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April 2024 - Issue Number 282

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On the cover:

Jael Miller, a junior at Punxsutawney Area High School, captured a gold medal at the PIAA Girls Wrestling Championships, held March 7-9, 2024, at the Giant Center, Hershey. (photo courtesy of Ken Diem - K&K Photography)

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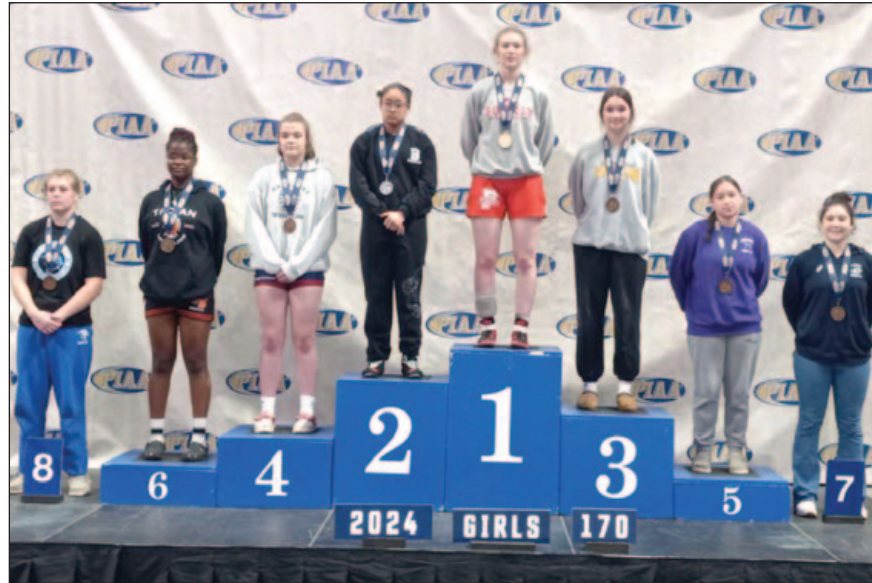
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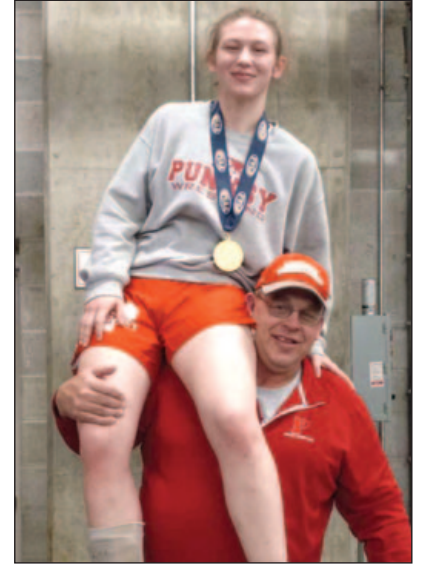
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CONGRATULATIONS!



First-place winner Jael Miller stands on the podium, along with the runners-up in the 170-pound weight class, at PIAA Girls Wrestling Championships on March 9 in Hershey. (submitted photo)



Jael perches on the shoulder of her dad, Shawn — a pose the father and daughter have recreated every year since Jael was a sixth grader. (submitted photo)

Jael Miller Claims State Wrestling Title

By Danielle Merrow
for Hometown magazine

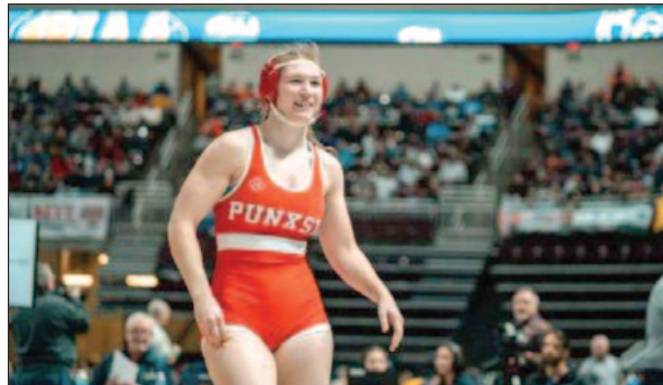
A PIAA girls state wrestling champ! One more goal achieved, and now on to the next one for wrestler Jael Miller, a junior at Punxsutawney Area High School, who is the school's second PIAA wrestling champion. The first was Kaleb Young, Class of 2016, who won his title in the spring of his senior year.

Jael competed March 7-9, 2024, at the Giant Center, Hershey, in the first-ever girls PIAA State Wrestling Championships. (March is International Women's Month, which provides a fitting context for Miller's latest wrestling achievement.)

pins and a major decision. Her first match in the Round of 16 ended with a pin 44 seconds into the match, as she defeated Greater Latrobe's Rowen Lewis. The next day, in Friday morning's quarterfinal match, Jael recorded a 9-0 major decision over Parkland's Shannon Fratus. Later that evening, she punched her ticket to the finals with a 41-



Jael (right center) poses with Punx's wrestling coaches (from left), Eric Eddy, Mark Miller, and DJ Gould. (submitted photo)



Jael Miller smiles on the mat, a place where she has known much success. (submitted photo)

Jael, who wrestles at 170 pounds, was featured in the February issue of Hometown, and just a few weeks later, she competed in the PIAA girls wrestling championship, with her parents and some siblings along for the ride.

Jael started strong in the three matches leading up to the finals, recording two

second pin against Audrey Calgaro of Cannon-McMillan.

In the championship match, Jael defeated her opponent, Maya Krieger of Bensalem, by a fall at 3:02.

Jael says the match started out like any other, and she felt strong from the beginning, though she admits she was more nervous than usual, saying, "This time I could really feel everyone watching me."

She quickly realized the shots she was taking needed to be adjusted because she wasn't used to wrestling opponents as short as Krieger. While Miller continued

to break Krieger down, Krieger continued to build her bases. Miller had a two-count for a near fall and was able to ride it out until the second period.

Resetting, Jael chose the down position — she says that's her favorite way to start — and was able to get the reversal quickly and broke her opponent back down.

Then, Miller made a mistake by reaching for Krieger's wrists, just as Krieger built her base up, resulting in a call for a full nelson. "That was a 'Whoops!'" Miller says. But she recovered quickly, shook it off, and was able to turn her competitor for the win.

Realizing she had won the match, Jael says her first thoughts were those of relief. "I had done it. I didn't make the same mistakes as last year. Last year I fell short of my goal in the championship. This year, I did it. All the hard work paid off."

Upon being declared the winner of the match, the referee raised Jael's hand in the air. Her other hand, she says, pointed

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The Presbyterian Church as it looks in 2024. (photo by Gloria Kerr)

Big Run Presbyterian Church Closing in April

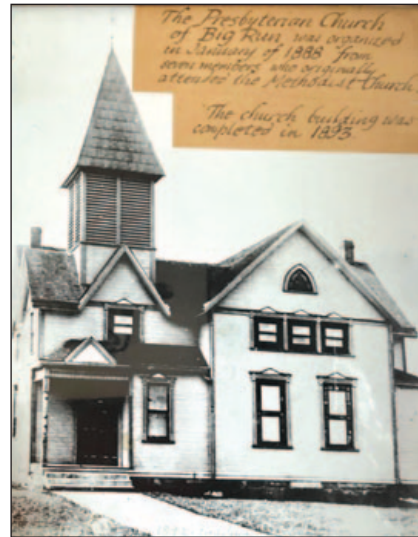
By Gloria Kerr
for Hometown magazine

With much sadness, the 10 remaining members of the Big Run Presbyterian Church congregation in collaboration with their governing body, the Kiskiminetas Presbytery, voted to close the church at their annual dinner in February. The last service will be held on Sunday, April 14, at 3 p.m. All former members, friends of the church, and interested parties are invited to attend this afternoon service to celebrate the church's 136 years of existence in the Big Run community.

The body of elected elders governing a Presbyterian church is called the session. Members of the Big Run church session are Brenda Kromer, Jim Hullihen, and Bonnie Hullihen. Kromer has been serving as both the church's clerk of session since 2008 and treasurer since January 2024. Her mother, Janice Grove, is secretary. The other church members are Norah Campbell, Clarence "Bob" Kerr, his daughter Bonnie Long, Donna Painter, Lois Schaffer, and

Joann Williams. Two factors prompted their decision to close the church: low attendance and lack of funds. The church's resources are not enough to pay maintenance, insurance, and utility bills and to hire a supply minister.

The Presbyterian Church has a rich history of involvement in the Big Run community. Cooperation among the town's three churches has always been congenial. In the past, from the 1960s through the early 2000s, the session and Women's Guild of the church coordinated with members of the First Christian Church and Saint Phillip's United Methodist Church (now the Solid Rock Community Church) to serve Lenten soup lunches, sponsor Easter sunrise services and breakfasts, and Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services, rotating responsibility for the



The original Presbyterian Church building was completed in 1893 after the church was organized in January 1888. (submitted photo)

events.

The three churches also collaborated to schedule their vacation Bible schools in the summer over three different weeks so that children could

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Presbyterian Church's Men's Bible Class, May 5, 1953: (l. to r.) Syl Gourley, Loyle Kerr, Mr. Cochran, John Miller (Myrtle's husband), Charles Weiss, Cordray Wilson, James Williams, Harry Weiss, Guy Kuntz, Clyde McKee, Ralph Hoover, Blake Means, L. Freas, Bill Graffius, Rev. D.R. Dresser, Duane Kerr, George Bowers, Clarence Kerr. (submitted photo)

Big Run Presbyterian

Continued from page 4



George "Butch" White is one of several supply ministers who've been serving the church in recent years. (submitted photo)

God, not less, because He is the only one that can help us and save us." Jim's wife Bonnie says she'll miss the fellowship shared with other church goers.

Members also say they are sad to lose the church where important milestones in their lives were celebrated, like the baptisms and marriages noted above. Both Donna Painter and Jim Hullihen were also baptized at this church, as were Jim and Bonnie Hullihen's three children. Later, Donna's grandmother's funeral and Jim's mother's funeral services were held here, as both were church members.

Nevertheless, despite the sadness, many good memories have been resurrected as members

- Continued on next page

Pastors of the Big Run Presbyterian Church

Rev. J.S. Helm	May 1888-1890
Rev. H.H. Ryland	1891-1895
Rev. R.M. Coulter	1896-1900
Rev. J. Drummond	Oct. 1900-1904
Rev. J.A. Cowan	June 1904-Nov. 1907
Rev. S.C. Palmer	Jan. 1908-Feb. 1911
Rev. R.M. Morrison	Aug. 1911-Dec. 1917
Rev. Thomas Parker	April 1918-Dec. 1919
Rev. A.A. Bird	May 1920-Sept. 1927
Rev. S.A. Gray	1928-1929
Rev. S.C. Newsome	Feb. 1930-Nov. 1931
Rev. R.G. Shockey	June 1932-1936
Rev. John C. Talbot	July 1937-Feb. 1943
Rev. H.J. Gerhardt	July 1943-Oct. 1947
Rev. D.R. Dresser	Aug. 1951-Nov. 1956
Rev. Sigurd Kristiansen	Aug. 1958-Feb. 1964
Rev. Clair Lundberg (M)	June 1964-June 1966
Rev. H.R. Speakman (M)	June 1966-June 1969
Rev. J.C. Kelly (M)	June 1969-Oct. 1970
Rev. Ray E. Gnagey (M)	June 1971-Oct. 1978
Rev. Richard George	Dec. 1978-June 1986
Rev. Wm. Starr (M)	June 1986-1989
Dr. J. Bernard Taylor	1989-1992
Mary Margaret Thiel	1993-1995
Rev. Marjorie Doriani	1995-2007
Pastor Robert Kifer	Jan.-June 2008
Pastor Dawn Krishart	Aug. 2008-Jan. 2013
Various Supply Ministers	Jan. 2013-April 2024

attend more than one of them. A Strawberry Festival on the third Sunday in June was another long-time favorite activity at the Presbyterian Church in the 1970s through 2007.

