

# Greene Scene

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

A DIRECT RESULTS COMPANY

HEALTH &  
WELLNESS  
EDITION

APRIL 2026

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FRONT COVER PHOTO:  
Paisley Reade at her first Easter egg hunt.  
Photo by Laura Reade.

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# TOWNE SQUARE

## LET'S TALK ABOUT THE ROBENA DATA CENTER: PROJECT HUMMINGBIRD

Plans for a large-scale data center have been unveiled for Greene County, and all the keyboard warriors have jumped to conclusions that are false or unknown, spreading fear and distrust among communities and residents. This article will provide known details of the proposed Project Hummingbird and mitigation opportunities for individual and community concerns.

### The Site

The Robena Coal Refuse Disposal Area is situated along the Monongahela River adjacent to Alicia. Although coal mining operations at the Robena Coal Mine ceased in 1983, prep plant operations continued until 2007, when most of the equipment and buildings were removed from the property. The conveyor belt, coal storage silo, one rectangular building, and the loadout equipment remained on site until 2017 due to ongoing surface mining operations.

In January 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development published a redevelopment "playbook" that offers a selection of opportunities for the Robena brownfield. This playbook presents recommended reuse strategies, includes useful site data and detailed market information, and offers three potential future uses: Industrial/Manufacturing, Commercial/Distribution, and Renewable Energy Generation. The DCED playbook can be downloaded at (<https://dced.pa.gov/download/robena-redevelopment/?wpdmdl=105434>).

### The Proposal

The Bryn Mawr-based Essential Utilities announced a partnership with energy supplier International Electric Power of Pittsburgh for the 1,400-acre project, anticipated to go online in early 2029.

International Electric Power is the developer purchasing property from Core Natural Resources, Inc. A successful merger of CONSOL Energy Inc. and Arch Resources, Inc. established Core Natural Resources, Inc., in 2025. This is a private land sale to a private land purchaser. The land is currently assessed as "Commercial" with no convenience, ordinance, or zoning at the site in Monongahela Township.

Last December, the Greene County Planning Board approved Phase 1 of the work, which covers grading and site reclamation to prepare for future uses. This positive vote indicates that the presented plan meets all legal requirements. The board's authority does not extend to deciding whether a business or industry is desired; it only requires that it meet all established legal requirements.

Because the data center will be on a brownfield site, the company will have to follow Pennsylvania DEP and U.S. EPA guidelines to reclaim the environmental issues that currently plague the site, as outlined in the Robena Playbook.

Electrical power requirements will be satisfied by two on-site natural gas turbine power generators. Peak demand and two-hour backup power resiliency will be supplied through a Battery Energy Storage System supplied by Eos Energy Enterprises. The plan indicates the turbines will be fully enclosed, reducing noise to 55 dB at the fence line. Fifty-five dB is a moderate sound level, comparable to normal conversation or background music.

The specific design of the Hummingbird project will NOT increase utility bills for residents, as this project has its own on-site power and backup power. There are also federal (Rate Payer Protection Pledge) and commonwealth legislative initiatives to protect residents



and small businesses from subsidizing energy costs driven by large data center operations.

Water from the Monongahela River will be utilized for cooling in the gas turbines and the data center. **Eighteen million gallons of water** will be used **per day**. For comparison, approximately **17 million gallons of water flow** past the Robena site **every minute**. There will be **NO water discharged back into the river**.

Permanent job creation is not yet known; however, **the project is expected to create 1,500 construction jobs each year over six years to build the plant**, as well as **150-200 permanent data center jobs**. There will be **40-50 permanent jobs necessary to operate the on-site gas turbines**; IEP is working with career and technical schools to train workers for these turbines. Job creation is not a specific need in Greene County, as 62% of our workforce commutes into the county, and there are job vacancies in nearly every employment category.

More important than jobs are the **taxable asset revenues generated by the value of capital investment in infrastructure**. There is no reliable estimate available currently as IEP has not found an investor to develop and operate the data center portion of the project, but it will be substantially more tax revenue for the school district, township, and county than is generated at this time.

### Property Owner Compensation

With decades of experience in the extraction industry, we know that landowners are com-

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](mailto:bret@directresults.us) *We reserve the right to edit submissions for grammar, length and clarity.*

compensated for damage to homes, structures, and land, as well as to pipeline rights-of-way or easements. Whether by the coal or natural gas industries, property owners are made “whole” for the loss of their property value. Landowners affected by other industries, such as data centers, for example, are also covered under Pennsylvania law for adequate compensation.

Compensation for industrial-induced depreciation of private property primarily occurs through inverse condemnation or civil nuisance lawsuits. **Property owners may seek damages if industrial activity causes a measurable loss in property value** by filing an inverse condemnation suit to recover lost market value (diminution in value). **Owners can also sue for “nuisance” if an industry’s operations unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of their land**, causing a decline in value. A real estate attorney specializing in PA property rights or a land-use planner is necessary to quantify the damages and initiate a claim.

### Community Development Agreement

In addition to property owner compensation, Community Development Agreements or Community Benefit Agreements can facilitate the delivery of tangible benefits from large-scale investment projects. **CDAs outline how the benefits of an investment project are intended to be shared with local communities.** Through a negotiating position, a community can express how it would be involved in and benefit from the project. Such benefits include financial contributions, such as a royalty stream linked to production, and non-financial benefits, such as local employment opportunities and commitments to source goods and services from local providers.

### Conclusion

Proposals of new industry activity in neighborhoods are emotional and significant inflection points in people’s lives. **Well-thought-out and professionally presented debates and protests are healthy for community engagement.** Fear-mongering and knowingly spreading false information is not. The truth remains important.

**Energy spent as an engaged, educated advocate for fair compensation for community and individual property owners will have generational benefits. Sincere efforts to develop Community Development Agreements and build coalitions will better serve the community. A coalition of property owners focused on fair compensation for measurable loss of property value will increase leverage in negotiations with industry representatives.**



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## MARCH PERSON, PLACE OR THING ANSWER: THE HORSE STATUE AT WANA B PARK



This statue of a steed at Wana B Park is a tribute to the park area's history with horses and local horse racing. The land where Wana B Park now sits originally hosted an agricultural fair for many years in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The fair showcased farm products, livestock, and races (including horse and bicycle races). The event drew large crowds with live bands and attractions like circus performers. It was a major community event until the fair's decline and eventual closing in 1935.

After the fair closed, the site was eventually transformed for public recreational use by the local community and municipal authorities.

Over the decades, Wana B Park evolved into a recreational park serving residents of Carmichaels and nearby communities. It features amenities like playgrounds, sports courts, open fields, walking paths, and pavilions.

Recently, many capital improvements and additional events and activities have added to the Park's draw.

# PERSON PLACE OR THING

SCAN TO ENTER!



**Hint:**

*Upon green hills where sturdy farmhands toil,  
A man they dub "The Governor" holds sway;  
Among the hogs and fields of honest soil,  
Near Rutan's roads he labors day by day.*

*The youngest son where sisters four stand tall,  
Yet strong he grew beneath their watchful gaze;  
With wife so dear he built a home for all,  
Three daughters bright who fill their father's days.*

*On courts and fields his legend first was sung,  
At Western games where roaring crowds would cheer;  
A record score from youthful hands was wrung,  
His tale continued in Orange and Black without fear.*

*Returning home he shared his knowledge courtside,  
Can you guess the Good man's name with Pioneer pride.*

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# WHY COMMUNITY MIGHT BE THE MOST POWERFUL HEALTH TOOL



In a culture obsessed with supplements, superfoods, and wearable trackers, one of the most powerful health interventions is surprisingly simple: community. Human beings are biologically wired for connection, and mounting scientific evidence suggests that strong social ties may influence longevity and well-being as profoundly as diet and exercise.

At the physiological level, social connection regulates the nervous system. Positive interactions—shared laughter, supportive conversations, physical touch—stimulate the release of oxytocin, sometimes called the “bonding hormone.” Oxytocin reduces stress reactivity, lowers blood pressure, and promotes feelings of safety. When we feel connected, the body shifts out of chronic fight-or-flight mode and into a parasympathetic state associated with repair and recovery.

Conversely, social isolation activates stress pathways. Loneliness has been linked to elevated cortisol, systemic inflammation, and impaired immune function. Researchers increasingly view chronic loneliness as a public health risk factor comparable to smoking or physical inactivity. The body interprets prolonged isolation as a threat, keeping stress systems activated in ways that can, over time, contribute to cardiovascular disease, depression, and cognitive decline.

Community also shapes behavior. Health habits are contagious. Studies show that individuals are more likely to exercise, eat nutritiously, and quit smoking when surrounded by others who model those behaviors. Group fitness classes, walking clubs, and recreational sports leagues succeed not only because of the activity itself but because of shared accountability and encouragement. When health becomes a collective experience rather than a solitary obligation, adherence improves dramatically.

Mental health may benefit even more profoundly. Regular social interaction buffers against anxiety and depression by providing emotional validation and perspective. Simply sharing struggles reduces their psychological weight. Community creates a sense of belonging, which is a fundamental human need. Feeling seen and supported enhances resilience during life transitions, illness, or stress.

For older adults, community plays an additional protective role. Social engagement has been associated with slower cognitive decline and reduced dementia risk. Conversations, shared problem-solving, and participation in group activities stimulate neural networks, reinforcing cognitive flexibility and memory. In this sense, community functions as brain exercise.

Importantly, quality matters more than quantity. A few meaningful relationships often provide greater health benefits than a large but superficial network. Digital connection, while valuable, does not always substitute for in-person interaction, which involves richer sensory and emotional cues.

Modern life, however, often fragments community. Remote work, frequent relocation, and heavy digital engagement can reduce organic opportunities for connection. Rebuilding social infrastructure—through neighborhood groups, faith communities, hobby circles, volunteer organizations, or shared meals—may be one of the most cost-effective health strategies available.

While medicine focuses on treating disease, community strengthens the conditions that prevent it. It lowers stress, shapes healthier behaviors, supports mental health, and enhances longevity. In a time when wellness is often marketed as an individual pursuit, the evidence suggests something different: health is deeply relational. Our biology does not merely tolerate connection—it depends on it.

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# Good NEWS

In Greene County

## County Athletic Trainers Meet to Celebrate Their Profession

The National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) designated March as National Athletic Training Month. It promoted the profession and raised awareness about the work of certified athletic trainers nationwide. This year's theme was "Care You Can Count On."

Last month, the athletic trainers from Greene County had the opportunity to meet as a group, for the first time ever, to socialize and strategically plan future meetings for continuing education. The luncheon was held at Waynesburg HS and was supported by the Greene County Athletic Directors Association (GCADA).



(L to R) **William Ankrom**, MS, LAT, ATC, Waynesburg; **Emily Ann Fields**, MS, LAT, ATC, Jefferson Morgan; **Dawn Ward-Malik**, LAT, ATC, Carmichaels Area; **Jason Pirl**, LAT, ATC, PES, Mapletown; **Alicia King**, LAT, ATC, West Greene

## 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](mailto:fivesolasministry@yahoo.com)

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



Congratulations to Waynesburg Central seniors **Sophina Maute** and **Daniel Lagaza**, who were selected to perform with the WVU Honor Bands in February.



## WCHS Lions Club Students of the Month for March

The Lions Club Students of the month are **Ani Cree** and **Lillian Greenwood**.



**Ani Cree** is the daughter of Billy and Ami Cree of Carmichaels. She has a 4.0 GPA. Ani is a member of Alpha-Beta, Spanish Club, Student Council and has served as the vice president of the FFA and treasurer of the Prom Committee.

She was the captain of the volleyball team this past season. She is a four-year letterman and was recognized as All-County, first team All-Section and All-State last season. She also plays on a travel team for the Pittsburgh Elite Volleyball Association and volunteers with the Waynesburg Jr. High Volleyball team. Ani is also a member of the Raiders track and field team.

Outside school, Ani is a member of the 4-H County Council and president of the 4-H Sheep Club. She has also spent time volunteering for several local Food Banks, the Conservation District, and a local nursing home. Ani has also worked at Ruby Tuesday, as a babysitter, and on her family's dairy farm.

She plans to attend Gannon University and enter the Physician's Assistant Program and play volleyball.



**Lillian Greenwood** is the daughter of Yvonne Barnhart and Craig Greenwood of Waynesburg. She has earned straight 'A's through high school.

She has been a member of Encore, Drama Club, Leo Club, Spanish Club, Creative Writing Club, NHS, Alpha Beta, Student Council, Envirothon, Safety Club, ASL Club, Book Club, Art Club, Engineering and Graphics Club, Academic League, and GSA. She was also the Challenge Program award winner for Academic Excellence.

Outside school, Lillian has volunteered in several capacities at the Bowlby Library, including as a Children's Art Class Teacher. She works in Guest Relations at the Waynesburg Waterpark in the summertime. In her free time, she enjoys painting and drawing.

Lillian's plans to attend Robert Morris University and major in User Interface/User Experience design.

# SPRING EPHEMERAL WALK AND SEED TO SUPPER CLASS

By Lisa Lewis

Penn State Extension Master Gardener of Greene County

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word ephemeral means “something that lasts a very short time.” In Greene County our opportunity to glimpse spring ephemeral wildflowers usually occurs in April. This is when the narrow window between snowmelt and the tree canopy filling in occurs. Sufficient sunlight and warmth hit the forest floor to allow these native plants to grow, flower, set seed, then die or go dormant in the space of just a few days or weeks. True to their name, spring ephemeral wildflowers last a fleeting time.

Last spring, Master Gardeners Tammy Jamieson and Susan Swala, who have a special interest in native plants, began leading a wildflower walk along the Greene River Trail in Rice’s Landing. **We invite you to join them for this year’s Wildflower Walk on Saturday, April 18 at 10 a.m. (with a rain date of Sunday, April 19).**

A wildflower walk is a wonderful opportunity to get out in nature and learn fascinating facts about the plant world. One can learn such things as the relationship between box turtles and the Mayapple plant, why wild ginger flowers grow close to the soil line and smell of decay, and why flowers look different to the bees than they do to us. Have I sparked your interest?

**A growing body of research shows that people report feeling happiest when interacting with nature or sharing a positive experience with other people.** The wildflower walk offers both experiences at the same time. In contrast, people who are surfing the web or on social media report lower levels of happiness. So, ditch your computer for a morning, and join us on a nature walk.

The wildflower walk covers approximately two miles on the Trail. The walk is leisurely with frequent stops to learn about the native ephemeral wildflowers. The trail parallels the Mon River and is quite beautiful in all seasons. The trail is flat, level and well-maintained by the county Department of Parks and Recreation. It should be easy for people of nearly all ages to participate.

However, please note the trail is not paved. In addition, when it comes to nature there are many variables at play, so there is no guarantee how many or what kinds of flowers we will see on this year’s walk.

The Wildflower Walk is free of charge. Space on the walk is limited so registration is strongly encouraged. Register by calling Cheryl Brendel at 724-802-8025 or emailing her at [ckb5569@psu.edu](mailto:ckb5569@psu.edu).

If you are unable to attend this wildflower walk, keep an eye out for the Enlow Fork Wildflower Walk and the Mason-Dixon Park Wildflower Walk. Both are usually held in April.

The group is also offering a free opportunity for adults to learn how to grow their own vegetables. Seed to Supper is a comprehensive beginning gardening course created by Oregon Food Bank’s Learning Gardens and adopted



by the PSU Master Gardeners.

The program has been adapted to reflect Pennsylvania’s unique climate, soil, and preferred crops. The program highlights practical and low-cost techniques for planning, planting, caring for your garden, and harvesting the produce.

Classes are informal and interactive. They are held over six weeks; please plan to attend all six classes. Registration is mandatory to ensure that there are enough educational materials for all attendees.

Eva K. Bowlby Library and the Corner Cupboard Food Bank work with the Master Gardeners to sponsor the program. Please call Bowlby at 724-627-9776 or Corner Cupboard Food Bank at 724-627-9784 for registration details.

Classes will begin in March at Bowlby and April at Corner Cupboard. Those interested can also contact the Penn State Master Gardeners at 724-802-8025.

## BOWLBY BITS

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# Cool at School:

## CARMICHAELS STAGES CLASSIC MUSICAL

By Emma Bates



**G**rease was the word at Rydell (and Carmichaels) High as the T-Birds and Pink Ladies raced for the stage in another show-stopping spring musical in March.

The stage rendition of the timeless film was special because it developed the backstories of the iconic characters, featuring principal roles in a more personal way.

For some of the young actors, Grease served as their stage debut. Others celebrated their big returns after years offstage, while still others celebrated Grease as a milestone musical out of dozens of other performances.

This year, the drama club parted the curtain to community audiences long before opening night, allowing followers on Instagram and TikTok to join in on the inside jokes and daily routines of the 57 passionate members of the cast and crew.

Not only was the 2026 production a show-stopper, it was—above all—a group effort and a gesture of love, paying homage to those it was intended to honor. The show opened with the singing of the iconic “Grease” overture while a slideshow of authentic 1950s yearbook photos from Carmichaels-Cumberland Township High School alternated with recreated versions staged by the cast shot in similar locations as the originals.

The colorful song and dance numbers in the production were directed and choreographed by Suzie Zalar. Gabrielle Yazanni served as musical director and Jeanine Hudock produced the show, which was sponsored by Jenna Panepinto. The show rocked us back to the 1950s for a few nostalgic nights that performers and audiences alike will treasure for a lifetime.

# Cool at School:

## McOLYMPICS HIGHLIGHT INCLUSION FOR ALL STUDENTS

By Megan Tilger

*McGuffey Life Skills Teacher & McFriends Club Advisor*

**T**he McGuffey School District Life Skills staff recently hosted the district’s annual McOlympics event. McOlympics is a high energy celebration designed to promote inclusion, friendship, and school spirit.

