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Highlighting Neighborhood News & Events

Volume 3, Edition 2, February 2026



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Junior Leadership Hazleton Focuses on “Hazleton City Operations”

By: Pat Korb



JLH Students and flight personnel are pictured in front of LVHN Medivac Helicopter at the Hazleton Regional Airport.

It was a jam-packed session full of new experiences and insights as Junior Leadership Hazleton spent the day experiencing “Hazleton City Operations”.

Members of the City of Hazleton administrative office welcomed the class to the day’s activities, which earmarked some of the city’s responsibilities and operations.

After viewing a video highlighting the station and its outstanding features, Gary Potter led a tour of the impressive John M. Ford Bus Maintenance Storage Facility which has Ralph Sharp as Transit Director. The facility, which is named for the former Hazleton mayor who was instrumental in the creation of what today is Hazleton Public Transit, is one of the largest projects in the City of Hazleton’s history.

Students were then on board the bus to tour Hazleton Municipal Airport, Hazle Township, which featured Dave Chronowski, Regional Airport Manager. He explained that the facility is a full service FBO offering fuel, maintenance, hanger lease, and more, such as serving as a parachute jump base.

LVHN flight nurses Kathee, Lisa and pilot

John showed off the beautiful LVHN med-helicopter housed at this facility.

Students then traveled to meet with Donald Leshko, City of Hazleton Fire Chief and Deputy Chief Shawn Jones along with firefighters Keith Mhley, Kyle Jones, and Egan Killian at the Southside Fire Station. They provided JLH with an overview of the training facility for firefighters at this site and opened the trucks so everyone could see all the equipment necessary for battling fires. They told the class that firefighting efforts are coordinated across the area and there is always a need to procure and maintain expensive but necessary equipment. Chief Leshko asked the class to give serious consideration to the very critical need for volunteers, not only as firefighters, but in other supporting roles such as fundraising. Interested teens should contact their local fire department chiefs for further information.

JLH traveled to Hazleton City Hall for a tour of the historic building highlighting the bell tower and for a working lunch.

It was a short trip to the Hazleton Public Safety/Police Department Building for a tour with

Jessica Surkin, Community Liaison Officer, Sergeant Colton Kishel and First Sergeant Joseph Babula. This is an impressive state of the art facility already at full capacity and in full use by the Hazleton Police Department. The students also got a close look at a police tactical SWAT vehicle with its impressive array of modern equipment and observed a drone demonstration.

Minds full of new information, students then returned to the Bus Maintenance Storage Facility for wrap-up and dismissal, but before exiting the bus, they went through the daily bus washing process, always a fun experience.

A note of recognition to last year’s class members Eli Lazala Gomez and Yosmairi Arias who provided program assistance.

“We are so grateful for this very eventful day for us,” explains Mike Dougherty, Program Coordinator. “We all, including the JLH team and I, were just as impressed as the students enjoyed learning about all the things that make our city operable. It is so very important for the public, especially our young people, to be aware of the work being done to protect and care for us and the amazing people who provide us with these services.”

More pics and commentary about the session can be found on the Junior Leadership Hazleton Class of 2025-2026 Facebook Page.

Beginning in March, High School Sophomores should keep an eye out for information on applying for next year’s JLH Class on their school website, the Junior Leadership Hazleton Facebook page, and in the newspaper.

The next session of JLH is Monday, March 9th at the Hazleton Launchbox where we will get into more detail on Entrepreneurship and what it means to us.

Junior Leadership Hazleton is dedicated to Dr. Edgar L. Dessen, founder of CAN DO. It is a program administered by Leadership Hazleton, an affiliate of the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce. Funding for the program is provided, in part, by the CAN DO Community Foundation.

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Dane Watro, State Representative

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Community Information

The Anthracite Post

Highlighting Neighborhood News & Events

Letter from the Editors

Hello everyone! February . . . the month of Love! Although I had a nice time last night (Valentine's Day) at Woodies Restaurant in Freeland, listening to Jack James sing love songs accompanied by Frank Balon on his trumpet, I am not a fan of Valentine's Day. We should show our love every day without being obligated to have to spend a bunch of money on a certain day. Guys really get a raw deal with the price of a dozen roses. I think it would be much more special to receive them any other day (and at a lower cost) than a day where your mate feels he has to buy them.

