Jonathan Clark, principal horn, ASO



Gerald Serfass, trumpet, ASO



Gilles Bernard, principal trombone, ASO



Randy Edelman, principal percussionist, ASO



Omri Barak, principal trumpet, ASO

Demkee, who is also ASO Associate Conductor and Conductor of our ASO "Pops Series."

To add more fun to the evening, the ASO Brass will be joined by ASO Principal Percussionist Randy Edelman, who will play an assortment of instruments, including chimes, tambourine, glockenspiel and sleigh bells.

Included in the program are some of my favorite pieces, "White Christmas," "The Christmas Song" and the "Saints Hallelujah," in arrangements done

by Luther Henderson, who wrote many of the arrangements for the Canadian Brass.

The ASO Brass will play selections from the "Nutcracker" since normally, for the last 25 years, we have performed Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker" for the Repertory Dance Theatre ballet on the Miller Symphony Hall stage at this time of year.

Other audience favorites with a focus on bells will be "Jingle Bells," "Ding Dong! Merrily on High," "The Carol of the Bells" and "I Heard

the Bells on Christmas Day."

To tell us more about the pieces on the program, we've invited actor, director and playwright, Wayne Turney, a member of the faculty at DeSales University and a frequent participant in the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, to join us as narrator for the concert.

Turney has narrated programs for the Cleveland Orchestra, Chautauqua Symphony and National Symphony, among others. We are all in for a treat as he takes

us through a wonderful evening of beautiful music that the entire family will enjoy.

Even though we can't be together in person, I hope we can all be together virtually, 7:30 p.m. Dec. 12, as we watch the beginning of a new tradition, the ASO "Holiday Pops Concert."

We can even chat back and forth during the concert.

Enjoy the music and happy holidays!

Tickets for Allentown Symphony "Holiday Pops Con-

cert": <https://www.millersymphonyhall.org/>

Diane Wittry is Music Director and Conductor of the Allentown Symphony Orchestra; Music Director and Conductor of The Garden State Philharmonic, New Jersey, and author of "Beyond the Baton" and "Baton Basics." She teaches conducting workshops throughout the United States and Europe.

BACH

Continued from page B1

treat in the Nazareth area, which is owned by George and her husband Bill George.

"Greg called it the cathedral in the woods," George says. "He put a lot of thought in how to prepare the choir. He was so dedicated."

To adhere to coronavirus safety protocols, Funfeld had the singers rehearse wearing face masks outdoors in small groups of eight. In a little over a month, he led 52 separate rehearsal sessions.

For the final rehearsal, all 65 singers wore face masks to sing together outside in the parking lot at First Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem.

The day of the recording, the singers arrived wearing face masks with the men in tuxedos and the women in long dresses. When they got to the 120-foot diameter great circle and were 10-feet apart, the face masks came off and the music began.

The choir performed Robert Parsons' "Ave Maria," traditional favorite "Ding Dong Merrily on High," "Go Tell It on the Mountain" as arranged by Paul Sjolund, and the choir's traditional Christmas concert closer Franz Xaver Gruber's "Silent Night."

All was captured by a team of videographers, including Bill George. Also recorded at Little Pond on a separate day was a performance of "Up Above My Head," sung by the Bel Canto Youth Chorus conducted by Joy Hirokawa, which will be included in the concert.

Additional music by soloists and instrumentalist was recorded in at Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem.

Adding to the program are intervals of sacred text and spoken word, delivering messages of hope, including St. Luke's Gospel read by Bishop C. Hopeton Clennon in downtown Bethlehem.

"They are deeply inspirational and full of joy," George says. "This is so important, especially in Bethlehem the

Christmas City."

George says there has been an "incredible response" to the concert and nearly 1,000 registrations have been received from 40 states and eight foreign countries.

She says it's a silver lining to a difficult situation. "While we miss having a live performance, expanding our audience is what we're about," she says.

George hopes the on-line audience will, as audiences have done at Bach Choir Christmas concerts, join in singing "Silent Night" at home as the concert concludes.

To register for the link to Bach Choir of Bethlehem concert, "Opening Up Our Hearts: The Music and Inspiration of Christmas": www.bach.org/event/christmas/

The concert is free. Free-will donations will be accepted to help offset the cost of the concert production.

Information: www.bach.org; 610-866-4382

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Arthur A. Swallow Associates, LLC (AASA Land Surveyors) is located in the west end of Allentown and serves the Lehigh Valley, Poconos and northern New Jersey. AASA seeks candidates with all levels of experience for CAD and technical support for land surveying and civil engineering. No professional license is required, technical school or college degree preferred. Qualified individuals will handle survey data for boundary and topographic mapping, prepare plans for subdivision, commercial building and site development plans. Candidates with AutoCAD and Civil 3d experience are preferred and must possess the ability to communicate with clients and the regulatory community. AASA offers a competitive starting wage, paid time off, 100% paid health insurance, health savings account, paid time off, retirement plan and full-time employment. Respond with resume to art@aasasurvey.com.