Current Members on Church's Closing

Long-time members and sisters Lois Schaffer and Janice Grove, along with Janice's daughter Brenda Kromer, are all saddened by the church's closing. All three were married at this Presbyterian Church, as were Lois's daughter Lisa and Janice's other daughter Julie. Moreover, Lois's two boys and Janice's two girls were baptized there. None of the three women have ever attended any other church, so they are contemplating where to find a new church home.

Donna Painter and Jim Hullihen both lament the closing of the church at this time in history when the world and this nation are experiencing such chaos. Jim says it's troubling "that we're losing a house of God" when "we need more of

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BINGO with Kim from Embassy at Hillsdale
Thursday, April 4th at 12:30 pm

CRAFTS with GAIL & PHYLLIS
Monday, April 15th at 11 am

NATIONAL SIBLINGS DAY
Wednesday, April 10th at 10:30 am
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NATIONAL BUCKET LIST DAY
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The members of the church's session: Bonnie Hullihen, Jim Hullihen, and Brenda Grove, clerk of session, next to Rev. Marjorie Doriani's flannel and felt board she used to deliver children's sermons. (Submitted photo)

Big Run Presbyterian

Continued from previous page

prepare for this church's doors to be closed. Donna Painter recalls that "love just filled this church when Reverend Marjorie Doriani was here. She was such a beautiful person inside and out and love just radiated from her. She cared about her flock and was at your house if you missed church to check on you. I really enjoyed Marjorie's flannel board services [with felt character and setting cut-outs] she had for the children. She made it interesting and [found a way] to include the children." Bonnie Hullihen also fondly recalls those children's flannel board "sermons," as well as her son and daughter, Jeff and Kelly, being married at this church.

Another happy memory for the Hullihen family and relatives was helping Trevor Runco, their nephew, build the handicapped ramp at the front door of the church for his Eagle Scout project back in the year 2000. It's still there and solid.

Janice Grove recalls the children's Christmas programs and plays that always brought smiles to everyone's faces as the little ones, often dressed in biblical costumes, recited memorized lines, sang carols, and invariably included something unscripted that provoked chuckles among the congregation.

Jim Hullihen fondly remembers, when his three children were small, that his mother Belle Hullihen was sometimes their Sunday school teacher. Under her guidance, and that of other Sunday school teachers, the children performed in plays at Easter and Christmas that always drew a crowd.

Jan Grove's daughter Brenda says some of her favorite memories of church life stem from her going to summer Bible school every year as a child. Then, as an adult, she became a helper at the church's vacation Bible school programs.

The church also had an active Women's Guild and a choir. Pianists and some choir directors whom members recall include Jane Taft, Jesse McCracken, Dotty Campbell, Laura Lynn Yohe, and Willa Kachmar.

History of the Church

The Presbyterian Church of Big Run was organized through the Clarion Presbytery on January 29, 1888, with seven charter members who left the Big Run Methodist Church to organize this new denomination. They were Mr. and Mrs. George M. Gourley, Mr. and Mrs. David McKee, Mr. and Mrs. T.M. Simons, and Mr. William Enterline. The membership grew quickly to 20 people in less than two weeks. The Reverend J.S. Helm, pastor of the Punxsutawney Presbyterian Church, was the leader during these proceedings.

With no building of their own, the members of the new church met in the room known as Enterline Hall, above what was Kerr's Market,

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Big Run Presbyterian

Continued from previous page

then Kay's Market, then Harvey's Cupboard, and now The Roasted Radish. It's located just a short distance down the street from the current church at the intersection of Route 119 and Mill Street across from the Best Kawasaki dealership.

Members began construction of a church building in 1891; it was completed and dedicated, completely free of debt, on March 15, 1893. Members John Zufall, L.A. Shafer, Will Blose, George Gourley, and William Enterline are among those who took an active part in building the new church.

Membership records show the highest church membership and giving/offering to the church were recorded from 1922 to 1929, just before the Great Depression, when A.A. Bird was the church minister, and then again in the 1950s. Church minutes from the year 1924 cite the roll at 182 members.

Sorting through office papers in preparation for closing the church, clerk of session Brenda Kromer found this fun fact in the 1944 church minutes book: The "first wedding in the church" took place on February 25, 1944, a Friday. Max Henry Weber and Sarah Maxine Chapman were united in marriage.

On September 16, 1951, the Big Run Presbyterian Church joined with the Cloe Presbyterian Church and the Pleasant Grove Presbyterian Church to form Trinity Parish. Rev. David Dresser was called to serve as pastor of the new parish. Then on August 3, 1958, the Punxsutawney Area Presbyterian Church Parish was formed; it consisted of 10 churches and absorbed the three that had been the Trinity Parish.

On March 23, 1964, the Big Run church withdrew from the Punxsutawney Area Presbyterian Parish to form a federation with the United Methodist Church of Big Run. It requested the Presbytery to appoint Rev. Clair Lundberg, pastor of the Big Run Methodist Church, as its supply minister and moderator, which it did. This event was the only federation involving two denominations in Presbytery Kiskiminetas history. The January 1, 1985, membership roll of the Big Run Presbyterian Church listed 73.

On June 24, 1986, the Presbytery acted to discontinue the federation with the Methodists and, as of July 1, appointed Rev. William Starr of the Punxsutawney Presbyterian Church as Big Run's moderator. Afterwards, services were conducted each Sunday through 1989 by supply ministers assigned by the Kiskiminetas Presbytery. Then from 1989 through 2013, the Big Run Church did have five different ministers assigned to the church for varying periods: Dr. Taylor, the Reverends M.M. Thiel, M. Doriani, R. Kifer, and D. Krishart. Due to lack of funds, the church has been served by various supply ministers from 2013 until April 14, 2024, the closing date of the Big Run Presbyterian Church.

Roberta Dinsmore's Perspective on the Presbytery

This writer interviewed Roberta Dinsmore for some perspective on Presbyterian Church governance. The Presbytery has assigned her to be an administrative commission member for the closure of the Big Run church. Roberta has been a member of the Punxsutawney Presbyterian Church for 64 years and a member of that church's session numerous times. The session is a body of ordained elders elected to govern a particular church under the auspices of its presbytery. She's been continuously active on various committees, along with her husband, Ray, recently deceased, and her children.

Dinsmore explained that all the individual Presbyterian churches nationwide are governed by a regional presbytery. The one governing churches in this area is called the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas with offices located in Yatesboro, Pennsylvania, near Rural Valley. Its area of governance includes churches in Jefferson, Elk, Armstrong, Clearfield, and Clarion counties.

Punxsutawney is in the center of that radius with other Presbyterian churches in Wilcox, Marienville, Indiana, Homer Center, Kittanning, Apollo, and other area towns and villages. The Punxsutawney Presbyterian Church membership roll was once as high as 115, but now Dinsmore says that number is 115.

Presently the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas oversees 73 Presbyterian churches. There used to be 80, but some are closing their doors due to lack of funds, staffing, and low attendance. Among those are the Black Lick Presbyterian Church that closed in 2023 and the Big Run Presbyterian Church that will close on April 14, 2024. Dinsmore says that, for those 73 churches, the Presbytery has only 26 ministers. Obviously, some ministers serve more than one church, while some churches must rely on supply ministers. A "supply" minister is a pastor who serves congregations in a temporary capacity between longer term, permanent pastors.

Dinsmore asserts, "Small churches are the backbone of the Presbytery because people are faithful to the local church, and those churches are family oriented." Empathizing with those sadly affected by the closing of their church, she says, "You are simply closing a building that happens to be a church. You are not dismissing your faith or your love of God. You can take that with you into another church building." She adds that the spelling of the word "c-h-u-r-c-h" is important as the letter "u" is central, just as "you" as a church member are central to your own church, whichever one you choose to attend.

Through her long experience serving her church as a very active member, Dinsmore has broad knowledge of Presbytery policy and workings. She says that the official records of the Big Run Presbyterian Church will be sent to a national Presbyterian depository in Philadelphia where they'll be stored in an underground vault. In the register books of the closed church are the names of all members, active and deceased, transfers, those no longer attending, and marriage and baptism records. If the Big Run church would ever be re-opened, those records could restore the church's history. Those current members of the Big Run Presbyterian Church, bereft of their home church, have one year to transfer their membership to another Presbyterian Church.

The Church's Decline

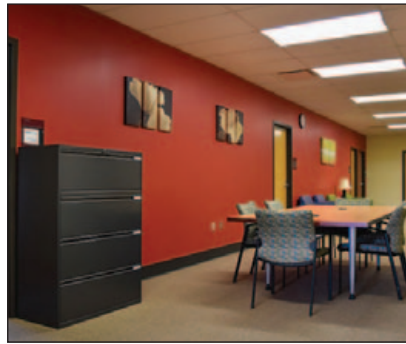
The Big Run Presbyterian Church's story parallels that of too many small, local churches these days that have not kept young people as members nor attracted new families with children to maintain their vitality. Founded in 1888, the church was quite vital in its early years. On April 9, 1893, Rev. Henry Ryland, who served the Big Run church from 1891 to 1895, received a class of 26 children. That number was exceeded only one time in the church's history on March 14, 1924, when Rev. A.A. Bird, who served the church from May 1920 to September 1927, received a class of 32 children. Children's membership is the lifeblood of the church.

In the 1950s, the Big Run Presbyterian Church experienced another growth spurt, as did churches all over America. According to Robert Ellwood, a professor of religion at the University of Southern California, "On a typical Sunday morning in the late 1950s, almost half of Americans were attending church" (<https://today.usc.edu/>). Having returned from World War II, veterans seeking normalcy in the post-war, booming economy embraced family life and sparked the baby boomer generation. Young families with children crowded "Sunday schools, vacation Bible schools, church picnics and potluck suppers. Many of the men, the fathers of those children, were veterans of 'the great and good war' that had ended only 12 years before," Ellwood writes.

A photo of the Big Run Presbyterian Church's Men's Bible Class on May 24, 1953, reflects the veracity of Ellwood's claim as the local church enjoyed a healthy male population at that time. The photo shows 18 men, young and old,

- Continued on next page

Shared Workspace Now Open in Punxsutawney



Two Punxsutawney development groups have collaborated to open a shared workspace available to people who need a desk or office for work. Punxsutawney Regional Development Corporation (PRDC) and the Punxsutawney Chamber of Commerce have opened the Punxsutawney Shared Workspace and Conference Room at the Punxsutawney branch of Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) on the second floor.



The shared workspace or co-working space is a concept that began several years ago and became popular as remote working became more prevalent and people sometimes needed a desk or office to work from on a temporary basis. The Punxsutawney shared workspace features six desks, one private office, and a conference room that can be rented. Amenities at the space are 5G wireless Internet, a multi-function printer, a kitchenette with Keurig for coffee (K-cups provided), a common area with easy chairs and a table, and a restroom.

Shared workspaces are convenient for people who travel for work, those who work from home and sometimes need a quieter environment, remote workers, freelance workers, and community groups or organizations that might need a place to have meetings.

Rental of the desks, office space and conference room are scheduled and paid for on the website, punxsyrpdc.org. The workspace is open and can be visited without an appointment during the open hours, which are Monday–Thursday, 7 a.m.–10 p.m., and Friday, 7 a.m.–7 p.m. Questions can be e-mailed to punxsysw@gmail.com.