The event brought together Life Skills and Autistic Support students from the McGuffey, Trinity, and Washington School Districts, alongside members of McGuffey High School’s peer group club, McFriends, as well as staff and community supporters for a day of Olympic style activities and celebrations.

The day began with an exciting Opening Ceremony that set the tone for the festivities. Students then rotated through a variety of engaging stations, including Just Dance, basketball, bocce, bowling, and many other interactive activities. Each station encouraged teamwork, movement, laughter, and meaningful connections among students of all abilities.

Lunch and refreshments were generously provided through the support of the Olivia Scott Foundation, whose continued commitment helps make the event possible year after year. Their donation ensured that every participant felt celebrated and cared for. A special thank you goes to Mr. Scott for his ongoing support of the Washington community.

To conclude the event, each athlete proudly received a gold medal, recognizing their participation, effort, and sportsmanship through-

out the day. The medal ceremony was a highlight, as students beamed with pride while being cheered on by peers and staff.

The success of McOlympics would not be possible without the dedication, preparation, and compassion of the life skills team, who work tirelessly every day behind the scenes and alongside students. McOlympics highlights the importance of inclusion and belonging within the school community.

The McFriends demonstrated leadership and compassion, while athletes shined in an environment designed for success, encouragement, and joy. McOlympics continues to grow each year, strengthening relationships and creating lasting memories. McGuffey looks forward to continuing this meaningful tradition for years to come.



*McOlympians Gia Brach, McKinley Moore, Sara Miller, and Chloe Williams*



# Cool at School:

## ICE COLD, RAIDER BOLD



Waynesburg Central High School's Polar Plunge Club members took a frosty dip into a frigid pool to support the Special Olympics' annual fundraiser. The Satu-Raiders took their dip at the Acrisure Stadium location in Pittsburgh on February 27. Each team member collected sponsorships for a team total of \$4,047. The Polar Plunge is Pennsylvania Special Olympic's biggest fundraiser.

Mr. Joe Kuhns, WCHS art teacher, challenged his art club members to participate in the Plunge four years ago. The art club team morphed into the Satu-Raiders and became open to all students. This year, 39 Satu-Raiders participated. Katelynn McChesney, Keri Phillips, Mrs. Blair, and Mrs. Layton cheered from the sideline.

Those who took the plunge included: Cam Anderson, Leah Ayers, Hudson Bennett, Maddi Blair, Tennant Blake, Railey Bochna, Addison Cowell, Teagen Crouse, Addison Cunningham, Eva Cyprowski, Ava Dialesandro, Aylah Ford, Caden Fowler, Averi Gallagher, Blair Gansor, Harper Grimes, Peyton Haines, Shannon Haines, Abby Hartman, Camryn Hawfield, Carrigan Henry, Ryan Kelley, Danica Lemley, Madison Loughner, Andy Mahle, Grant Pack, Cole Phillips, Natalie Phillips, Dezie Rasmussen, Jack Ricciuti, Nate Ricciuti, Olivia Sulka, Ross Tennant, Elana Thomas, Jarett Tretinik, Sara Tuttle, Braden Walawander, Mr. Joe Kuhns, Mr. Matt Blair.

## WCHS NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION

By Andrea Layton

Waynesburg Central High School's Chapter of the National Honor Society, advised by Mrs. Kathryn Keller, welcomed 45 new members in February. After hearing words of wisdom from Rev. Lanfer Simpson, the NHS officers, Mason Schroyer, president, Lucas Pettit, vice president, Sophina Maute, secretary, and Madison Loughner, treasurer, led the new inductees through the candle lighting ceremony and recitation of the NHS Pledge.

### The New Inductees Were:

Leah Ayers, Railey Bochna, Tyler Camilli, Amelia Craig, Teagen Crouse, Eva Cyprowski, Aylah Ford, Caden Fowler, Blair Gansor, Maria George, Meela Gioella, Anthony Gray, Cole Headlee, Addison Henderson, Carrigan Henry, Alexandria Johnson, Chatham Knight, Emma Lawson, Ace Litwinovich, Eliana Makel, William Maxwell, Lelia McCollum, Chase Mcle, Kaylee McLaughlin, Sadie Moore, Jordan Patterson, Kalee Piper, Noah Price, William Pulkownik, Trenton Reha, Jack Ricciuti, Preston Scattaregia, Emma Shirley, Reiley Shultz, Lucas Slifko, Joan Smouse, Bria Stephenson, Madison Stephenson, Olivia Sulka, Riley Taylor, Ross Tennant, Elana Thomas, Jarett Tretinik, Braden Walawander, Jackson Zalar

## WCHS WINS COUNTY SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

By Andrea Layton

The Waynesburg Central Science Olympiad team, led by Mr. Matt Brandstetter, took first place for the second year in a row at the Greene County competition. All county schools were represented.

The competition included water testing and a presentation of each team's findings and proposals of solutions. The teams also demonstrated their modified drones to collect water samples.

At the event, teams were challenged to build a bridge. According to team member Mac Renner, "Mason Schroyer had taken Mrs. Keller's CAD class, so we were confident."

WCHS STEM team members were Peyton Cowell, Keira Kennedy, Will Maxwell, Mac Renner, Mason Schroyer, Mylo Snyder.

# Cool at School:



Fifty West Greene students in grades 4 through 8 competed in the district's spelling bee on February 4. The top three spellers, from left, Beckett Blouir (Grade 6), first place; Jackson Allen, (Grade 7), second place; and Kaitlin Richards, (Grade 7), third place. The students were awarded plaques and a cash prize.

Beckett, a two-time champion, completed an online spelling test and finished in the top 15 out of over 70 schools that participated in the program this year. She will compete in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette's Western PA Spelling Bee at Point Park University. (Photo submitted by Jeffrey Polander, school spelling bee coordinator).



Mason Schroyer, Peyton Cowell, Mac Renner, Keira Kennedy, Mylo Snyder.

## Cool at School:

### JEFFERSON-MORGAN ELEMENTARY G.A.T.E. STUDENTS ENJOY ETIQUETTE EXCURSION

The Jefferson-Morgan GATE students recently toured the Denny House in Waynesburg. They were treated to an elegant afternoon tea prepared by co-manager Leigh Ann Shaner, followed by a fascinating tour of the grounds led by her husband Andy.

According to the group's teacher **Mrs. Kuruskin**, "Every detail was thoughtful, engaging, and truly memorable. We would like to thank Pam and Kent Marisa for hosting us."

She continued, "The students were absolutely thrilled, and we've already had parents texting us about how excited their children were when they arrived home — talking nonstop about the history, the treats, and the wonderful hospitality".

The purpose of the visit was to allow the students to practice dining and social etiquette and gratitude in a real-world setting.

As an additional treat, the group was given a LEGO Titanic to facilitate a variety of team building exercises and projects. According to Kuruskin, "This project will be a lasting challenge and opportunity for our students to practice collaboration, planning, and problem-solving in the Library. It is a gift that goes far beyond the model itself — it's a gift of inspiration, learning, and confidence building."



## Cool at School:

### PIONEER STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO A WIDE VARIETY OF SERVICES

By Aubrey Lesnett



*West Greene Elementary School Guidance Department Sensory Room, led by Jessica Jacobs.*

At West Greene High School, student health and wellness go far beyond physical well-being. Through a strong network of mental health and guidance services, the school is committed to supporting students academically, socially, and emotionally - ensuring that every student has access to the tools they need to succeed.

West Greene offers a comprehensive, tiered system of support services designed to meet students where they are. Whether a student needs occasional guidance or more consistent support, resources are readily available. Students have access to both school-based outpatient services and free remote online therapy options, making help accessible in multiple ways.

Inside the building, a collaborative team—including a social worker, behavioral specialist, school psychologist, and licensed school counselor—works together to provide individualized care. In addition, the school's Student Assistance Program Team plays a key role in identifying students who may be facing challenges and connecting them with appropriate resources.

Today, many students turn to the counseling office for support with social and emotional concerns. Anxiety, stress, and peer relationships are among the most common challenges, often influenced by situations at home or school.

In recent years, conflicts stemming from social media and cell phone communication have become increasingly common, sometimes leading to misunderstandings. Counselors help students navigate these issues by building communication skills and managing emotions. For older students, the focus often shifts toward the future, with many seeking guidance on college applications, career paths, and scholarship opportunities.

Academic planning is another key component of the counseling office's role. Counselors work closely with students to ensure they are meeting graduation requirements while also exploring personal interests and strengths. Students receive consistent support in academic, career, and social-emotional development. Tools like Smart Futures allow students to explore career options and build a portfolio of experiences aligned with their goals.

Beyond the classroom, West Greene provides a variety of hands-on opportunities to help students prepare for life after high school. Events such as college fairs, job fairs, and Reality Fairs give students real-world insight into future planning.

Despite the wide range of services available, some students may feel hesitant to seek help. School counselor Mrs. Barr emphasizes that the guidance office is a safe space for all students. "It's completely normal to feel nervous about asking for help, but you don't have to face challenges alone," she said. "Even if you're unsure what to say, just starting the conversation is a great first step."

Ultimately, the counseling office is about more than schedules and academics—it's about supporting the whole student. As Mrs. Barr explains, the goal is to provide guidance in every aspect of a student's life. "We support not only academics and schedules but also career planning and social and emotional well-being."

# “AERIAL” ANGSTROM

By Emma Bates

Most people with their feet on the ground don't get to have their heads in the clouds, too. But luckily Smithfield teen, Angstrom Eberenz, gets to do both.

The fifteen-year-old is the 2026 Junior Representative for Team USA's FAI F2B (control line model aviation precision aerobatics) team. This type of flight allows the pilot of a model airplane with a wingspan of about five feet to operate a vessel with a handle attached to 60-70 foot control lines. Essentially, the pilot is tasked with drawing figures in the sky with various constraints and obstacles applied. Angstrom competes in a number of events, including speed, racing, precision aerobatics, and Navy carrier. He has earned three National Championship titles in precision aerobatics, several Navy carrier titles, and eight national records at the National Aeromodeling Championships (NATS) in Muncie, Indiana.

Angstrom shares that he caught his first glimpse of this type of flight at the Brodak Fly-In in Carmichaels, the second largest control line competition in the country. When he was eight years old, Angstrom took his first flights with the help of a seasoned pilot at the Brodak Fly-In and advanced enough over the week to take first place in the Basic Flight competition.

Encouraged by the support of his family, Angstrom realized that he had unlocked a deeper passion and continued pursuing his own career in this type of aviation. He began building his own planes and training consistently in the backyard of his then-Carmichaels home.

“Space is a huge constraint,” says Angstrom. He explains

that 120-140 feet of space is needed to practice a full monty of aerial maneuvers in a circular overhead space without running into the nearest obstacles.

“Wind is also a really big setback,” continues Angstrom. At USA Team Trials last fall, Angstrom was met head-on by 20 mph gusts that made him the only contestant daring enough to put up a test flight before his moment of truth. In a devastating moment of competition, Angstrom omitted a singular maneuver in his flight outline that barely edged him to second place against another nationally-renowned teen. Fortunately, the competitor backed out a few months later, and Angstrom was excitedly offered the spot as the Junior Representative on the four-person control line team for the USA.

“Some guys are legends of the sport. Having just joined the ranks, I enjoy learning from them,” says Angstrom. And as all three of his other team members have already achieved a Walker Cup— the most prestigious control line honor to their name— Angstrom is training with the best.

Angstrom's spring is slated to be a busy one, with the preliminary World Cup in late April, followed by the 2026 Control Line Model Aircraft World Championships in Perth, Australia a week later. “I love to travel for different events. I'm very excited to compete, show what I can do, and make everyone proud,” he shares.

Angstrom and his entire family encourage readers to get involved with the rich aviation opportunities in Greene County, especially the Brodak Fly-In, held each summer the week before



*Angstrom and his family enjoy the fruit of a good day's flight at Brodak's 2023 Fly-In*

Father's Day. The whole family can be found every day of the event with their eyes to the sky. They are also excited to partner with the community to allow for Angstrom's dream to continue to stay in flight. Those interested in learning more about control line flight are welcome to search Angstrom Eberenz on YouTube for examples of this exciting sport and support his season via Facebook at AngstromtoAustralia.

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# A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS: 5TH ANNUAL

## 'THE WAY' GALA PROMISES A MAGICAL EVENING OF PHILANTHROPY

The stars are aligning for a night of wonder as The Denny House prepares to host the 5th Annual "The Way" Gala. This year's theme, "A Magical Starlight Gala," promises to transform an ordinary evening into an extraordinary realm of enchantment, all in support of The Way Community Center of Greene County.

As twilight settles over the county, guests will be ushered into an atmosphere defined by elegant feasting and mystical entertainment. Organizers have hinted at a night full of "spellbinding surprises," headlined by a master magician who will weave illusions and awe throughout the festivities.

While the entertainment may be magical, the impact of the gala is very real. Over the past five years, the event has become a cornerstone of local philanthropy. Proceeds have allowed The Way Community Center to serve as a beacon of light for the region, providing a space where:

- Families are strengthened through community resources.
- New opportunities are unlocked for local youth.
- Lives are uplifted through dedicated outreach and support.

"This gala is a tale written by generosity and hope," organizers shared. "It is rooted in the belief that when a community comes together, miracles follow."

As the organization enters its next chapter, the focus remains on expansion and deeper community roots. The 2026 gala aims to build on past successes, fueled by a dedicated team of volunteers and the unwavering support of local donors. Every ticket purchased contributes to a legacy that leaders say "will shine for generations."

On an evening when every guest is treated like a VIP, space is expected to fill up quickly.

To make reservations call The Denny House 724-710-8056 or email [innkeeper-wbg.com](mailto:innkeeper-wbg.com)



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## Intentional Walks

By Bret Moore

# ECHOES OF AN IMPRINTED SPORTS MEMORY

*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 recent passing of one of my all-time favorite sports heroes had me thinking about a fascinating phenomenon we all experience without much introspection or discussion. Bill Mazeroski hit arguably the most famous home run in World Series history back when baseball was by far the country's most popular sport.

It was such an iconic moment in Pittsburgh sports history that men of that era remember exactly where they were when it happened. Such moments in history have a peculiar power. They fasten themselves not only to the collective calendar, but to our personal memories.

These "flashbulb memories", as neuroscientists call them, feel like mental photographs. You can remember the smallest details of your surroundings at those moments, while the activities of our normal daily lives are washed away without a trace.

Too often, those shared memories are tied to tragedy - moments of loss or national grief that freeze time in place. But sports offer a rare exception. We remember where we were for joyful events like the winning field goal, the final out, or the miracle comeback that made us leap from our seats.

Part of this phenomenon comes from emotion. Neuroscience suggests that highly emotional experiences activate the amygdala, strengthening the brain's encoding of memory.

Events that happen between roughly the **ages of 10 to 25** are especially likely to become vivid, lasting memories. Psychologists call this the "**reminiscence bump**." As a result, historic or sports moments experienced during these years often feel permanently etched in memory.

But psychology alone can't tell the whole story.

Such events are rarely experienced in isolation. They are

shared through television, radio, social media, and the conversations that follow. When millions of people absorb the same moment simultaneously, it creates a kind of social glue. Later, when we recount where we were, we are affirming our membership in a community that witnessed something together.



Consider how people recall moments of national tragedy. The details are often startlingly specific: sitting on the edge of a dorm room bed, standing in line at a grocery store, driving home while the news crackled over the radio. History crashes into the everyday and it becomes permanent.

My father always recalled hearing the news of Pearl Harbor on the radio as his mother washed dishes in their kitchen. One of my earliest memories was of a family friend bursting into our kitchen with the news of JFK's assassination.

Sports events, though less consequential in a geopolitical sense, can generate the same intensity of memory. For supporters, these events are not trivial

entertainment. They are emotional investments that unfold over lifetimes. The final whistle doesn't just end a game. It seals a narrative arc in our lives.

Subsequent research has refined the idea of flashbulb memories. Studies show that while people report high confidence in these recollections, they are **not always more accurate** than ordinary memories.

In fact, I love it when people say they remember watching the Immaculate Reception on television. That simply isn't true for 99.5 % of our locals. The game was not shown around here because of the NFL's Blackout Rule, which didn't change until the following year.

I remember yelling at the radio in our kitchen for Franco to get out of bounds to stop the clock for a field goal attempt. My father and his buddies had driven to Canton,

Ohio to get a hotel room to watch the game.

Instead, the vividness of many of these memories often comes from repeated rehearsal. People talk about the event, see it replayed in media, and revisit it in conversation, which strengthens the memory but also introduces errors.

Perhaps my most vivid sports memory was the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" hockey game. I was a junior in college, and I remember everything about the closing moments of that game and the spontaneous celebrations that occurred on campus that Friday night. The celebrations were enhanced by the fact there was a big snowstorm that day which had prevented people from going home or leaving campus.

During the U.S. hockey teams' recent gold medal victories, I was texting with a group of old college buddies. To a man, they all remembered exactly where they were on that February evening 46 years ago.

I have other such imprinted memories regarding sports events that were important to me. I will never forget New Years Eve 1989. As usual, the evening's plans were scheduled by the wives.

Unfortunately, there was only one serving time for dinner at The Willow Inn, and it happened to coincide with the overtime period of the Steelers / Houston Oilers playoff game. The restaurant had no television, so twenty men ended up crowding around a small radio in the kitchen to hear Gary Anderson kick the winning field goal.

Other such memories are Super Bowl moments like: Lynn Swann's circus catch, James Harrison's 100-yard pick-6, and Santonio Holmes' game winner.

