

Greene Scene

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

A DIRECT RESULTS COMPANY

21st Annual
**HUNTERS'
BRAG MAG**



FEBRUARY 2026

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GreeneScene
COMMUNITY MAGAZINE



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**DON'T MISS A BEAT - SEE WHAT'S
HAPPENING IN GREENE COUNTY!**

FRONT COVER PHOTO:

Lee Robinson of Waynesburg capped off a once-in-a-lifetime hunt with a moment few outdoorsmen ever experience: taking a Stone sheep in the final hour of the final day of his hunt in the Cassiar Mountains of north-central British Columbia. After days of glassing steep ridgelines and navigating unforgiving terrain, Robinson's perseverance paid off just as daylight was fading, turning an already challenging adventure into a truly unforgettable success.

Robinson hunted with Scoop Lake Outfitters, whose guides specialize in the remote, rugged country that Stone sheep call home. The Cassiars are known for dramatic landscapes—towering peaks, rocky basins, and sudden weather changes—and every step of the hunt demanded patience, endurance, and respect for the mountain environment. The final stalk, coming so late in the hunt, added an extra layer of intensity and emotion to the achievement.

Stone sheep are among North America's least-known wild sheep, roaming isolated regions of northern British Columbia and parts of the Yukon. Named after naturalist Andrew Stone, they are admired for their striking coats, which range from charcoal gray to silver and provide natural camouflage against rocky slopes. Rams carry massive, tightly curled horns, while ewes are smaller with shorter horns. Exceptionally agile, Stone sheep are perfectly adapted to steep terrain, harsh winters, and sparse forage.

Robinson will be one of the outdoorsmen featured in the new GreeneScene Outdoor Spotlight section, highlighting local hunters and anglers whose experiences reflect dedication, conservation-minded values, and a deep appreciation for the outdoors. His Stone sheep hunt stands as a testament to preparation, perseverance, and the rewards that come only at the very edge of effort and time.

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TOWNE SQUARE



SMALL TOWN GAME PLAN: A FOOTBALL STORY ABOUT COMMUNITY

Small towns run a lot like a football team, and Greene County is no exception. It isn't about bright lights or fancy arenas, it's about the people on the field, on the sidelines, and in the stands, each playing their part.

The Game Plan

The commissioners and local government? They can draw up plays, plan strategies, organize meetings, and try not to call a timeout every time someone starts a Facebook argument.

They can create an environment where success could happen, but they can't bake the brownies, fix the plumbing, sell insurance, cut hair, cook burgers, repair cars, or grow grapes and turn them into wine.

They can set the stage, but they can't run the businesses that make our small towns thrive. They can't do it alone.

The Action

The real action comes from the players: the business owners and nonprofit organizations. These are the folks who will fight for every yard. They open early, stay late, take risks, and push through the tough plays.

They are the heartbeat of Greene County's offense. They keep showing up. But even they can't do it alone.

The Sidelines

Then we've got the second-string players and the assistant coaches, the true community leaders.

They share social posts, help spread the word, quietly organize festivals, and volunteer at events.

They may not be in the spotlight, the announcer may never say their name, but they keep the season alive.

The Concession Crew

These are the side-hustlers, the craft-fair warriors, the bake-sale champions, and the "I'll help any way you need me" folks.

They fill in the gaps and keep the organization running smoothly, all to the benefit of the entire community.

The Crowd, The People of Greene County

These are the folks who decide whether the stadium is dead silent or absolutely roaring.

They choose to show up, clap, cheer, buy local, spend local, and back their hometown businesses like it's the Super Bowl every day.

They're the ones spending time at the farmers market instead of driving an hour away.

They're the regulars grabbing lunch at locally owned cafés instead of a giant chain.

They're the neighbors who leave reviews, share posts, tell friends, and proudly say, "You've gotta check out this place, it's ours."

In small towns, the crowds are not simply just spectators.

They are the momentum. They are the energy. They can shift the entire game.

Avoiding Fumbles

If we start pointing fingers, blaming the coaches, the players, the volunteers, or the fans, while refusing to step into our own role with hometown pride and passion, we hurt the whole team.

You can't yell about the quarterback from the bleachers if you didn't even spend a few bucks on a ticket.

A winning season in Greene County won't come from complaints. It'll come from support, commitment, and dedication, no matter how big or small our role feels.

The Heart of It

Our roles matter.

Our effort matters.

Our energy matters.

Whether we choose to coach, play, volunteer, cheer, or simply leave a positive review for a local business, we can all be part of what pushes Greene County forward.

Small towns don't win because of one person or one group.

They win because everyone, from the commissioners to the concession stand volunteers to the fans, decides to show up, work together, and believe in the home team. And yes, criticism will happen. That's okay.

Just make sure your positive energy and effort outweigh the negative.

If we all do our part, no excuses, no blame-shifting, no waiting for someone else to run the ball, Greene County can become the kind of team nobody wants to bet against.

Not because we're flashy.

Not because we're perfect.

But because we show up for each other.

That's what can make a small town unstoppable.



The GreeneScene welcomes its readers to share their opinions on civic, economic, or cultural issues in Town Square Thoughts. All submissions must be respectful and constructive points of view aimed at improving our area. Please send Thoughts to bret@directresults.us *We reserve the right to edit submissions for grammar, length and clarity.*

Re-Elect Camera Bartolotta in the May 19, 2026 Primary Election



CAMERA BARTOLOTTA

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PROVEN CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP

Since her election to the Pennsylvania Senate in 2014, Senator Bartolotta has built a reputation as a tireless advocate for economic growth, workforce development, energy independence, and justice reform. Representing communities across Washington, Greene, and Beaver Counties, she has championed legislation that strengthens Pennsylvania's economy, supports working families, and restores common sense to government. As the first Republican Senator elected since 1927, and the first woman elected to represent the 46th Senatorial District, her election ushered in a Red Wave across Southwestern Pennsylvania.

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS

Having been elected to Leadership by the Republican Caucus, Senator Bartolotta's advocacy has led to the following funding:

- Iron Senergy Methane Abatement Project \$2M
- East Dunkard Water Authority - \$1.9 M
- The Way Community Center - \$773,300
- WHS Green Ambulance Entrance - \$345,000
- Carmichaels Senior Center - \$113,428

Senator Bartolotta led 11 significant bills that changes lives including:

- Domestic violence victim protection
- Safety for PennDOT workers
- Medical cost containment
- Permit reform
- Saving landowners thousands in taxes

Still fighting for:

- COLA for retirees
- Property tax reform
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NEW!

- **Greene County will receive \$265,000** to repair roofs at the Greene County Fairgrounds arena barn and Mon View Park roller rink.
- **The Greensboro Monongahela Township Joint Sewer Authority will receive \$85,000** for key sewer system upgrades in Greensboro Borough.
- **Jefferson Township will receive \$485,140** to build a five-bay storage building for road equipment and vehicles.
- **Perry Township will receive \$85,198** for community center upgrades, including a new roof, doors, generator, and bathrooms.
- **Perry Township**, on behalf of the Mount Morris Community Volunteer Fire Company, **will receive \$35,732** to replace an outdated water heater at the fire station.



Treasurer Stacy Garrity

Camera has been endorsed by
State Treasurer Stacy Garrity and
State Auditor General Tim DeFoor.



Auditor General Tim DeFoor

PAID FOR BY CAMERA FOR SENATE

SinterKlaas Holiday II Person, Place or Thing Answer

Santa Claus, as Americans know him, was not so much discovered as assembled—stitched together over centuries and polished to a festive shine in the United States. While his roots reach back to Saint Nicholas, a fourth-century bishop known for secret gift-giving, the American version of Santa is a distinctly homegrown creation.

The transformation began in the early 19th century, when Dutch traditions followed settlers to New York. “Sinterklaas,” celebrated by Dutch families, gradually morphed into “Santa Claus,” a name that sounded friendlier to English-speaking ears. In 1809, Washington Irving gave the first major nudge, portraying Saint Nicholas in *A History of New York* as a jovial, pipe-smoking figure who flew through the air—a far cry from a solemn saint.

The most influential moment came in 1823 with the publication of the poem *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, better known as “’Twas the Night Before Christmas.” Attributed to Clement Clarke Moore, the poem shrank Santa from a towering bishop into a “jolly old elf,” gave him eight reindeer with memorable names, and relocated his gift-giving to Christmas Eve. It also placed him firmly in the American household, sliding down chimneys rather than arriving at church.

Visual artists finished the job. In the mid-1800s, cartoonist Thomas Nast drew Santa for *Harper’s Weekly*, adding the North Pole workshop, a naughty-and-nice list, and the red-suited, white-bearded look that became standard. Nast’s Santa reflected American ideals: cheerful, industrious, and democratic, a man of the people who visited every home equally.

Early in the 20th century, Coca-Cola’s holiday advertising campaign cemented Santa Claus as a national icon. What emerged was not a religious figure but a cultural invention: a symbol of generosity, childhood wonder, and American Christmas itself. Santa Claus, in short, is one of America’s most successful creations—mythical, marketable, and endlessly reinvented.



PERSON PLACE OR THING

SCAN TO ENTER!



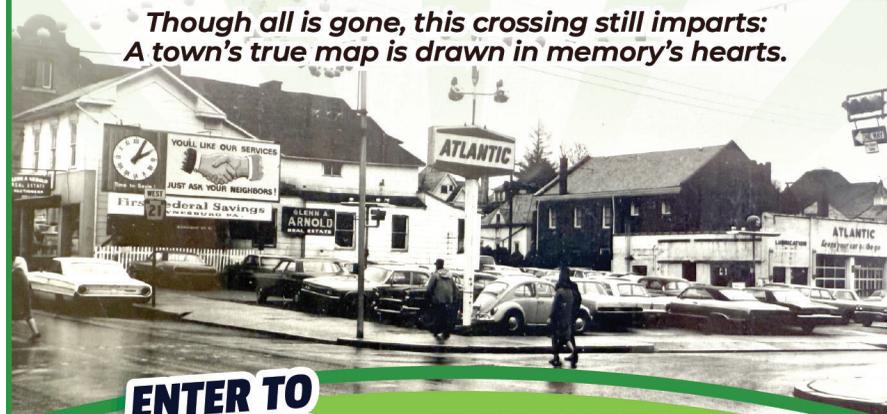
Hint:

*Behold this quiet cross of road and lane,
Where stop lights pause the gossip of the day,
There lies a past some in town still can’t quite name,
A memory paved, then slowly worn away.*

*Here once the gas pumps breathed their oily sighs,
And travelers traded coins for miles and hope.
By turning right we headed to the northern skies,
Left took us on a gentle postal slope.*

*And there - how well the locals still recall -
A humble stand where death dogs crowned with steam
Drew crowds enough to make the traffic stall,
A kingdom built on mustard, bun, and dream.*

*Though all is gone, this crossing still imparts:
A town’s true map is drawn in memory’s hearts.*



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SMALL TOWN SOCIAL SAFETY NETS ARE EVOLVING

Across the United States, a quiet but powerful shift is reshaping the landscape of social support: churches and nonprofit organizations are increasingly stepping into roles once dominated by government programs. As federal and state resources tighten under political pressure and budget constraints, communities are turning to faith-based groups, local charities, and volunteer networks to meet basic needs—from food security and housing to healthcare access and mental health services.

In urban areas and rural towns alike, the soup kitchens, thrift stores, and community clinics run by religious and civic groups have become safety nets for families struggling with rising costs and diminishing public assistance. For many Americans, these institutions offer more than material aid; they provide belonging, advocacy, and on-the-ground problem-solving that traditional bureaucracies often lack. In neighborhoods where public investment is sparse, a “social ecosystem” of nonprofits and congregations has emerged, pooling donations, volunteer hours, and professional expertise to fill gaps that government programs can no longer cover.

This trend is reshaping assumptions about civic responsibility. Supporters argue that localized, mission-driven care is more responsive and humane than one-size-fits-all policies. In an era of polarized politics and stretched public budgets, these grassroots efforts are not just supplemental—they are indispensable.



PROGRAMS

MONDAYS

Startables.....Youth.....3:15 pm - 6pm
 Beginners Sewing Class.....6 pm - 7:30 pm
 Cooking Classes.....1st & 3rd Monday/month.....6 pm - 8 pm

TUESDAYS

Add-Ventures.....Preschool.....10 am - 11 am
 Brighter Tomorrows.....Tuesday & Thursdays.....3:30 pm - 6 pm
 Knitted together Support Group.....Parents & Caregivers...6 pm - 7 pm
 Coffee House.....7 pm - 10 pm
 Women's Bible Study.....7 pm - 8 pm
 Pick-Up Basketball.....7 pm - 9 pm

WEDNESDAYS

Adult Christian Book Club.....1 pm - 2:30 pm
 Open Gym, Board Games, & Computer Fun.....4 pm - 6 pm
 4-H Sewing.....2nd & 4th Wed/month.....6 pm - 7:30 pm
 Quilting Basics.....First Wed/month.....6 pm - 7:30 pm
 Canva Basics.....Adults.....12 Noon

THURSDAYS

Brighter Tomorrows.....Tuesday & Thursday.....3:30 pm - 6 pm
 Men's Bible Study.....6 pm - 7 pm

SUNDAYS

Congregational Gatherings.....12 pm - 2pm
 Spark Youth Group.....4th, 5th & 6th Grad.....6 pm - 8 pm



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Good NEWS

In Greene County

WCHS Lions Club Students of the Month for January

The Lions Club Students of the month are **Tucker Smith and Abigail Hartman.**



Tucker Smith is the son of Ryan Smith and Tiffany Ritenour of Spraggs. He has earned a 4.0 GPA throughout high school. Tucker has stayed very busy at WCHS. He is a member of the art club, Botz IQ, choir, drama club, encore music appreciation club, envirothon, hope squad, national honor society, national technical honor society, precision machining, skills USA, student council, and TRIO upward bound. He serves as the president of the choir.