...

Big Run Presbyterian

Continued from previous page

proudly dressed in suits and ties, for people at that time dressed up to attend church.

What Happens to the Church Building?

The Big Run Presbyterian Church session has consulted with the General Presbyter of the Kiskiminetas Presbytery, Don Wilson, to proceed properly with the church closure and to liquidate the property. The church building belongs to the Presbytery, while the furnishings in the church belong to the congregation. The session has been sorting through materials in the church to determine the best way to handle them.

According to Wilson, the church building will be sold. The best and first option, according to the Presbytery, is to sell the building to another church group that wants to continue using it as a house of worship. If that option is not possible,

the second option is to sell the building to a community group that would use it as a facility to serve the public. Examples of such community use could be as a school, a doctor's office, or a community meeting venue. Whoever buys the building will have to pay for upkeep, utilities, and any taxes that might be due. The final option, if the first two are not feasible, is to sell the building to a private individual.

Anyone interested in buying the building should contact the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas that's near Rural Valley. The address is 71 West Main Street, Yatesboro, PA 16263. The office phone number is (724) 783-7196. The Presbytery office is open Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the final Big Run Presbyterian Church service on April 14 at 3 p.m. to celebrate the church's history. The address is 104 East Main Street, Big Run, PA 15715. General Presbyter Don Wilson will preside at this event.

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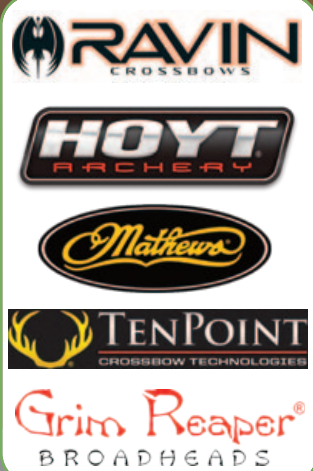
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Living Dangerously – But Loving Every Minute of It!

By Mary Ellen Pollock-Raneri
for Hometown magazine

Remember back in the day? When you played outside until the streetlights flickered their warning that it was time to go in? There were no text messages from parents, no cell phones, no security cameras watching your antics. The biggest warning you got from your folks was a reminder not to play in your school clothes and to be home when Dad was ready to eat supper. Yes, growing up back then sure was different, and some things we did would



back then would probably completely shock some of today's parents.

For instance, when we rode our bikes, I remember my friend and I used to drink water from the ditch that ran alongside the road. She thought it tasted sweet and was way better than tap water – I just followed suit. Sadly, the water was run-off from drains and sewers in our neighborhood. I am happy to say I made it through my childhood without any horrific parasites or intestinal plagues.

One of our favorite places to ride our bikes was at the Circle Hill Cemetery. In fact, we would bring our brown-bag lunch, complete with baloney sandwiches and apples,

and sit there on a patch of grass and munch away. Now, I know some of you may think it's a little morbid, but I always chuckle when I remember that my grandmother told me to not be afraid of dead people – it was the living ones you needed to watch out for.

Speaking of bikes, we never wore helmets when we rode them. Nor did we wear helmets when we sledded down Fairview Hill – a hill that was peppered with telephone poles and other interesting obstacles. I recall narrowly missing one pole located near Johnston's house when my Flexible Flyer decided to take a little side excursion.

Yes, we kids played outside as much as

possible. These days, there is a marked decrease of children sightings in the great outdoors. Have you noticed? I mean, who can blame them? There are so many distractions that are readily available nowadays. Netflix, Peacock, video games, cell phones, tablets, and chatting with your friends on Snapchat (where you can make yourself look like a rabbit with a little nose and whiskers) all have a certain appeal these days, I guess.

And what about us kids from the Wayback Machine? We went out into the daylight as soon as we could, and we didn't come in until it was getting dark. I remember the streetlight in our front yard signaled that I needed to get home. I don't think my folks really knew exactly where we were either. I mean, they knew we were somewhere in the neighborhood, but they never called us. We didn't have cellphones. They couldn't text us. We didn't have cellphones. And they couldn't see what we were up to or ask us to send a photo. We didn't have cell phones. Nevertheless, Mom sure could call the neighbors using our rotary-dial telephone with the 10-foot spiral cord to find out if I was there, and sometimes she did just that. But there was kind of an understanding that we kids stayed in the neighborhood, that we didn't go in other people's houses or yards unless invited, and that we came home when it got dark. (Did I mention that we didn't have cellphones?)

There was also an understanding that we didn't wear our school clothes to play outside or our good shoes. Mom worried more about that rule than she worried about where I was. Seeing as I had only a couple pairs of shoes and about 10 outfits that I rotated, it was important not to ruin my good clothes. So, play clothes it was! I remember having this one pair of plaid shorts and a matching red sweatshirt that was kind of like my after-school uniform.

Another noticeable difference that is striking for me is cold-weather wear. I mean, when I was getting ready to walk to the bus stop, my mother dressed me in about four layers – layers that included horrible, grey, woolen snow pants. I had to wear a hat, gloves, scarf, winter coat, and she probably made me bring an umbrella in case it rained (instead of a snow blower). Nowadays, when I check out the youth (if I ever see any outside), they wear shorts all year long. I see most kids at the bus stop wearing only a short-sleeve T-shirt – no coat. Ever! That is if they stand at a bus stop. Most times, I see Mom-cars lined up at a bus stop, and the children are in a nice, toasty, warm car listening to music on their phone.

We kids, however – from those days when dinosaurs walked the earth – walked to the bus stop and stood outside (near the road) bundled up in all kinds of weather. The only music we might hear would be the sound of a stray radio playing in a car as it whizzed past us. I recall feeling excited when I heard the tune "Cracklin' Rosie" by Neil Diamond drift into our bus windows from a passing vehicle.

Now, I know some of you are rolling your eyes as I explain that we walked through foot-high drifts and walked four miles to go to school. But some of us did not get to wait in our folks' SUV! It was just understood that you walked to the bus stop in the morning, and in the evening, you walked home

- Continued on next page

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Punxsutawney Area Hospital's CARE Award to Recognize Non-Nursing Employees

Living Dangerously
Continued from previous page

Punxsutawney Area Hospital established the CARE Award recognition program to promote and highlight the extraordinary efforts of the non-nursing members of the workforce. PAH recognizes that being a successful organization and providing the best care possible to patients is a collaborative effort.

The CARE program will recognize hard-working individuals of the hospital who do not qualify for the DAISY Award, given to nurses, but who serve an equally significant part within the organization. During National Hospital Week 2024, May 12 through May 18, the hospital will announce the first CARE Award recipient. PAH will present the award to one staff member annually. In addition, the hospital will announce the top CARE nominees during this time. To qualify for a CARE award, a staff member must exhibit the following:

C = Compassion and Care for the hospital's patients, for the job the staff member does, and how the employee treats fellow coworkers and visitors

A = Admirable attributes possessed and displayed in the job that staff member does

R = Respect shown for patients, visitors, coworkers, and the job that staff member does

E = Excellence in the job that the staff member performs

Anyone may submit a nomination: patients, family members, coworkers, physicians, staff – anyone who experiences or observes extraordinary compassionate care provided by any staff member or witnesses a staff member performing their job in an exemplary manner. Paper copies of nomination forms can be found throughout the hospital, and electronic copies are online on the hospital's website (pah.org).

The nominations can be submitted year-round. The cutoff date for nominations to be considered for this year's announcement is Friday, April 19. Any nominations received after that date will be in consideration for the next cycle. PAH is excited to



recognize the hard work and exemplary efforts of the staff. And don't forget that nominations for the DAISY Award can be submitted year-round as well. The hospital selects a DAISY recipient three times a year.

For more information about the CARE Award, please visit www.pah.org.

from the bus stop. If it rained – you walked in the rain. If it snowed, you walked in the snow! If it hailed or sleeted – you walked in it. You know the adage: “Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow, nor hail shall keep us kids from watching ‘Adventure Time Theatre’ at 4 p.m.” Well, something like that!

And, if you were late for the bus, you ran to try to catch it before it took off for its route! I can recall when I was in first grade, one poor youngster was a few seconds late to catch the bus in the morning. He ran alongside the giant yellow taxi until the driver finally stopped and let him climb into the vehicle. The little boy's face was red, and he huffed and puffed as he made it down the aisle to his seat. Meanwhile, the bus driver gave him a strict warning that “the next time, no stopping if you are late.”

Wow! Have times changed or what?

I guess I could ramble on and on about old-fashioned, school dress codes, the carnage from the playground merry-go-round, passing actual PAPER notes to our friends in class, black and white televisions with three channels and a 25-inch screen (indeed, it was amazing to have one that big!), lawn darts impalements, bow and arrows, and trampolines without nets! All those memories are for another time and place, though. Right now, let's all count our blessings that we made it this far and are alive – in spite of our childhood. I wouldn't trade it for anything – not even a brand-new cell phone!



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Some of the special speakers that attended the PCA Annual Meeting, along with several members of the committee, were invited to tour Wise Cattle Company. Visitors included (l. to r.): Frank and Irene Stoltzfus; NCBA CEO Colin Woodall; Robbi Pritchard; Penn State Extension Beef Specialist Tara Felix; and keynote speaker Don Schiefelbein, and wife, Jennifer, of Kimball, Minnesota. (photo by Jennifer Skarbek)

Wise Cattle Company Hosts Educational Farm Tour

By Jennifer Skarbek for Hometown magazine

Wise Cattle Company of Cider Mill Road on the outskirts of Punxsutawney was recently chosen by the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association (PCA) to host a “Speakers Farm Tour.” The tour, held in conjunction with PCA's annual meeting and banquet on

generation farmers. Rick graduated from Pennsylvania State University, majoring in animal industry, and then began his life-long career in cattle farming.

Rick's wife, Kathy added, “There have been cattle on the farm Rick's entire life.”

Also working on the farm are Rick and Kathy's sons, Adam and Ben. Adam also graduated from Penn State with a degree

in animal science and works full time on the farm. Ben, following in the footsteps of his uncle Bill, became a veterinarian. Both he and Bill use their expertise to keep the family's livestock healthy.

Rick added, “The entire family is involved in the operation of the farm.”

During the tour, Rick explained his farm's breeding and nutrition programs and how they handle and care for their cattle, and he showed them their calving facility, mention-

ing that he and his family had built all the facilities themselves.

He explained, “Our cows are synchronized so that most of the calves are born within a 60-day period beginning mid-February. During the calving season we monitor the cows closely and bring them from the field into the calving barn shortly prior to their due date. They're checked every few hours; and, once they start the calving process, they're put in separate pens so we can provide assistance as necessary and make sure that the calves get colostrum from the cow, which is critical to them for their life-time health.”

- Continued on page 17



Rick Wise showed his guests the room within his Bank Barn where they wash the heifers. The barn was built in 1858. (photo by Jennifer Skarbek)

Saturday, February 24, in Altoona, was attended by members from the PCA as well as from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). According to NCBA Region 1 Policy Vice President Frank Stoltzfus of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, Wise Cattle Company was suggested by the PCA Annual Meeting Committee as a place for a group to visit on the morning of the banquet. Farm owners Rick and Kathy Wise graciously welcomed the opportunity to show their property and facilities to the group.

Rick said, “We were honored that they were interested in seeing our operation.”

The Wise Farm was established in 1837, making Rick and his brother, Bill, fifth-

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CONGRATULATIONS!



In the championship match against Maya Krieger of Bensalem, Jael works her way to a victory-clinching pin. (submitted photo)

Jael Miller Claims

Continued from page 3

to the sky, raised to the heavens in thanks.