What makes sports memories particularly potent is their ritual quality. The anticipation builds collectively as we watch with friends and family, and the outcome delivers a concentrated emotional release. The experience is embodied as heart rates spike, voices rise, and strangers hug or commiserate. The body helps anchor the memory.

Over time, these recollections evolve. Each telling reinforces not only what happened but who we were at that moment. Remembering where we were becomes a shorthand for remembering who we were. We do not simply live through history; we locate ourselves within it. And in doing so, we turn fleeting moments into enduring landmarks of identity



**Kallyn Novak** is the daughter of Donnie and Kim Novak of Jefferson. She is a two-year letter-winner in softball. She is the vice-president of the junior class and a member of the student council, yearbook, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

She plans to become a sonographer.



**Zac Ashcraft** is the son of Steve and Ty Ashcraft of Golden Oaks. He is a sophomore and participates in baseball. Zac is a member of the Pioneers' FFA and was a 2024 homecoming escort.

He enjoys hunting, fishing, and riding dirt bikes, along with spending time with family in his leisure time.



**Ryan Jewett** is a senior and plays center for the basketball team. In addition to basketball, he is a member of the Academic League and Envirothon. In his free time, Ryan enjoys hunting and spending time outdoors. Following graduation, he will be leaving for Texas to complete basic training for the Air Force. Ryan is the son of Nikki and Robert Jewett of Greensboro.



**Peyton Cowell** is the daughter of Wade and Michelle Cowell of Waynesburg. She is a senior and maintains a 4.0 GPA. She also plays girls' soccer, basketball, and track and field.

She served as captain of the basketball and soccer teams. Cowell is a four-year letter winner in soccer and basketball and a one-year letter winner in track and field. Her honors include All-Section Soccer Athlete, multiple GCADA Awards in basketball and soccer, Lions Club Student of the Month, and Highest Honors all four years.

She is active in numerous school organizations, including NHS, Leo Club (President), Youth Alive (President), Alpha Beta, Book Club, FFA, Student Council (Secretary), Debate Team (Captain), Science Olympiad, Spanish Club, and Hope Squad.

She also participates in community and church activities, including FBC Youth Group, Mission Team, Praise Team, and 4H Market Lamb Club. After graduation, Peyton plans to attend the University of Pittsburgh to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She intends to continue her education by earning a Doctorate in Nurse Anesthesiology.



**Alek Palko** is the son of Tom and Melissa Palko of Jefferson. He is the captain of the Rockets' wrestling team and compiled an impressive list of accolades including: TriCADA Champion, WPIAL Runner-up (2026), WPIAL third place finish (2025), fourth-place finish in the 2026 S.W. Regionals, and PIAA qualifier.

He is a member of the National Honor Society and carries a Highest Honors GPA. He also volunteers at St. Matthias' fish fry and is a PIAA certified wrestling official. He plans to continue his wrestling career in college and major in engineering.

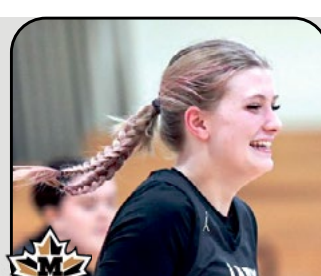


**Josie Mason** is the daughter of Jeff and Jackie Mason of Aleppo. She is a freshman and participates in volleyball, wrestling, and softball.

On the mat, she participated on the boys' team roster all season. Then, in the post-season, Josie took 3rd at the WPIAL Girls Tournament and 3rd at the PIAA West Regional Girls Championships to qualify for the State tournament in Hershey.

**She is the first girl from the County to compete in the PIAA State tournament.**

Josie is also a member of the Pioneers' FFA Chapter. She enjoys spending time with her grandparents and rides dirt bikes and her side-by-side for recreation.



**Chloe McCleed** is a hard-working post player for the Maples, who has been playing basketball since fifth grade. She is an active member of the ski club. Chloe thrives on staying busy and being active, whether it's on the court or on the slopes. Off the court, she enjoys traveling with her family, hiking and exploring. After graduation, Chloe plans to pursue a career as a paramedic while hopefully playing college basketball. Favorite quote: "I did all I could so that God could do what I could not." - Paige Bueckers.

**Cole Headlee** is the son of Joe and Nicole Headlee of Waynesburg. He is a member of the WCHS boys' basketball and golf teams. Only a junior, he has been selected to the All-Conference and All-County basketball teams. He was also named the Roundball Classic Freshman and Sophomore of the Year.

In addition, he is a two-year letter recipient in golf. He is a member of National Honors Society and maintains a 4.0 GPA with plans to attend college after graduation.



### WG's Whyte Ascended the PIAA Podium Again

West Greene's Colin Whyte completed one of the best individual seasons in the program's history.

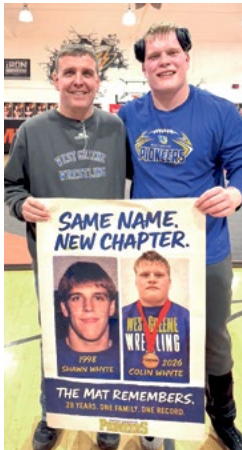
He captured his second consecutive WPIAL 285 Lb. Title and became only the 12th Pioneer to win a PIAA Regional Title. (It was their first since Kory Bissett won it in 2006).

Colin also broke his Uncle Shawn's school career wins record after finishing with 164. The two WPIAL Titles match his father Gary's two, which were won in 1993 and 1994. Uncle Shawn was also a WPIAL Champion.

His father is currently the team's coach, and his uncle is an assistant.

At Hershey, the Pioneers' heavyweight lost two heartbreaking overtime matches after qualifying for the semi-finals and finished fourth in the state for the second consecutive year.

**Colin is the 13th ranked heavyweight in the nation according to FloWrestling. He has committed to continue wrestling for Division I Kent State University.**



**West Greene's Noah Collins** entered the 100 Wins Club, finishing with 109 victories. He was section runner-up, placed third at the WPIAL tournament, and advanced to the SW Regional. However, he was unable to participate due to an injury.

# Sports Shorts



## 1,000 Point Club!

This past season, **West Greene's Kendra Tharp eclipsed the 1,000 point mark and finished her career with 1,128 points. She also became the first Pioneer girl to collect 1,000 rebounds, finishing with 1,031 in her career.**

Kendra helped lead the Pioneer girls' back to the playoffs. They won an opening round playoff game, lost in the quarters, but rebounded to win a consolation game.

**The West Greene rifle team won their section this season and finished in third place at the team portion of the WPIAL tournament. That qualified them for the PA State Team shoot, where they placed eighth in the state.**

The team also had **Khyler Davis and Dylan Hughes** advance from the WPIAL Championships to the PA Individual State Championships.



*Kneeling (L to R): Khyler Davis, Aubrey Sotler, Melony Shreve, Autumn Cumberledge.  
Standing (L to R): Sean Campion, Savanna Somerville, Melony Shreve, Madison Burns, Dylan Hughes, Colton Braddock.*



*Front Row: Seniors (Courtney Main, Eryka Hackney, Kendra Tharp)  
Middle Row: Katie Brudnock, Kenzlee Hill, Jessica Keener, Jillissa Yeater  
Back Row: Assistant Coach Kolton Rush, Ava Shipman, Kendall Barner, Chloe Harris, Madelyn Roberts, Samantha Zimmerman, Assistant Coach Kirsten Shannon, Head Coach Ben Brudnock*



The **2025-26 Waynesburg Central girls' basketball team** had one of the program's strongest seasons ever, finishing **19-2 overall and 10-2 in conference.** Despite the fact they had only one senior in the line up, they also turned in a strong performance in the WPIAL 3A playoffs.

*Front row left to right-Larsyn Huffman, Addonae Johnson, Tess Pauley, Emma Blair, Kendall McKay  
Back row left to right-Havalah Griffioen, Addison Cowell, Peyton Cowell, Olivia Mills, Chatham Knight*

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# Sports Shorts

## Raider Dane Woods Scores 1000 Career Points

By Andrea Layton



Dane Woods earned his 1000th career point in the February 3 game against Ligonier Valley. In addition to being at his home gym, it was senior recognition night. “I thought they might make an announcement, but they stopped the game, and when I turned around, everybody was staring at me,” said Woods.

His family was there to celebrate and support him. “I saw my mom hold up her camera every time I went to the line, and my brother came home from college to be there.”

Woods also enjoyed the support of the fans, the pep band, and the cheerleaders. “The student section was really excited. They had signs and were counting down. That was cool,” Woods said.

Woods got his first taste of basketball playing on a mini hoop at home with his brother Breydon. The brothers have always been competitive and played a variety of sports, but while Breydon favored football, Dane navigated toward basketball.

As a freshman, Woods watched other great Raider basketball players like Lucas Garber, Claire Paige Miller, and Kaylee Rohanna earn the 1000-point honor and set a goal for himself. This season, Dane realized, “after a few good games, I really started to think it was possible.”

The Little Dribblers program in Waynesburg was the first organized basketball experience for Dane. It gave him a good start and motivated him to keep going. Looking back as a senior, if he was giving advice to other basketball players, “Playing in the off-season, helped me out a lot.”

Dane plans to attend WVU next year and would like to keep playing basketball on an intramural or club team.

## West Greene Girls Softball Ready for the Season

After an 8-2 section campaign last year, the Lady Pioneers are looking forward to this spring.

Six starters return including: Madelyn Roberts (LF), Kendra Tharp (SS), Emmaline Beazell (3B/C), Kylee Davis (C/IF) Katie Brudnock (1B), and Sammi Zimmerman (2B/RHP).

Tharp had an outstanding junior year with 20 RBI and 21 runs scored. She was named All-Section and All-State (2nd team). Beazell was also named All-Section and hit .339 with 24 RBI.

Zimmerman looks to rebound from a season-ending injury and come back strong in the circle and at the plate. Coach Bill Simms feels freshmen Rylee Yeager (C) and Caitlin Whyte (RHP, 1B) will make immediate impact on the team.

The squad will have to replace Second Team All-State centerfielder Marissa Tharp, and last year's leading hitter and pitcher Payton Gilbert, who is now playing at PennWest California

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# THE TOUR - A CELEBRATION OF BASEBALL AND FRIENDSHIP

By Ray N. Delay

What started out as a couple of beers between friends better than twenty-five years ago has become a celebrated spring tradition. John Curtis and Dave Bates have been friends for a long time (*see photo insert*). Some might say too long based on the antics the pair has gotten into over the years.

Curtis was Bates' high school baseball coach at Jefferson-Morgan in the early 1980s, so it was a natural progression to celebrate their shared love of the game when the duo became competitors in the years ahead.

In 1997, at Ralph Bell's Christmas Farm in Jefferson, Bates and Curtis met up while transacting Christmas tree sales. The two exchanged swag from their respective baseball positions. Curtis was already in his seventeenth year as the skipper of the J-M Rockets, and Bates was entering his fourth year as head coach at Lakeview High School in Stoneboro, PA.

"We made plans to bring my Lakeview boys down to Greene County later that spring," according to Bates. John Coss at West Greene had brought his club to Mercer County the spring before, and we really enjoyed the camaraderie. The spring of '98 would be a chance for the Sailors, Rockets and Pioneers to play some early season ball at Jefferson-Morgan's field and enjoy one another's friendship.

Prior to the "Lakeview southern trip," Bates and Curtis got together in advance of the series and departed for Waynesburg on a Friday night good will baseball tour. "By today's standards, they'd call it "bar hopping," quipped Curtis. "We'd make a stop, run into a few baseball pals, talk ball and then it was time to move on to the next base."

"In those days, it was probably P.A. Taylor's Third Base Lounge in Stoney Point," Bates added with a smile. "We started in Bucktown and work our way home towards the river," said Curtis. "Along the way, we'd schedule to meet up with as many like-minded baseball guys as we could arrange."

We'd visit them on their turf. By the time we made it back to Rices Landing, we had fixed a bunch of the world's problems, baseball and otherwise," said Bates. In later years, stops along the way would include the Triangle, Rohanna's, Serb's Red Star Inn, Carl's Lounge, Strykers, Third Base Lounge, Caputo's, Jefferson Hotel, Rices Landing Athletic Club, The Riviera and

several American Legion Posts.

Curtis had worked at Greene County Parks and Recreation for several years under the direction of Alan Hughes in the late 1970's and early 80's. John was instrumental in organizing the original Greene County Baseball Camps along with Frank Pryor and Larry Piper. Bates and Curtis would revive those camps once more in the early 2000s during the heyday of Mike's baseball.



Bates was hired as the Carmichaels head coach for the 2000 season, by which time the gathering was already steeped in baseball tradition. "It was an assembly of baseball guys celebrating our love for the game," said Curtis. "It was sort of our "kick-off celebration."

"We'd don our colors and head westward to Waynesburg," Curtis joked. We were proud of our respective programs and what we had accomplished. We so wanted to share that spirit of good will with the other guys," noted Bates. "It was an extension of the baseball clinic environment that we enjoyed so much each winter. Learning, sharing, improving.... 'The Tour' just gave it a more Greene County flavor."

What started off as a slow burn added additional baseball fire from around the county with the passing of each season. Chris Haines, Bill Simms, Lou Giachetti, and Lenny Lohr all

became regulars.

"We knew we had to hire a designated driver to handle transportation." Driver education instructor, Alan Rafail, was designated for that assignment and handled those duties nicely. "He was our rock," said Curtis admiringly.

Other notables and local celebrities intermittently filled out the roster (which was an actual line-up card). They were announced on an ancient Mr. Microphone system.

PA Representative Pam Snyder even threw out the ceremonial "first pitch" at Caputo's. Former players started to plan their homecoming trips around "Tour" weekend so they could attend the festivities. Even members of the dark side, the evil empire of umpires, made their way into the yearly celebration including umpire Bill Schottenheimer and veteran college umpiring great, Joe Volpe.

The night began with the singing of the Star-Spangled Banner. No venue has ever elicited a truer baseball vibe than Caputo's on the first leg of the Tour. During the night, participants took turns reading from the famous baseball poetry anthology, *What I Love About the Game of Baseball*.

The jukebox would shut down, the crowd would go quiet, and whoever's turn it was to recite would select five or ten of their favorite facets of the game to thunderous audience applause. Then, the jukebox would be turned up, and another round would be ordered.

By the time the Tour turned 10, a full-sized school bus was required to transport the congregation. It could take close an hour for Milo "Serb" Krewaski to accommodate all of his Red Star patrons as they stepped off the bus. However, glasses would eventually be filled, and then it was onto the next leg of the Tour.

Curtis even ordered t-shirts to commemorate the 20th anniversary tour. One year, his son, Tommy, flew in from Florida with a group of southern baseball enthusiasts.

No matter the form the Tour took over the years, the one facet that never changed was the group's passion for and deep love of the game and the camaraderie it facilitated. May that passion for the game live on in the next generation of coaches and players. Here's to the Tour!

# In the Out-Door

By T.R. Mahle

## THE INSIGHTS OF OUR OUTDOOR EDITOR

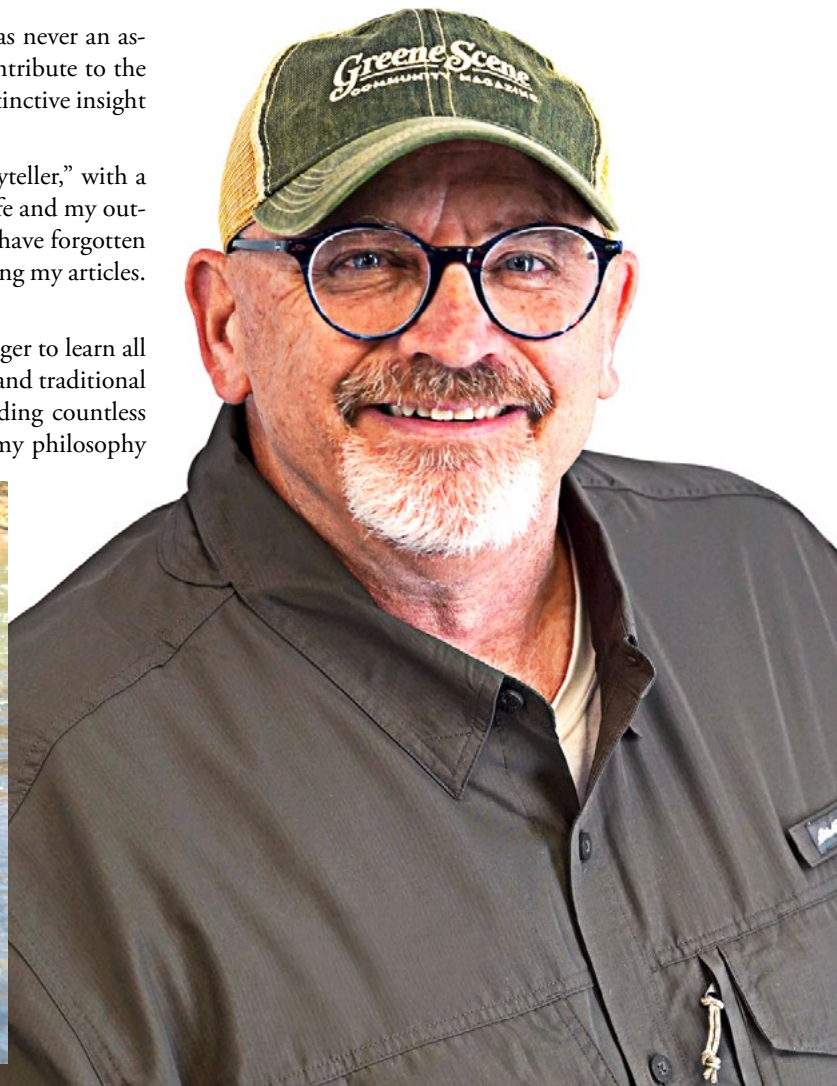
Hunting, fishing, and outdoor living is simply a way of life in Greene County. There was never an aspiration or intention on my part to become an outdoor writer. But when asked to contribute to the outdoor section of our local *GreeneScene* magazine, I saw an opportunity to share a distinctive insight into my outdoor experiences, and I jumped at the opportunity.