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Arthur A. Swallow Associates, LLC (AASA Land Surveyors) is located in the west end of Allentown and serves the Lehigh Valley, Poconos and northern New Jersey. AASA seeks candidates with all levels of experience for CAD and technical support for land surveying and civil engineering. No professional license is required, technical school or college degree preferred. Qualified individuals will handle survey data for boundary and topographic mapping, prepare plans for subdivision, commercial building and site development plans. Candidates with AutoCAD and Civil 3d experience are preferred and must possess the ability to communicate with clients and the regulatory community. AASA offers a competitive starting wage, paid time off, 100% paid health insurance, health savings account, paid time off, retirement plan and full-time employment. Respond with resume to art@aasasurvey.com.

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LEHIGH COUNTY SENIOR MENUS

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American Heart Association logo and website: Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke www.americanheart.org

CRYPTOGRAM

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CWBI ZIW VWEQOWGT RUWKIUR WA Z ODZBG BZEQ AWD Z JKDDQBRCT SWSKCZD RWRURSZVRQ, ZBG RUQ JDQVR NV UNVRWDT.

See solution on page B6

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals T

PREMIER Crossword

By Frank A. Longo

WAX SHADES

- 1 Played golf on the green 7 Baseball card company 12 Indy sponsor 15 Andy's pal 19 Ryan and Tatum 20 Little Mermaid's name 21 Superman's love interest 23 Kitschy lawn adornment (1997) 25 Rotating part in a water pump 26 Chicago-to-Atlanta dir. 27 Fraternal org. with lodges 28 Canine with gray brindled fur (1993) 30 Carnival treat on a stick (1998) 35 Loch monster, informally 36 Shoe parts 37 Piccolo's kin 39 Skin art 43 Retail store's beginning? 44 Rice — (food brand) 46 Iowa college 48 Woman on "Frasier" 49 Plant also called bachelor's button (1958) 53 Glitzy display (1993) 57 Verse tribute 58 Counterpart of masc. 59 Test versions 60 Old — (quaint) 61 Sky, to the U.S. Air Force (2003) 66 Tax-deferred svgs. plan 67 Nestlé movie theater treats 68 Zadora of "Butterfly" 69 "That's a big yes from me!" 73 "Criminal Minds" ailer 74 Grassland on the slope of a peak (1998) 78 Pond growth 81 Curt 82 P.O. arrival 83 Hip-hop "Dr." 84 Plant rolled about by the wind (1993) 86 Makeup of many dunes (1998) 90 Deg. for a future exec 91 Large tank 92 Novelist Jong 94 Often-refined resource 95 Capitol group 98 Life story: Abbr. 99 Gets by 103 Lose all feeling 106 Both pleasant and sad (1958) 109 "The final frontier" (1998) 113 See 54-Down 114 Caustic alkali 115 Muscle rotating the forearm to a palm-down position 116 What each of this puzzle's featured answers is (with the year it was introduced)

18x18 crossword grid with numbered starting points for clues.

- 121 Lily Tomlin's little girl persona 122 Confine 123 Spelunking chamber 124 Pecans, e.g. 125 "Norma —" 126 Hops-drying ovens 127 Sports deals

- DOWN 1 "Nova" genre, for short 2 Togetherness 3 Doctrines 4 "... we'll — a cup o' kindness ..." 5 Pixieish sort 6 WWW access inits. 7 Florida port 8 Sky hunter 9 Missed badly 10 Wooden pin 11 Vegas fixture 12 Gloppy stuff 13 Burial places 14 Calumet part 15 100% wrong 16 St. — (French resort) 17 Like Nash's "lama" 18 Feudal slave 22 Opera — (many a Handel work) 24 Basic skills

- 29 Suffix with hero 31 Smallish city 32 Royal Norse name 33 Little — (Dickens girl) 34 Yang go-with 38 Tried to hit, as a clay target 40 British trolley 41 Leak slowly 42 Rocker Osbourne 44 — bit (just slightly) 45 — Martin (cognac) 46 Energy mogul 47 Pound divs. 49 Dairy animals 50 Norse god 51 Move, in Realtor lingo 52 "Just the Two —" (1981 hit) 54 With 113-Across, had some humble pie 55 Based on — story 56 Fancy crown 59 Square in the first bingo-card column 62 Mr. T movie 63 Biblical tower setting 64 Old hi-fi buys 65 "The Da Vinci Code" group 66 Suffix with hero 69 Apropos of 70 Old Icelandic saga 71 Michael who played Worf 72 Had liabilities 74 Confront

- 75 Often-refined resource 76 Sir Guinness 77 "— boy!" 78 S&L devices 79 Garage job 80 Certain Fed 81 Pan Am rival 85 Planet seen at sunset, old-style 86 Canon or Sony products, for short 87 Wave sound 88 Baking pans 89 Deli dish 93 Steal from 96 Go-betweenes 97 Yeshiva text 98 Telly network 99 Cry feebly 100 Solidified 101 Pal of Pooh 102 Ships' backs 104 "Once — midnight dreary ..." 105 Seine feeder 107 "Taste this" 108 Cel figures 109 Not closed 110 Language of Pakistan 111 "Snap —!" 112 Canyon effect 117 Actor Stephen 118 Be a thespian 119 Road vehicle 120 Eggs

See solution on page B7