Tucker is a student in the CTC precision machining shop where he competes in Botz IQ. He also serves as a tour guide and worker at the CTC school store.

Outside of school Tucker works at the W.A. Young and Sons Foundry and Machine Shop. His future plans are to pursue a degree in machining and go into the work force.

He enjoys helping others and hanging out with his friends. And Rock and Roll! Tucker would like to thank his parents and friends for all their support and encouragement.



Abigail Hartman is the daughter of Brad and Amy Hartman of Waynesburg. She has earned straight 'A's through high school. Abigail has been a member of the Creative writing club, Spanish club, FFA, The Raider Rose, Encore Music Appreciation, Polar plunge, Alpha Beta, Envirothon, Prom committee, and the Safety Club. She has served as the treasurer of the Creative writing club. She has had two poems published in the American Library of Poetry.

Ms. Hartman is also a member of the varsity soccer team, and a four-year letterman. Abigail was also a Prom Attendant during her junior year.

Outside of school Abigail spends a lot of time volunteering in the community. She has helped with Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan's Purse and Erin's Inside Out Cafe Soup Kitchen at Waynesburg First United Methodist Church. She is also the coordinator for Bowlby Library Children's Art Class.

Abigail works as a barista at RGB Coffee and spends her free time reading, baking, cooking, shopping and traveling.

Abigail's future plans are to attend Duquesne University and major in early childhood education. She hopes to create a safe and positive classroom environment, and dedicate herself to helping the students who need it the most.

Five Solas Christian Theater to Hold Auditions for Summer Play

Auditions for the summer production of *Pilgrim's Progress: the Musical (Part Two)* will be held Monday, April 13 and Wednesday April 15 at 7 p.m.

All ages and experience levels are welcome. There are both singing and acting roles available.

Five Solas Christian Theatre
193 Preachers Rd. Waynesburg
Email: fivesolasministry@yahoo.com

Please e-mail or Facebook message with questions if you are interested in helping.

CFGC and Career & Technology Center Announce Over \$235,000 in Grants and In-Kind Donations

The Community Foundation of Greene County (CFGC) and the Greene County Career & Technology Center (CTC) recently announced over \$235,000 in grants and in-kind donations were received to benefit the following programs at the CTC: Electrical Occupations, Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and the CDL Class-A training programs.

A grant of \$199,000 was received from The Heinz Endowments to expand and increase the CDL Class-A training classes and hire additional staff for the LPN program to meet the demand for more LPN nurses in our region. According to Mark Krupa, CTC Director, "The grant for the CDL Class-A training classes will allow us to offer these training courses more frequently and meet an identified workforce shortage in SW PA. These are living wage jobs for Greene County. The grant for the LPN program will allow us to hire two additional part-time LPN instructors to meet our mission of training every student for their next step in life. These are examples of educational training programs students in Greene County need to be career ready when they graduate from high school."

In addition, a grant of \$25,000 was received from the FirstEnergy Foundation to support the Electrical Occupations program. According to John Chapman, Electrical Occupations instructor, "The grant from the FirstEnergy Foundation allows our students to learn using industry standard equipment and tools, by preparing them to enter the electrical trades."

Finally, the George R. Smalley Company, Electrical Contractor of Hopwood, made an in-kind donation of various power tools and electric wire to the Electrical Occupations program. "We have a long history of working with, supporting, and hiring graduates of the CTC, according to Rusty Smalley, owner of George R. Smalley Company. We are proud to continue supporting the program."

"We are thankful to the Heinz Endowments, FirstEnergy Foundation, and Smalley Electric for their support of our Career & Technology Center and Greene County, as we prepare HS graduates to enter the workplace by giving them the training and tools necessary to be career ready," said Dave Calvario, CFGC Executive Director.

Since 2000, CFGC has been able to award more than \$7 million in grants and scholarships that have helped meet the needs and improve lives of Greene County residents.

Applications Are Being Accepted for 1, 2, 3 & 4 Bedroom Apartments

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BOWLBY BITS

Hours: Mon & Wed: 9am – 7pm | Tues & Thurs: 9am – 6pm | Fri & Sat: 9am – 4pm

FAMILY PLACE PLAY – Fridays from 10 – 11:15 AM starting February 6th | Eva K. Bowlby Public Library will be hosting a 5-week, Family Place Parent-Child Play program! These educational, free-play sessions for children ages 0-3 and their caregivers is the signature program of the national Family Place Libraries™ initiative. Children can play with others and explore a variety of developmentally appropriate materials, while parents can access resources and meet local community professionals on various topics concerning their child's overall development. Call 724-627-9776 to sign-up.

BOARD GAME CAFE – Come to the Library on February 3rd & 17th for a cozy board game day from 5-6 PM! We look forward to seeing you here! Call 724-627-9776 to let us know you're interested in attending.

TAYLOR SWIFT LOVER PARTY – Thursday, February 12th from 4 – 6 PM | Join the Bowlby Library for a Taylor Swift party for ages 5yrs+! Sign up required with a minimum of 5 participants needed by 2/10.

VALENTINE'S STORY HOUR – Friday, February 13th from 1 -2 PM | The Bowlby library invites all parents and children to a special holiday-themed story time open to all ages! Call 724-627-9776 to let us know you're coming.

STEAM CLUB – Do you love Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics? Starting on February 7th, join us from 10am-11am on the first Saturday of each month for STEAM Club Saturdays! Must be 5yr+ to attend. Sign-ups are required and you can do so by calling the library at 724-627-9776.

NATIONAL TAKE YOUR CHILD TO THE LIBRARY DAY – Saturday, February 7th, we will have a scavenger hunt for families to complete all day.

MOVIE NIGHT – Enjoy movie night here at the library Friday, February 6th, beginning promptly at 7:00 PM. In the Library's Community Room. This Month's Movie is Now You See Me: Now You Don't. FREE snack and beverage! Doors open at 6:45 PM. Call the library to RSVP your seat(s)

PUZZLE CHALLENGE – Saturday, February 14th from 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM. Do you trust your puzzle skills enough to compete against other puzzle lovers??? The library is looking for 10 teams of two to compete in putting together a 500-piece puzzle in three hours or less. Contact the library to register. Prize is awarded to the fastest team.

THREADHEAD MEETUP – Monday, February 9th from 5:00 – 6:30 PM, Come join us and bring your WiP to our Threadhead Meetup! Open to all crafters and experience levels. Snacks, tunes, and laughter provided. Call 724-627-9776 to RSVP but walk-ins are welcome.

SILENT BOOK HOUR – Join us in the Library's Young Adult Room every Tuesday from 5 - 6:00 PM for a silent hour of reading.

BOOK CLUB – Wednesday, February 11th from 5:00 – 6:30 PM. This month's book discussion is on Ann Patchett's "The Dutch House", There are several physical copies available at the front desk. New members are always welcome to join!

LEGO BUILD-A-BAG – Saturday, February 21st 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM | Participants, alone or in groups, can build anything they can imagine out of a bag of random LEGOs within the allotted time and can keep their creations as well as the creation they made. Please call 724-627-9776 to sign-up, but walk-ins are welcome!

COSMIC BINGO – Join us at the library on Friday, February 27th at 7:00 PM for a fun night of Glow in the Dark "COSMIC" Bingo! The Library will supply all needed items including prizes. Join us for a COSMIC fun time! Call 724-627-9776 to let us know you're coming.

MAHJONG CLUB – Meets every Wednesday, 1:00 – 4:00 PM. Mahjong is a tile-based game that's been played in Asia for over 300 years and is gaining global popularity. It's fairly easy to learn the basics. Walk-ins are welcome.

WEIGHT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP – Is a weight management support group that meets every Friday, 10:00 – 11:00AM.

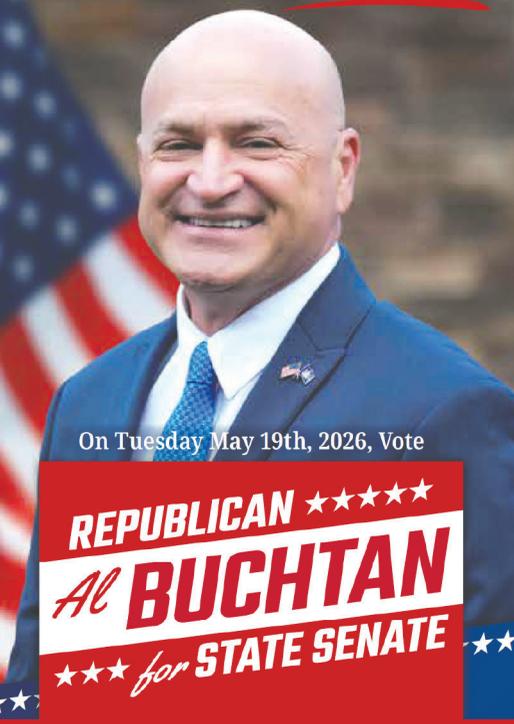
CPR/AED TRAINING [AHA] – The library is offering CPR Certification classes for Adult, Child, & Infant First Aid, and AED on Saturday, February 28th. Class begin at 10:30 a.m. and end at 2:30 PM. Please call Sharon at 724-984-5702 to register; there is limited seating for this event. Cost is \$88 and includes training, workbook, Take Home CPR Kit, 2 yr. certification card & manual.

TECH TUTORING – Need help with one of your devices?? We want to help! Call the library to reserve a time-slot. Bring your electronic device, account passwords, any devices you use (and charging cords if needed), and your library card. One of our tech savvy librarians will help you with a variety of technology services.



GreenScene by Jim Rankin of Carmichaels

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HOSTED BY:

The Community Foundation of Greene County

Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 6:00pm

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Cool at School:

WEST GREENE FFA ATTENDS STATE FARM SHOW

By Aubrey Lesnett

The West Greene FFA Program recently traveled to Harrisburg for the Pennsylvania Farm Show, continuing a long-standing tradition that celebrates student achievement, leadership, and commitment to agricultural education. Each year, the Farm Show serves as a milestone event for members, where freshmen are awarded their official FFA jackets, and seniors are recognized for earning the prestigious Keystone State FFA Degree.

This year's trip was especially memorable, as 21 members received their first-ever FFA jacket. For many students, putting on the iconic blue corduroy jacket for the first time is a powerful and emotional experience.

It represents not only membership in FFA, but also dedication to leadership, service, and agricultural excellence. Standing among 1,448 fellow members from across Pennsylvania, West Greene students shared a moment that connects generations of FFA members statewide.

Pennsylvania once again broke its own record by placing the largest single jacket order to National FFA, highlighting the continued growth and strength of agricultural education programs throughout the state. For West Greene freshmen, receiving their jackets at the Farm Show marks the official beginning of their FFA journey and sets the tone for their future involvement in the organization.

In addition to jacket presentations, 15 members

earned their Keystone State FFA Degree, the highest honor an FFA member can receive in Pennsylvania. This recognition is traditionally awarded to seniors who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and achievement throughout their high school FFA careers.

Earning the Keystone Degree requires years of commitment, including active participation in FFA activities, strong academic performance, and successful supervised agricultural experiences.

West Greene FFA takes pride in returning to the Show each year to honor both new and graduating members in this meaningful way. The tradition allows underclassmen and upperclassmen alike to see the full journey of an FFA member. This shared experience reinforces the values of growth, perseverance, and leadership within the chapter.

Beyond the awards ceremony, the Show offers students an opportunity to immerse themselves in the agricultural community. Members interact with other chapters, explore agricultural exhibits, and witness firsthand the scope and importance of Pennsylvania's agricultural industry.

Whether celebrating first steps or crowning achievements, the experience in Harrisburg reminds students of the opportunities FFA provides and the pride that comes with being part of an organization rooted in tradition, leadership, and service.



Famous Pennsylvania Farm Show butter sculpture.



West Greene FFA members earn their jackets and degrees at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg.

Cool at School:

McGUFFEY BOCCE TEAM ENTERS SECOND YEAR

“Great roll!”
“Don’t miss this roll, coach! Lotta pressure!”
“That’s it! That’s how you do it!”

Walk into any practice of the McGuffey Unified Bocce team and these are things that you are likely to hear. The team is likely to offer encouragement to you as well as some playful banter, just to keep things light.

In their second season, the team has gotten off to a 2-2 start and is a nice mix of returning veterans and brand-new players, all ranging from 9th to 12th grade. The team is coached by Steve Shilling, a public speaking teacher, and Susi Hamilton, a math teacher, each having the time of their lives.