To be completely honest, I am not a writer at all...I view myself more as a “reflective storyteller,” with a nostalgic tone. I am happy to share with you my thoughts, and my unique perspective on my life and my outdoor journey. I hope my articles can take you to a special place in your own story that you may have forgotten and put a smile on your face. “I know exactly what he’s saying” is what I hope you get out of reading my articles. I hope you enjoy reading about my viewpoints on these experiences.

Being raised in the hills of Greene County I developed an early love for wild places. I was eager to learn all I could about everything outdoors. Hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, survival, conservation, and traditional outdoor skills...I couldn’t get enough of it. I developed a deep connection with nature, spending countless hours roaming forest, fields, and streams. These formative experiences helped me shape both my philosophy and my writing.

My articles rarely glorify the kill or the catch. Instead, I focus on the adventure, the serenity, the comradery, and our relationship with the wilderness. When I enter the wilds, I do so as an observer. Time spent outdoors, no matter what the event, can help us rediscover the value of wild places and create memories that will last a lifetime.

After a long and rewarding career I recently “semi-retired.” And, with more time on my hands, I am looking forward to continuing my outdoor journey. I have now assumed the title of “*Outdoor Editor*” of the *GreeneScene* magazine, and I look forward to developing the outdoor section of the magazine. I will continue to reminisce and write about my past experiences, and I look forward to new adventures. Either way, I hope you enjoy reading my articles.



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# HUNTING HILLS ARMORY & OUTFITTERS OPENS ITS DOORS

By T.R. Mahle

Sporting clays has grown rapidly over the past several decades, evolving from a niche shooting discipline into one of the most popular clay target sports in the world. Often described as “golf with a shotgun,” sporting clays challenges shooters with a wide variety of target presentations designed to simulate the flight paths of game birds such as ducks, pheasants, and quail.

Having originated in England in the early 20th century, hunters looked for a way to practice shooting during the off-season. Early courses used simple traps to launch clay targets in unpredictable directions, helping shooters improve their reflexes and accuracy.

By the 1980s, sporting clays began to experience strong popularity. The establishment of organizations such as the National Sporting Clays Association helped standardize rules, scoring systems, and tournament structures. Technological improvements also played a significant role in the sports expansion. Modern automated traps allow for highly varied and realistic target presentations, making courses more challenging and engaging. Shooting facilities offer multi-station courses that simulate different hunting environments, including wooded areas, open fields, and water features.

Participation has also increased dramatically as sporting clays appeal to a wide range of people. There are hunters, competitive shooters, recreational shooters, and those who enjoy shooting but not (hunting) killing. National competitions now attract thousands of competitors each year, with events hosted all over the country.

Today, as sporting clays continue to grow, more shooting ranges and sporting clays courses are being added. And, as youth programs continue to expand, the sport is likely to remain a significant part of the shooting sports community for years to come.

Fortunately for us, **Hunting Hills Shooting Preserve** is a well-known sporting clay and upland bird hunting facility located in Dilliner.

Established in 1967 by Roy and Sally Sisler, the preserve has developed a reputation as one of the premier destinations in Pennsylvania for shooting sports and pheasant hunting. The preserve offers a wide variety of shooting activities designed for both beginners and experienced hunters.

In addition to sporting clays, the preserve includes several other shooting practice areas. These include two five-stand stations, a wobble trap, and skeet and trap fields. A five-stand is a compact clay shooting game where targets are thrown from multiple machines, creating unpredictable shooting scenarios. The wobble trap adds another level of difficulty by changing the angle and elevation of the clay targets, helping shooters improve their reflexes and accuracy. There are also practice stations where shooters can refine their skills before moving on to the more

challenging courses.

Beyond target shooting, Hunting Hills is also widely recognized for its upland bird hunting opportunities. From mid-October through the end of March, hunters can participate in guided pheasant hunts across the preserve’s carefully maintained habitat. The land includes switchgrass fields, food plots, and small woodlots designed to provide a natural environment for game birds. Professional guides and well-trained bird dogs assist hunters during these outings, helping locate birds and ensuring a safe and successful hunt.

*Recently, Toby and Aileen Rice became key investors in the preserve and are making considerable improvements to the facilities and adding additional land, bringing the total area of the operation to approximately 800 acres. Being very mindful to continue and protect the meaningful legacy*



*Hunting Hills Armory and Outfitters managers, Kurt Katchmark, Michele Katchmark, Janine McAndrews and Pat McAndrews.*

*created by Roy and Sally Sisler, both subtle and significant changes can be expected at the preserve. Long time staple and key contributor to the preserve, Ras Sisler will continue to oversee the day-to-day operations.*

One exciting addition to the shooting preserve is the opening of the new **Hunting Hills Armory and Outfitters** emporium. With a “soft opening” in November 2025 and a Grand Opening slated for April 3, the Armory and Outfitters addition offers a wide selection of guns, ammo, optics, apparel, reloading supplies, E-bikes, and shotgun sports simulators.

**The guns range from hunting grade to exquisite and everything in between. The high-end rifles and shotguns feature a wide selection of carefully selected and carved classic wood stocks that are chosen for both strength and their**

**striking grain patterns. High-end rifles and shotguns occupy a rare space where engineering precision meets traditional gun making artistry. Built for demanding hunters, competitive shooters, and collectors, these firearms are defined not only by performance but by meticulous craftsmanship and premium materials that go into them.**

High-end rifles and shotguns typically emphasize extreme precision and feature elaborate engravings and decorative touches. Master engravers cut intricate scrollwork, wildlife scenes, or geometric motifs directly into metal surfaces. Some pieces include gold inlays or custom serial markings. The result is a firearm that reflects both technical excellence and artistic heritage.

Carefully tuned triggers, rigid actions, and precisely bedded stocks help deliver consistent shot placement at long distances. Premium shotguns, especially over-under or side-by-side designs, prioritize flawless balance and smooth operation. Their actions open and close with remarkable precision, while finely regulated barrels ensure reliable shot patterns.

**Two shooting simulators have also been installed and are up and running.** Shooting simulators are interactive systems designed to replicate the experience of firing a weapon in a safe, controlled environment. They use real firearms (bring your own or they have some there), fitted with laser emitters that are inserted into the barrel to emit a laser pulse when you pull the trigger, which is detected by high-speed cameras.

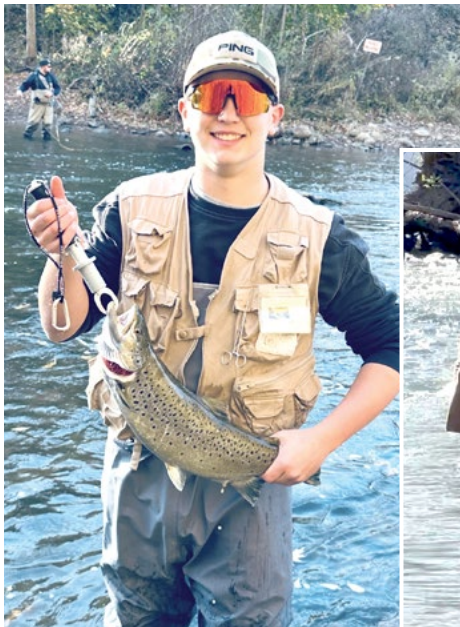
**High-definition projection screens and software generate a dynamic scenario and amazing graphics.** These simulators are widely used by military units, police departments, security personnel, and sport shooters for training and decision-making practice. Users can improve aim, reaction time, judgment, and situational awareness without the cost and risk of live ammunition. Modern systems track accuracy, timing, and movement, providing feedback after each session. Beyond training, the shooting simulators are also popular for team building activities and party’s (maximum six people per simulator).

The HH Shooting Preserve and the HH Armory and Outfitters emporium are also major sponsors of the Hunting Hills Hawkeyes Sporting Clays team. The Armory and Outfitters is managed by **Kurt Katchmark, Michele Katchmark, Pat McAndrews, and Janine McAndrews.** The staff is highly qualified and available to assist you with all your shooting and outdoor needs. Pat has over 40 years of shooting sports sales and service as the former owner of Pat’s Sporting Goods (1985-2025).

Regular hours for the Armory and Outfitters emporium are **Friday & Saturday, 9:00-5:00**, and Sunday, from 9:00-3:00. For questions, schedule a party, or reserve a spot on the simulator, please contact them at **724-324-2230.**

# OPENING DAY OF TROUT SEASON

By T.R. Mahle



Andy Mable on one of his many trout adventures.



The first day of Pennsylvania trout season is Saturday, April 4, at 8:00 am. There is also a mentored Youth Day on March 28. These days arrive like a quiet holiday for anglers across the state. Before sunrise, Anglers head to their favorite bend in the creeks they have visited for decades to secure their spot.

The opening day of trout season has always been a gathering for friends and family. It carries a kind of nostalgia that feels almost timeless. For me, it is still the same excitement I felt as a kid when I string my rod and pull on my waders. For many these are annual traditions that we return to year after year. For many, the opening of trout season starts the night before with camping, bonfires, cooking over open flames, and early morning breakfast. Others, however, chose to stay in the comforts of home and make the long drive in the dark to their favorite spot.

The air is still usually cool at this time of the year, and the streams run cold and clear. There is a special calm in those early morning moments when you step into the water for the first time. I can still sense the excitement of opening day at Ryerson State Park...aka "Elbow Lake."

For many people, opening day is more than just fishing, again it is tradition. Families get together to prepare rods, tackle boxes, and thermoses of coffee or hot chocolate. Parents tell stories of past seasons, "fish tales," and children listen with anticipation, imagining their own moment of triumph in the morning. At the stream the next morning, familiar faces appear year after year, almost like a reunion. Friends who may not see each other all winter greet one another like old teammates returning to the field.

There is also something comforting about the rituals. The stream has its own smell and the sound of water moving over rocks is timeless. The smell, the water, and the quiet concentration of tying on a favorite lure all create a sense of connection to the past. Many anglers remember standing beside a parent or grandparent who first taught them how to cast, patiently guiding their hands and sharing wisdom about the stream. Fishing is an excellent way to introduce children to the outdoors.

Stocking has been taking place since early February with over 3.2 million trout released across the state in 684 streams and 130 lakes. In addition to these trout (adults that average 11 inches in length and weigh an average of .58 pounds), the PFBC will be stocking trophy-sized trout...72,000 trout that are 14-20 inches in length.

When the clock finally reaches the official start time, the calm banks will come alive. Lines arc out over the water, splashing softly as lures, minnows, and worms drift into the current. The streams and lakes, stocked with rainbows, brown, tiger, brook, and golden trout, hold the promise of the season's first catch. For many people, this is all a time-honored tradition.

Even if the fish are not biting, opening day still feels like a success. It marks the return of spring, the renewal of old traditions, and the simple joy of being outdoors with people who share the same love for the water.

By late morning, some anglers will head home with a few trout for dinner, while others simply enjoy the day outdoors. The first day of trout season is less about fishing itself and more about welcoming spring, sharing stories, and continuing a tradition that runs deep in Pennsylvania.

Several streams and lakes in Greene County have been stocked with trout in anticipation of the opening day. Key locations include **Browns Creek, Enlow Fork, North Fork Dunkard Fork, South Fork Tenmile Creek, and Ryerson Station State Park's waters.** Good luck to all of you and enjoy your day on the water.

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# NOTHING GOOD EVER LASTS...JUST THE MEMORY OF IT

By T.R. Mahle

I'm not sure how I know, I just know that I do. I have always had a unique understanding that time is a gift and something that should be cherished. I understand and recognize that everything exists in motion. Even from a very early age I understood that nothing remains the same. I also understood that identifying and enjoying the moment was, and still is, a special gift. To steal a quote I recently heard, the number of good things in your life depends on your ability to see them.

We measure time in seconds, days, years, and lifetimes...nothing remains fixed. Seasons change, we age, relationships and friendships evolve and dissolve, and life moves on. In addition to seconds, years, and lifetimes... there are "periods." Our lives are shaped by certain defining periods, and the memories of these periods quietly carve out our identity. These stretches of time...sometimes brief, sometimes long...leave marks that influence how we see ourselves and the world.

Childhood is often the first defining period. It is where our beliefs take root, our confidence is built and shaken, and these early experiences teach us about life. Even years later, the echoes of childhood guide the way I think and react. Growing up on the north side of Waynesburg we gathered daily to ride bikes, play baseball, and just hang out together. None of us knew it was happening, but at some point, we all gathered for the last time to play together. I try, but I can't remember the last time we played baseball in the neighbor's yard, or we all rode our bikes together. I understood at the time that it would all end too soon, and so it was with us. I don't know exactly when that happened, but it certainly did, and all that is left now is just the memory of it.

Another childhood period that remains strongly embedded in my mind is my early outdoor experiences. There was a very special old oak tree, the biggest in the woods. I remember as a young boy sitting beside my father next to that special oak tree for many years when squirrel hunting. I knew every inch of that oak tree...I explored it and left no stone unturned when the squirrels went quiet. My dad never complained about me moving or making too much noise. Looking back, I think he appreciated just watching me enjoy the outdoors. We had some special moments just sitting under that tree, sometimes talking, sharing a snack, or most of the time just listening...the old oak seemed like it would always be there for us.

But trees change and grow old too, as the years progressed when we showed up to hunt, there would be more limbs laying around its base and it was clearly failing, struggling to exist, and it didn't seem as towering...maybe I was just getting taller. Somehow, I knew this was a special place and a special time, but I also knew it was coming to an end way too soon. My dad has long since passed away, and a house was built where the old oak used to stand...and once again, I am left with just the memory of it.

As we got older, we entered a period of testing boundaries and forming values. The friendships that we choose, the risks that we take, and the failures and successes we endured during this period often set the stage for our adulthood. There are also unexpected defining periods...deaths, career changes, heartbreaks, illness, and personal defeats and triumphs...and once again the memories are all that is left.

The idea that nothing stays the same can feel unsettling. We often seek stability and permanence. Yet time gently teaches us that growth depends on change. We could not remain children and still expect to become adults. Even our thoughts and beliefs adapt as we gather new experiences. Without change, there would be no learning, no healing, and no progress. I believe that these "periods" in our lives are what really defines who we are. These periods are things that we can control to some extent. We can pick our friends, choose our academic course, choose whether we want to participate in sports, and what career path we want to pursue.

Understanding time also encourages attentiveness because moments pass quickly and cannot be reclaimed. You need to understand that the moment you are in will not last. Holiday gatherings, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations...all markers of change. Time humbles us, but it also



offers hope. Whatever we face success or struggle, it will not remain forever. Somethings however are left to fate. To accept that nothing stays the same is not necessarily fearing change, but it helps us to appreciate the movement. In embracing time, we embrace the continuous unfolding of life.

Anticipation of changes is also a very powerful sense. The current "period" for me...marriage, career, family, college, and recently semi-retiring, forced me to realize that my life is more than half the way traveled, there are far more miles behind me than ahead of me. This period of my life has me going to more funerals than weddings. For years, growing up we witnessed the passing of acquaintances and people we casually knew...now, it's my friends, siblings, classmates, and co-workers.

They say that by the time your child reaches eighteen years of age you have spent 85% of the time you will ever spend with them...what a devastating realization...especially for someone who waited till the age of forty-four to start having them. For now, and in the future, this realization will help me take the time to really enjoy the blessings that have been bestowed on me.

Go on that hunting trip, spend more time on the water, attend every event with your kids that you can because they truly are your most precious possession. I can, and will, take the time to really enjoy the moments I have with my friends and family...because eventually this too will be no more than a memory.

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# ATV/UTV SAFETY: SPRINGTIME & SUMMERTIME IS TRAUMA TIME

By T.R. Mahle

Greene County has more than its share of ATV, UTV, side-by-sides, and dirt bikes. Pennsylvania, including regions like Greene County, ranks among the top 10 states for ATV related fatalities. ATV accidents result in over 100,000 emergency room-treatment injuries and 600-800 deaths annually in the country. Nearly half of all injuries and over 35% of deaths occur in children under 16 years old.

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are powerful machines designed for off-road travel across dirt, mud, sand, and rough terrain. They are popular for recreation, farming, hunting, and trail riding. However, their power and mobility also make them potentially dangerous when used improperly. Practicing proper ATV safety is essential to prevent injuries and ensure that riders can enjoy these vehicles responsibly.



One of the most important safety measures when riding an ATV is wearing protective gear. A helmet is the single most critical piece of equipment because it protects the rider's head in the event of a crash or rollover. Riders should also wear goggles or a face shield to protect their eyes from dust, rocks, and insects. Additional gear such as gloves, long sleeves, long pants, and over-the-ankle boots can help protect the body from cuts, scrapes, and burns from the engine or exhaust.

Another key rule is riding an ATV that is appropriate for the

rider's age and size. ATVs are manufactured in different engine sizes, and younger riders should use youth-sized models designed specifically for them. Operating an ATV that is too large or powerful can make it difficult to control, increasing the risk of accidents. Riders should also read the owner's manual and understand the controls before operating the vehicle.