Following the tournament, Miller took three days off from training to recover



The referee raises Jael's hand in victory as she raises her other hand to the heavens – a wrestler thankful for her win. (submitted photo)

from the demanding schedule of the competition. “There wasn’t much celebrating after,” she says. “There were lots of smiles, for sure, but no real celebration. I don’t like bringing a lot of attention to a win. We have family near Hershey, so we stopped for a quick visit before driving home, but that was sort of it.”

Kaleb Young, who continued his wrestling career at the University of Iowa, commented on Miller’s success at the state level: “I’m pumped for Jael! She’s put in a lot of work over the last few years and I’m sure she’s excited to reap what she’s sown. I look forward to what the future holds for her in wrestling!”

Jim Beach, executive director for PA Women’s Wrestling, has been with Jael at different events throughout the past year, including at Fargo, North Dakota, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, last summer for national competitions. “She’s one of the best pound-for-pound athletes in Pennsylvania,” said Beach.

This year’s national competition will be held back in Fargo, sometime in July.

Jael says it’s important to her to extend her deepest gratitude to all those who have helped her along the way. “There are too many to name everyone specifically,” she laughs, “but they know who they are, and I want them to know how grateful I am.”

...



Congratulations to the Punxsutawney Area High School Boys Varsity Basketball Team!

On March 2, the Chucks defeated Bradford 60-52 in the championship game to win the team’s first District 9 title in 10 years – the first since 2014! The team finished the 2023-24 season with a winning record of 11-10.

(photo by Jacinda Gigliotti)

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Congratulations to Jael Miller and to the Boy's D9 Champs

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Wed., March 20	ST. MARYS	4:30 pm
Friday, March 22	DUBOIS CENTRAL CATHOLIC	4:00 pm
Wedn., March 27	at Brookville	4:30 pm
Monday, April 1	at Bald Eagle	4:30 pm
Saturday, April 6	at Altoona	11:00 am
Monday, April 8	DUBOIS CENTRAL CATHOLIC	4:30 pm
Wed., April 10	at Philipsburg-Osceola	4:30 pm
Friday, April 12	at DuBois Central Catholic	4:00 pm
Monday, April 15	MONITEAU	4:30 pm
Wed., April 17	at DuBois	4:30 pm
Friday, April 19	at Marion Center	4:30 pm
Wed., April 24	at St. Marys	4:30 pm
Friday, April 26	at Keystone	4:00 pm
Saturday, April 27	at Karns City	11:00 am
Wed., May 1	BROOKVILLE	4:30 pm
Monday, May 6	INDIANA	4:30 pm
Wed., May 8	BRADFORD	3:30 & 5:30 pm
Monday, May 13	DUBOIS	7:00 pm
Wed., May 15	CLEARFIELD	4:30 pm

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Varsity & JV



Wednesday, March 20	at St. Marys	4:15 pm
Friday, March 22	ELK COUNTY CATHOLIC	4:30 pm
Monday, March 25	INDIANA	4:30 pm
Wednesday, March 27	BROOKVILLE	4:30 pm
Tuesday, April 2	TYRONE	4:30 pm
Thursday, April 4	KARNS CITY	4:00 pm
Friday, April 5	at Karns City	4:30 pm
Monday, April 8	at Clarion	4:15 pm
Wednesday, April 10	BRADFORD	4:30 pm
Friday, April 12	at Johnsonburg	4:30 pm
Monday, April 15	MONITEAU	4:30 pm
Wednesday, April 17	at DuBois	4:30 pm
Friday, April 19	at DuBois Central Catholic	4:00 pm
Monday, April 22	REDBANK VALLEY	4:30 pm
Wednesday, April 24	ST. MARYS	4:30 pm
Tuesday, April 30	at Marion Center	4:30 pm
Wednesday, May 1	at Brookville	4:30 pm
Tuesday, May 7	PHILIPSBURG-OSCEOLA	4:30 pm
Wednesday, May 8	at Bradford	4:30 pm
Monday, May 13	DUBOIS	7:00 pm
Wednesday, May 15	at Clearfield	4:30 pm

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2024 PAHS Spring SPORTS SCHEDULES

TRACK & FIELD *Varsity Girls & Boys*

Wednesday, March 20	ARMSTRONG INDIANA	4:00 pm
Tuesday, March 26	at Karns City	4:00 pm
Tuesday, April 2	BROOKVILLE	4:00 pm
Tuesday, April 9	at St. Marys	4:00 pm
Saturday, April 13	Invitational at Brookville	10:00 am
Tuesday, April 16	at DuBois	4:00 pm
Tuesday, April 23	ELK COUNTY CATHOLIC	4:00 pm
Tuesday, April 30	INDIANA	4:00 pm
Tuesday, May 7	at Bradford	4:00 pm

TENNIS *Varsity Boys*

Monday, March 25	ST. MARYS	3:30 pm
Tuesday, April 2	at Elk County Catholic	3:30 pm
Monday, April 8	DUBOIS CENTRAL CATHOLIC	3:30 pm
Tuesday, April 9	BROCKWAY	3:30 pm
Thursday, April 11	at DuBois	3:30 pm
Monday, April 15	at St. Marys	3:30 pm
Thursday, April 18	ELK COUNTY CATHOLIC	3:30 pm
Tuesday, April 23	at Bradford	2:30 & 4:30 pm
Thursday, April 25	at Dubois Central Catholic	3:30 pm
Monday, April 29	CLEARFIELD	3:30 pm
Tuesday, April 30	DUBOIS	3:30 pm
Thursday, May 2	at Brockway	3:30 pm

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Rick Wise and his family have built special pens for calving. The pens are equipped 24/7 with cameras so that the calving process is well-monitored. (photo by Jennifer Skarbek)

Wise Cattle Company

Continued from page 12

Rick said that within a day or two after a calf is born, the cow and calf are moved from the birthing pen to a pasture where they'll spend the rest of the summer.

Stoltzfus, who was born and raised on a diverse family farm in western Chester County, Pennsylvania, and who retired in 2020 from active farming to run a cattle consulting business that assists cattle producers and beef processor, was impressed by Rick's methods and said, "The farm is a very well managed cow/calf operation with some real specific goals in mind."

Also attending the tour was Colin Woodall, a member of NCBA for 20 years, a past lobbyist in Washington, D.C., for the association, and the CEO for the past five years. He is located at the NCBA headquarters office in Denver, Colorado, but originated in west Texas where his family has a small commercial cow/calf operation of which he is still a part.

Woodall said, "Cattle production in west Texas looks much different than it does in PA."

Although it was not his first trip to Pennsylvania, it was his first trip to Punxsutawney and Wise Cattle Company.

"Wise Farm is a beautiful operation, and it is obvious that the Wise family is passionate about the work they do to care for their land and their cattle. The care they provide for their cattle during calv-

ing season demonstrated their commitment to ensuring their cattle are safe, comfortable and healthy," Woodall commented. "Given the location of the Wise Farm, especially in relation to the local watersheds, presents challenges that producers in other parts of the country don't have to worry about. However, their environmental stewardship and protection of their natural resources is why cattle production across this country is part of the solution, not part of the problem."

Woodall added that most states hold an educational farm tour in addition to their annual meeting and banquet, saying, "This allows the meeting speakers to learn more about the way farms are operated in different states."

Rick also communicated to his visitors on the tour that cattle produced on his farm are marketed as breeding and show animals as well as being sold locally as all-natural beef.

"They do an excellent job of preparing their cattle for those special sales. In addition, they are contributing to their local economy by selling freezer beef to the community," Stoltzfus said.

Rick said that the farm's freezer beef trade has really picked up since COVID.

"We feel that it is important for people in our community to know where their food comes from," Rick said. "We welcome visitors to see our operation, so they have a better understanding of how our food is produced."

...

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NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK - April 7-13, 2024



National Library week was first sponsored in 1958, and the weeklong event was developed with the intent to motivate people to read as well as to support and show appreciation to their local libraries. The yearly affair is also doubly sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) who decided that this week be observed every April.

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Punxsutawney Memorial Library to Celebrate National Library Week

Library Seeks Community Leaders to Read on April 12

By Jen Soliday, MLIS
for Hometown magazine

National Library Week is an annual celebration highlighting the valuable role libraries, librarians, and library workers play in transforming lives and strengthening our communities.

In the mid-1950s, research showed that Americans were spending less on books and more on radios, televisions, and musical instruments. Concerned that Americans were reading less, the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers formed a nonprofit citizen's organization called the National Book



Jen Soliday
Director of
Punxsutawney
Memorial Library

Committee in 1954. The committee's goals were ambitious. They ranged from "encouraging people to read in their increasing leisure time" to "improving incomes and health" and "developing strong and happy family life." In 1957, the committee developed a plan for National Library Week based on the idea that once people were motivated to read, they would support and use libraries. With the cooperation of ALA and with help from the Advertising Council, the first National Library Week was observed in 1958 with the theme "Wake Up and Read!" The 2024 celebration marks the 66th anniversary of the first event.

The theme for National Library Week 2024 – "Ready, Set, Library!" – promotes the idea that in our always-online world, libraries give us a green light to something truly special: a place to connect with others, learn new skills, and focus on what matters most. Find your crew at your library's author talks, programs, and book clubs.

No matter where you find yourself on the

roadmap through life's journey – preparing for a new career, launching a business, or raising a family – your library provides an inclusive and supportive community where everyone belongs.

As part of this week, on April 12th, Libraries and schools across the country celebrate D.E.A.R. Day. D.E.A.R. stands for "Drop Everything and Read," it is a national celebration of reading designed to remind families to make reading a priority activity in their lives. D.E.A.R. is sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA); Parent Teacher Association (PTA); Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC); Reading Rockets; The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC); the American Press Institute; First Book; HarperCollins Children's Books; Read Kiddo Read; and Walden Media.

This year, the Punxsutawney Memorial Library will feature community leaders and other citizens in a reading marathon. Beginning at noon on April 12th, we will have volunteers to come to the library for 15 minutes and read. The idea is to show our community that adults read too, and that it is important to carve time out each day to read. We are looking for community leaders and citizens to help us on D.E.A.R. Day. If you are interested in reading (not aloud), please contact us at (814) 938-5020.

Also on April 12th, the Punxsutawney Memorial Library, in conjunction with the other libraries in Jefferson County, will work to put a book in the hands of every child in our service areas. Simply bring your child in during our open hours and ask for your free book. One per child, as supplies last.

Get ready to explore, become inspired, and connect with your library this National Library Week. Libraries are there for you, all the way to the finish line.

Happy Reading!

Jen Soliday, MLIS, is the director of the Punxsutawney Memorial Library.

•••

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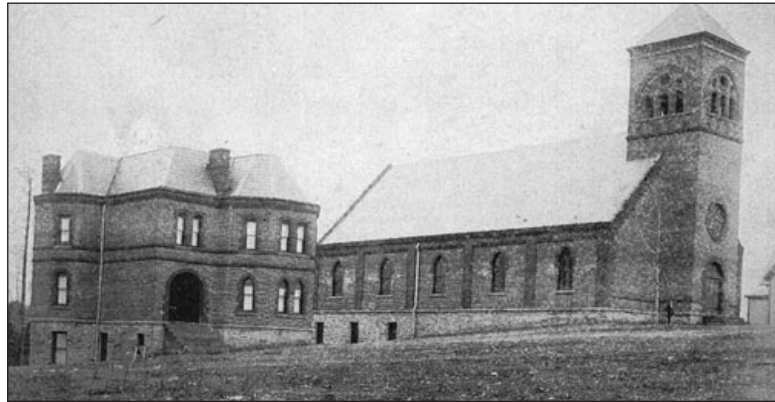
Ready Set Library!