“Starting this team last year, I didn’t know what to expect,” said Shilling, who has coached football, baseball, soccer and volleyball at the high school level. “But from day one and every day since, it has made my day. Quite simply, it’s the best thing that I have ever been a part of.”

For first-year coach Susi Hamilton, the experience has been much the same. “When the kids are smiling all the time, it’s contagious. I look forward to it every day, it makes me so happy to be a part of the program,” she said.

For those unfamiliar with Unified Bocce, it is one of many sports run under supervision by Special Olympics that are recognized by the PIAA and WPIAL as varsity sports. There are a

complete regular season and playoffs, culminating in state title matches in Hershey.

A match consists of two games with 30-minute running clocks. Each game counts towards a team’s record.

One of the most intriguing things about it is that coaches can’t actually coach players during the games. “That’s unlike any other sport that I have been a part of. But while we are competing, it’s all about fun first and foremost,” Shilling said. “We can encourage our players, but we can’t tell them what to do, unless we call timeout. It’s unique for sure.”

A team consists of players deemed with special needs and their “partners,” regular education students who also play. The team practices twice a week and most often has a weekly game. Players receive varsity letters for their commitment and participation.

According to Special Olympics Pennsylvania, the state has over 500 schools participating in the Unified Sports Program that is “aimed at promoting social inclusion through intentionally planned and implemented activities affecting systems-wide change.

With sports as the foundation, the model of Unified Champion Schools offers a unique combination of activities that equip young people with tools and training to create sports, classroom and school climates of acceptance. These are school climates where students with disabilities feel welcome and are

routinely included in, and feel a part of, all activities”

“We feel that change of perception when it comes to our players and inclusion,” Shilling said. “We had some pretty large crowds come to our matches last year, and it continues to grow and become more a part of the school community”

“I’ve seen some pretty amazing things in sports, but nothing as special as when these kids are competing together,” Shilling said. “I’ve had players say, ‘I never thought I’d ever be considered an athlete.’ I’ve also had others who’ve expressed an interest in becoming a special education teacher, so I know the program is doing all the right things.”

In their initial season, the Highlanders struggled to rack up wins. However, this year they are off to a great start and have hopes of winning their section and making the playoffs. “That’s the goal, but in the end, whether we do or not, we’re having a blast every single day,” Shilling said. “The laughter and team camaraderie that we have far outweighs any result that we could have.”

Junior Captain Ariana Condon also shared her experience. “Being part of the bocce team has given me the great feeling that I am part of a team. Growing up, I was always involved in sports, and I never thought I’d be able to be a part of something so positive like bocce.”



Cool at School:

CARMICHAELS EMT PROGRAM RECEIVES “SIREN-WORTHY” GRANT

By Emma Bates

The EMT training program at Carmichaels High School is one of both challenge and comradery. Led by active EMT and Social Studies teacher Rebecca Reed, the program is running with a full outfit of lights and sirens. With more than 100 participants over the course’s existence, students and their patients have been aided for the better. In light of the current boom in medical careers, early, real-world training is an asset to students looking to further their education in nursing or pre-med tracks.

EMT is a scheduled course, offered through partnership with Penn State Fayette, that is taken in two parts throughout the school day. In it, students are taught practical emergency response skills and medical practices used by EMTs. They are then assessed on textbook and hands-on learning through exams of both formats.

Students in the EMT program are also given the opportunity to accompany Ms. Reed and other working paramedics at Brownsville’s EMS department on ride-alongs that eventually develop into supervised shifts as training EMTs. These shifts can be a moment of truth for students to discover whether or not they are truly called to a medical career, and for those that may have been on the fence to potentially unlock newfound confidence and passion.

In order to provide such an immersive career track, the EMT program requires updated training equipment to accurately prepare budding EMTs with the exposure to the latest technologies. Fortunately, Carmichaels’ program just received a generous grant from EMS West, which provides

support for Emergency Medical Services education, workforce development, and patient care, according to Rich Kaufman, the organization’s Deputy Director.

In early budgeting, EMS West identified Greene County as an area of need in the 16-county region. Besides Carmichaels, who invites Jefferson High School students to participate in the program in-person, EMT programs at the Jefferson Volunteer Fire Department and the Greene County Career and Technology Center (CTC) were selected for a bolstered arsenal of training equipment due to their strong base of community presence and volunteering. EMS instructors at all three programs provided input as to what tools were of greatest need to efficiently direct the grant providers to the most useful classroom items.

“It is important for us as the Regional EMS Council to advocate for EMS providers, agencies, students, and patients,” said Kaufman. “Having this equipment in the hands of qualified EMS instructors at rural education sites in Greene County makes the most sense. It shouldn’t be locked away in a cabinet somewhere.”

Carmichaels “received two airway heads, a rescue mannequin, a labor and delivery simulator, glucometers, pulse oximeters, gloves, and tourniquets,” shares Reed gratefully.

EMS West extends its appreciation to Justin Beal of Jefferson VFC, Dan Halliday of Greene County CTC, and Rebecca Reed of Carmichaels High School for their leadership, cooperation, and commitment to advancing EMS education in Greene County.



Rich Kaufman, EMS West Deputy Director presents Carmichaels EMT students, principal Lisa Zdravecky, instructor Rebecca Reed, and School Resource Officer Howard with the shiny new supplies. Students in the back (L-R): Suzann Osbetsky and Addison Palko. Front: Trenton Bates and Jack Shaffer.

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First Friday Valentine's Day Theme

Downtown Waynesburg

Friday, Feb 6th

4 pm - 8 pm

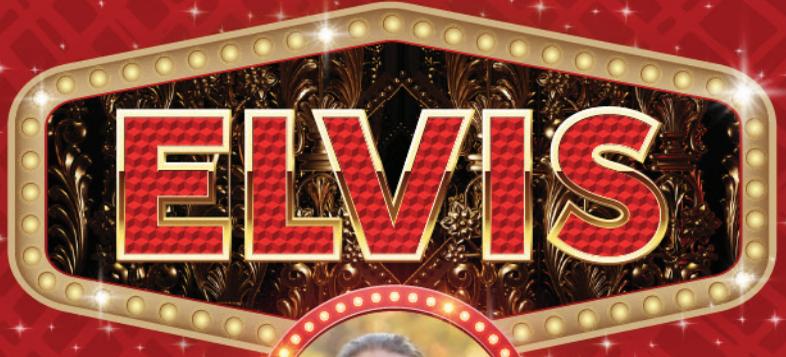
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THE RISE OF BARN WEDDINGS

By Lacey McVeil

Over the past decade, barn weddings have shifted from a niche choice to one of the **most popular wedding venue trends** in the U.S. and beyond. Once associated with simple rural celebrations, barn venues now rival traditional banquet halls and ballrooms for style, flexibility, and atmosphere. In fact, wedding-planning data shows that farms, barns, and ranches have surged in popularity, with roughly **one in five couples choosing these spaces for their reception** (a tenfold increase from the early 2000s).

Several factors are driving this trend:

- **Authentic, rustic charm:** Weathered open spaces and the textured beauty of historic structures create an immediate sense of character that's hard to replicate in conventional venues.
- **Connection to nature:** Barn venues are often set against scenic landscapes like rolling fields, old trees, ponds, or pastures, providing natural backdrops for ceremonies and photography.
- **A blank canvas for personalization:** Unlike pre-designed banquet rooms, barns provide a flexible space that couples can style to fit their personalities and wedding visions.
- **Social media appeal:** The visual richness of the setting translates to photos and videos, boosting the trend via social media.

This combination of aesthetic appeal, flexibility, and sto-

rytelling backdrops has cemented barn weddings not as a passing fad but as a **lasting cornerstone of contemporary wedding culture**.

Barn weddings have grown far beyond the stereotypical rustic chic look of mason jars and burlap. Today's barn celebrations blend country charm with elevated design, comfort, and thoughtful experiences.

Modern barn weddings often feature **refined décor alongside rustic elements**. Couples mix soft draping, sophisticated lighting, nature-inspired palettes, and metallic accents to create a look that feels both cozy and elegant.

The rustic structure of a barn, such as exposed beams and weathered wood, serve as a backdrop for curated details that feel intentional, not rustic by default.

One of the biggest appeals of barn venues is how easily they incorporate **both outdoor and indoor spaces**. Many couples plan their ceremony in a garden or meadow near the barn, then transition indoors for dinner and dancing, creating a natural and engaging flow throughout the day.

This experience makes the wedding feel expansive rather than confined to one bounded room.

Common trends during the wedding include:

- Signature cocktails or welcome drinks inspired by the season
- Lounge and fire-pit areas

- Late-night snack stations or interactive food stations
- Photo walls and guest activity spots

Within the broader barn wedding boom, certain **design and stylistic directions** are shaping celebrations:

- **Earthy, seasonally inspired color schemes:** Warm neutrals feel organic alongside wood textures.
- **Statement lighting:** Twinkle lights strung through rafters, candlelight, and warm uplighting transform rustic spaces into romantic settings at night.
- **Mixed seating and layouts:** Long banquet tables and lounge areas create a dynamic reception flow, encouraging conversation and movement.
- **Interactive and personal touches:** Interactive drink stations and custom signage make each wedding feel unique. These design elements help barn weddings feel both **current and timeless**, balancing rustic heritage with modern touches.

The barn wedding trend isn't without challenges. Logistics can be trickier for guests, as many barn venues are rural and may require travel, lodging, and careful coordination.

However, barn weddings continue to endure because they offer something that few other venues can: **a blend of authenticity, flexibility, and visual charm that feels personal and meaningful**.

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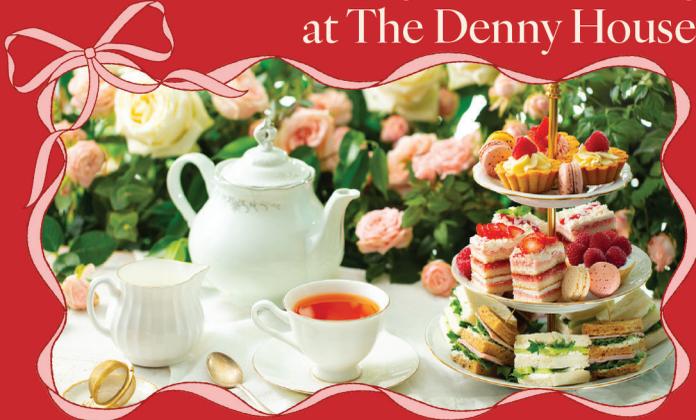
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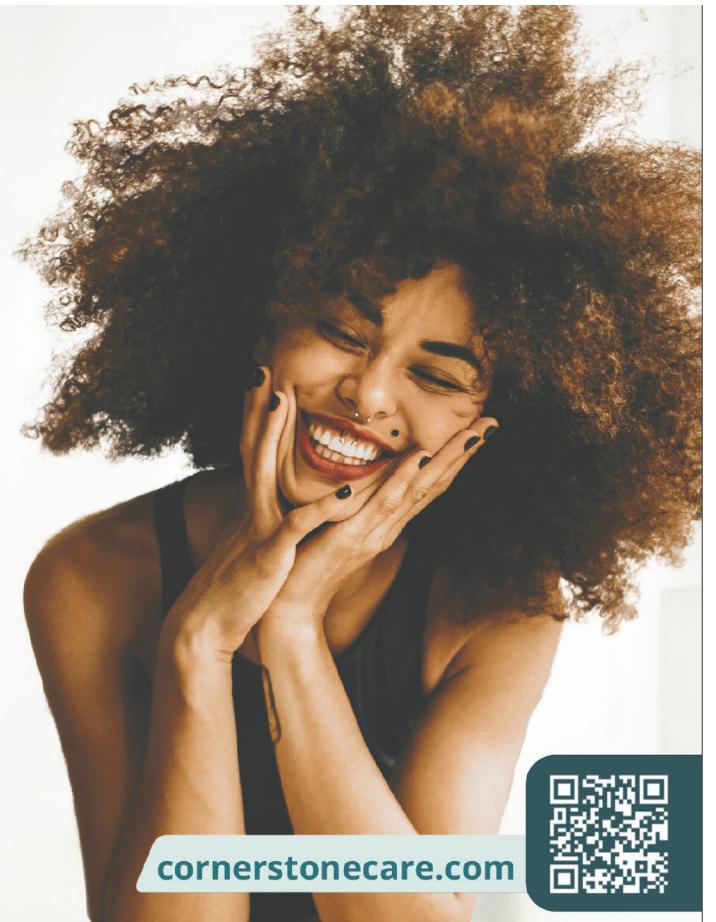
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Intentional Walks

By Bret Moore



*Bret Moore is the Director of Recreation for Greene County. He taught English and coached multiple sports at McGuffey High School for thirty years. He is also the author of **Rough and Ungentlemanly Tactics**, a two-volume history of sports in Greene County, available at Direct Results and McCracken Pharmacy.*

THE DEATH OF SPORTS JOURNALISM AND THE CACOPHONY OF CLOWNS

There was a time when sports journalism was less about volume and more about voice. Not loudness, not outrage, but *voice*—measured, informed, and rooted in a genuine love of the games and the people who played them. Sports-writers once served as translators between the action on the field and the fan at home, explaining not just what happened, but *why it mattered*. Today, that concept feels as outdated as a typewriter. **True reporting and analysis has been drowned out by a chorus of shouting heads and manufactured conflict.**

The classic sports journalist was a reporter first. They traveled with teams, hung out in the locker rooms, and learned the rhythms of a season one bus ride at a time. Their columns were built on access, trust, and context. They understood that sports were not isolated events but ongoing stories, shaped by personalities, histories, and communities.