Training and education play a major role in ATV safety. Many organizations offer safety courses that teach riders how to handle an ATV correctly, including how to turn, brake, and navigate hills or uneven terrain. These courses also teach riders how to shift their body weight to maintain balance, which is essential for preventing rollovers. Taking a certified ATV safety course can greatly improve a rider's confidence and ability to react in difficult situations.

Safe riding behavior is equally important. Riders should always operate ATVs at safe speeds and remain alert to obstacles such as rocks, tree roots, and sudden drops in terrain. Riding on paved roads should be avoided because ATVs are designed for off-road use and can be difficult to control on hard surfaces. In addition, riders should never carry passengers unless the ATV is specifically designed for more than one person. Carrying extra passengers can affect balance and make the vehicle unstable.

Alcohol and drugs should never be used before or during ATV riding. Impaired judgment, slower reaction times, and reduced coordination significantly increase the risk of crashes. Just like driving a car, operating an ATV requires full attention and quick decision-making.

Finally, regular maintenance is an important part of ATV safety. Riders should check tire pressure, brakes, lights, and fluid levels before each ride. A mechanical problem in remote or rough terrain can quickly become dangerous if the vehicle fails unexpectedly. Keeping the ATV in good condition ensures it will respond properly when the rider needs control.

In conclusion, ATV riding can be an exciting and useful activity, but it also comes with risks. Wearing protective gear, choosing the right ATV, receiving proper training, riding responsibly, and maintaining the vehicle are all critical steps in reducing accidents. By following these safety practices, riders can protect themselves and others while enjoying the benefits of ATV riding.

# DOGS, THEY TRULY ARE OUR BEST FRIENDS

By T.R. Mahle

Lunch had just ended. I watched one of our friends gently wrap a piece of hamburger up in a napkin and place it in his coat pocket. An unusual occurrence, so we asked him what was up. He explained that it was a treat for his long-time friend...a friend he was going to put down later in the day. "This dog has been all over the country with me, he was a good friend" he explained. Very seldom is our lunch table at a loss for words, but this hit us hard.

Losing a pet, whether through illness, old age, or the painful decision to put them down, is one of the most heartbreaking experiences a person can face. For many of us, pets are not just animals, they are family members, daily companions and steady sources of comfort. Their very presence becomes a part of our daily existence. We grow accustomed to the sound of their paws on the floor, the excited greeting at the door, and their excitement at feeding time. When they are gone, the silence can feel overwhelming.

Putting down a pet carries a unique emotional weight. Unlike sudden loss, euthanasia often involves "making a decision", even when it is clearly the most compassionate choice. When a beloved companion is suffering, in pain, or has no quality of life left, the responsibility can feel crushing. The decision to euthanize a pet is not about giving up. It's about preventing suffering when comfort and joy are no longer possible in a meaningful way.

Having made the decision to euthanize pets myself, I struggled with second guessing, always wondering if I waited too long or acted too soon. Like others, I replayed the final days repeatedly in my mind, questioning every choice. But at its heart, choosing euthanasia is an act of love. It means placing your pet's comfort above your desire to keep them longer. It means absorbing the pain, so they don't have to.



Grief after losing a pet is real and valid. For some, it can mirror the grief felt after losing a human loved one. You are still in a routine mode...reaching for the leash or listening for their bark. There can be anger, sadness, even moments of unexpected calm. But the bond between a person and a pet is profound. Pets offer unconditional love. They don't judge, hold grudges, or complicate affection. They are present in life's quiet, ordinary moments, which makes their absence deeply felt.

Children often experience pet loss as their first encounter with death. This can be a tender opportunity to teach them about love, mortality, and empathy. Allowing them to grieve openly shows that sadness is not something to hide. Adults, too, need to mourn. Holding a small memorial, creating a photo album, planting a tree, or keeping a collar or tag can provide comfort and a tangible way to honor the relationship.

Healing does not mean forgetting. Over time, the sharp pain softens into a quieter ache, and memories begin to bring more smiles than tears. You may remember the funny quirks, the way they tilted their head, or the comfort they gave during difficult times. Their life, though shorter than ours, leaves a lasting imprint.

Eventually, some people choose to welcome another pet into their lives. This is not a replacement but a continuation of the love they learned to give. Others decide not to, carrying their memories forward in different ways. There is no single "right" way to grieve.

What matters most is recognizing that loving deeply always carries risk. The pain of loss is the price of that love. And if given the choice, most of us would choose to do it all again, every time. You will never look back at your life and think "I spent too much time with my dog".

# THE SMALL-TOWN DOCTOR'S BIG ROLE

By Bret Moore

For generations, the small-town doctor stood as one of America's most reassuring figures - black bag in hand, available at any hour, and woven into the intimate fabric of community life. In literature and film, this archetype became shorthand for steadiness, discretion, and moral clarity. In *Our Town*, Dr. Gibbs makes his rounds through Grover's Corners not as a distant professional but as a neighbor who knows every family's joys and sorrows. In numerous television shows like *The Waltons* and movies like *Field of Dreams*, the town doctor is part of the gentle moral landscape of rural America. He is a quiet guardian of continuity and care. **Across decades of storytelling and in real life, the local physician symbolized trust rooted in familiarity.**

Throughout Greene County anyone over the age of forty can certainly remember a local doctor from their past who would fit that archetypal role like they were right out of central casting.

Our readers responded with overwhelming enthusiasm to our online post asking them to share their memories. As we expected, these shared stories were humorous and heart-warming and embodied a bygone era that is slowly fading in our collective memories.

Three of these medical legends were very present in my youth. My mother was an OB nurse who stood alongside Dr. Mering as he delivered half of Greene County.

As a former athlete at Waynesburg Central and Waynesburg College, I am a member of the very large club that was treated by Doc Patterson. Every athlete of two generations has a great story about Doc's colorful personality and treatment methods. He was a perfect fit for those athletes and those times.

On the flip side was the gentle nature of Dr. Greenlee, who hosted an annual end of season dinner at his house for the players, cheerleaders, and staff of the Raiders' football team. This was a tradition that lasted almost three decades.

Our readers also contributed a vast repository of county doctors who created generations of memories. The names are familiar to anyone of a certain age. **Sonneborn, Brooks, McNeely, Gray, Clendenning, Huffman, Fowler, Abner, Stitt, Gray, Kumar, Buterbaugh, Jack, Martin, Ring, and Marisa.**

Most of the memories extolled their countenances with descriptions such as "always joyful", "kind," and "pleasant." These men covered small towns like Carmichaels, Greensboro, Rogersville, Mt. Morris, and Kirby.

Their services were all-encompassing. Many provided house calls, and they brought "the pharmacy" with them. In addition to giving shots, a few even brought presents for children. One reader recalls Dr. Gray bringing her a baby buggy as a child.

I also found it fascinating more than one of these men treated the family pups during house calls. They were truly concerned about the entire household.

One Kirby resident shared that Dr. McNeely delivered her in the house where she still lives. Some family members continued their chores on the farm that day before being greeted with the newborn's cries as they came in for dinner.

The respondents also swore by the medical acumen of these men. Several stories told of how the diagnostic prowess of their doctor saved their lives or prevented serious complications. One reader shared a story of how Dr. Abner told her sister she was pregnant before the woman had any idea.

The final element that stood out in these stories was simply access. People could walk into their doctor's office without an appointment and simply wait their turn. Today, it might take weeks or even months to see a doctor (if your insurance company says it's ok).

Today, those types of men have faded from our landscape. Most independent practices have been absorbed into sprawling hospital systems. House calls have yielded to urgent care chains; personal relationships have given way to electronic portals and

rotating providers. Economic pressures, consolidation, and workforce shortages have reshaped rural medicine into something more corporate and less personal. **As small towns struggle to hold onto schools, newspapers, and local businesses, the disappearance of the traditional family doctor marks not just a shift in health care, but the erosion of a cultural ideal once central to American life.**



## WHO KILLED THE SMALL-TOWN DOCTOR?

You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to solve this case. For years, the healthcare giants have quietly merged insurers with pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and physician groups. This "vertical integration" allows corporations to steer patients toward their own services, inflating costs while squeezing out independent providers.

The situation is so bad it has created the most unlikely bedfellows in American history.

Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) could not be more polar opposite on the political spectrum. However, they have found a **common enemy: the healthcare conglomerates.** Their bipartisan *Break Up Big Medicine Act*, aims to dismantle the monopolies that now define American healthcare.

The legislation would fundamentally reset the industry by:

- **Forcing Divestiture:** Companies would be prohibited from simultaneously owning insurers/PBMs and medical providers.
- **Wholesale Restrictions:** Medical wholesalers would be barred from owning the providers they supply.

These insurance companies and vertically integrated healthcare conglomerates are significantly undermining small-town independent doctors through aggressive financial and administrative tactics such as:

- **Independent practices often receive reimbursements that are less than half** of what hospital-owned or corporate-affiliated practices earn for the same services.

- **Medicare physician payments**, which set the standard for private insurance rates, have **dropped by 30%** since 2001, while the cost of running a practice has risen by **47%**.

- Pharmacy Benefit Managers owned by insurers under-reimburse independent providers for drugs, sometimes paying **below acquisition cost**, forcing clinics to absorb losses on essential medications.

- Vertically integrated companies use their insurance arms to **aggressively steer patients** toward their own doctors and pharmacies, bypassing local independent providers.

- Insurers **exclude independent doctors from "preferred networks,"** making it prohibitively expensive for local patients to see them.

- This financial pressure has led to a massive shift; nearly **80% of U.S. physicians** are now employed by corporate parents.

- Independent offices must spend hours navigating complex **prior authorization requirements** and appealing drug denials, a burden easily absorbed by large corporate systems but crippling for small staffs.

- Integrated systems require their doctors to **refer patients "back to the mothership,"** cutting off the flow of patients to independent specialists in the community.

**Our romanticized memories of the small-town doctor may be societal relics of a bygone era. However, we can certainly do better than the current system that rings every bit of humanity from an industry that should be built on that concept.**

# WHERE THE LIGHT BURNED LATE

By Bret Moore

If one were searching for the quintessential image of a twentieth-century small-town physician, one need look no further than Doctor Meyer R. Sonneborn.

Doc Sonneborn arrived in Greene County in 1961 by what many would call providence. He was in Wheeling Hospital for gallbladder surgery and found himself sharing a room with a man from western Greene County. As the man spoke of the desperate need for a doctor in his hometown of Wind Ridge, something stirred in Sonneborn. When he recovered, he began driving out to the area every Wednesday—his lone day off—to see patients.

It did not take long for the hills and the people of the region to claim his heart. Soon he moved there permanently, beginning what would become a lifetime of service to the community.

Doc's daughter-in-law and former office manager, Marcia, remembers him as a man whose skill, compassion, and quiet determination touched generations of lives.

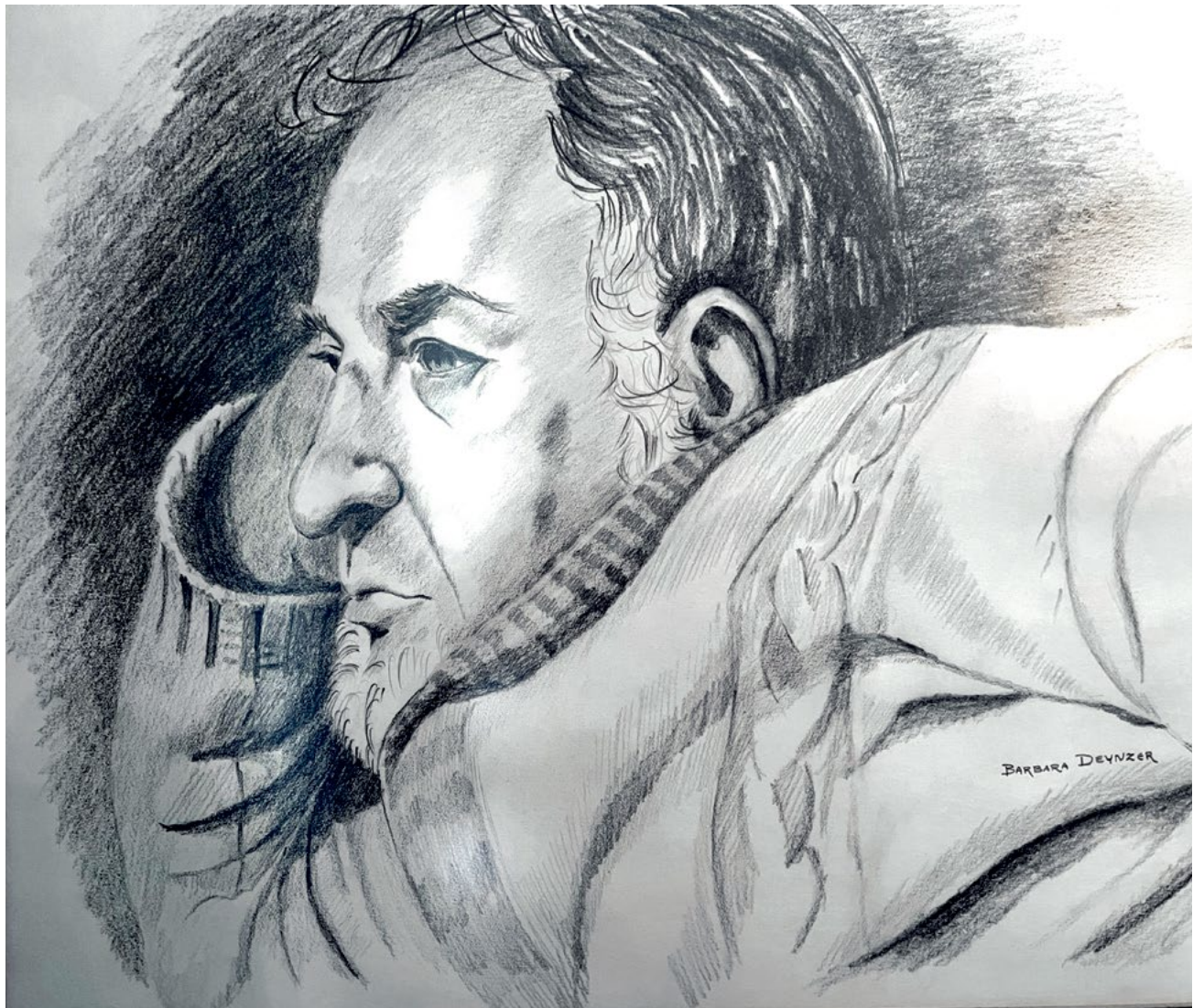
One of her earliest memories concerns her own younger sister, born a month premature in Doc's office and weighing only four pounds. In an age before neonatal intensive care units were commonplace, the tiny infant was sent home with an oxygen tank and a bassinet provided by the doctor himself. Against the odds, she thrived and grew into healthy adulthood.

By Marcia's estimate, Doc Sonneborn delivered more than a thousand babies. But his role was never confined to the delivery room. This was the era of cradle-to-grave medicine, and Doc liked to say, he was a "one-stop shop."

To modern readers, his practice might seem almost unbelievable. His office housed its own laboratory, X-ray machine, and drug room. Many former patients still speak fondly of the cough syrup he compounded himself, adjusting the formula to suit the needs of each individual. Minor surgeries were performed there as well, right in the office.

Yet the place did not feel like the sterile, impersonal clinics of today. Currier & Ives prints adorned the walls, and comfortable furniture softened the room. Patients often remarked that it felt more like a home than a medical office.

Even ten or twelve hours of daily appointments did not end his work. His home stood next door to his office, and the people of Wind Ridge knew they could knock on his door at any hour. And when patients could not come to him, Doc would climb into his car and make the journey to them, traveling country roads in all seasons.



*Local artist Barbara Deynzer, who was one of Doc's patients, captured the essence of the man in this beautiful drawing.*

As if this were not enough, Sonneborn also served as the school physician, the team doctor for the Pioneers, and a devoted teacher for medical trainees and EMTs who came to learn from a master of practical medicine.

What makes this portrait of compassion and courage even more extraordinary is that Doc carried out these Herculean labors while enduring serious physical trials of his own.

An accident with a fluoroscope in his office left several fingers and a thumb terribly burned by radiation. When it became clear the damaged digits could not be saved, Sonneborn calmly supervised his own staff during the amputation of portions of them.

A childhood accident suffered during a Boy Scout outing took the vision of his left eye. Later he developed severe

spinal stenosis, a condition that would have forced many men into retirement. But Doc refused to allow his own suffering to diminish his service to others.

In truth, his devotion lasted until the very end. The day before he died, lying in a nursing home bed, he called in a prescription for a patient who needed help.

The modern world, with its litigation, regulation, and technologies, makes physicians like Doc Sonneborn seem anachronistic. But the difference runs deeper than circumstance. His generation carried within it a profound sense of duty, a work ethic rooted in service, and a conviction that one's purpose in life was found in caring for others.

And for that reason, the memory of Doc Sonneborn stands not only as a tribute to one remarkable man, but as a quiet reminder of what a life of service can truly mean.

# WVU SCHOOL OF PHARMACY - RATIONAL DRUG THERAPY PROGRAM

## KEEPING CLINICIANS CURRENT

By Katlyn Moore

If you're like most of the population, **Academic Detailing** is a foreign term, but the premise isn't new. It is simply an evidence-based educational outreach method. Trained health-care professionals (such as pharmacists) meet with doctors and clinicians to deliver non-commercial, up-to-date, and unbiased information.

In the early 1980s, researchers at Harvard Medical School noticed a gap between prescribing practices and best evidence-based approaches toward patient treatment.

**Large Pharmaceutical companies had discovered the "secret sauce" in gaining access to physicians and influencing their prescribing habits;** disseminate highly trained representatives and equip them with enticing marketing materials to sell product.