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

April 7-13, 2024



The Jewish Synagogue in Punxsutawney where Abraham Light worshiped. It was located on the south side of Mahoning Creek. It was on land that was taken to create a new roadway. Rabbi Cohn served this congregation. (photo courtesy PAHGS)



St. Adrian's Catholic Church where Father Zubrzycki served and assisted in placing orphaned children with Catholic families. (photo courtesy PAHGS)

The Peddler, the Priest, and a Child

By Coal Memorial Committee
for Hometown magazine

Punxsutawney, in 1890, had become the hub of the bustling coal industry.

The mine towns were becoming established communities encircling the central city. In addition to work in the mines, mining communities had developed a variety of support systems. The most influential were the church, the school, and the traveling providers of goods. The church provided spiritual support. The schools provided an education and understanding of American values. The traveling providers of goods included the farmer, who provided fresh vegetables, eggs, meat, and other consumables, and the peddlers who provided a variety of dry goods. Dry goods ranged from practical cooking utensils, needles and pins, clothing essentials

as well as items that could brighten a life including spices, books, and jewelry.

In the late 1890s, a peddler, Abraham Light, and a priest, Joseph Zubrzycki, arrived in the Punxsutawney area. Both men had their sights set on a better future. Little did they know how their lives would intersect.

Abraham Light had left his home in Lithuania in 1883. At the age of 13, he began to work his way across Europe, to London, England, and on to Ireland, where he became a peddler of lace. He was diligent in saving his money and when he was 18 years old, he had enough to book steerage passage to America. When arrived in New York,

he gravitated to the lower east side where there were he found work as a peddler of clothing. While working there one day, he happened to meet a man from Punxsutawney. The man told him about the opportunity to sell clothing and other goods to miners and their families in the new mine towns being created in the area.



Picture of the child claimed to be Morris Lurie, by Ethel Lurie of Sharon, Pennsylvania. (Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Wednesday, July 25, 1900)

Abraham was well equipped to succeed as a peddler. He spoke 13 languages, which made it possible for him to speak with many of the miners and their families in their native tongues. This skill helped him establish trusting relationships with miners and their families. He had an installment plan that let them

make payments for their purchases out of their weekly wages, enabling them to have items that would improve their quality of life. And, with telephones not yet having become in general use in the home or community, he would often act as an informal communications assistant, taking messages from individuals in one mining community to their relatives in a neighboring community. In this way he became a confidant of many mining families.

Father Joseph Zubrzycki was also born in Lithuania, where he grew up, attended school, and studied for the priesthood. About 1897, he came to the United States where he attended St. Bonaventure College in New York State. Upon completion of his studies, he was assigned to St. Adrian's Church at Adrian, now called Delancey, near Punxsutawney. One of Father Zubrzycki's first activities was to oversee the construction of a school building at Adrian that would serve the children during school day and as an adult education facility and community center during evenings and weekends. He would provide lessons to the congregation at Adrian. He took his role the "Father" of the people of Adrian very seriously. He was their educator, banker, and adviser. For 28 years he taught them English and money management and helped them establish regular savings accounts. He looked after their social and emotional needs as well as their physical needs.

The Sisters of Charity of New York appealed to priests throughout the country to assist them in providing homes for orphans. Their founding hospital was overcrowded, and they encouraged Roman

- Continued on page 25

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Glen E. Lee of Mahaffey
March 10, 1937 – February 22, 2023

Glen was self-employed for most of his life in the lumber industry. He owned and operated Lee Lumber Company.



He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Geraldine L. (Sunderlin) Lee, Mahaffey; a daughter, Linda Lee, Mahaffey; two sons, Russell (Wendy) E. Lee and Daniel (Rose) S. Lee; grandchildren, Kim (Andy) Thorpe, J.D. Lee, Alicia, Kayce Lee, Marisa (Michael) Norwood, Denna R. Lee (Brian Ford), Lucinda (Evan) Nicole Marsh, Tyler D. Lee, seven great-grandchildren, Reagan Thorpe, McKenna Thorpe, Julia Mertz, Derrick Lee, Brianna Lee, Wyatt Ford, Harper Ray Ford; and a brother, Paul Lee, Mahaffey.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Wilbur and Helen (Fishel) Lee; a son, Jeffrey L. Lee; and a grandson, James Lee.

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Richard Kenneth Charles, Jr.

September 27, 1946 – February 27, 2024
Richard honorably served in the United States Marine Corps from 1967 to 1971 and was a proud veteran of the Vietnam War.



He was an active member of Punxsutawney Moose Lodge 954 for over four decades as well as an active member of Coalport Lodge 350, serving in various leadership roles, including Administrator, Past Governor, and committee activities. Rich's involvement extended to Penn Mountain Moose Legion 40, where he served as secretary, earning honors such as Past President and the Moose Legion Medal of Honor. He joined the Pennsylvania Moose Association Executive Committee in August 2008, progressing to President in August 2010. Rich's unwavering dedication to Moose ideals lead him to being honored with the Fellowship Degree of Honor in 1994 and the highest honor, the Pilgrim Degree of Merit, in 2001.

He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Paula (Kellert) Charles, and children, Tammy (Chris) Chappell, Robert Charles, Gary (Liliana) Charles, Richard (Nora) Charles III, and Tracy (Ryan) Johnson. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Brayden, Carrie, and Remington Johnson; Sophia, Olivia, Adalynn, and Richard IV

Charles; Paige Charles; Gary Charles, Jr.; Amber Boyd; Dakota Wort; Morgan Wort; and Emma Means as well as several great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. Also surviving are his brothers, Danny Charles and Arnold (Tammy) Charles; sisters-in-law, Karen (Ken) Bailey, Raelene Hickox, and Tina Covatch; brothers-in-law, Gary Covatch and John Hickox; and two sisters-in-law, Kay Charles and Debbie Charles.

In addition to his parents, Richard K. Charles, Sr., and Eleanor (Ritchey) Charles, he was preceded in death by his first wife, Carrie (Wazelle) Charles; brother Edwin Charles; in-laws, Warren and Mary Kellert; brother-in-law, Timothy Kellert; and grandson, Clayton Johnson.

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Nelda (English) Shields of Juneau
June 13, 1927 – February 27, 2024

Nelda, along with her husband, her sister and brother-in-law, Joyce and Bill Dunmire, were the original Gospel group, The Harmony Four, that spread the word of God throughout Western Pennsylvania. She was employed at Loree Footwear, Steffy's Market, and White's House of Kitchens.

Nelda is survived by her sons, D.A. (Carol) Schaffron and Clarence Shields; grandchildren, Shawn (Kim) Schaffron, Toni Schaffron, and Dennis Shields; great-grandchildren, Aaron and Taylor Shields; brother-in-law, William Dunmire; sister-in-law, Marge English; and numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, Eli and Mary (Tyler) English, and her husband, George (Dick) Shields, she was preceded in death by her son Rodger Shields; daughter-in-law Claudette Shields; and all 13 of her siblings, sisters, Annabelle (Arch) Whidden, Audrey (Lester) Gaston, Infant Amy English, Hazel (Art) Tyger, Lola (Walt) Gaston, Ida (Lloyd) Lasley, Jane (Walter) Bishop, Joyce Dunmire, and Beverly (Joe) Weaver, and brothers, Clyde English, Sam (Sue) English, and Eli English; a brother-in-law; Harold Osborne; and sister-in-laws, Flo Nelson, Rachel (Marty) Yount, and Elizabeth (George) Haverilla.

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Vincent Thomas Gaston
May 27, 1952 – February 28, 2024

A 1971 graduate of Marion Center High School, Vince with his brother Ed owned and operated Gaston Lumber in Punxsutawney. While he never attended college, he was an engineer and fabricator of all things, but especially those with a motor, such as race cars, tractors, heavy equipment, and trucks. He was the epitome of the good neighbor, helping anyone in need, and if he had it to give, he was happy to help.

He is survived by his wife, Lora (Reiter) Gaston; his three children, Heather (Jason) Rankin, Matthew (Amy) Gaston, and Heath (Tina) Gaston; and seven grandchildren, Jonathan and Emily Rankin, Cameron, Madilynn and Alaina Gaston, and Loren and Sawyer Gaston. Surviving siblings include Edward, Allen, Huck, Charles, George, and Nick Gaston.

Vince was preceded in death by his parents, Ora (Armstrong) and Layard Gaston, and his siblings, Dan, Eileen Calhoun, John, and Jeanne Fox.

Deeley Funeral Home Inc.
(www.deeleyfuneralhome.com)

Linda L. Baun-Kidd
of Home

June 7, 1956 – February 28, 2024.

Linda was a 1974 graduate of the Punxsutawney Area High School. She worked as a mail carrier for over 37 years before her retirement in 2019. Linda enjoyed gardening, being outdoors, yearly beach vacations, and spending time with family. Her greatest joy was spending time and playing with her grandson.

Linda is survived by her husband, Joseph A. Kidd, whom she married September 8, 2015; a son, Shane (Somer) L. Baun; a grandson, Owen A. Baun; her mother, Sally M. (White) Sprankle; a sister, Debra (Ron) L. Bishop; sister-in-law, Melissa (Butch) J. Sprankle; four sisters-in-law on her husband's side, Georgia Ann Cocco, Diane Baskick, Linda Kidd, and Valerie Kidd; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her father, Merle Sprankle, and a brother, Douglas L. Sprankle.

McCabe Funeral Home Inc.
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Bo Eric Westover
of Mahaffey

August 7, 1986 – Saturday, March 2, 2024
Bo was a 2004 graduate of Harmony High School and was a 2006 graduate of Triangle Tech. He attended Banner Ridge Church. Bo enjoyed the outdoors, but his passion was fishing. He also enjoyed gaming. Most of all, Bo loved spending time with his family.

He is survived by his wife, Laura (Hilliard) Westover, whom he married November 10, 2012; two daughters, Nova and Amara Westover; his mother, Brenda (Todd) Ferguson; his father, Michael Wholaver, Sr.; a brother, Brendan (Sophie) Westover; a sister, Megan Wholaver; grandmother, Mary B. Westover; mother-in-law, Donna Hilliard; his brother, Jonathan (Jenifer) "Griff" Griffin; and numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Roy E. Westover, Sr.; his uncle, Roy E. Westover, Jr.; his father-in-law, Randy L. Hilliard, Sr.; and a brother, Michael Wholaver, Jr.

McCabe Funeral Home Inc.
(www.mccabewaldronfh.com)

Kathryn J. Wyne

of Rossiter
March 4, 1963 – March 6, 2024

Kathi enjoyed gardening, flowers, cooking, baking, spending time with her grandchildren, and decorating for the holidays, especially for Halloween and Christmas.

She worked as a travelling nurse and then as a caretaker at various nursing and care homes throughout the area.

In addition to her husband, John W. Wyne, she is survived by a son, Billy (Stacy) Mumau; three grandchildren, Zaylee, Amelia, and Ryleigh; a daughter, Elizabeth Wyne; and a sister, Bobbi (Rodney) Jarvie and husband, Rodney, of Clymer.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Kathryn J. (Beatty) and Jack G. Kroll.

Deeley Funeral Home Inc.
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Robert E. "Bob" Barnett of Anita
December 30, 1957 – March 9, 2024

Bob was a graduate of Jeff Tech High School and was a member of Grace United Methodist Church.

Prior to his retirement in December 2020, he was employed at NAC as shipping supervisor for 20 years, then had a second



Continued on next page

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Continued from previous page
career at Neko's Restaurant as a line cook for 20 years.

He was a past member and treasurer for NWF and enjoyed horses, raising goats, chickens, Alpacas, and his dog, Chasy.