When I was young, sports *personalities* became a new thing. Broadcasters such as Howard Cossell and Myron Cope added a bit of dramatic flair to the traditional voices of the time. As a young man, I appreciated the humor they brought to the table. My father, an old school journalist, did not share my enthusiasm in the least.

In hindsight, he may have been right. The unique novelty of a bombastic character in the field has morphed into a sea of carnival barkers who think they are the story instead of the reporter.

Today's most visible sports talk shows resemble competitive yelling contests. Panels are crowded with personalities who talk over one another, racing to deliver the "hottest take" before the commercial break. Nuance is treated like a weakness. Thoughtfulness is a liability. If an opinion can't be compressed into a confrontational soundbite, it doesn't make it to air.

This isn't accidental. The modern sports show is engineered for attention in an era where attention is scarce. Outrage travels faster than insight. A calm, reasoned breakdown of a game doesn't trend the way a shouted declaration does. Algorithms reward extremes, and networks follow suit. The result is a media ecosystem where being correct matters far less than being memorable.

Lost in all this noise is reporting. Many shows now revolve around speculation rather than information, opinion untethered from fact. Stories are debated before they're verified. Anonymous rumors are elevated to the same level as confirmed report-



The crew of ESPN's The Sports Reporters.

ing, as long as they provoke reaction.

The journalist as a watchdog who holds leagues, owners, and institutions accountable has been pushed to the margins. They have been replaced by performers whose primary loyalty is to the spotlight.

Every player's daily performance is framed as a referendum on their legacy. Every loss is a crisis. Every disagreement is a feud. The season becomes a series of artificial emergencies designed to keep viewers emotionally hooked. It's exhausting, and it

leaves little room for the quieter truths that sports often reveal: perseverance and growth.

What's especially ironic is many fans haven't lost their appetite for real sports journalism. Thoughtful columns still get shared. Podcasts hosted by reporters who know their beats routinely outperform louder studio shows. When given the choice, many fans gravitate toward substance. The problem isn't demand; it's corporate emphasis.

The loss of true sports journalism isn't just a nostalgia problem. It matters because sports are a reflection of culture. They intersect with politics, economics, race, and identity. When coverage is reduced to yelling and provocation, those intersections are either ignored or overly exacerbated depending on that particular network's point of view.

There are still excellent sports journalists working today. Writers such as Jeff Pearlman still work quietly outside the brightest lights. But until the industry rediscovers the value of listening over shouting, of reporting over reacting, their voices will continue to struggle for oxygen.

Sports deserve storytellers, not screamers. Writers like **Grantland Rice** and **Red Smith** are legends who produced sports literature. They didn't need to shout to be heard. Their words carried weight because they were earned through experience and respect for the reader.

Others such as **Dick Schaap**, **Bob Costas**, **Mike Lupica**, **Mitch Albom** and **Frank Deford** brought elegance and curiosity to every subject they touched, reminding readers that sports stories were ultimately human stories. Their columns didn't just recap events; they explained meaning.

Unfortunately, chronicling sports with patience, wit, and perspective feels incompatible with modern television pacing. The legends of the past trusted readers to think. Today's format often assumes they can't or won't.

ATHLETES OF THE MONTH HONORED AT LUNCHEON

The GreeneScene and the Department of Recreation recently hosted a banquet celebrating the achievements of local high school athletes who exemplify excellence both on and off the field. The luncheon was less about scoreboards and statistics and more about character, commitment, and community.

Honored athletes represented schools from across the county and shared a common thread: they are leaders in the classroom, competitors in their chosen sports, and active participants in school clubs, volunteer efforts, and community organizations.

Host Kent Marisa applauded the hard work of both the students and their parents that often goes unseen—early mornings, late practices, academic discipline, and a dedication to service that extends beyond school hallways. Featured guest speaker Derek Bochna exhorted the students to embrace their fears as a motivating tool for success.

By honoring these students, the GreeneScene and Department of Recreation reinforced a simple but meaningful message. Success is measured not just by trophies, but by the positive impact these young leaders make every day in the County.



Carmichaels

Cannon Bupka, Baylee Landau, Gage Kundry, Jase Zdravecky



Rudy Marisa Scholarship Winners

Ani Cree and Jase Zdravecky



Mapletown

Ashton Walker, Daniel Fox, Emma Zalar Helena Cumpston, Leona Liggett, Marley Shiflett, Willow Rudman



West Greene

Joel Grimes, Bethany Courtwright, Jillisa Yeater



Waynesburg Central

Zach Jiblits, Rylei Rastoka, Ani Cree, Jeffrey Blair, Railey Bochna, Austin Surber



Jefferson-Morgan

Carrie Corbett, Gabbie Marmie, Dayten Marion, Jaymison Robinson, Ava Wood, Emilee Bazzoli, Kelsey Vessels, Addyson Teagarden, and Liam Rogers

We would like to sincerely thank **Iron Senergy** for sponsoring the Greene County Sports Recognition Weekend, which honors both the Athletes of the Month and the Greene County Sports Hall of Fame inductees. Their continued support makes it possible to celebrate the hard work, dedication, and achievements of athletes past and present. Without Iron Senergy's generous contributions, these meaningful events would not be possible. Their commitment to investing in local youth, honoring excellence, and strengthening community pride helps ensure that deserving individuals receive the recognition they have earned.

GREENE COUNTY HALL OF FAME WELCOMES FIVE INDUCTEES

The fifth annual Greene County Sports Hall of Fame banquet was held at the historic Denny House, bringing together former athletes, families, and community members for an evening rich with memories and gratitude. The event honored a new class of inductees whose athletic achievements left a lasting mark on Greene County sports history.

Throughout the evening, inductees took the podium to share personal reflections that moved the room. Inductees spoke of early practices on familiar fields, long bus rides to away games, and coaches who demanded excellence while teaching life lessons that extended far beyond competition. A recurring theme echoed through each tribute: Greene County was not just where their athletic journeys began, but where their values were shaped.

Even for those who have since moved away, the connection remains strong. Inductees shared how the discipline, teamwork, and sense of community they learned here followed them into careers, families, and lives far from home. Greene County, they noted, provided a foundation that never faded with distance.



2026 annual Greene County Sport Hall of Fame winners (L to R): Tim McConnell, Kristin Polosky-Puskas, Bobby Hathaway, Tammy McIntire-Mandich and Rodney Wilson. Nick Vukmanic was a posthumous inductee.

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YOU CAN'T MAKE NEW "OLD FRIENDS"

By T.R. Mahle

I have many "old friends"...hunting friends, fishing friends, hangout friends, and unfortunately, memories of old friends who have passed.

As 2025 quietly slipped away, I found myself reflecting on many things. One thing that is very important to me is "old friendships". Old friendships carry a quiet kind of strength that newer connections often lack. They are built from shared history, inside jokes that no longer need explaining, memories that surface with a single word, and they hold versions of us that no longer exist but still matter.

Time may stretch these friendships thin, pulling people in different directions, but it rarely breaks them completely. Even after long gaps, old friends often reconnect...a conversation after months or years can still feel natural, as if little time has passed at all. These friendships remind us of who we once were, who we are, and how far we have come as friends. Old friendships also teach patience and forgiveness, shaped by years of understanding each other's flaws. Though they may not always be part of daily life, old friendships remain quietly meaningful, always waiting to be rediscovered.

Friendships that have endured years, or even decades, carry a bond built on shared history, trust, and understanding. One of the greatest strengths of old friendships is the comfort they provide. These relationships often become emotional anchors where differences in opinion no longer feel threatening and there is little need for explanation or performance.

These friends know our stories, our flaws, our bad habits, and they accept us anyway. This sense of being fully known creates a safe space where honesty is easier and vulnerability feels less risky. In a world that often demands constant reinvention, old friendships allow us to simply be ourselves.

Old friendships also serve as living records of our lives. They remember our childhood dreams, past mistakes, and moments of vulnerability that others may never know about. When memory fades or perspective is lost, old friends help us remember...even though we don't always agree on how things actually happened. They can laugh with us about embarrassing moments and remind us of different events that have taken place. This shared history gives the relationship emotional richness that cannot be created quickly.

Another important value of old friendships is loyalty. Time-tested bonds have survived disagreements, distance, and changing priorities. Staying connected through different life stages such as school, careers, relationships, or family responsibilities, requires effort and commitment. Yet even with less frequent contact, the bond often remains intact. This resilience is part of what makes old friendships so valuable. Old friendships are precious because they combine trust, shared history, loyalty, and understanding. Even though they may require patience and effort to maintain, the emotional security and meaning they offer make them worth preserving.

Because of this, old friendships often come with a deeper sense of reliability. Knowing that someone has stood by you during difficult times builds trust that is hard to replicate in newer relationships. Old friendships also help provide balance and perspective, offering honest feedback without judgment. Old friends are more likely to tell us the truth, even when it is uncomfortable, because the relationship is strong enough to handle it.

After all of this reflecting...the best part for me is that I can still get together with my "old friends" and make new memories.

CANNING VENISON By T.R. Mahle

Given this is the Brag Mag Issue, I thought I would share another of my favorite recipes for "Canned or Cold Packed" venison. Canned venison will keep for a long time when stored properly (cool dark areas)

Canned or Cold Packed Venison

- Cut venison into 1" squares (all silver skin must be removed)
- Pack (tightly) raw or "browned" venison into warm, sterilized jar
- Leave 1" headspace at the top
- The meat will actually create enough of its own liquid so adding water is not necessary
- Wipe the jar rim with a clean damp cloth
- Add salt and/or a beef bouillon cube
- You can add a slice of onion (optional)
- Add a clove of garlic
- Add a bay leaf or some Tyme (optional)
- Place the jars in a cold-packer bath of boiling water (covered) for an hour and 15 minutes
- Remove from heat and let cool

***Note: some people will only eat meat that has been prepared in a "pressure cooker." We didn't have one growing up and we are still alive! If using a pressure cooker, follow the guidelines for using a pressure cooker.**

January - February Outdoor Calendar

Small Game

- Squirrels thru Feb. 28
- Ruffed Grouse (Closed)
- Rabbit (Cotton Tail) thru Feb. 28
- Ring-Necked Pheasant thru Feb. 28
- Bobwhite Quail thru March 31
- Groundhogs (No Season)
- Crows thru March 22 (Thur.-Fri.-Sat.-Sun. only)

Big Game

- Turkey (WMU 2, Greene Co.) (Closed)...Spring Gobbler May 2
- Black Bear (Firearms) (Closed)
- Elk (General) (Closed)
- Deer (Archery) thru Jan. 19
- Deer (Regular Firearms) (Closed)
- Deer (Flintlock) thru Jan 19

Furbearer Hunting

- Coyotes (No Closed Season)
- Foxes thru Feb. 21
- Raccoons thru Feb. 21
- Bobcat thru Feb. 4

Trapping

- Minks & Muskrats (Closed)
- Coyote & Fox thru Feb. 22
- Opossums & Raccoons thru Feb. 22

Migratory Game Birds (Sunday Hunting Prohibited)

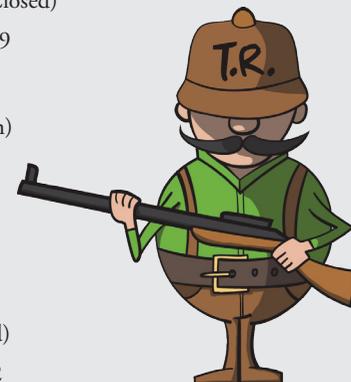
- Ducks (South Zone) thru Jan. 19
- Ducks (South Zone) Junior, Veteran & Active-Duty Military (Closed)
- Canada Geese thru Jan. 17
- Canada Geese Junior, Veteran & Active-Duty Military (Closed)
- Doves (Closed)
- Woodcock (Closed)

Falconry

- Squirrel, Bobwhite Quail, Ruffed Grouse, Rabbits and Ring-Necked Pheasant thru March 31

Fishing

- First day of trout season is Saturday, April 4
- Mentored Youth fishing day is March 29



WHO COULD ASK FOR MORE?

A REFLECTION ON 2025 HUNTING & FISHING

By T.R. Mahle

Ring in the new year is a very exciting time for most people. You know the saying, out-with-the-old and in-with-the-new...but as the last few fluttering strands of confetti finally reach the ground and all the noisemakers and horns are silenced, I often ponder in amazement at the wonderful year I just experienced in the great outdoors with my friends and family.

As I look back and reflect on last year's outdoor adventures, I remembered how both hunting and fishing offered me lessons that extended far beyond the activities themselves and influenced my mindset and respect for the natural world. These experiences provided me with ample opportunities to spend quality time with friends and family and helped me build a deeper understanding of wildlife and the environment.