**Researchers contemplated if these same tactics could be used to promote clinical education materials as opposed to profit motives.** Their research would go on to prove the effectiveness of Academic Detailing and its value in improving care for numerous clinical conditions.

In 2022, the Rational Drug Therapy Program, part of the West Virginia University School of Pharmacy, established its Academic Detailing division. Comprised of a team of academic detailer pharmacists, their mission was to provide West Virginia clinicians with the most up-to-date clinical research. The goal was to help increase office efficiency, decrease costs for patients, and enhance long-term outcomes.

**The Academic Detailers would present non-commercialized, evidence-based information in a detailing session**

**with the intent of keeping clinicians abreast of current guidelines and best practices.**

After discovering somewhat alarming stimulant prescribing trends in West Virginia, a panel of experts from across the state assembled to create what would become the Academic Detailing team's first educational campaign, the *WVACC Guidelines: A West Virginia Guide to Evidence-Informed Evaluation, Diagnosis, and Treatment of ADHD and Comorbid Concerns*.

**The objective of these guidelines was not to deter clinicians from prescribing stimulants to those who needed them but to emphasize the importance of adequate education and training on the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of ADHD.**

The team's pharmacists would be tasked with educating clinicians from across the state, including those in the most rural areas. Thanks to funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the Maternal and Child Health Services Title V Block Grant, the Academic Detailers could provide various education opportunities for clinicians including continuing education credits, lunch and learns, short key messages, web courses, and more.

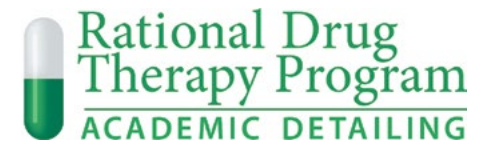
The Academic Detailing team has recently shifted its efforts to other topics such as stigma in substance use disorder, medications for opioid use disorder, and exploring how screening, intervention, and referral to treatment can identify risk early and connect patients to appropriate care.

In addition, they are awaiting the release of the revised 2016 WV Safe & Effective Management of Pain Guidelines

for detailing, which will reflect the most recent guidance from the CDC in addressing opioid prescribing and risk reduction strategies. They expect the new guidelines to be available in the spring/summer. Continuing education opportunities for the guidelines will also be available to providers.

The Academic Detailing model has proven to be a valuable resource for clinicians and an effective method of positively influencing clinical decision-making for patients. It has expanded to several organizations in the country including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other state/university programs.

**Because of the efforts of organizations like these and the Rational Drug Therapy Program, clinicians are better equipped to make clinical decisions resulting in improved patient safety.**



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- 4/4 » Mason-Dixon Easter Egg Hunt, Mason-Dixon Park
- 4/11 » Kids' Fishing Rodeo, Chestnut Ridge Park
- 4/25 » Ramp Dinner & Vendor Show, Mason-Dixon Park
- 5/25 » Pool Opens, Camp Muffy Park
- 5/30 » Chestnut Ridge Concert #1/Optimus Riff, Chestnut Ridge Park

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Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 In Episode # 18, what local park does guest Brian Sokol discuss?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What is unique about the lodging site called Blessed Valley featured in Episode #16?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Who is our special guest in Episode # 21 discussing the Warrior Trail Gobblers?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 What two representatives of the Waynesburg Social Service League discussed the group's charitable works in Episode #10?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Name one of the haunted locations in Greene County visited by paranormal investigator Ronnie Gaskins (Episode #7).  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



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# THE INEVITABLE ROLE OF AI IN MODERN MEDICINE

The promise of Artificial Intelligence in healthcare is no longer a futuristic concept. It is the current “operating layer” of modern medicine. As we move through 2026, the integration of AI is fundamentally altering the patient experience and the clinician’s workflow. However, this digital evolution brings a complex set of trade-offs that demand careful navigation.

## The Benefits Include Efficiency, Precision, and Personalization

The most immediate benefit of AI is the **eradication of administrative burnout**. Historically, doctors have spent nearly two hours on electronic health record (EHR) documentation for every one hour of patient care. Today, AI-powered scribes listen to consultations and generate accurate clinical notes in real-time, allowing physicians to look their patients in the eye rather than at a screen.

Beyond paperwork, AI is incredible at **diagnostic precision**. Machine learning algorithms can now scan thousands of radiological images or pathology slides in seconds, identifying microscopic anomalies, such as early-stage tumors or subtle cardiac irregularities, that the human eye might miss. This “second set of eyes” reduces human error and enables earlier intervention, which is often the difference between a routine procedure and a life-threatening crisis.

Furthermore, AI is ushering in the era of **personalized medicine**. By analyzing a patient’s unique genetic code alongside their lifestyle data from wearables, AI can predict how an individual will respond to specific medications. This moves us away from the “trial and error” approach to prescriptions, ensuring patients get the right treatment at the right dose from day one.

## The Drawbacks Include Bias, Privacy, and the “Black Box”

### Problem

Despite these leaps forward, the “black box” nature of AI presents significant ethical challenges. One major concern is **algorithmic bias**. If the data used to train an AI is skewed—for instance, if it lacks diversity in ethnicity or gender—the AI’s recommendations may be inaccurate or even harmful for underrepresented populations. This risks exacerbating existing health disparities rather than closing them.

Then there is the issue of **data privacy and security**. Healthcare data is among the most sensitive information a person owns. As hospitals become increasingly reliant on cloud-based AI systems, the surface area for cyberattacks grows. A single breach could expose the intimate medical histories of millions, leading to identity theft or insurance discrimination.

Perhaps the most philosophical drawback is the **erosion of the human touch**. Medicine is as much an art as a science, built on empathy, intuition, and trust. There is a fear that over-reliance on algorithms could turn healthcare into a transactional, cold process. If a computer delivers a terminal diagnosis or suggests a high-stakes surgery without the nuanced oversight of a compassionate human provider, the “care” in healthcare may be lost.

**The goal for 2026 and beyond is not to replace the doctor with an algorithm, but to use AI as an augmentation tool.** By leveraging AI to handle the data-heavy “lifting,” we can actually free up human providers to focus on what they do best: connecting with patients. The future of healthcare depends on our ability to embrace the speed of the machine while fiercely protecting the soul of the practice.



Noah Jeffries and the Easter Bunny.

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## WHY LIFTING WEIGHTS IS NOW ESSENTIAL FOR WOMEN OVER 40

For women over 40, strength training is no longer optional—it's foundational to long-term health. As estrogen levels begin to fluctuate and gradually decline, the body undergoes significant changes. Muscle mass naturally decreases (a process known as sarcopenia), metabolism slows, and bone density begins to drop. Without intervention, this can lead to increased body fat, reduced strength, and a higher risk of osteoporosis.

Lifting weights directly counters these effects. Resistance training stimulates muscle protein synthesis, helping preserve and build lean muscle. More muscle supports a healthier metabolism, improves insulin sensitivity, and makes everyday activities—like carrying groceries to climbing stairs—easier and safer.

Bone health is another critical reason. After 40, women face a higher risk of osteoporosis due to declining estrogen, which plays a protective role in bone maintenance. Weight-bearing exercises and resistance training place healthy stress on bones, signaling them to become stronger and denser. This significantly reduces fracture risk later in life.

Strength training also supports hormonal balance and body composition. Many women notice that traditional cardio alone becomes less effective for maintaining weight. Lifting weights helps shift body composition by increasing lean mass and reducing fat mass, even if the scale doesn't change dramatically. This can improve energy levels, joint stability, and overall mobility.

Beyond the physical, the mental health benefits are powerful. Resistance training has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression while improving cognitive function. Feeling physically strong often translates into greater confidence and resilience during a life stage that can feel hormonally and emotionally turbulent.

Importantly, lifting weights does not mean bulking up. Women typically do not produce enough testosterone to develop large muscle mass without specialized training and nutrition. Instead, they gain tone, strength, and metabolic support.

In short, after 40, strength training shifts from aesthetic choice to essential self-care—protecting bones, preserving muscle, supporting metabolism, and enhancing overall vitality for decades to come.



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# OUR GROWING EMERGENCY CARE DESERT

By Bret Moore

Lack of medical coverage in rural America is a growing crisis that affects millions of people across the state and thousands in this county. While urban residents often live within minutes of hospitals, rural communities face shrinking healthcare infrastructure, long travel distances, provider shortages, and increasingly fragile emergency medical services.

**Among the most urgent concerns is ambulance coverage, which in many rural areas is underfunded, understaffed, and stretched beyond sustainable limits.**

Rural hospital closures have accelerated over the past two decades. Financial pressures, declining populations, lower reimbursement rates from Medicare and Medicaid, and high levels of uninsured patients have forced many facilities to shut down. When a rural hospital closes, the consequences ripple outward. Residents must travel farther for routine care, preventive services decline, and chronic conditions often go unmanaged.

**Moreover, rural counties often lack primary care physicians, mental health providers, and specialists** due to lower pay. As a result, patients delay seeking care, rely heavily on emergency rooms, or simply go without treatment. Preventable conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease become more severe, increasing the likelihood of emergency situations that require rapid response.

In rural communities, ambulance call volumes are relatively low, and transport distances are long. Our units may be tied up for hours on a single call due to travel time to distant hospitals. This means fewer ambulances are available to respond to other emergencies.

In addition, rural ambulance services depend heavily on volunteers. However, volunteer EMTs often balance emergency responses with full-time jobs and family responsibilities. **As rural populations age and younger residents move away, volunteer recruitment becomes increasingly difficult.** Some communities struggle to maintain minimum staffing levels, leading to delayed response times that can mean the difference between life and death.

The consequences of inadequate medical and ambulance coverage are profound. **Rural residents experience higher rates of preventable deaths and maternal mortality.** Delayed emergency responses worsen outcomes for heart attacks, strokes, farming accidents, and motor vehicle crashes—incidents that are more common in rural settings.

**These issues are complicated and systemic, and addressing this crisis requires multifaceted solutions. After talking with several experts in this field (which I am not), I am passing on some suggestions for us to discuss with our elected officials.**

## 1. Expand Funding and Reimbursement Reform

The state has recently dedicated funds to bolster EMS operations. There is a new \$6 million investment in the EMS Operating Fund which supports recruitment, training, and equipment purchases through regional EMS councils. Expanding and making this type of funding more consistent year-to-year would help stabilize financially strained services.

### A. Reimburse More Realistically for Responses

The state has recently passed laws that increase ambulance

reimbursement rates, tying Medicaid payments to the higher federal rate and paying for all patient transport miles — an important step for rural providers who often travel long distances.

Further reimbursement reforms could include:

- Paying for non-transport care (treatment on scene), so services get revenue even when no hospital trip occurs.
- Creating a statewide fee schedule so insurers reimburse more predictably and sustainably.
- Expanding tele-health to improve access to specialists and reduce unnecessary transports.
- Reverting to a system that requires insurance payments go directly to the EMS agency instead of the patient.
- *Increasing the pro-rated insurance payments. An EMS agency will bill based on their cost of a run but only receive pennies on the dollar for that invoice.*

### B. Expand Local Taxing Authority

Bills in the legislature would allow more municipalities to levy taxes specifically for fire and EMS funding. Instead of relying solely on reimbursements and donations, towns could generate dedicated local revenue to support staffing and operations.

## 2. Workforce Recruitment and Retention

### A. Grow EMS Career Pipelines

**Local governments and hospitals could partner with schools and community colleges to offer tuition assistance and stipends for training and create EMS certification programs that funnel graduates directly into local services. Greene County CTC is already doing this and has a very successful program assisting students to achieve their certification.**

### B. Better Pay and Benefits

Part of the staffing crisis stems from low wages and high stress; EMS personnel often make less than jobs requiring similar responsibility, contributing to burnout and turnover. Competitive pay, benefits, and loan forgiveness for service in rural areas could make EMS careers more attractive.

## 3. Shared Services

A. *Create Regional EMS Authorities* where multiple towns pool resources to fund, manage, and operate ambulance services collaboratively. This spreads costs and stabilizes coverage.

Regional authorities can:

- Coordinate staffing and equipment across municipalities.
- Set uniform fees or contributions.
- Provide consistent service levels that single small towns struggle to sustain.

*According to Richie Policz, Director of Greene County Emergency Services, he has met with local municipal association members concerning these issues. They are researching opportunities to apply for grants to help offset the costs of EMS services.*

### B. County-Level EMS Coordination

Some officials and advocacy groups recommend shifting EMS oversight to counties rather than leaving it fragmented across many small municipalities. This can improve planning, budgeting, and service allocation. Although, this would require a rewrite of Pennsylvania Act 69 and Title 35.

## 4. Reduce Operational Barriers

### A. Flexible Staffing Rules

Pennsylvania's Act 17 allows exceptions to rigid ambulance staffing requirements in extraordinary circumstances, which can help struggling rural services remain operational rather than shut down for lack of personnel. Continued refinement of staffing regulations could reduce unnecessary barriers while maintaining safety.

### B. Shared Services Among First Responders

Some fire departments operate Quick Response Services (QRS) or integrated EMS units that provide basic care and support for ambulance crews. Encouraging these tiered response structures — where trained first responders begin care while ambulances are en route — can improve response times and reduce strain.

According to Policz, Clarksville, Jefferson, Nemaocolin, and Rices Landing already have EMS/ambulance service attached to the fire companies. New Freeport VFC has a Certified QRS.

**Unfortunately, over the past 15 years, Greene County has lost four volunteer fire company-based EMS services.**

## 5. Look to New Technologies

Policz also discussed possible solutions on the horizon.

**“We have reviewed a new concept of using drones to deliver AEDs and certain medications to medical emergencies in areas that have a long ambulance response time. Pilot programs in other PA counties are showing positive results, but funding to launch these programs are the biggest hurdle to make it possible and continued support of the program.”**

**Ultimately, access to timely medical care is not simply a matter of convenience; it is a matter of equity and survival. Without meaningful investment and policy reform, rural communities risk further erosion of essential healthcare services, leaving residents increasingly vulnerable in moments when help is needed most.**



*Frenchy (above) and Earl (below) await the start of the barrel races at the Greene County Fairgrounds. We assume Earl was a spectator.*

# GREENE COUNTY CTC SHINES AT 2026 DISTRICT 9 SKILLSUSA COMPETITIONS

The Greene County Career and Technology Center once again represented our area by turning in outstanding performances at the 2026 District 9 SkillsUSA competitors. Out of 17 students, 13 earned top honors in their events.

**1st Place Winners** – Blake Nash (Collision Repair Technology), Ashlynn Snyder (Automotive Refinishing Technology), and Linzy Rush (First Aid/CPR) – will advance to the state competition in Hershey this April.

**2nd Place Winners** – Summer Davis (Collision Damage Appraisal), Madison Harding & Krissa Snyder (Emergency Medical Technician), Eva Pester, Emma Shirley & Zoey Caldwell (Crime Scene Investigation), Julieanna Sechrengost (T-Shirt Design), and Tucker Smith (Precision Machining).



Left to Right — Natalie Goodwin, Zoey Caldwell, Jordyn Roberts, Julieann Sechrengost, Ashlynn Snyder, Blake Nash and Todd Kieffer.


**3rd Place Winners** – Cole Jackson (Job Skill Demonstration A) and Hayden Patterson (Fire Fighting).

**Participation Recognition** – Coltin Halbert (Welding), Ealyn Klaner (CTE Demonstration), Jordyn Roberts (Restaurant Service), and Eli Taylor (Electrical Construction Wiring).

Advisors Mr. Kieffer and Mrs. Goodwin stated they were very proud of all the students for their dedication, hard work, and for representing Greene County CTC with excellence.



Left to Right — Natalie Goodwin, Hayden Patterson, Ealyn Klaner, Linzy Rush, Ava Pester, Emma Shirley, Tucker Smith, Cole Jackson and Todd Kieffer.



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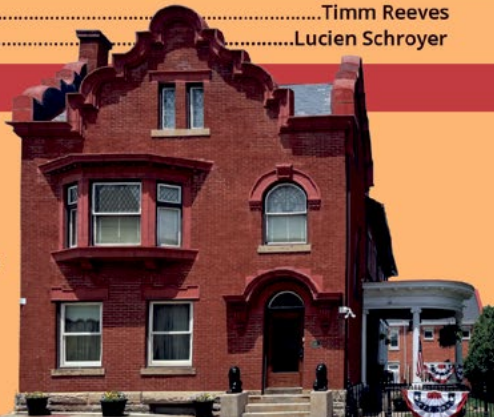
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Transparency, government reform and ethical leadership are cornerstones of Senator Bartolotta's work. For instance, when taking office, she declined the state government pension, chose not to use a state vehicle, and opted to provide receipts for expenses rather than accepting "per diem" vouchers that lack accountability.

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Camera has also been endorsed by the Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association and many local trade unions.



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# McCracken Pharmacy Wins National Award

## Shines in Statewide EngageRx Spotlight

McCracken Pharmacy in Waynesburg has been honored with the 2025 CPESN Most Engaged Pharmacy Award, placing it among just 32 community pharmacies nationwide recognized for exceptional engagement in value-based, patient-centered care. The award, presented through the Pennsylvania Pharmacists Care Network (PPCN), highlights how this independent pharmacy is not only filling prescriptions, but actively transforming the way health care is delivered in Greene County.

At the same time, McCracken Pharmacy has been featured in statewide coverage of Highmark EngageRx, a program that reimburses independent pharmacies for the clinical services they provide every day—services that often go far beyond answering medication questions at the counter. For patients in and around Waynesburg, this convergence of recognition and innovation simply confirms what they already know: McCracken is more than a pharmacy. It is a trusted health partner.