In addition to his wife, Brenda "Bea" (Leasure) Barnett, he is survived by his daughter, Niki (Steve Huff) Barnett; his grandson and special buddy, Jackson Barnett; his brother, Howard Barnett; his sister, Jan (Donnie) Bosak; and several nieces and nephews and their families.

In addition to his parents, Francis Ardell and Shirley Martin Barnett, he was preceded in death by a brother, Mike Barnett, and his sisters, Marcia Cochran and Debbie Bridge.

Furlong Funeral Home
(www.furlongfuneralhome.com)

William Reinhart

of Punxsutawney
April 22, 1941 – March 10, 2024

William was a graduate of Punxsutawney High School and continued his education, obtaining a degree in computers.

William proudly and honorably served his country in the U.S. Air Force, serving from 1959–1963.

Prior to his retirement in February 1988, he worked for Mellon Bank as well as other banking institutes. When a younger man, he was the owner of a business that installed computer terminals, which gave him the opportunity to travel throughout several states.

He was of the Christian faith and was a member of the Masons, Lions, Elks, and Warrendale Sportsmen's Club. His pastimes included trap shooting, fishing, and being in the outdoors.

In addition to his wife, Donna (Barnett) Reinhart, he is survived by his daughter, Brenda Tomei; his sisters-in-law, Judy (Joel) Brooks, Kay James, Barb Pape, Emily (Al) Barnett; several nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, and extended family members; and friends Dan and Laura Finn. His family would like to extend a special thank you to Judy and Jada for all their support.

In addition to his parents, Clarence and Ruth Weber Reinhart, he was preceded in death by his in-laws, Lawrence Barnett and Evelyn Lewis, as well as several extended family members and friends.

Furlong Funeral Home
(www.furlongfuneralhome.com)

James R. Overly, Sr. of Punxsutawney
September 17, 1938 – March 11, 2024,

Jim was a member of Saints Cosmas and Damian Roman Catholic Church of Punxsutawney. He sang in the choir and was a lector for Mass.

He enjoyed tinkering with anything mechanical, singing and whistling and making up his own songs, and watching TV.

Jim worked as a mechanic and laborer for Grange Lime and Stone and formerly worked for Thomas Coal Company as a mechanic on their water pumps.

In addition to his wife, Erda "Carol" (Simons) Overly, he is survived by six children, daughter Mary Beth (Rick) Bosak, son J.R. (Ellen) Overly, daughter Debbie (Mark) George, son Bill (Jen) Overly, son Don (Louis Mitchell) Overly, and daughter Patti (Robert) Dinsmore; 10 grandchildren, Erin, Chelsea, James, Jeff, Geoff, Amber, Becky, Carol, Jackson, and Andrew "A.J."; seven great-grandchildren, Mason and Colton, Harper and Sydney, Deegan, and Ivy, and Fiona; a sister, Patricia (Bill) Massi; a sister-in-law, Suzann Simons of New Kensington; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, Mary Loretta (Schneider) and James Luther Overly, he was preceded in death by a grandson, Cory George, and a brother, John "Jack" Overly.

Deeley Funeral Home Inc.
(www.deeleyfuneralhome.com)

Marjorie "Marge" S. Brennan

of Punxsutawney
November 9, 1925 – March 14, 2024,

Marge was born at 207 Woodland Avenue in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. She loved to mention, "Not many people can say they were born and married in the same home where they lived for ninety years!"

Marge graduated from Punxsutawney Area High School in 1942 at the age of 16 and then enrolled in Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Indiana State Teachers College) in the summer of 1942 during the World War II era. As a result, she was able to attend an accelerated program and was awarded a B.S. in Business Education when she was only 19 years old. Marge went on to teach for 30 years. She taught at Rossiter High School, Big Run High School, and spent the majority of her career teaching typing at Punxsutawney Area High School. Marge had a passion for teaching, and her students truly loved her. Over the years, Marge often shared that one of her greatest rewards was when her former stu-

dents would stop to express how grateful they were for the positive impact she made on their careers and how much she meant to them.

Marge had many interests throughout her life. One, in particular, was her love for participating in various clubs. She was a member of the following organizations: a 50-year member of the Order of the Eastern Star, Punxsutawney Irving Club, Friends of the Library, Pennsylvania State Education Association, Jefferson County Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees, Punxsutawney Country Club, and a ladies and couples bridge club. Marge was a lifelong member of the Punxsutawney Presbyterian Church, where she served as a Deacon and a Sunday school teacher.

One of Marge's greatest joys was being a loving mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She adored her friends, found great pleasure in sending cards, making flower arrangements, going on vacations, and wearing fashionable clothes.

Surviving children include two daughters: Lynne Brennan Zelle and Patricia (Albert) Brennan Wille. Surviving grandchildren include Jennifer (Tom) Butman, Ashley Zelle, William (Christy) John Blose, and Brenna (Michael) Sisinni. Great-grandchildren include Ava Paron, twins Addison and Anthony Sisinni, Luke Blose, Brent Blose, and Jack Butman in addition to several nieces and nephews.

Marge was preceded in death by her parents, David W. Straitiff and Mildred (Condron) Straitiff; her husband, John L. Brennan; sisters, Kathryn Koepf and Adelene MacBurney; son-in-law, Joel Zelle; and great-grandchild, Chase Blose.

Deeley Funeral Home Inc.
(www.deeleyfuneralhome.com)

Martin "Marty" Huffman

of Rochester Mills
January 1, 1960 – March 15, 2024

Martin was a 1978 graduate of the Redbank Valley High School. He furthered his education at the Hobart School of Welding in Troy, Ohio. He worked as a welder/mobile plant maintenance for NRG power plants around the area.

Martin loved his family and being at home in his garage. He appreciated the simple things in life, including Velcro footwear, Busch Light, Camel Wides, and sharing his words of wisdom. He was an exceptional welder and woodworker who created custom pieces to share with his family and friends. His home was a hangout spot. He enjoyed having fires, listening to music, storytelling, and spending time with his Uncle Rodney.

In addition to his mother, Patricia M. (Herrick) Huffman, he is survived by four children, Jason (Jena) Huffman, Jaimie (Ben) Eisenhart, Janel Huffman, and Jolene (Ryan) Gotwald; seven grandchildren, Anna and

Austin Huffman; Audrey, Judah and Esme Eisenhart; and Hudson and Hal Gotwald; two brothers, Mark (Wendy) Huffman and Michael (Deanne) Huffman; his significant other, Amy Fenstermaker; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, Harold C. Huffman.

Deeley Funeral Home Inc.
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Larry B. Marshall of Punxsutawney
July 15, 1941 – March 15, 2024

Larry attended the Countryside Baptist Church. He graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a degree in computer science. He retired from IBM as a computer programmer. He enjoyed singing hymns, was a member of the Choral Society and enjoyed playing the trombone.

He is survived by a daughter, Pamela Ann Arriola; a sister, Janice (Clyde) E. Moore; a niece, Wendy Moore; and three nephews, Lee A. Moore, Bernard M. Pella, and Mark A. Pella.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lawrence V. and Elizabeth (Watson) Marshall; his first wife, Ella Maye (Hoover), and second wife, Norma Jean Smith; a son David Allen Marshall; and a sister, Alice Marie (Marshall) Pella Fellows.

McCabe Funeral Home Inc.
(www.mccabewaldronfh.com)

Philip E. Cameron of Penn Run
May 20, 1966 – March 18, 2024

Phil was a graduate of the Punxsutawney Area High School. He worked construction most of his life.

Phil enjoyed listen to loud music, chasing his grandchildren, and being very social with his friends and family.

He is survived by two daughters, Jessica L. Duck and Justina (Devin) M. Bair; two sons, Gary A. Cameron and Derek R. Cameron; seven grandchildren; two sisters, Lisa (Robert) M. Cochran and Stefanie (Nathan) A. Wyant; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Gary Cameron and Gloria Bowers.

McCabe Funeral Home Inc.
(www.mccabewaldronfh.com)

Please visit the websites of the funeral homes listed to view the complete obituary, sign their guestbooks, plant a tree, and offer your condolences.

If you have a loved one who has passed away and would like to publish the obituary in Punxsutawney Hometown magazine, please contact us at hometown@punxsutawneymagazine.com or call (814) 952-3668.



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Run or Walk for Someone Special Set for April 14

The 45th Run or Walk for Someone Special will be held on April 14 the Town Hall on Main Street in Sykesville.

All monies raised at this event are used to provide four free summer camps for children and adults with special needs who reside in Jefferson and Clearfield Counties. We plan to have our first camp the beginning of June for Punxsutawney residents, followed by our DuBois camp and Brookville/Brockway camp, and ending with our Autism camp the last week in June. Without the support of the Run or Walk, these camps would not be possible.

Not only does the Run or Walk support our camps, but it also helps to support our two Recreation and Respite Clubs in Punxsutawney and DuBois. The clubs provide recreation and respite for individuals 18 or older with intellectual or developmental disabilities. For these individuals to have a place to socialize is often referred to as a dream come true. The need for these clubs evolved when we saw a lack of activities and socialization provided for these individuals once they graduate from high school.

Those interested in specific details about our Run or Walk can visit our Facebook page or go to our website www.jcarc.org to print a registration form and also donate early through either our PayPal QR code or our Firstgiving.org link, which is on our website as well. Pre-reg-

istration must be completed by Friday, April 12, at midnight. You can also print a registration form and bring it to the check-in station the day of the Run or Walk along with the money collected.

Registration begins at the Sykesville Town Hall at 1:30 p.m., and the race begins at 3:00 p.m. Anyone wishing to participate has the option to run or walk 2 miles or run 5 miles. We are also excited about our Stroll and Roll race. This is a short race for those who cannot participate in the longer walk or run; it's great for those with wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers.

Trophies and ribbons will be rewarded to finishers in a variety of age groups with prizes given to the top money collectors. We will also have games, food, prizes, and many great items on our raffle table.

We would like to thank all the local businesses for their donations and continued support over the years. It is amazing how wonderful this community is at supporting our Run or Walk. We also can't forget the numerous volunteers who donate so much of their time to make this happen.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call Bill Cuba, Jr., (814) 591-6800 or Pat Mowrey (814) 591-0949. They would be happy to hear from you. You can also email us at carlajcarc@gmail.com.

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Proceeds are used to provide children and adults with special needs in Jefferson and Clearfield Counties four free summer camps.

SUNDAY, APRIL 14

Sykesville Town Hall

Registration 1:30pm

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Pre-Register by April 12 or on Day of Run/Walk

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Challenger League players enjoy their end-of-the-season pizza party. Players are, from front left, around the table: Robert Sampson, Christian Harry, (standing) Aiden Cochran, Gabriel Jackson, Michael Soliday, Zane Trybus, Azalea Reinard, and Jude Bishop. Standing behind the players is Shelley Nippes, who represented the Community Guidance Center, one of the team's sponsors. (submitted photo)

Challenger League Returns to the Field for a New Season

By Jennifer Skarbek for Hometown magazine

The Challenger League, a division of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Little League, is gearing up for its 11th season locally.

According to organizer Anna Rugh, the Challenger League division was started in 1989 by Little League International and is a sanctioned division. It provides the opportunity for individuals with physical and/or developmental disabilities to participate in a fun, non-competitive game with support and accommodation and to learn new skills. Rugh became aware of the Challenger League when her nephew, who has

special needs, played in the Dubois Challenger League.

She said, "I wondered why Punx'y didn't have this wonderful league."

Hence, Rugh talked with the Little League board members and got the ball rolling on establishing a local division.