Fishing was one of the most consistent outdoor activities throughout the year for me. Spring trout fishing in local streams, early summer Tarpon fishing in the Gulf of America, mid-summer bass fishing in local ponds, early fall salmon fishing in Upstate New York, and late season brown trout fishing in the tributaries of Lake Ontario in the Rochester, NY area...who could ask for more.

Fishing requires patience and focus, especially on days when conditions were unpredictable and success was not guaranteed. Spending long hours on the water encouraged mindfulness and appreciation for quiet moments. Fishing also improved my observation skills, as paying attention to weather patterns, water movement, and timing often made the difference between a successful and unsuccessful trip. Even when only a few fish were caught, the experience remained rewarding because of the calm environment and the opportunity to disconnect from daily distractions.

Last year's hunting experiences were equally impactful but in a different way. Early season squirrel, the howl of the hounds and rabbits, pointers and pheasants, the quietness of the tree stand in bow season, night hunts for coon, ten days in the mountains of Big Sky country in Montana, and countless hours sitting in hunting blinds on local farms. I also managed to watch my son shoot a few thousand rounds of 12-gauge shells at skeet, trap and sporting clays...who could ask for more.

Hunting requires more preparation, discipline, and awareness of safety and ethical responsibility. Time spent scouting and waiting reinforced the importance of patience and self-control. These experiences emphasized respect for wildlife and the understanding that hunting is not just about success, but about participating responsibly in outdoor traditions. Observing animals in their natural habitats help's me better understand the wildlife and the balance between humans and nature.

Another important aspect of these experiences (actually, the most important) was the opportunity to spend time with others. Sharing hunting and fishing trips with family or friends created strong memories and strengthened our relationships. Conversations during quiet moments and shared experiences helps cultivate and foster these relationships. These moments emphasize the value of shared traditions and learning from those with more experience.

Overall, reflecting on last year's hunting and fishing activities reveals how valuable outdoor experiences can be. Beyond recreation, they promoted personal growth, respect for nature, and a sense of responsibility. These activities encouraged patience, observation, and appreciation for the environment. Moving forward, the lessons learned from these experiences will continue to influence how I approach outdoor activities, value outdoor time, and respect the natural world.

NEW FEATURE

SPOTLIGHTING GREENE COUNTY OUTDOOR SUCCESS

By T.R. Mahle

The Outdoor Section of the Greene Scene Magazine, is excited to announce that in 2026 we will be doing a quarterly spotlight on an accomplished "outdoor" individual that calls Greene County home. Initially we will be focusing primarily on the hunting and fishing aspects for the inaugural articles. We will be highlighting individuals that have been consistently successful in either of these fields. The feature will be "spotlighting" their accomplishments with an in-depth bio and photos of their success.

We feel such a feature will foster connection and recognition. It validates the individual efforts of those who often work quietly to perfect their passion. Public acknowledgment not only honors the individual but strengthens community pride and encourages others to pursue their own success.

Spotlighting an outdoor person is a meaningful way to celebrate individuals who have exhibited exemplary success in their chosen area of interest. These articles will recount diverse stories and allow us to engage deeply with one person's lifelong outdoor journey...and hopefully build anticipation for future features.

A quarterly spotlight offers balance. By highlighting one outdoor person every three months, we can invest time in thoughtful storytelling...exploring not just accomplishments, but motivations, challenges, and values. This slower pace encourages depth, allowing readers to understand how a person's relationship with the outdoors has evolved and how it influences their daily life.

These spotlights could also serve as powerful tools for inspiration. Many people know someone who participates in hunting and fishing activities but really never new how successful they are or how they got there. Sharing real, relatable stories about successful local outdoor people who, in most cases, have invested a lifetime to their passion may inspire some to start their own story. Hopefully, readers may see themselves reflected in these narratives and feel encouraged to take steps to expand their outdoor journeys.

Finally, we hope these spotlights provide educational value. Each featured individual will share their own unique knowledge and experience. Over the course of a year, readers will be exposed to varied individual perspectives about techniques, methods, and outdoor disciplines. By weaving practical insights into personal stories, the spotlight becomes more than a profile...it becomes a learning opportunity.

In essence, we hope these spotlights provide a way to honor individuals, educate audiences, and nurture a lasting connection between people and our long-standing traditions of hunting and fishing in Greene County.

If you would like to recommend someone for consideration in future issues, please forward the information to: info@greenescenemagazine.com

Greene Scene
COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2026

Go to:
www.greenescenemagazine.com
or scan the QR code

The graphic features a green and yellow calendar for the month of February 2026. The calendar shows dates from 01 to 31. A QR code is overlaid on the calendar, and a location pin icon is visible to the right. The text 'Greene Scene' is in a large, stylized font, and 'COMMUNITY MAGAZINE' is in a smaller font below it. The main title 'CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2026' is in large, bold, white letters. Below the title, it says 'Go to: www.greenescenemagazine.com or scan the QR code'. The QR code is a square with a green border and a small 'GS' logo in the center.

21st Annual HUNTERS' BRAG MAG



We are pleased to share pictures of a few of our Greene County area hunters who have earned the right to **BRAG!**



Amber Burkett



Roger Myers

◀ 10 Point



Joey Bair

Jefferson, PA ▶



Samuel Maddich

▶ Samuel is 7 years old from Rices Landing, PA. This is his first Buck, a 5 Point.



Alex Moore

◀ 7 Point

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Dan Karpency

Adah - 9 Point



Jaxon Parker

Age 15 of Mt Morris - 12 Point



Greg Nopwaskey



Wilbur Goodwin

9 Point



TR Mahle

12 point
Montana
Whitetail



George Taylor

9 Point



Jaydee Hobbs

Age 15 from Jefferson. 8 Point
from Arkansas hunt



Carson Henry

Waynesburg - 8 Point



Kolson Meyers

8 Point

Robbie Cowden

Montana Mule deer.



Jake Nopwaskey





Beau Karpency

Adah - 10 Point



Brody Bennett

Graysville, PA



Preston Whitmer

9 years old with his Eight point buck



Garrett Clark

Graysville, PA



Uriah Teasdale

16 of Waynesburg, PA



Tucker Rahuba

Age 12. First Buck – 12 Point



Troy Hopkins

180 inch Giant Ohio Whitetail



Daisy Robinson

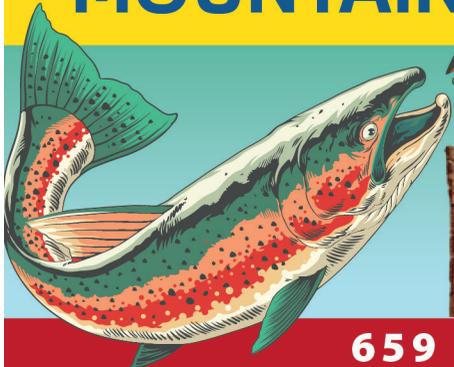
10 Point of Waynesburg



Wyatt Schaum

Age 10 of Spraggs. First Buck – 8 Point

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 Jackie Taylor
8 Point



Jackson Nopwaskey 



Emily Moore 
First Buck, shot
near Graysville



Jacob Bair 
Jefferson, PA 



Kory Taylor 
7 Point



 Kipton Myers
First Buck – 8 Point



 Kristin Hopkins
Waynesburg local 



Logan Burkett 



Luca Manni 
Luca Manni and his grandfather
Bob Ruffalo with his 10 point
near Prosperity



 Laci Myers
10 Point 





Owen Maddich

12 Point near Ruff Creek



Lilah Burkett



Paul Burkett



Page Phillips

Age 11 of Jefferson



Juliet Rahuba

First Buck - 12 Point



L.J. Stickovich

Jefferson, PA



Zeke Wilkens

6 Point



Kaleb Wilson

Kaleb Wilson and his Uncle Ryan Wise



Colton Waine

Age 11, West Finley 8 Point



SPARKS OF CHANGE: A CENTURY SINCE THE DOWNEY HOUSE FIRE

By Emma Bates

It was a cold and windy morning. Christmas was coming, and everyone in and around the Waynesburg area waited with anticipation for something big that holiday. But instead of the peace and joy that we long to surround the Christmas season, December 23, 1925, came with a rage that took an entire community by storm.

About 3:30 that early morning, a fire was said to have ignited in a hotdog stand dinette called the Coney Island Restaurant in the well-known hotel and business-hub, the Downey House.

An earlier anniversary observance of the Downey House Fire in the Greene County Messenger explains that the whole region was “shocked, frightened, and stunned by the tragic blaze.”

Standing a stately three stories tall and spanning a block on the southwest intersection of Washington and High Streets, the Downey House was an icon for locals and travelers alike. The building housed over 50 businesses at its peak, and was a bazaar of shops, department stores, supermarkets, eateries, and, of course, 60 guest rooms.

Opened in 1869 by R.F. Downey, the hotel was being operated by his two lawyer sons, Frank and Robinson, at the time of the fire.

When flames penetrated the restaurant walls of the Downey House and its numerous other rooms, guests and onlookers began to take note. As the blaze raged on, sparks multiplied and eventually danced their way to 25 other local buildings and businesses outside the Downey House walls. As winds whipped, the fire eventually destroyed the First Presbyterian Church that stood in the lot now occupied by the Observer-Reporter Building. Not even the statue of General Nathaniel Greene atop Greene County’s Courthouse cupola was safe. But far more devastating was the loss of five brave lives of men who fought to ensure the safety of their neighbors, despite the cost.

Greene County journalist John O’Hara wrote that the five men who passed “were trapped when the wall of the four-story Grossman Building suddenly cascaded down upon them and were hopelessly pinned under tons of brick and concrete.”

We hardly hear much beyond the names of those lives that are lost to unfortunate events such as this. These small biographies shed the tiniest glimmer into who these men might have been: Harvey Call, Jr., at 22 years of age, was the president of the eponymously named Grocery Company. William Finch studied at both Waynesburg High School and Penn State University by his 25th birthday. Thurman Long was a married man of 30 from Morgan Township. Joseph Rifenburg served as a contractor for W.K. Reed at 21 years of age. Victor H. Silveus was a 24-year-old married man at the time of his death.

This December marked the 100th anniversary of the Downey House Fire, an event remembered with sorrow by our community. But as a result, this December also marks the start of Waynesburg’s own Volunteer Fire Department.

Until this tragedy occurred, Waynesburg had not had a fire



Members of the Rices Landing VFD responded to the fire in the department's first truck.

company of its own since 1884, and utilized primitive bucket-brigade tactics, assembled by whoever might not be engaged in other matters when the courthouse bell would peel.

Responders to the Downey House Fire hailed from a myriad of departments across Greene County and beyond, including Rices Landing (who had just obtained their first truck a day prior), Nemaocolin, East Washington, Charleroi, Carmichaels, Jefferson, Fredericktown, Masontown, Brownsville, Bentleyville, and even Buckeye Mine’s own response crew.

Afterwards, the borough of Waynesburg wasted no time assembling the proper leadership and equipment for more effectively fighting fires in the years to come. By March 4, 1926, Marshall D. Wood was selected as the first fire chief, rather than that responsibility falling on the already over-burdened police chief as at the time of the Downey House Fire.

The department was officially incorporated on December 28, 1926. Soon after the fire, the borough purchased an American LaFrance 750 gallon-per-minute pumper for \$12,500, according to G. Wayne Smith, author of “Fighting Fires in Waynesburg, 1883-1925”.

Mere weeks after the monumental building fell, a group of like-minded Waynesburgers purchased the land where the Downey House stood and began construction on another recognizable Waynesburg building—the **Fort Jackson Hotel** that still stands today, albeit as office buildings rather than in its original capacity.

In 1967, the ruins of the Downey House that remained standing were torn down with mixed emotions from the community. Many passers-by even wept when the wrecking ball came for the final bricks of the last century.

In 1976, former Waynesburg Fire Chief R. Clovis Wright was interviewed regarding his involvement in response to the Downey House Fire. Wright was one of the nine volunteers on the hotel roof when the walls came crashing down and lived to tell a piece of this heroic tale. He shared that, “One of the doctors in Waynesburg was over at the hospital at the time... and he cleared the hospital of all the patients that were able to go home,” in order to prepare a place for the large number of individuals requiring immediate care.

Chief Wright went on to explain that the fire was fought with water alone, without the aid of foaming agents that are typically recommended today, leading to great challenges in putting out the blaze that raged for over six hours.

These perspectives demonstrate the far-reaching scope of The Downey House Fire: this wasn’t just an event that mattered in 1925. Instead, it ignited positive change that we continue to benefit from today.

**Many thanks to David Cressey and the entire research staff at Cornerstone Genealogy Society, housed in Waynesburg’s first courthouse, for bringing this event to life, and to those first responders who continue to serve our community and beyond.



2025 Coloring Contest Winners

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 9 VERY TALENTED WINNERS OF OUR 2025 COLORING CONTEST! THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO ENTERED!