CPESN USA is a nationwide network of community-based pharmacies created to advance pharmacy practice and improve patient outcomes. Each year, local network leaders nominate pharmacies that consistently go above and beyond in implementing CPESN payer programs, documenting clinical services, and collaborating with providers, and 32 are selected as “Most Engaged” for their commitment to patient-centered care in their communities.

For McCracken’s patients, this recognition is not abstract policy language—it shows up in longer conversations, proactive checkins, and pharmacists who know their stories as well as their prescriptions.

McCracken Pharmacy was prominently highlighted and used as a prime example in recent statewide reporting on Highmark’s EngageRx initiative, showcasing its role as a critical access point for care in rural Pennsylvania—especially for Medicaid members. EngageRx reimburses community pharmacies for clinical activities such as regular checkins, medication synchronization, and coaching on chronic disease management—services many pharmacists have historically provided without compensation.

By participating in EngageRx, McCracken Pharmacy is formalizing what it has always done informally: meeting patients where they are, closing care gaps, and ensuring that no question or concern falls through the cracks.

At the heart of McCracken’s success is owner Scott Adamson and his dedicated team—pharmacists Andrew Behm, Drew Eddy, and Heather Eddy, alongside the skilled pharmacy technicians—whose daily work brings national initiatives down to a very local, very human level. As an independently owned community pharmacy, McCracken is structured so that these pharmacists can spend time listening, counseling, and problem-solving with patients rather than rushing from one transaction to the next.

Whether it is adjusting a medication schedule so a caregiver can manage a loved one’s complex regimen, walking a new parent through dosing and side effects, or coordinating vaccines and health screenings, the pharmacists at McCracken focus on relationships, not just prescriptions. Their counseling often ex-

tends beyond the prescription label—addressing cost concerns, transportation issues, and communication with prescribers.

McCracken Pharmacy’s mission is to provide high-quality health care products and services using modern technology to support “innovative and compassionate pharmaceutical care,” and that mission is evident in the range of services they offer. Patients can access medication synchronization, multidose packaging, medication therapy management, health screenings, immunizations, and private consultations, all designed to make it easier to stay healthy daytoday.

But what truly sets McCracken apart—and what awards and news stories can only partially capture—is the continuity of care that comes from seeing the same pharmacists over time. In a health system where patients often see a rotating cast of faces, McCracken’s team offers familiar voices, shared history, and a level of trust that helps patients open up about side effects, missed doses, or life changes that might affect their treatment. That kind of relationship-based care is difficult to replicate in chain settings or through mailorder models and is exactly the

kind of value CPESN and EngageRx are designed to recognize and reward.

Located on East High Street in Waynesburg, McCracken Pharmacy has long been part of the local landscape, offering prescription services, over-the-counter products, medical equipment, and delivery to meet the diverse needs of its community. Today, its role has expanded beyond dispensing medications: it acts as a connector between patients, prescribers, and health plans, ensuring that no one in its community has to navigate the health system alone.

Being named a CPESN Most Engaged Pharmacy and highlighted for their excellent work with programs like Highmark’s EngageRx simply validates what local patients already experience every day at McCracken: a team of pharmacists who know their names, understand their challenges, and are committed to walking alongside them on their health journey. In an era of consolidation and impersonal care, McCracken Pharmacy stands as a powerful reminder of the unique value independent pharmacies bring to the communities they serve.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO**  
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*Rob Maher (PPCN), Drew Eddy, Heather Eddy, Andrew Behm, Scott Adamson, Stephanie McGrath (PPCN) and Kelsey Hake (PPCN).*



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# WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY NEWS

## Professor and 10 Students Attend Pittcon 2026

Dr. Bradley Davis, associate professor of chemistry, recently attended the Pittsburgh Conference on Analytical Chemistry and Applied Spectroscopy (Pittcon) in San Antonio with 10 Waynesburg students. Dr. Davis and his students are actively involved in the Society for Analytical Chemists of Pittsburgh (SACP) and the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP), local societies that help to organize and staff the conference.

**Pittcon, a local nonprofit, is focused on science outreach and education.** The conference is largely organized and staffed by members of the Society for Analytical Chemists of Pittsburgh (SACP) and the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP). The annual meeting is known for its extensive exposition of laboratory equipment and instrumentation in addition to its technical program where research advancements are presented. Proceeds from the annual conference help fund various local, national and international outreach programs.

Dr. Davis currently serves as the Treasurer of Pittcon. Hailey Crusenberry (pharmaceutical science major), Marah Pegram (forensic chemistry), Riley Ellis (pharmaceutical science), Reagan Mittendorf (forensic science), DaGyn Williams (chemistry), Kalena Mostoller (chemistry), Mya Riggle (forensic chemistry), Macie Kraynak (forensic science), Cami Myers (forensic science) and Ethan Best (chemistry) attended the con-

ference as student aides and helped staff the event.

When not volunteering, students were able to attend the technical program, explore the exposition and take part in professional development opportunities such as short courses and networking sessions. Crusenberry shared her undergraduate research in an oral presentation, while Pegram and Williams presented their work as posters. Crusenberry and Pegram also organized the judging of the Undergraduate Poster Session where various awards were presented.

**Hailey Crusenberry** presented, "Synthesis of Rufinamide Analogs for Inhibition of Nav Sodium Channels and Epilepsy Treatment." This research was completed during a summer REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) program at the University of Puerto Rico.

**Marah Pegram** presented research she completed with **Mike Cipoletti**, assistant professor of forensic science, entitled, "Evaluating chemically dyed hair as forensic evidence via UV-vis microspectrophotometry."

**DaGyn Williams** presented research conducted during a summer REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) program at Montana State University. The poster was entitled, "Bulk vs Surface Behavior in III-V Semiconductors."



*Morgan Sholtis of Ruff Creek provided this shot of Farmer Brycen living his best life loving on his newborn baby goat.*

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Grant awards for Community grants will not exceed \$5,000.

**The deadline to submit applications for each of these funds is May 29.**

Successful grant awards will be announced in late July for projects beginning after the first of August.

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## Our Easter Recipe Choice

Easter meals in the United States reflect the country's rich mix of religious traditions, regional flavors, and family customs. The foods served on Easter Sunday vary widely depending on heritage and geography. From glazed ham in the Midwest to seafood feasts in coastal communities, Easter dinner is as diverse as our great country.

In many American households, baked ham is the traditional Easter main dish. This custom became popular in the 19th century when pork was more readily available in early spring than other meats. The ham is often glazed with brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, or pineapple, creating a sweet and savory flavor profile.

Ham is especially common in the Midwest and South, typically served with side dishes like scalloped potatoes, deviled eggs, green bean casserole, and dinner rolls. The leftovers often become sandwiches or are used in soups later in the week.

Roast lamb holds strong symbolic meaning in Christian traditions, representing sacrifice and renewal. Many families with Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, or Eastern European backgrounds continue the custom of serving lamb on Easter.

In the U.S., lamb is often prepared as a leg roast seasoned with garlic, rosemary, and lemon. It may be accompanied by mint jelly and roasted vegetables. Though less common than ham nationwide, lamb remains an important dish for families honoring older traditions.

In many Italian-American homes, Easter meals reflect traditions tied to the end of Lent. After weeks of fasting or abstaining from certain foods, Easter Sunday becomes a time of abundance. Seafood dishes such as shrimp, scallops, baked fish, and

seafood pasta are common.

Some families also prepare dishes like lasagna or baked ziti. Sweet breads shaped like wreaths and decorated with colored eggs are popular desserts, symbolizing rebirth and spring.

In the South, alongside ham, you might find macaroni and cheese, collard greens, cornbread, sweet potato casserole, and pound cake. These meals are hearty, comforting, and designed for large family gatherings.

In parts of New England, seafood like baked haddock may appear on the table. On the West Coast, lighter spring menus featuring fresh vegetables, salads, and grilled meats are common.

Across America, Easter meals blend faith, family, and food traditions passed down through generations. They reflect both cultural roots and the joyful spirit of spring renewal.



### CHERRY BOURBON-GLAZED HAM

(Sent in by Charles Lamb)

Since Greene Countians are pretty traditional, we decided to offer a nice safe ham recipe.....with a little twist.

You can take ham to new heights with a tangy-sweet glaze made with tart cherry juice, cherry jam, and bourbon. The glaze is both brushed on the ham during baking and broiled with scallions for a sticky, deliciously caramelized accompaniment to the meat.

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 fully cooked bone-in ham (about 7 lbs. total; preferably shank end)
- 1-1/2 cups tart cherry juice
- 1/2 cup cherry jam
- 1/2 cup bourbon
- 2 whole star anise
- 1 1 -1/2-inch-piece of ginger, peeled and sliced
- 1 tsp. soy sauce
- 1/2 tsp. black peppercorns
- 2 bunches scallions
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- Kosher salt and pepper

#### Cooking Instructions

##### Step 1

Heat oven to 375°F. Place ham, cut side down, on rack set in roasting pan; add 1/4 cup water to pan. Score ham on all sides in diamond pattern, cutting only 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch deep. Cover ham and pan tightly with foil and bake (1- 1/2 hours).

##### Step 2

In medium saucepan on medium, combine cherry juice, jam, bourbon, star anise, ginger, soy sauce, and peppercorns. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until reduced to about 3/4 cup, (20 to 25 minutes).

##### Step 3

Brush 1/4 cup glaze over ham and bake, uncovered, (15 minutes). Rotate ham in oven and repeat with second 1/4 cup glaze; bake until ham is heated through and internal temperature reaches 140°F, (25 to 30 minutes more).

##### Step 4

Heat broiler. On rimmed baking sheet, toss scallions with oil, 1 tablespoon glaze, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Broil until tender and slightly charred, (2 to 3 minutes).

Serve along side sliced ham and remaining glaze.



### JEFF LASH'S LEG OF LAMB RECIPE

Create a dry rub with salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Coat lamb with the dry rub and smoke it for 3 hours. Then transfer to a slow cooker with a small amount of water in the base. Cover and cook on medium heat until the meat is falling off the bone (approx. 6-7 hours). Can be served with sauce or gravy.



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# GOLDEN YEARS, NOT SENIOR FEARS.

## PROPOSED CHANGES IN SENIOR CARE LAWS

By Bret Moore

**G**reene County has a median age of 43.5. The average age in Pennsylvania is 41, while the national average is only 38. Recent changes in our state's laws are affecting senior citizens at a critical time, shaping protections, healthcare access, and long-term care.

As the elderly population grows, funding has not kept pace with the rising demand for these services. Insufficient resources strain nursing homes, overburden caregivers, and limit access to protective services. Without sustainable investment, communities risk reduced care quality, workforce shortages, and widening gaps in support for vulnerable seniors.

**Political gridlock, competing budget priorities, and partisan disagreements over taxes and spending often stall increased funding for senior services.** Lawmakers debate Medicaid costs, deficit concerns, and whether resources should favor institutional or home-based care. Lobbying pressures further complicate consensus on sustainable, long-term investment solutions.

Here's a quick overview of some of the proposed changes in Pennsylvania law and budget expenditures.

### 1. Reforming the Older Adult Protective Services Act (OAPSA)

Pennsylvania's 2026–27 proposed budget calls for long-overdue updates to Pennsylvania's Older Adults Protective Services Act (OAPSA), which hasn't been meaningfully revised in decades. The proposed modernization, if enacted by the legislature would:

- Define financial exploitation as an explicit crime
- Expand mandatory background checks for caregivers and service providers
- Establish fatality review teams to investigate failings when abuse cases involve death
- Broaden reporting requirements for professionals.



The Lil' Stinkers Clubhouse in spring sent in by Molly Usber.

*These changes are designed to bring Pennsylvania in line with current federal and neighboring states' protections.*

Organizations such as AARP have publicly endorsed these updates. However, some frontline aging agency workers have expressed concerns that:

- Without funding, the law could be ineffective.
- Others suggest the proposal might not go far enough to hold agencies accountable.

### 2. Increased Funding for Aging Services and Oversight

Pennsylvania's recent state budgets have included some investments in senior care:

- Funding for increased oversight and transparency of local Area Agencies on Aging through a performance evaluation system.
- Sustained investments in institutional care such as skilled nursing facilities and long-term care providers, boosting reimbursement rates to support staffing and care quality.

**House Bill 1310 (2025–26)** proposes to change how Pennsylvania calculates Medicaid reimbursement rates for institutional care under the Human Services Code.

It seeks to *statutorily adjust* payment mechanisms so that nursing facilities receive consistent public assistance payments for institutional care, reducing unpredictability.

**The bill was referred to the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee a year ago this month. It remains under committee consideration without final House or Senate passage.**

Advocacy groups like the Pennsylvania Health Care Association and SEIU Healthcare PA support provisions to stabilize the Budget Adjustment Factor (BAF) — the funding tool that often reduces nursing home Medicaid rates. They argue it will *restore predictability and sustainability for providers*. They estimate a BAF floor would inject tens of millions of dollars into facility funding.

Critics of HB 1310, notably the Pennsylvania Homecare Association and the PA HCBS Association, *oppose the bill*, arguing:

- It could redirect limited Medicaid funds toward institutional care at the expense of home-based care options.
- A statutory BAF floor could limit legislative flexibility to adjust reimbursement in response to changing policy or fiscal needs.
- The estimated \$352 million annual cost increase might strain Medicaid without clear offsets or sustainability plans.

### 3. Strategic Aging Plan and Long-Term Vision

Pennsylvania has adopted a 2024–2028 State Plan on Aging, a strategic roadmap that prioritizes:

- Person-centered services across care settings
- Supporting caregivers and care partners
- Strengthening data systems and accountability in aging programs

This plan aligns with the broader "Aging Our Way, PA" initiative, a decade-long effort to modernize how the Commonwealth serves its aging population and ensure aging adults

can live with dignity and choice.

Assisted living and long-term care resident advocacy has succeeded in raising the Personal Needs Allowance, giving residents more financial autonomy for personal expenses (e.g., toiletries and clothing).

This change (to about \$60 per month) represents a *modest improvement*.

**Bills like HB 200 and SB 906 are aimed at establishing statewide paid family and medical leave. They have implications for caregivers of older adults, allowing workers to take protected time off to care for elderly relatives. These bills have drawn significantly mixed public responses, especially related to costs for employers and program design, though neither has passed the full legislature yet.**

### 4. Long-Term Care & Nursing Home Regulatory Changes

Pennsylvania has updated care standards in long-term care settings, including nursing homes and assisted living:

- Higher minimum direct care hours are increasingly being implemented, requiring more hands-on time per resident.
- Changes in assisted living regulations have increased staffing ratios and care requirements, reflecting a trend toward higher quality and oversight.

**Although not enacted yet**, bills in the legislature (like **House Bill 65**) aim to reform Pennsylvania's filial responsibility laws — which currently allow nursing homes to pursue family members for outstanding bills. Critics say this system:

- Is unique among states and *unfairly burdens families*, especially when the resident lacked capacity or resources.
- Reflects *industry lobbying* to preserve liability mechanisms rather than moving toward Medicaid or public support structures.

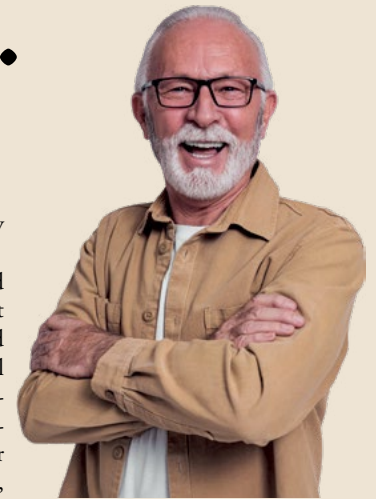
Advocates want to limit or eliminate adult children's financial responsibility for parents' care costs, but the proposal has encountered resistance from some providers who argue it *protects facilities' financial solvency*.

### 5. Senior Financial & Prescription Access Laws

Recent legislation has *extended and preserved key benefits* for seniors:

- An extension of provisions in the PACE/PACENET prescription drug programs ensures many older adults retain affordable access to medications by excluding Social Security cost-of-living increases from income eligibility calculations.

**Ultimately, A society is judged by how it protects those who depend on it most.** When seniors and other vulnerable citizens receive dignity, safety, and support, communities grow stronger and more humane. Investing in their care is not charity. It is a reflection of our shared values and collective responsibility.





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## Meet **AL BUCHTAN**

**F**orged from the tough and resilient attitude that is the hallmark of people from the southwestern Pennsylvania, Al Buchtan has lived the classic American Dream success story. A lifelong resident of this Senate district, Al hails from very humble beginnings: living in a single wide mobile home with six siblings. His father, Emil, was a coal miner and his mother, Diane, tended bar. Al witnessed firsthand how hard his parents worked to make ends meet and learned his first life lesson: "Work hard for what you have." This has stayed with him throughout his life.

Upon his high school graduation in 1985 from Carmichaels Area High School, Al attended Beaver's Masonry where he finished a four-year apprenticeship in just two years and went on to gain many employment opportunities and promotions along the way. In addition, he has been a member of the Bricklayers Allied Craftworkers Local 9 for 22 years.

Fueled by a desire to change the masonry industry for the better, Al created Advanced Masonry in 2011 with support from many of his customers. His vision was simple: **Be the best!** He has excelled in creating many jobs for people in southwestern Pennsylvania and has completed numerous construction projects throughout Washington, Greene and Beaver Counties.

Additionally, Al Buchtan continues to support many charitable endeavors through his businesses like scholastic sports, St. Jude's, and many local historical societies. Al's desire to serve the community motivated him to serve on the Carmichaels Area School Board of Directors where, after two years of enacting needed reforms, Al stepped down so he could devote full-time energy to serving the people of Washington, Greene and Beaver Counties in the State Senate.