"I contacted Williamsport to get information on the procedure, got approved by the Punxsutawney Little League board, and then contacted the Punxsutawney Area School District superintendent and the head of the special education department," Rugh said of get-

- Continued on next page



("From Our Past," researched by S. Thomas Curry, features items of interest from past editions of Punxsutawney and area newspapers.)

March 21, 1947 — Members of the Punxsutawney Board of Health today threatened prosecution of those persons who are guilty of dumping garbage and rubbish within city limits. It is found that local residents are dumping garbage in certain sections, particularly along the banks of the Mahoning Creek in the East End area. The names of some of the guilty persons of the violation have been submitted to the local health officer. Refuse dumpers have made the Mahoning Creek extremely unsightly and have brought about a hazard to the community's health. (Punxsutawney Spirit)

March 24, 1886 — The roads were so muddy that Mr. Cyrus Wilson, of the Marion stage route, had to come back to town for another team of horses to pull him up the hill on Friday morning last. (Valley News)

Note: At that time in area history, Marion Center was known as "Marion." The hill in this report would be the old Indiana Street that wound up to the top of the hill toward Indiana. At one time it was identified as "Gaskill Hill." Gaskill Avenue is connected to Indiana Street.

March 26, 1890 — A special train on the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh railroad will be run from Walston to Adrian on next Sunday, March 30th, for the accommodation of those desiring to attend services at Adrian. The train will leave Walston at 11 o'clock, a.m. Fare for round trip, from Walston, 25 cents; Clayville, 20 cents; Punxsutawney, 15 cents. (Punxsutawney News)

April 3, 1928 — The 27th anniversary of the eight-hour day for miners was celebrated in Punxsutawney yesterday. More than 1,000 miners took part in a parade that also included 200 workmen and children. Boys carried banners with inscriptions "In Union There is Strength." Near the beginning of the parade and at the end, flags were carried by girls. Spectators were requested to throw money toward the flags for the benefit of the striking miners. Following the parade an elaborate program was presented from the band stand under the auspices of the Rossiter local of the United Mine Workers. (Punxsutawney Spirit)

Note: In 1928, the "band stand" was an octagonal wood building built in 1911 for the Citizens Band to give concerts. It was located in the corner near the Pantall Hotel. The stone Bandstand in Barclay Square was built in 1932 as a memorial to "soldiers and sailors of all wars." Historically at that time, World War I was referred to as "the war to end all wars."

April 9, 1890 — The mail route between this place and Lindsey has been cut off so that the Brookville mail, which heretofore reached us at noon does not arrive until six o'clock p.m. Why? The stage driver passes this office at the usual hour, but he doesn't bring the mail. Why not add something to his wages, and let him bring the mail to this place? (Punxsutawney News)

Note: With its beginning in 1886, the Punxsutawney News office and printing was in a three-story building at 230 West Mahoning Street.

April 13, 1898 — Our public square in its present condition is not beautiful. It is not calculated to impress strangers with the notion that we are a fastidious and aesthetic people. The portion that is filled up should be leveled off and sowed in grass. Those cannons should be painted and mounted, and other improvements made which will make the square resemble a park, and not a mere common. (Punxsutawney Spirit)

Note: Two Civil War cannons were brought to the park in 1897. With a nationally known landscape designer, in 1902 the "public square" was transformed into a city-type "public park."

Challenger League

Continued from previous page

ting approval and backing.

Rugh reported that in its first year Punxsutawney Challenger League had nine players. Since this was the Junior division, players would age out of the league when they were 18, or 21 if still attending school. Five years ago, however, Little League International started the Senior Division of Challenger, where players can play with no age limit. Rugh said that with the addition of the senior league and due to more people hearing about the challenger league, the local program has since grown. She said, "There were 31 players in the 2023 season."

The Challenger League plays at the Punxsutawney Little League complex, as well as at Heindl Stadium in DuBois, where they play against the Dubois Challenger League. The Challenger League also uses "buddies," these are youth or adult volunteers who assist players on the field if they need help batting or fielding the ball. Rugh said that "the use of buddies gives the players and the volunteers the opportunity to form friendships."

Rugh added that Little League sign-ups are ongoing and that players, coaches, and volunteers, new and returning, need to sign up at www.Punxsutawneygroundhoglittleleague.org. There is no registration fee for Challenger League players. Junior League includes youths from age 5 to 18, while Senior League includes those 15 years old through adulthood. The schedule for 2024 hasn't been developed yet but will be posted on Punxsutawney Challenger League Facebook page when it is.

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4. Clip and forward the coupon to: Penguins Hockey Contest, c/o Hometown magazine, 129 Aspen Road, Punxsutawney, PA 15767. **PLEASE MARK YOUR TEAM PICK & TOTAL POINTS ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE ENVELOPE.**
5. All entries must be received by 4 pm, **Thursday, April 11.**
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Individuals enjoy a variety of fun activities at the Rec and Respite Centers of The ARC of Jefferson and Clearfield Counties. (submitted photos)

JCARC: Providing Services to the Community for 50 Years

By Jennifer Skarbek
 for Hometown magazine

The Arc of Jefferson and Clearfield Counties (JCARC), a local chapter of the nationwide nonprofit The Arc, has been providing services to area individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), for five decades. According to JCARC Executive Director Carla Ferko, many counties have chapters, and "all chapters share the same mission: which is to provide advocacy to the IDD community."

Ferko joined The Arc 4 1/2 years ago and says that she loves her job and what JCARC brings to the community.

"I work for and with some of the nicest people I have ever met. I truly feel blessed to be part of such an amazing organization," Ferko said.

Since its start locally in 1974, the number of activities and supports that JCARC provides has continued to grow.

"We have two Recreation and Respite Clubs," Ferko explained.

The Punxsutawney location, funded solely through donations and fundraising and located at 408 Beyer Avenue, is open from noon to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The second location, at 34 Hoover Avenue in DuBois, is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Ferko said that the DuBois location is funded through state and county dollars.

Ferko said that these clubs provide daily activities as well as parties for special occasions. This translates to fun and social interaction for the members and, likewise, a type of respite for their caregivers. The calendar of activities can be found on their Facebook pages: "Punx-

sutawney Rec and Respite Club" and "The Arc, DuBois Rec and Respite Club."

"To be a member of our Rec and Respite club, an individual must be 18 or older and have an IDD," Ferko said. "We do have a yearly membership of \$20, but we make sure everyone who has an IDD can attend."

Another activity that is provided by JCARC for individuals with an IDD is Camp Friendship. This annual event services school-aged children in the special education programs in school districts of Jefferson and Clearfield counties.

Ferko said, "We provide four free summer camps during the month of June," adding that information on the camp can also be found on Facebook at "Camp Friendship."

She said that the organization appreciates and welcomes volunteers to help at the camp.

At present, Ferko said that she and the rest of the members of JCARC are currently gearing up for the chapter's 45th Run or Walk for Someone Special, to be held on April 14th at the Sykesville Town Hall. She said that the money raised at the event provides the funding for Camp Friendship.

"We could not make all of these wonderful things possible without the support of our community," Ferko stated. "The love and support of all of our donors and volunteers help to put smiles on the special needs community and we can't thank you all enough!"

To register for the run or walk, or to donate, visit the organization's website, jcarc.org, or its Facebook page, "The Arc of Jefferson and Clearfield Counties," or call Carla Ferko at (814) 952-2467.

...

Punx'y Area Community Foundation Elects Officers, Approves 2024 Activities

The Punxsutawney Area Community Foundation (PXYCF) elected officers and approved their calendar of activities for 2024 at their Annual Meeting held on February 20. Officers for the upcoming year will be Timothy Spence, president; Ron Walker, vice president; Shirley Sharp, secretary; Nancy Anthony, treasurer; and David Smith, assistant treasurer.

PXYCF has provided technical assistance to SPLASH for developing a nonprofit organization and a SPLASH Fund with the Foundation to provide on-going support for the community's swimming pool.

The first activity hosted by PXYCF in 2024 was the Groundhog Eve Dance at the Eagles Aerie in Punxsutawney. The dance was well attended, and a good time was had by all.

The Foundation will offer two competitive bonus grants of \$500 each to Punxsutawney area nonprofit organizations. The grants will be to assist organizations in providing summer programs in arts and humanities or STEM activities targeted to youngsters in the "Tween" age group,

between 11 and 14 years of age. Grant guidelines and applications forms are available online at pxycf.org. They may also be requested by mail at PXYCF, P.O. Box 663, Punxsutawney, PA, 15767, or by leaving a message at (814) 938-2493. Applications are due to PXYCF April 15, and grants will be awarded May 15.

PXYCF scheduled activities for 2024 include hosting an educational workshop for Punxsutawney area nonprofit organizations in September and coordinating the annual Day of Giving on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, which will be on December 3 this year.

PXYCF has established an office through the Punxsutawney Revitalization and Development Corporation at the Punxsutawney Campus of IUP. Individuals interested in exploring their opportunity to create a philanthropic fund with PXYCF may make an appointment to discuss options by calling (814) 938-2493 and leaving a message or by e-mailing: info@pxycf.org. A member of the foundation board will respond and schedule an appointment.

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The Peddler, the Priest

Continued from page 19

Catholics to provide homes for the children. In June 1900, Father Zubrzycki, having had requests from parish members who desired children and having seen the grief of parents who lost a child, and knowing of the children needing parents, made application to the New York foundling asylum for eight children. Among them was a boy about four years old, whom Father Zubrzycki



Abraham Light came to the Punxsutawney area and found work as a peddler and advanced his occupation to that of business man and coal mine operator. (photo courtesy of Punxsutawney Area Historical & Genealogical Society)

placed with a family at Adrian. When Abraham Light stopped by to deliver some trousers for the man of this household, the woman caring for the child asked him whether he could tell her if the child was "a Hebrew." The woman told Abraham that if the boy was Jewish, she could not raise him because her family was of the Christian faith and wanted a boy to raise in this tradition. Abraham, being Jewish, advised the woman that the people of his faith would prefer that a Jewish boy be raised in a Jewish family. Rabbi Cohn at the synagogue in Punxsutawney was consulted, and the boy was determined to be Jewish. Rabbi Cohn and Abraham posted a notice in a Hebrew newspaper that was widely circulated in the Jewish community. The article described the boy and the facts, as told to them, about how he came to be in the Punxsutawney area.

This advertisement was read by Ethel Lurie, who lived at Sharon, Pennsylvania. She hurriedly sent a message to Punxsutawney, delivered to Abraham and asking if the boy was still there. Abraham sent a message back confirming that he was. Mrs. Lurie left immediately by train for Punxsutawney. She arrived at 1:30 a.m. and found an all-night restaurant where she received permission to sit until morning. She arrived at Abraham Light's house on Church Street at dawn. She told him that two years previously she and her husband had left their child sleeping in his cradle while they went to the store on an errand. When they returned home 30 minutes later, the child was missing. An intensive search did not find any trace of the child. A \$1,000 reward had been offered for his return but to no avail. Arrangements were made to take her to Adrian to see the boy.

The child's hair was darker than Mrs. Lurie remembered; however, she identified birthmarks on the child's arms and legs, which she felt confirmed the boy was her child. Father Zubrzycki, who had posted bond ensuring proper placement in a good home, was concerned about Mrs. Lurie's taking the child without some type of security. Abraham Light provided \$500 bond. The boy's father, Louis Lurie, and William Goldberg, of Sharon, arrived Saturday evening to escort the mother and



Father Joseph Zubrzycki was born in Lithuania and came to the United States, where he received a Doctor of Divinity at St. Bonaventure College near Olean, New York. He served as the priest at St. Adrian Church for 28 years, from 1899 to 1928. He was born in Lithuania. (photo courtesy of the Diocese of Erie)

child home.

The story of this reuniting of an abducted child with his parents was carried in newspapers across the United States.