Charlie
AGES 4 - 5 : (FIRST PLACE)
RICES LANDING, PA



Harper
AGES 4 - 5 : (SECOND PLACE)
GRAYSVILLE, PA



Dilyn
AGES 4 - 5 : (THIRD PLACE)
WAYNESBURG, PA



Ella
AGES 6 - 7 : (FIRST PLACE)
GRAYSVILLE, PA



Matten
AGES 6 - 7 : (SECOND PLACE)
WAYNESBURG, PA



Abigail
AGES 6 - 7 : (THIRD PLACE)
HOLBROOK, PA



Kaelyn
AGES 8 - 9 : (FIRST PLACE)
CLARKSVILLE, PA



Brooklyn
AGES 8 - 9 : (SECOND PLACE)
WAYNESBURG, PA



Quinn
AGES 8 - 9 : (THIRD PLACE)
CLARKSVILLE, PA



NMLS#458729



STRONGER TOGETHER: HOW A CUP OF COFFEE IS CHANGING VETERAN LIVES IN GREENE COUNTY

By Chris Clark, Sergeant Major, US Army (Retired)

When the **Together with Veterans (TWV)** initiative first began in Greene County a few years ago, we started with a simple premise: bring veterans together. I still remember one of our very first “**Coffee with Veterans**” events hosted at the **EQT REC Center**. We had the coffee ready, the doors open, and high hopes.

That day, exactly one veteran showed up.

It was a humble beginning, but it was a start. We cannot forget the efforts of our members at the very “tip of the spear” who tried to get this off the ground in those early days, hosting similar attempts at **McDonald’s** and the **Huddle House at the Mt. Morris truck stop**. Those quiet mornings laid the groundwork for what was to come.

Fast forward to this past November, a month dedicated to honoring our service members. The contrast could not be more striking. At our latest gathering, we didn’t just have a few attendees; we welcomed more than 120 people through the doors. The room was filled not just with veterans, but with family members, community partners, and a palpable sense of energy.

One of the unique strengths of TWV-Greene County is that we don’t just stay in one place. We go where the veterans are. Over the last few years, our “Coffee with Veterans” events have become a roving sanctuary of support. We have been humbled by the outpouring of support from organizations across the county, some of whom have even chased us down to volunteer their space. Each venue provides a “third place”, somewhere outside of work or home, where veterans can connect without pressure.

The success of TWV-Greene County is built on the foundation laid by our sponsors. We owe a debt of gratitude to the **Greene County Office of Veterans Affairs** and the **County of Greene**, including the **Office of Mental Health and Team HOPE**, for consistently championing our cause. Their involvement in suicide prevention and awareness efforts has been indispensable.

We must also extend a special thank you to our corporate partner, Waynesburg’s local **Walmart**. Several employees, including the store manager, have put their actions behind the company’s donations, rolling up their sleeves to help prepare and serve our recent pancake and coffee breakfast.

We are equally grateful to the **Community Foundation of Greene County** for its fiscal stewardship. Furthermore, we must acknowledge **Direct Results** and **Hilltop Packs/RGB Coffee**, who have been steadfast partners of our coffee gatherings since the early days, helping us fuel both the conversation and the awareness campaign.

Why does a monthly coffee gathering matter? It comes down to a single, powerful word: **connectedness**.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **connectedness is a primary protective factor against suicide**. Isolation is a silent enemy, especially in rural areas like ours. When a veteran walks into a room of 120 peers, that isolation is shattered. They realize they are not alone.

This connectivity allows us to bridge the gap between veterans and the services they need. Programs like TWV-Greene and our Coffee with Veterans make a tangible difference by facilitating suicide awareness, education, prevention, and postvention. Instead of struggling to navigate a complex system alone, a veteran at our event can meet face-to-face with representatives from the Greene County Department of Veterans Affairs or staff from nearby VA Vet Centers. We can make personal introductions to healthcare, housing assistance, and financial benefits before a situation escalates to a crisis level.

We focus on connection because the reality of veteran suicide is a crisis we cannot ignore. To understand the scale of this tragedy, we can look back at the height of the war in Iraq.

In 2005 and 2006, the U.S. military suffered approximately 1,600 combat deaths in operations supporting the Global War on Terrorism. This timeline holds particular weight for us, as the **Waynesburg-based PA Army National Guard unit deployed to Al Anbar Province, Iraq**, during this exact window, participating in a year of heavy combat operations.

During those same two years, the VA reported that nearly 11,600 veterans died by

suicide at home. For every service member lost on the battlefield during that period, seven veterans were lost to suicide here in the United States. This disparity drives us. It is why TWV-Greene County exists: to make the public aware that the battle often continues after the uniform is taken off.

Our goal is to ensure that every veteran in Greene County knows their life has value and that support is available. We want to reach you before the crisis. Whether you served in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, or the Global War on Terror, you have a place here.

From one veteran at the EQT REC Center to 120 in November, we are growing stronger. Our work continues until every veteran in our community has the connection and support they deserve.



TOGETHER WITH VETERANS



Resources & Crisis Support

Veterans Crisis Line

- Dial: 988 and Press 1
- Text: 838255
- Free, confidential support available 24/7.

Greene County Crisis Services

- 24/7 Crisis Line: 1-800-417-9460
- Text: “#63288” to chat with a crisis worker.
- Chat: Visit ccrinfo.org

VA Vet Centers (Serving Greene County)

- Morgantown Vet Center: 304-291-4303 (34 Commerce Dr., Suite 101, Morgantown, WV)
- Wheeling Vet Center: 304-232-0587 (1058 E. Bethlehem Blvd, Wheeling, WV)

US Veteran Outreach



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COFFEE WITH VETERANS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Second Saturday of the Month
8am-10am

- ★ Share Stories
- ★ Find Resources
- ★ Connect

February 14	Greene County Career & Technical Center (include JROTC, if possible)
March 14	Waynesburg University (during Spring Break)
April 11	Harvey's Aleppo Grange
May 9	Lions Club Park, Waynesburg
June 13	Nemacolin Volunteer Fire Company (New Location)
July 11	Mt. Morris Community Center
August (Fair Week)	Greene County Fair Outreach Join us at the Fair Monday-Friday Evenings
September 12	RGB Coffee, Waynesburg
October 10	Moose Lodge #461, Waynesburg
November 14	Greene County Fairgrounds (4 H Building) Pancake Breakfast
December 12	VFW Post 4793, Waynesburg



ARE YOU A VETERAN IN CRISIS OR CONCERNED ABOUT ONE?



info@twvgreene.org

Phone: Dial 988 PRESS 1
Text: 838255
Chat: [www.veteranscrisisline](http://www.veteranscrisisline.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/TWVGreene/>



Dr. A. Jay Rumbaugh · Dr. T. Curtis Jones

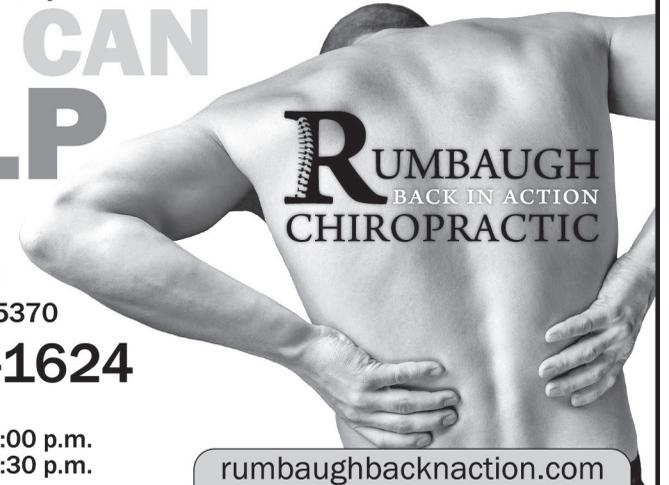
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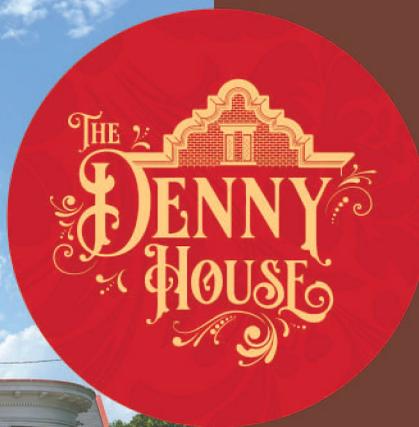
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NOT SO MODERN LOVE

By Emma Bates

With over 1,500 dating apps, 100-plus major social media platforms, and a global population of 8.3 billion, connecting with the perfect person should be a breeze. But in the wake of these current technological advancements and their entrance into the mainstream dating scheme, **love isn't so much of an open door as it is a convoluted screen that pulls our generation farther away from the real qualities of intimacy and togetherness one seeks in a serious romantic relationship.**

What hope, then, remains for today's couples, and those not yet in touch with that "special someone?" Technology *can* be positively incorporated into today's relationships. About 60% of long-distance relationships are now successful, as opposed to much lower statistics in the pre-technology age. For couples near and far, 88% cite the ease of contacting one another through both video and voice calling as well as texting as the reason for their feelings of closeness. Social media also provides a first look into a potential partner's interests and values without even going out on a single date.

But one lovely evening with an even lovelier couple yielded inspiration and insight into a successful marriage, proving that you don't need to "swipe right" to find the right person.

Take it from Bill and Lura Ann Cree of Carmichaels, who just rang in the New Year with their **62nd anniversary** on December 31, 2025.

Lura Ann was working her way through Waynesburg College's Elementary Education program when she first met Bill Cree, a frequent flier at the Hartley Inn restaurant in their hometown. "I started working there in 1960, so I was 17. Bill ran with about 20 farm guys who would come into the restaurant. It took a while for him to notice me, though," Lura Ann jokingly remembers.

Bill tells his side of the story next: "When I first saw her, I really liked her walk."

"I didn't know that! I thought it was my piano playing," Lura Ann exclaims.

"Well, that was number two...you had to walk over before I heard you tinkling the ivories," he says with a grin and a look that spans decades of love and devotion to his wife.

The couple's first official date was spent at a horse race in Waynesburg. The second was a visit to Bill's Grandfather Riley's home, where Lura Ann first graced Bill's ears with her command of Aunt Bernice's piano. That same instrument now sits in the couple's living room, where it is joyfully played each day and fondly enjoyed by both.

Bill has built a life farming over 700 acres of Cree land in Greene County, while Lura Ann forged a lifelong teaching career at East Ward and Carmichaels Area Elementary Schools. Upon moving into her classroom at Carmichaels, Lura Ann recalls that she, "couldn't teach Kindergarten without a piano," and that one was promptly moved in.

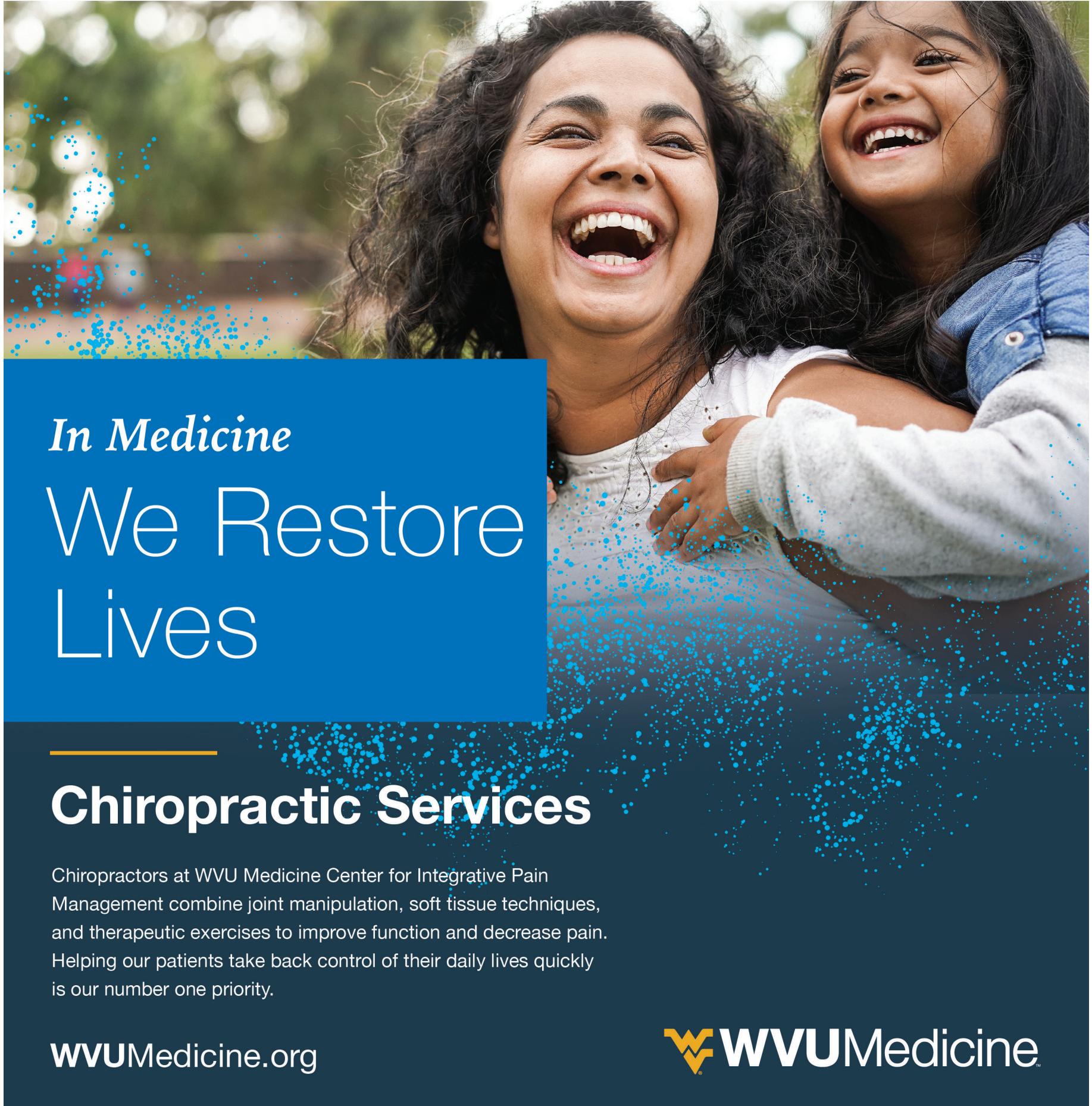
"There's lots of challenges on a dairy farm and teaching," Bill says, but reassures us that there is much more to be enjoyed. "We make each other laugh," he says.