How about this bitter winter? The coldest in 30 years. I sure hope those single digit days are now behind us. It looks like it is going to be in the 40s this week. That should melt a lot of this leftover gray, dirty snow.

I was finally able to get to the car wash today. I went at 7:15 this morning. There was no one there. It was like mud rinsing off my white car. The local car washes have been real busy with the temperature finally hitting the 40's.

As always, if you have any ideas, stories, recipes, photos, etc., that you would like to submit for *The Anthracite Post*, send us an email, text or give us a call.

Lee Ann & Shari

WRITTEN BY SHARI

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Pennsylvania State Police Troop N Camp Cadet 2026

The enrollment period for the **2026 Troop N Camp Cadet** program is now open and applications are being accepted through April 1, 2026. Anyone interested in attending camp can obtain an application at any of the following Troop N State Police Stations: Hazleton, Bloomsburg, Lehighton, Fern Ridge and Stroudsburg State Police.

The application is available for online registration at the Troop N Camp Cadet website - www.TroopNCampCadet.com.

The Troop N Camp Cadet program is open to boys and girls that are between the ages of 12 to 15 and reside in the Troop N area. This includes (lower) Luzerne, Monroe, Carbon, and Columbia Counties. The camp is held at Penn State Hazleton Campus and will run **June 21, through June 26, 2026**. This week-long camp is designed to give young people a better understanding of law enforcement activities in an atmosphere of an actual State Police training school. Once accepted, the cadet will reside at the camp for six days under the direct supervision of state and local police officers.



www.troopncampcadet.com | [f](#) [i](#)

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- ✓ Must be between ages 12 & 14
- ✓ Must be in good physical condition
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For information, contact: 570-459-3900
 Camp Director: TFC ANTHONY PETROSKI (x216)

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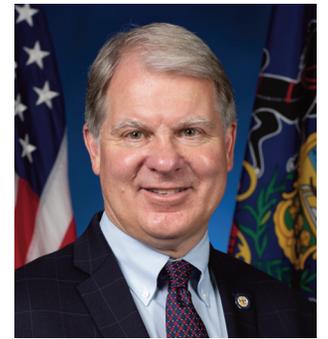
WORD LIST

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BOOTS	HOLIDAYS	NEW YEAR	SNOWMAN
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COLD	ICE HOCKEY	QUILT	SOCKS
DECEMBER	ICE SKATING	SCARF	SWEATER
EAR MUFFS	ICICLE	SKIING	TOBOGGAN
FIREPLACE	JANUARY	SNOWBOARDING	WINTER
FROZEN	MISTLETOE		



Senator Dave Argall 29th District Pennsylvania Senate

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Schuylkill, Carbon and Luzerne counties



Discussing Growth in the Hazleton Region with Mayor Cusat & Rep. Watro

By State Sen. Dave Argall (R-Schuylkill/Carbon/Luzerne)

I recently joined Hazleton Mayor Jeff Cusat and Rep. Dane Watro (R-116) for our regular update on the continued growth and momentum throughout the greater Hazleton region. These meetings provide an important opportunity to take stock of where we are and where we're headed as a community.

We discussed the many new businesses choosing to invest in Hazleton and the surrounding area, creating jobs and strengthening our local economy. Just as importantly, we talked about how we can continue supporting and improving education at every level — from early childhood learning to higher education — including Penn State Hazleton, which we successfully worked together to preserve this past year for our students and families.

Our conversation also focused on housing needs across the region, ensuring that growth is matched with safe, affordable places for families, seniors, and workers to live. In addition, we reviewed the continued expansion of community programs that improve quality of life, including the ongoing renovations and investment at the Hazleton YMCA.

These regular meetings highlight the strong collaboration between local and state leaders that is helping Hazleton move forward. And for those of you who know Mayor Cusat, you'll understand exactly why these discussions are productive, engaging — and NEVER boring!



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LIHEAP Can Help You Stay Warm this Winter

By State Rep. Jamie Walsh (R-Luzerne)

Residents who struggle with their home heating bills are reminded they can apply for assistance from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP is a federally funded program that helps individuals and families pay their heating bills through home heating energy assistance grants. It also provides crisis grants to help in the event of an emergency or if a resident is in danger of losing his or her heat due to broken equipment, lack of fuel or termination of utility service.