In July 1900, the story was believed to have had a happy ending for the child, the parents, the priest, the peddler, and all others concerned. Then in August, a letter arrived from the treasurer of the

New York Foundling Hospital containing affidavits that the child was, in fact, the son of an "Annie Smith" of New York. Mrs. Lurie was stunned by the information; however, she was determined to keep the child as her own. William Goldberg was appointed as the guardian for Morris Lurie.

During following year, the trauma of having lost, then found, a child, only to discover it was not his child, placed such stress on Louis Lurie that he was admitted to a psychiatric hospital, where he remained until he passed away in 1904.

Ethel Lurie continued to live in Sharon. Morris Lurie remained with his adoptive mother. In 1907, when crossing the Pennsylvania Railroad Tracks at Sharon, he was thrown out of his delivery wagon, suffered a skull fracture, and sustained damage to both feet, necessitating amputation. Ethel Lurie passed away in 1943. Morris Lurie lived until 1981. A marker at his grave is inscribed with the words "Beloved Uncle," which indicates he never married, yet he had family who cared for him.

Father Joseph Zubrzycki continued to serve the Adrian parish until his death on January 10, 1928. He was honored and remembered by the community of Adrian through the naming of Zubrzycki Hall in his honor.

Abraham Light would become a successful businessman and owner of coal companies; he left a legacy of philanthropy in the Punxsutawney area.

This article has been prepared by the Coal Memorial Committee of the Punxsutawney Area Historical & Genealogical Society. Resources used in preparing his article are from PAHGS, Punxsutawney News @ Newspapers.com., and the Library of Congress. Direct comments to PAHGS, P.O. Box 286, Punxsutawney, PA 15767. Individuals desiring to honor a coal or coal-related industry worker in 2024, are encouraged to purchase their tile by June 30, 2024. A Coal Memorial tile may honor persons who worked in any aspect of the coal industry, including railroads and ancillary services. Additional information and forms may be found online at www.punxsyhistory.org or may be requested by an email to: punxsyhistory@outlook.com, or call (814) 938-2555 and leave a message.

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Punxsutawney Area Hospital Foundation Employee Spotlight

Shelly Bishop began her career archiving medical records at the Punxsutawney Area Hospital laboratory in 1990. While working night shifts initially, Shelly later accepted a day-shift position where she completed on-the-job training to become a phlebotomist and lab secretary. Shelly is responsible for processing laboratory orders and obtaining specimens for both in-patient and out-patient services. Additionally, she performs secretarial duties that include answering calls and relaying results to medical offices.

"I always desired to have a job that allowed me to help others," says Shelly. "Being a part of PAH allows me to serve not only my community but also its surrounding areas."

She continues, "Blood work and labs are amazing resources that help our clinicians to diagnose and treat patients."

Due to COVID-19 precautions in 2020, phlebotomy was relocated to the main entrance of PAH while the laboratory remained in its original location. Extensive renovations are planned to create a unified Laboratory and Phlebotomy Services department. "I am excited for our department to be together again," Shelly says. "We will be expanded and updated with state-of-the-art equipment to meet the needs of our community."

Shelly attributes the success and longevity of her career to the friendships she has with her PAH family. With the sudden passing of her husband of nearly 50 years, Shelly feels blessed to have such supportive coworkers. She explains, "Ken's service was held at Grace Church (located beside PAH). When I walked outside after his service the hospital hill was lined with my hospital family holding a sign saying, 'We Love You.' That shows how much we care for and love one another. During my 34-year career, I can truly say, I never once not wanted to be at work."

Shelly is the mother of two sons, Ben, married to Julia, and Reggie, married to Carrie. She is the doting grandmother of Santana (financé Tristan), Cameron, Chloe, and Jude. Shelly is a member of Grace Church, where she is the coordinator of Children's Ministry and their Vacation Bible School summer program. She is also active in Grace's Blanket and Soup Ministries as well as the Good News Club at the Punxsutawney Area Elementary School.

Thank you, Shelly, for your unwavering commitment and dedication to the Punxsutawney Area Hospital.

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Punxsutawney's Green Light program hosts an activity group twice a week, a prom, and holiday get-togethers, providing socialization for people with special needs. (submitted photos)

'Green Light' is a Go

By Jennifer Skarbek
for Hometown magazine

The Green Light program of Punxsutawney offers people with special needs the opportunity to socialize and have fun in a communal setting. The group was started in the fall of 2023 by Dawn McKenrick, a resident of Punxsutawney and a retired special education teacher. McKenrick said that even though she was no longer teaching, she "still wanted to be active with people with disabilities," and that hosting such a group would provide her with that chance. Needing a facility in which to hold the program, McKenrick, a member of the First Church of God, presented her idea to Pastor Rob Van Fossen of her church, and she reports that he was totally supportive, giving her permission to use the church building.

Of their conversation, McKenrick said, "Everything I said that I wanted to do for the program, he answered, 'You got the green light, you got the green light, you got the green light'" and so on.

Therefore, with the pastor's support and a place to host the group, McKenrick started what she fittingly calls, the "Green Light" program.

Green Light is held from 12 to 2 p.m., every Tuesday and Thursday in the youth wing of the First Church of God, located at 23 Skyview Drive in Punxsutawney. Anyone with special needs is welcome to join and

must be accompanied by a family member or agency staff. Since the group meets at noon, McKenrick said that members are welcome to bring their lunch with them. The members engage in a variety of activities, including foosball, pool, ping pong, card and board games, and holiday activities. There is no registration required; McKenrick said that anyone who wants to join can just show up.

The group is currently preparing for a special-needs prom this spring. According to McKenrick, she and several volunteers, seeing the need for more locally held social activities for people with disabilities, began having a Christmas get-together and a prom a few years ago. Both occasions boasted a great turn-out and provided enjoyment for those attending as guests and as volunteers. Once Green Light was established, McKenrick then thought it natural to combine the operation of the various events and activities under the umbrella of "Green Light."

This year's prom, titled "Under the Sea," will be held from 6 – 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 18, at the First Church of God. Features of the event will be pizza and refreshments, music, dancing, and a complimentary souvenir photo. Anyone who wants to attend must first register by May 10. They may email greenlightprom@gmail.com or call or text McKenrick at (814) 939-1979. McKenrick said that the prom is an opportunity for fun and socialization.

•••

Armstrong County Memorial Hospital Announces Agreement with PA Mountains Care Network

Pennsylvania Mountains Care Network (PMCN) proudly announces that a definitive agreement has been signed with Armstrong County Memorial Hospital (ACMH). Both Boards voted in favor of the move to expand the Network. PMCN now includes Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC), Punxsutawney Area Hospital (PAH), and, following regulatory and third-party approvals, ACMH.

This affiliation will help to preserve, enhance, and provide quality health care for patients in the multi-county service area for all three hospitals. It will also create synergies, cost-efficiencies, and sustainability for the well-run organizations.

After closing, individuals from all three communities will sit on the boards of PMCN while an IRMC, PAH, and ACMH combined executive management team will represent the common interests of these rural communities for the long-term.

The hospitals will retain their local identities and operate as three separate nonprofit corporations with three separately licensed community hospitals. While there will be some sharing of human resources for the benefit of respective patient communities,

each hospital will retain its existing medical and nursing staffs, employees, volunteers, and community connections.

IRMC president and chief executive officer (CEO), Stephen Wolfe, will also serve as the president and CEO of PMCN with ACMH CEO, Nichole Geraci, continuing to serve in

that capacity at ACMH.

PMCN was formed in 2015 as the parent company of IRMC and PAH, as the facilities explored opportunities to more closely integrate in an increasingly challenging health care marketplace. A letter of intent to explore affiliation opportunities was signed by ACMH in October 2023.

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Stephen Wolfe, Pennsylvania Mountains Care Network's President and CEO, joins Nichole Geraci, Armstrong County Memorial Hospital's President and CEO, in the signing of the affiliation agreement. (submitted photo)

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PACC reaches people with disabilities in several areas of the state with activities, employment support, and transition services. (submitted photos)



PACC: Connecting Communities and Changing Lives

By Jennifer Skarbek
for Hometown magazine

PA Connecting Communities (PACC) is a state-certified provider that aims to empower individuals with disabilities and to provide opportunities to improve their quality of life, supporting each person according to their needs. This nonprofit organization has been active in the state for two decades, celebrating 20 years of service this summer, and has gradually expanded from its base in the greater Pittsburgh area, with the goal of going statewide and then nationwide. This past year, PACC has begun to service individuals locally.

Program facilitator Kimberly Noon said, "We offer services in Clearfield, Jefferson, and Elk Counties, as well as events and programs in many communities within those counties."

Kimberly and her husband, Michael Noon, both worked for PACC in the Pittsburgh area, and when the couple decided to move to the tri-county area last spring, she said that the opportunity for the organization to expand became available through their staying with PACC for employment. Thus, Michael took on the role of director of PACC Tri-county, overseeing all operations and services in the area, and Kimberly became the lead event facilitator, hosting over 150 community-based events this past year.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to work together and to offer these services to individuals here," Kimberly stated. "We have loved being a part of these incredible communities, by connecting with people, businesses, and other local nonprofits."

Kimberly explained that PACC is a nonprofit organization that receives most of its funding through the services that are provided to individuals in the community.

PACC serves individuals with disabilities, including developmental, physical, behavioral, emotional, and sensory impairment.

She said, "PACC's events and activities promote community participation, socialization, skill-building and opportunities for inclusion."

Some of the activities that PACC has hosted in the area include bowling, bingo, ceramics, movie nights, swimming, library story time, exercising, and many more socialization and fun opportunities.

"We have had an overwhelmingly positive response since our expansion here in the Tri-County area and have had over 1,000 attendees at our events over the last nine months," Kimberly added.

PACC partners with over 6,000 businesses, individuals, families, school districts and providers across Pennsylvania. There are a lot of ways for businesses and organizations to get involved with the PACC community.

Kimberly said, "We are always looking for creative and fun events to host in the community at local businesses," adding that if you would like to be included as an event location, or to offer a service, you may contact her directly.

Although PACC's activities were mainly held in the DuBois area last year, the Noons have made it a priority to branch out into the neighboring communities, including Punxsutawney, where Kimberly said that all PACC's services are now available and where the organization will be joining forces with the Green Light program for some events.

In addition to social activities and community-based events, PACC offers direct in-home and

community support services, employment services, and transition services for students 14 years of age and older. Anyone interested in disability services such as Supportive Employment, Community Habilitation, and High School Transition Services, may contact PACC Tri-County Director Mike Noon at mnoon@pacc.org.

With PACC's Employment services, Kimberly stated, "We work with a pool of talented job seekers that are looking for jobs in many different types of industries." Businesses are encouraged to contact Mike Noon if they are interested and looking to fill a position within their company.

Likewise, Kimberly stressed that PACC is hiring. Interested applicants may contact Mike Noon for more information. She shared the fact that PACC was awarded the 2022 Pittsburgh Post Gazette "Best Place to Work" distinction.

"We have over 210 employees and are growing," Kimberly said.

She said that the organization welcomes volunteers for anyone interested in helping with events and activities. To receive a volunteer form, please contact Kimberly at knoon@pacc.org. There is a background check that will be required.

To make all these services possible, Kimberly said that PACC partners with businesses that are inspired by the organization's mission and would like to support its efforts financially through tax deductible contributions.

"With your help, we can impact more lives in our communities," she stressed. Any business wanting to help may contact PACC's director.

To get connected with all the community events and activities happening in the area, join the organization's Facebook group, PACC Tri-County (Clearfield, Jefferson, Elk). You may also visit the website pacc.org to learn more about PACC.

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