Lura Ann imparts some more wisdom: "We just keep loving each other and remember the good times."

"She's required to play the piano quite often," Bill teases as another recipe for success. "You can forget that part if you want," he whispers to Lura Ann.

The two never go to bed angry, and Lura Ann says one song, in particular, rings true as their shared life's motto: "One day at a time, sweet Jesus."

That's exactly how Bill and Lura Ann will dance into tomorrow. And hopefully for the rest of us, we will too.



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TOGETHER WITH VETERANS

THE END OF AN ERA... PRESIDENT JUDGE OF GREENE COUNTY RETIRES

By T.R. Mahle

For many, retirement marks a significant transition from a structured work life to a period of greater personal freedom. It represents a reward for years of effort, responsibility, and routine. Retirement offers time to pursue hobbies, travel, volunteer, or simply rest and reflect. It can also strengthen relationships, allowing people to reconnect with family and friends without the pressure of deadlines. Retirement is not an end...but a new beginning.

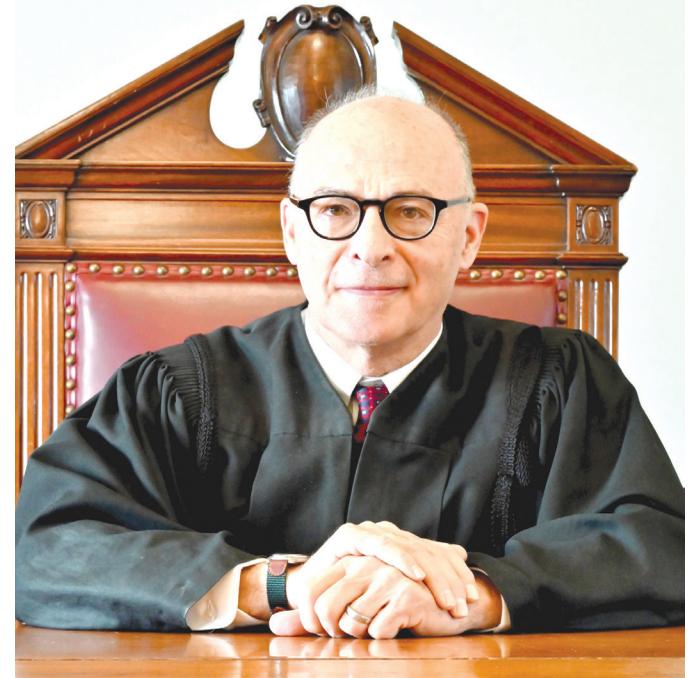
The Honorable **Louis M. “Lou” Dayich**, the retiring **President Judge of Greene County**, has sat on the bench for the last time in his long and distinguished career. Judge Dayich chose not to seek retention. His decision closes a career that spanned more than 25 years across different roles in the Greene County judiciary system.

As President Judge of Greene County, Judge Dayich presided over the Court of Common Pleas in the 13th Judicial District of Pennsylvania, which includes Greene County.

As President Judge, Dayich adjudicated cases but also oversaw court administration, assigned cases, supervised court personnel, and ensured the efficient functioning of the judicial process within the county. The President Judge is typically the most senior or elected leader among the county’s Common Pleas judges.

President Judge Dayich states, “I really love the law, I love the fact that there are laws and that there are common sense approaches on how to apply the law”.

Dayich’s legal career spans several decades with deep roots in the local system. He earned his undergraduate degree from *Washington & Jefferson*



College and later obtained his Juris Doctor from the *University of Pittsburgh*, preparing him for a multifaceted career in law and public service.

While attending law school, he began selling hotdogs from the back of a bright yellow ‘49 Chevy truck for extra cash on the streets near the Pitt campus. His business slogan was, “**Sweet Lou’s Hotdogs...if it’s not the best you’ve had...you’ve had better.**”

After his graduation, he secured a storefront on High Street in Waynesburg and ran his law office out of the back of *Sweet Lou’s Hotdog* shop, managing both operations simultaneously for a period.

He began his professional journey as a *public defender* in Greene County in 1988. After several years in that role, Dayich transitioned to private practice as a trial attorney from 1991 to 1999, broadening his expertise in civil and criminal matters.

Dayich was then elected as a *Magisterial District Judge*, taking office in January 2000. It was a role that provided him with substantial experience in presiding over court proceedings and serving the community at the grassroots level. In November of 2015, he was elected to the *Greene County Court of Common Pleas*.

In 2020, Dayich was elevated to the role of President Judge, recognizing his experience, leadership qualities, and commitment to the judicial process. As President Judge, he has managed the court’s administrative duties, coordinated judicial assignments, and worked to uphold the rule of law within Greene County.

In retirement, Judge Dayich plans on spending time focusing on some of his many hobbies such as doing amateur carpentry work, operating his ham radio, and traveling. He and his wife Tammy recently purchased a vintage “high-top” camper and plan to travel and explore the western states.

Judge Jeff Grimes has been elevated to the position of President Judge. He is a lifelong Greene County resident, graduated from West Greene High School and California University of Pennsylvania, and earned his law degree from Ohio Northern University in 1998.

Filling the vacancy left with the elevation of Judge Grimes will be the newly elected Common Pleas judge, the honorable **Chris Simms**, an attorney and lifelong Greene County resident. He graduated from West Greene High School and Washington & Jefferson College, and he earned his law degree from Duquesne University.

Holiday II Contest Winners

Winners Not Pictured



Where is this,
Contest Winner!

Robert Grogan

**GingerBread Cookie Hunt
Contest Winner!
Robert Smith**

**Person, Place or Thing
Contest Winner!
Teresa Cole**

**Christmas Song Match
Contest Winner!
Mary Peterson**

Results of our Match The Classic Christmas Song To Its Movie Contest.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. White Christmas - Holiday Inn | 6. Heat Miser Song - A Year Without a Santa Clause |
| 2. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas - Meet Me in St. Louis | 7. We Need a Little Christmas - Mame |
| 3. Believe - Polar Express | 8. Where are You Now - Grinch |
| 4. A Holly Jolly Christmas - Rudolph | 9. Christmas is All Around Us - Love Actually |
| 5. Silver Bells - Lemmon Drop Kid | 10. Christmas Time is Here - Charlie Brown Christmas |



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A Nation of Chili: The Many Bowls of America's Favorite Game-Day Dish

On Super Bowl Sunday, Americans may disagree about commercials and halftime shows, but they overwhelmingly agree on one thing: chili belongs on the menu. Easy to make in large batches and perfect for slow pre-game simmering, chili has become as much a part of football culture as chips and trash talk. Yet across the country, the dish takes on wildly different identities, shaped by history, geography, and fiercely defended local pride.

Traditional Texas chili, often called “chili con carne,” contains no beans and no tomatoes, much to the confusion of the rest of the nation. Instead, it relies on chunks of beef, dried chilies, garlic, and spices, simmered into a thick, bold stew. To add beans, many Texans argue, is not a variation but an offense. This stripped-down approach reflects the dish's roots in cattle country, where simplicity and spice ruled.

In the **Midwest**, chili often includes beans, ground beef, tomatoes, and a milder spice profile. **Cincinnati chili stands apart as its own category**. Influenced by Greek immigrants, it's seasoned with cinnamon, cloves, and allspice and famously **served over spaghetti, topped with shredded cheddar cheese** and sometimes onions or beans.

In the **Southwest**, chili reflects its closeness to Mexican cuisine. New Mexico chili frequently features Hatch green chiles, lending a smoky heat. **Pork often replaces beef**, and the consistency can lean toward a stew. In Arizona and parts of Colorado, chili may blur the line between red chile sauce and traditional chili.

In the **Northeast**, chili softens into comfort food and is often tomato-laden, packed with beans, and designed to be spooned generously over cornbread or served alongside it. Spice levels tend to be gentler, favoring warmth over heat. (Perfect for cold-weather tailgates and long winter Sundays).

Texas Chili (No Beans, No Nonsense)

Ingredients: **Two lb. beef chuck, cut into chunks; 2 tbsp oil or beef fat; 1 onion, chopped; 4 cloves garlic, minced; 3 tbsp chili powder; 1 tsp cumin; 1 tsp paprika; ½ tsp oregano; 2 cups beef broth; Salt and black pepper to taste**

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a heavy pot. Brown beef in batches; remove and set aside.
2. Sauté onion until soft. Add garlic and spices; cook 30 seconds until fragrant.
3. Return beef to pot. Add broth, scraping up browned bits.
4. Simmer uncovered 1½–2 hours, stirring occasionally, until beef is tender and chili is thick.
5. Season to taste. NO beans allowed.

Cincinnati Skyline Chili

Ingredients: **Two lb. ground beef; 1 small onion (finely chopped); 2 cloves garlic (minced); 2 tbsp chili powder; 1 tsp cinnamon; ½ tsp allspice; ½ tsp cloves; 1 tsp cumin; 2 cups tomato sauce; 2 cups water or beef broth; Salt to taste**

Directions:

1. In a pot, combine raw beef and water/broth. Stir over medium heat to break meat into fine pieces.
2. Add onion, garlic, tomato sauce, and spices.
3. Simmer uncovered 1½–2 hours, stirring occasionally, until thin and sauce-like.
4. Serve over spaghetti and top with shredded cheddar, onions, and/or beans—your choice of “ways.”

Sweet Southern Chili

Ingredients: **1½ lb. ground beef; 1 onion (chopped); 2 cloves garlic (minced); 1 can (15 oz) kidney or pinto beans (drained); 1 can (15 oz) tomato sauce; 1 tbsp chili powder; 1 tsp cumin; 1–2 tbsp brown sugar (to taste); ½ cup beef broth or cola; Salt and pepper to taste**

Directions:

1. Brown beef with onion in a pot; drain excess fat. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds.
2. Stir in beans, tomato sauce, spices, brown sugar, and broth or cola.
3. Simmer uncovered 45–60 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Adjust sweetness and seasoning. Serve with cornbread or over hot dogs.

Southwest Chili

Ingredients: **1½ lb. pork or beef (cubed); 1 tbsp oil; 1 onion (chopped); 3 cloves garlic (minced); 2 cups roasted green chiles (Hatch if possible) (chopped); 1 tsp cumin; 1 tsp oregano; ½ tsp smoked paprika; 2 cups chicken or beef broth; Salt and pepper to taste**

Directions:

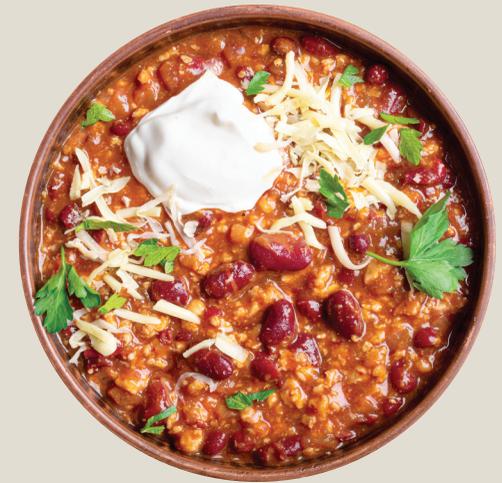
1. Heat oil in a pot. Brown meat; remove and set aside.
2. Sauté onion until soft. Add garlic and spices; cook briefly.
3. Return meat to pot. Add green chiles and broth.
4. Simmer 1–1½ hours until tender and slightly thick.
5. Season to taste and serve with warm tortillas.

Down South, chili takes on a **sweet-savory** personality. In places like Tennessee and Georgia, you'll often find chili slightly sweeter, sometimes **served over hot dogs or fries**. Cocoa powder, brown sugar, or even a splash of cola might be used, creating a rich, unexpected depth.

Then there's **white chili**. It's made with **chicken or turkey, white beans**, and green chiles. It skips tomatoes entirely and is creamier, often finished with sour cream or cheese. While purists debate whether it qualifies as “real” chili, it has become a game day staple for those looking to change things up and eat “healthier”.

No matter the style, chili's greatest strength is its adaptability. It's a dish that invites customization, debate, and second helpings. So when the chili pot is bubbling, remember: every bowl tells a regional story. In America, there's room on the table for all of them.