Now residing in Canonsburg, Al is the father to his daughter, Victoria, and 2 stepdaughters, Malanna and Lila, with his wife Mindy of 10 years. ★★★

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## THE BETTER AGING SERIES: AGING WELL, OR AT LEAST A LITTLE BETTER

### Part 1: Getting Flexible

I am spending the next few articles highlighting fitness trends, hacks, ideas, and information that has helped me. I will preface by saying I am not an expert in nutrition, nor do I have any medical training whatsoever. However, I do have about 55 years of experience dancing and being active.

I have acquired my RYT 200, Reiki Master, Personal Trainer Certification, many fitness certifications, Certified Stretch Coach, Sound Healing (currently studying), and other types of continuing education credits with dance and fitness over the last 40 years.

I have taught dance and fitness for just as long, and I've seen trends come and go. I've collaborated with many people along the way. They have come in all shapes and sizes with diverse techniques.

First, it is imperative you check with your physician before starting any kind of fitness program because they can give you the best path based on your specific goals, concerns, and restrictions. I am simply sharing what I have found to be good information from my own personal experience and continuing education. I hope you find something useful from this series to help you age well.

I could never have imagined when I stepped into my first dance class at the age of five that stretching and flexibility would become one of the most important parts of my life. I would never realize the true impact until decades later.

When I was young, flexibility was just part of dance. I was not naturally flexible by any means. Those splits and backbends came easy to some people, but not for me. It was constant work. So, what does it mean to be flexible from an adult's standpoint, and how does it make our lives better?

Back in the day, we did a more ballistic form of stretching where we bounced in those splits or stretches. Sadly, instructors would sometimes place their bodyweight on students to "force" flexibility. (Can you imagine?)

The participant trying to become more flexible was relatively passive in the exercise. (In rare cases, this can be necessary but only if you are in a supervised PT session when you are rehabilitating from surgery or injury.)

As time went on, people came to their senses and realized that a more static-active form of stretching is safer. Think about holding a position and breathing intentionally, concentrating on your inhale/exhale, and holding that position for a longer time.

I have found that inflexible hamstrings prove to be a huge problem for absolutely everyone. When those muscles are short and tight, you start to see lower back pain, instability in the knee joint, reduced mobility with walking, sitting, or bending over, and even issues with spine alignment.

As a result, you open yourself up to injury, which no one wants or needs. If I talk to one more person who injured a hamstring from pickleball, I am going to scream. It does not have to be this way. If I were to choose one stretch to do for the rest of my life, it would be the *hamstring stretch*.

Standing, seated, assisted, or alternative stretches all can do the trick for the hamstring. For



many, the hamstring stretch is downright painful, which is why so many of us avoid it. To get started, follow these tips:

1. Try a standing forward fold, a seated forward fold, an assisted forward fold, and a half forward fold. You are going to know right away where your limit is: you will immediately feel that tension or tightness in the hamstrings.

2. However, first warm up for a few minutes. Maybe you take a short walk around your house or some other preferred warm-up. The goal is to get blood flowing and just do some light movement.

3. Now you can try the stretch. Think about tightening the quadricep muscle and relaxing the hamstring muscle. Find that point where you can feel the hamstring beginning to resist, but you are not in pain. Back off as you need to initially. Find that sweet spot where it is effective but not making you want to scream.

4. Time yourself by holding the stretch for 30 seconds. Breathe in for 4 and exhale for 4. Repeat 2 more times.

5. As time goes on you will start to see the difference in your ability to hold the stretch. You might eventually be able to inhale and exhale for 8 counts. You might be able to transition from an assisted forward fold to a standing forward fold. Once you can hold the stretch for a longer period, you may not need to repeat it. You can try this in the morning, before bed, or even both times. How many times you do this stretch per week is up to you based on your level of activity.

Happy Hamstrings! The wonderful thing about this stretch is you will see benefits in a noticeably brief time. And for all of you pickleballers out there, please stretch your hamstrings before AND after a session. Most of you are not twenty-five anymore!

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# REVIVING THE CIVIC ROOTS OF EARTH DAY

By Bret Moore

I remember the first Earth Day like it was yesterday. I was in fifth grade at East Franklin, and we wrote an essay about the significance of the celebration in Mrs. Neubauer's Language Arts class. Then we went outside and planted a tree near her classroom window. Fifty-six years later, Mrs. Neubauer and I are still going strong, but I can't say the same for Earth Day. (I'm not sure about the tree.)

**Earth Day began not as a symbolic holiday, but as a mass civic uprising rooted in crisis.** Its origin story is inseparable from the environmental emergencies of the late 1960s. On the first Earth Day (April 22, 1970), Americans were responding to visible, visceral signs that the postwar industrial boom had come at a staggering ecological cost.

In 1962, the publication of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson exposed the dangers of indiscriminate pesticide use. Her work translated scientific findings into moral urgency, showing that chemical contamination was not an abstract issue but a direct threat to human health and wildlife. The book sparked public debate, congressional hearings, and eventually regulatory reform.

The late 1960s delivered dramatic images that reinforced this message. In 1969, the heavily polluted Cuyahoga River in Ohio caught fire due to industrial waste floating on its surface. The national media coverage turned that episode into a symbol of environmental neglect.

That same year, a massive oil-spill off the coast of Santa Barbara coated beaches and wildlife in crude oil, horrifying viewers across the country. Smog blanketed cities like Pittsburgh, Los Angeles and New York. Lakes were declared biologically dead. The costs of unchecked growth were no longer invisible.

**It was against this backdrop that Senator Gaylord Nelson conceived of Earth Day. He envisioned a nationwide environmental teach-in that would harness grassroots energy. He recruited young activists to coordinate the effort. The date—April 22—was strategically chosen to maximize student participation, falling between spring break and final**

**exams.**

The response exceeded expectations. That day an estimated 20 million Americans—roughly one in ten—participated in rallies, marches, and educational events. Republicans and Democrats, urban and rural communities, labor unions and conservationists found common cause. Earth Day was not initially partisan. **It was framed as a defense of public health, shared natural heritage, and intergenerational responsibility.**

The political impact was swift. By the end of 1970, Congress had authorized the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Landmark legislation followed: the Clean Air Act (1970), the Clean Water Act (1972), and the Endangered Species Act (1973). President Nixon, not typically associated with environmentalism, signed all these measures into law. The 1970s marked a rare period when environmental protection was widely seen as compatible with economic prosperity and national strength.

But the environmental emphasis of the 1970s was not only about regulation. It reflected a broader cultural shift. The decade saw the rise of ecological thinking in schools, media, and popular culture. **The first Earth Day was embedded in a worldview that questioned reckless growth and technological hubris.**

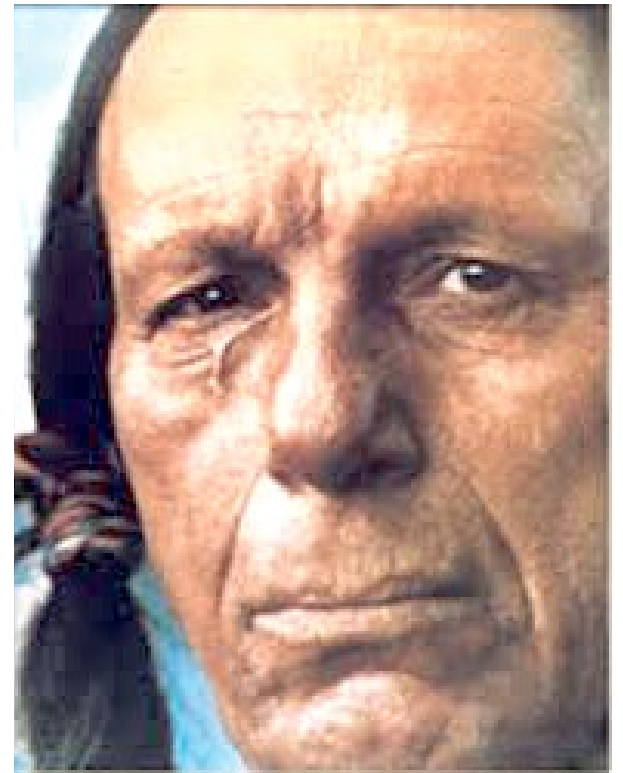
**Citizens believed pressure could restrain corporate pollution and reshape national priorities. The narrative was clear: human activity had destabilized natural systems, but public action and government intervention could restore balance. Environmental protection was patriotic, pragmatic, and morally urgent.**

So why does that narrative feel lost today?

Part of the answer lies in economic and political shifts that began in the 1980s. Environmental regulations were increasingly portrayed as burdensome constraints on growth. Regulatory rollback became a central policy objective. Environmentalism was reframed as anti-business, rather than as a defense of shared public goods.

At the same time, environmental challenges grew more complex. The smog and burning rivers of 1970 were visible and local. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and ocean acidification are diffuse and global. It is easier to rally around a river on fire than around rising atmospheric carbon concentrations. The immediacy that galvanized Earth Day's first generation has been replaced by abstract data, models, and long-term projections.

**Media fragmentation has also altered the landscape. In 1970, Americans consumed news through a handful of national outlets. Shared images created shared outrage.** Today's media ecosystem is more polarized and segmented. Environmental issues often become entangled in partisan identity rather than framed as universal concerns.



*The "Crying Indian" was the iconic figure in a 1971 anti-pollution PSA by Keep America Beautiful. The ad featured actor Iron Eyes Cody paddling through polluted waters and shedding a tear as trash lands at his feet.*

Yet the narrative is not entirely lost. Earth Day is now observed globally, involving more than a billion participants across countries and cultures. The language of planetary boundaries and environmental justice has deepened the conversation, linking ecology with equity and human rights.

What may be missing is the unifying story that once cut across ideology. The first Earth Day framed environmental protection as common-sense stewardship. It emerged from tangible crises that transcended party lines. Today's environmental discourse often feels technocratic and apocalyptic. While urgency remains, consensus has frayed.

**Recovering the spirit of 1970 does not mean romanticizing the past. The early environmental movement had blind spots, but it did succeed in forging a broad civic coalition around the idea that clean air, clean water, and a stable climate are foundational to human existence.**

The origin of Earth Day reminds us that narratives matter. History demonstrates that collective action can produce measurable results. The challenge for the present generation is to recover the sense of shared purpose that once made twenty million people take to the streets for the air they breathed and the water they drank.

Whether the narrative is truly lost, or simply waiting to be reframed, depends on how societies choose to tell the story of their relationship with the Earth in the decades ahead.



*Fire boats battle a flaming Cuyahoga River near Cleveland in 1969.*



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## A MORNING FOR EVERY PACE: THE WAY COMMUNITY CENTER PREPARES FOR "THE WAY 5K"

By Pam Marisa

On a typical Saturday morning, West High Street is a quiet stretch of Waynesburg charm. But on **May 2**, the pavement is set to pulse with a different kind of energy: the rhythmic beat of running shoes, the excited panting of four-legged friends, and the high-pitched cheers of the town's youngest athletes.

The Way Community Center has officially announced the return of **The Way 5K**, a multi-generational fitness event designed to prove that staying active is better when done together. Starting and finishing at the center's headquarters at **209 West High Street**, the morning promises more than just a race; it's a full-scale community celebration.

The event isn't reserved for elite marathoners. The schedule is intentionally "staggered" to allow every family member, including those with fur, to have their moment in the spotlight.

The festivities begin at **8:30 a.m.** with a community welcome, followed quickly by the **1K Pet Walk** at **9:00 a.m.** For the local kids looking to burn off some Saturday morning energy, the **Kids 1K Race** kicks off at **9:15 a.m.** For those who prefer a steady grind, the **Walk and Ruck** begins at **9:30 a.m.**, leading up to the main event: the **5K Run** at **9:45 a.m.**

### The Stakes and the Swag

While the spirit of the day is centered on community, a little healthy competition is certainly on the menu. Awards will be presented immediately following the races to the top three male and female finishers in six different age categories, ranging from energetic teens to the seasoned 60+ division.

For a **\$40 registration fee**, participants aren't just earning a finish-line high, they're also scoring the official event T-shirt. Organizers urge interested parties to register by April 2 to ensure their preferred shirt size is available at the starting line.

Whether you're aiming for a personal best or just looking for a reason to get outside with the neighbors, The Way Community Center is ready to welcome you.

- **To Register:** Visit [www.runsignup.com/Race/PA/Waynesburg/TheWay5kraces](http://www.runsignup.com/Race/PA/Waynesburg/TheWay5kraces).
- **For Details:** Contact Sandy Wilson at 724-710-8355 or [sswilson34@gmail.com](mailto:sswilson34@gmail.com).




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## A PIECE OF A READER'S MIND

I was inspired by an article in February's *Greene Scene* written by Vicky Hughes. In Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken", the traveler chose the road less trodden. Life is full of choices, taking the easy path is the path to failure.

Years ago, and I do mean years ago, my mother would tell us, "As the wind blows so blows the tree." Meaning that a person is influenced by his peers. "You know your friends are in trouble again," she would say. "I don't want you hangin' out with them. If you get into trouble with them, you can't blame them. Birds of a feather, flock together."

As a parent, there were kids in our neighborhood that I didn't want my kids hangin' out with. My mother's words echoed. I thought, "Your choice in friends directs your life. Your life evolves with the choices you make. Making you who you are today."

As I grew older, I realized that mom's old sayings were true for adults as well. We all know many people who have made bad decisions in their lives. They were unsatisfied with their careers, their marriages, and their lives. They did not set out to be that way, but they made some bad choices in life.

My son and I often went to Pizza Hut after his wrestling matches. We discussed motivation and goal setting. On the back of a placemat, I wrote the framework of what would later become a poem.

"What do you want to be when you grow up? What choices do you need to make to get you there? Don't wait too long. Don't wish that you would have, could have, or should have, later in life".

### *Wilt Thou Wind, or Wilt Thou Tree*

*By Kenneth A. Marley*

As the wind blows, so blows the tree.  
Hints that circumstance, makes us to be.  
But its choice, not circumstance that shapes our  
destiny.  
Wilt thou wind, or wilt thou tree?

It's choices, small choices, along life's way.  
That made you what you are today.  
You are what you are because you chose to be.  
Wilt thou wind, or wilt thou tree?

Woe is the man on his death bed lament.  
A tree he's become, though not his intent.  
He could have been the wind, how easy to see.  
But he made the wrong choices and became a tree.

It's not the fault of circumstances. Choices were made since you were old enough to make them. And it was those choices that brought you to where you are today. Are you the wind or the tree?

In the end, don't wish that you would have lived your life differently. You only get one. Live it, choose wisely.

"I took the one less traveled by  
And that made all the difference." – Robert Frost

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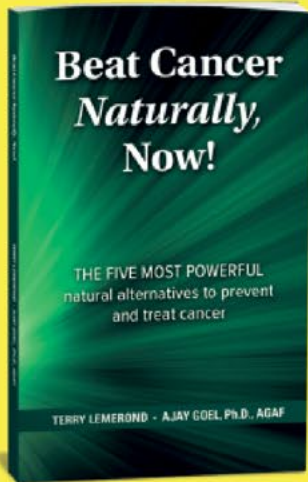
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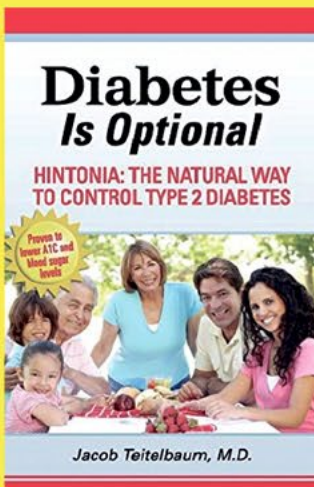
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Winners Not Pictured

Where is this, Contest Winner!

Erin Piper

O' You Think You're Irish? Contest Winner!

Andrea Haldeman

Person Place or Thing Contest Winner!

Rhonda Morris

### O' YOU THINK YOU'RE IRISH ANSWERS:

1. Famous Tiger, Magic, and Laker hoop legend? **Shaquille O'Neal**
2. A bald Irish singer-songwriter whose emotional voice and fearless public persona made Nothing Compares 2 U a global hit. **Sinéad O'Connor**
3. An Irish-American late-night talk show host famous for his towering height, bright red hair, and quick, self-deprecating humor. **Conan O'Brien**
4. Film and television actor known for Love Story, Barry Lyndon, and Paper Moon; part of a famous Hollywood family. **Ryan O'Neal**
5. Iconic redheaded film actress and singer, celebrated for classic Hollywood roles and her strong Irish identity; later became a U.S. citizen. **Maureen O'Hara**
6. Long-time owner who moved the Dodgers from Brooklyn to Los Angeles. **Walter O'Malley**
7. Celebrated American writer known for Southern Gothic short stories and novels infused with dark humor and moral themes. **Flannery O'Connor**
8. A frank Irish-American novelist and short-story writer whose works often explore working-class life and the Irish diaspora in New York. **Frank O'Connor**
9. One of America's greatest playwrights and the only American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature for drama; son of Irish immigrants. **Eugene O'Neill**
10. An Irish-American politician and former U.S. House Speaker known for his strong leadership style and Irish heritage. **Tip O'Neill**

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**GreeneScene** COMMUNITY MAGAZINE **CONTEST**

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**WHERE IS THIS?** A colorful pack of patriotic livestock stands guard at this post for pastoral provisions.

SCAN TO ENTER!

MARCH'S "WHERE IS THIS" ANSWER: CEYLON ROAD.



Where is this?: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

ONLINE OR BY MAIL Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: GreeneScene Contest, 185 Wade St, Waynesburg, PA 15370. One Entry per person per category. Drawing on 04-14-26. Winner must respond within 24 hours of notification to receive prize.



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