We assume everyone already has their favorite Southwestern PA recipe, so we included a few of the other regional ones in case you want to change things up for the big game – or a random Tuesday night.



BON APPÉTIT, Y'ALL: THE 'FOREIGN' FOODS THAT NEVER LEFT THE UNITED STATES

By Bret Moore

Americans love an exotic origin story. We want our international foods carrying a centuries-old recipe written in cursive. Nothing tastes quite as good as something we believe passed through at least three generations of grandmothers.

And yet, many of the “foreign” foods we smugly mispronounce in restaurants were actually invented right here in America. Not adapted. Not improved. Invented. As in: **somebody in an American kitchen said, “What if we did this?”** and history shrugged and said, “Sure.”

Let's begin our culinary identity crisis.

Chop Suey, General Tso's chicken, crab Rangoon, and fortune cookies form the Mount Rushmore of Chinese-American cuisine—iconic, beloved, and only loosely connected to China itself.

Chop suey may be the original Chinese-American invention. Created in the late 19th century, in California, it was designed to appeal to Western palates using familiar meats and vegetables stir-fried together. Though legends claim ancient Chinese roots, chop suey is an American improvisation—part necessity, part marketing.

General Tso's chicken is named after Zuo Zongtang, a 19th-century Chinese general who never tasted anything battered and deep-fried. The dish familiar to Americans was popularized in the United States in the 1970s, often credited to chef Peng Chang-kuei after he brought a toned-down version from Taiwan to New York in the 1950s.

Crab Rangoon, a deep-fried wonton stuffed with cream cheese and crab, is another American creation. Cream cheese is unknown in traditional Chinese cooking, making the dish less “ancient recipe” and more “mid-century cocktail party.” It emerged post-WWII in San Francisco's Trader Vic Polynesian-themed restaurant.

Fortune cookies complete the quartet. Despite their association with Chinese restaurants, they were also invented in California and trace their roots to Japanese-American bakers.

To complete the Far East tour of misinformation, the **California Roll** was invented in the United States in the 1970s by sushi chefs in Los Angeles. Designed for American tastes, it replaced raw tuna with avocado and crab, turning sushi inside-out and introducing millions of Americans to Japanese cuisine.

Speaking of Polynesian influences, the abomination known as **Hawaiian pizza** was invented by a Greek-Canadian restaurateur in the 1960s. Pineapple on pizza then made its way into American culture, where it has caused arguments for the past half century.

When people around here say they are going for **Mexican**, they are probably referring to Tex-Mex, as in created in the American Southwest. Tex-Mex food is its own cuisine, shaped by geography, immigration, and American abundance. Different roots, same delicious result.

This menu includes: **Chili con carne**, the unofficial state food of Texas. Traditional Mexican cuisine doesn't feature chili as a standalone stew. This is a Texas invention, built on beef, chilies, and bravado.

Also on the home-grown list are **hard-shell tacos, fajitas, chimichangas** (Arizona), **Queso**, and **flour tortillas**. And as you're enjoying your **nachos** during the big game, thank the Texans who invented them in the 1940s.

There are obviously a great many people in Greene County of Irish descent. Many of them like to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a traditional Irish dish of **corned beef and cabbage**. However, its roots are **Irish-American**.

In Ireland, pork and potatoes were far more common, while beef was expensive and usually exported. When Irish immigrants arrived in 19th-century America, they found corned beef affordable from Jewish butchers in urban neighborhoods. Curing the beef with salt made it last longer, and cabbage was cheap and filling. Combined, they created a hearty, economical meal. Over time, the dish became a St. Patrick's Day staple. It's really a lasting symbol of immigrant adaptation rather than Old World tradition.

The county also has a sizable **Italian** population, whose nanas have incredible pasta recipes. However, in Italy, spaghetti and meatballs is not a thing. There are meat dishes. There are pasta

dishes. They politely keep their distance.

Spaghetti and meatballs as we know it was born in America, created by Italian immigrants who suddenly had access to more meat than ever before. The result was a glorious, oversized, sauce-soaked symbol of abundance. It's less “old country” and more “new opportunity with extra Parmesan.” Same with **Fettuccine Alfredo**.

Rounding out our tour of faux, foreign foods:

French dressing sounds elegant. Sophisticated. The kind of thing that should be poured while wearing a scarf. In reality, French dressing, especially the orange, tangy variety, was invented in the United States. In France, vinaigrette is king, and it doesn't glow in the dark.

American French dressing is what happens when we look at another culture's food and say, “Yes, but what if we added a bunch of sugar and paprika?” The result is a salad topping that is as French as a guy named Billy Bob.

This one hurts. Deeply. **German chocolate cake** is not from Germany. It was named after Samuel German, an American chocolatier who developed a type of dark baking chocolate in the 1850s. The cake itself became popular in the United States after a Texas newspaper printed a recipe in the 1950s. This is an entirely American dessert with an identity crisis and a misleading name.

These foods aren't impostors. They're immigrants. They tell the story of America doing what it does best: borrowing ideas, remixing them enthusiastically, and sometimes slapping the wrong label on the jar.

So, the next time you order something that sounds foreign, take a moment. It might not have crossed an ocean. But it's still part of our shared culinary mythology.



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TOO MANY HEAVY STONES

When we think of January, the first thought that comes to mind is “resolutions.” We may ponder what that resolution should be, and we produce ideas like get in shape, lose weight, clean out the garage, etc. These are all great, but statistics show 65% quit their resolution by the end of January, another 15% drop off by mid-February. By the end of the year, only about 10% are still working on their resolution.

These are daunting odds. However, what if we looked at what was standing in the way of completing a resolution? That is really where the trouble lies. It's not that we don't want to be successful, but there is usually something preventing us from doing so. The obstacle might not be apparent, or it may be something we don't want to dwell on. Yet we will never get where we want dragging around excess baggage or heavy stones.

As we enter the New Year, I like to visualize throwing a stone over my shoulder. Theoretically, I want to pass into the new year, toss the metaphorical stone, and boom - I am on to the next. It seems simple, but years are difficult to leave behind. For me, there have been several years where very heavy stones clung to me for dear life.

Some years, I can toss that stone, and it easily rolls down a hill to land in a pile with other smaller, inconsequential stones. However, other years I can barely lift those stones. Some just sat there, tripping me up and refusing passage. Others caught on stumps and only made it partway down that hill behind me. They refused to tumble down and rest with those other stones at the bottom.

Time can create distance from those stones and encourage them to roll a little farther down the hill. Others are more persistent. For 2026, I propose we try to unburden ourselves of the

heaviest of these stones.

Admittedly, we all have a few stones that are never going to make it to the bottom of the hill, but that's ok. It is a never-ending work in progress. I don't have to finish the work, but I can make progress for years to come. Success is not defined by completion, but by the process. I will toss a couple lighter stones into my pile, and they might nudge a big rock a couple of inches.

It is not a resolution I drop quickly, never to return. It is always there for me to work on little by little. Even tiny progress is progress. It always deserves a little pat on the back. Each time I move a stone, I know I did something good for myself.

I might need tools to help me. These could include talks with a friend, meditation, journaling, therapy sessions, spiritual teachings, walks in the woods, classes, books, time with family, cuddling with a beloved pet, or spending time with my thoughts. Yikes, that last one is a rough one!

What it all boils down to is inner work. There is never going to be that “one fix” to be happy. There is no miracle drug. It is the consistent work that matters. Is it easy? Absolutely not, or everyone would be succeeding. Many times, we will need some intense help or therapy to move the heaviest rocks.

We should never be ashamed at any age or any stage of our life to ask for that help. Many of those heavy stones cannot be moved alone. And what is wrong with that? Again, absolutely nothing.

The heavy stone could be a person, an event, a failure, or just a tragedy. Some need forgotten and thrown all the way down the hill sooner than later. Other stones are tragic memories we cannot just eliminate. We learn to work around them or find a purpose for them in our lives.

The main idea is to throw the meaningless stones as far as we can. The stones that no longer serve us need to be hurled down that hill. There might be that boulder you have been dragging around for years that is doing nothing but holding you back.

There is nothing wrong with moving at our own pace. Dealing with heavy stuff means working from the inside out. It is exceedingly demanding work, but as those stones start to tumble, a path is cleared.

If you're looking for a resolution that sticks and keeps evolving year after year, get rid of the heavy stones. Let's see the rewards start to materialize. Let's recognize when we take a few steps forward.

We are never perfect, but we can keep moving to free-up space in our lives. It is a lifelong process. We should strive to be constantly learning and evolving. Here's to a 2026 with fewer heavy stones.

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WHY LESS STRESS ISN'T A LUXURY: IT'S A NECESSITY

Mounting evidence suggests chronic stress is far more than an inconvenience - it's a serious health risk. The American Psychological Association's long-running Stress in America surveys consistently find that roughly three out of four adults report stress affects their mental and physical health.

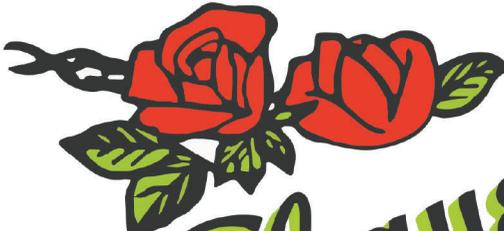
Unchecked stress keeps the body in a constant state of high alert, flooding it with cortisol and adrenaline. Over time, this can worsen anxiety and depression, disrupt sleep, strain relationships, and even impair memory and concentration. What's especially insidious is how normalized this feels—many people don't recognize the damage until they're

already depleted.

Reducing stress doesn't require a dramatic life overhaul. Small, intentional changes such as setting firmer boundaries around work, taking short daily walks, or simply unplugging from constant notifications can meaningfully calm the nervous system. Equally important is reframing rest as productive rather than indulgent.

In a culture that celebrates hustle, choosing to reduce stress is a quiet act of self-preservation. It protects not just your health, but your ability to think clearly, connect deeply, and show up fully for the life you're working so hard to build.

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THE GROWING FITNESS TREND IN GREENE COUNTY: RUCKING

By Kent Marisa

Perhaps you have recently noticed more people walking around the roads of Greene County wearing sleek backpacks. If you have, then you may have witnessed one of the fastest growing fitness trends, and it is known as “Rucking.” And a lot of our residents have joined the party.

Rucking is merely walking with weight on your back. It is quite simple, but it is also scalable, inexpensive, and extremely effective. If you are a walker, it will absolutely add intensity to your everyday walks. It has been proven to provide significant benefits like building strength, burning more calories, improving endurance, and boosting mental wellness with minimal impact: Thus, with fewer injuries than running. And it is also easier to motivate yourself to do it than many other training regimens. You simply sling your backpack over your shoulders and begin walking.

My first exposure to rucking was last August. I had just had my second hip replacement (The first being three months earlier), and I was desperate to plan a way to re-strengthen my legs and core. I knew running was not advisable, because that is what probably led to my replacements in the first place. While recovering, a friend suggested I read the book, *The Comfort Crisis: Embrace Discomfort to Reclaim Your Wild, Happy, Healthy Self*, by Michael Easter. The book explores how being too comfort-

able in the modern western world has led to a rise in depression, disease, and obesity. I highly recommend the book for a full reading, but I was particularly struck by the section on rucking.

Easter describes how humans, throughout history, were built to carry loads for long distances. This ability allowed early hunters to travel tens of miles in a day to find game, and then to return to their villages carrying heavy loads of fresh meat. He speculates that even modern-day humans are still built to benefit from a similar activity.

He then describes how the U.S. special forces, the most well-trained forces in the world, have largely abandoned running in favor of rucking. They have discovered that rucking provides equivalent levels of endurance, while also building more muscle and strength, increasing fat burn, increasing bone density, and dramatically reducing injuries sustained from other types of training.

When I got the “All clear” from my surgeon, I started rucking. Obviously, I eased into it, and I suggest anyone should do the same to allow the muscles to become used to weight-bearing. I began with five pounds and rucked about one mile. Over the course of the next several months I have increased my pack weight to 75 pounds, and my ruck times vary between 30 and

60 minutes, at least five days a week. Some rucking experts recommend not exceeding one-third of your body weight, so I believe I have maxed out. But I do plan on occasionally rucking for longer distances, and I hope to do a 10-miler.

Not everyone will want to ruck with a 75-pound pack, and that is fine. The most important thing is consistency. If you feel you will more consistently enjoy rucking week after week with 5, 15, or 25 pounds, then that is what you should have in your pack.

You can begin your own rucking journey with any kind of backpack and some old weight plates or dumbbells. However, if you plan to get serious, and want a backpack that stands up to heavier loads, you can look at the websites of companies like GoRuck for both packs and specialized weight plates. You can also find less expensive packs on Amazon. You can also look for announcements in the GreeneScene Magazine for rucking clubs and rucking events. Good luck to all of you who begin your rucking journey!



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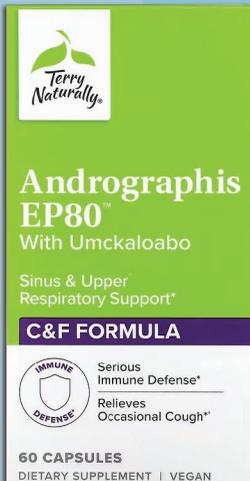
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