To qualify for LIHEAP in Pennsylvania, you must meet income requirements, which are set based on your household size. For example, the maximum annual income for an individual is \$23,475 and for a family of four it is \$48,225. For each additional person, add \$8,250 to the income limit.

Residents may apply for LIHEAP online at www.dhs.pa.gov/COMPASS, by phone at 1-866-857-7095 or by contacting the Luzerne County Assistance Office at 570-820-4882. My office is also always available to assist residence with this and other state programs.

LIHEAP runs through April 2026.



Trooper Anthony Petroski III
Public Information Officer
Community Service Officer
 Pennsylvania State Police
 Troop N - Hazleton



Happy New Year from all of us at Troop N. In Pennsylvania, it's the law to move over when approaching an emergency response area, which means a Police Officer who has a car pulled over or is investigating a motor vehicle crash, with their emergency lights on. If you are approaching this, you must move over to an adjacent lane, if possible, or if not, slow down 20 MPH below the posted speed limit. This law is often called the "Steer Clear Law" or the "Move Over Law". Penalties can include: - \$500 fine for first offense, \$1,000 fine for a second offense and \$2,000 for a third or subsequent offense and a 90-day license suspension for a third or subsequent offense.

- New point system that imposes 2 points for failing to merge into adjacent lane.
- \$10,00 fine if an emergency service responder is injured or killed.

Please be aware of this law and the strict penalties. Always focus on the road while you are driving to allow safe travels for everyone on the road!

Do you know where this Valentine heart is located?



Local entertainer Jack James, created this Valentine heart decoration which is displayed at Woodie's Luncheonette in Freeland. Jack stated that he used 200 lights to make this beautiful light up heart.

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Heating Assistance Program Now Open

By State Rep. Dane Watro (R-Luzerne/Schuylkill)

Winter is here and residents who struggle with their home heating bills are reminded they can now apply for assistance from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP is a federally funded program that helps individuals and families pay their heating bills through home heating energy assistance grants. It also provides crisis grants to help in the event of an emergency or if a resident is in danger of losing his or her heat due to broken equipment, lack of fuel or termination of utility service.

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Residents may apply for LIHEAP online at www.dhs.pa.gov/COMPASS, by phone at 1-866-857-7095 or through my offices.

The program runs through April 2026.

The 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show

The 110th Pennsylvania Farm Show – the country's largest indoor agricultural exposition under one roof – will be from Jan. 10 through Jan. 17 at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg.

This year's theme is "Growing a Nation," which, with 2026 being the 250th anniversary of American independence, is a great reminder that our democracy was born in Pennsylvania and our country grew from the very soil of our Commonwealth.

The 2026 Farm Show will feature fan-favorites like the 1,000-pound butter sculpture, delicious Farm Show Food Court, thousands of competitive agricultural events, homegrown celebrity cooking demonstrations at the PA Preferred® Culinary Connection, and more than 1 million square feet of hands-on agriculture education opportunities and chances to engage with the people who are growing Pennsylvania and our nation through agriculture.

Admission to the show is free, but parking is \$15 per vehicle. Shuttle service is provided.

New Law Protects Senior Citizens' Prescription Coverage

Medications play a vital role in preserving health and improving quality of life, but they can be costly, especially for our senior citizens. That's why I was pleased to support a new law that will protect thousands of Pennsylvania seniors from losing access to affordable prescription drug coverage.

Act 49 of 2025 extends the current Social Security cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) moratorium for the PACE and PACENET programs through Dec. 31, 2027. Without this extension, more than 22,000 older Pennsylvanians would have faced disruptions in their benefits due to modest increases in Social Security income.

The PACE and PACENET programs serve over 250,000 Pennsylvanians age 65 and older.

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MMI Preparatory School Student Advances to National Level of Prestigious Scholastic Writing Awards



Above: Kayleigh Erickson with Mrs. Jennifer Novotney.

(Freeland, PA – February 9, 2026) – MMI Preparatory School Head of School Mrs. Theresa Long is proud to announce that Kayleigh Erickson '28 has earned three honors in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for her poetry, including two Honorable Mentions and one Gold Key award. Her Gold Key-winning poem now advances to the national level of the competition, where it will be judged in New York City. National Medalists will be announced on March 25, 2026.

Kayleigh received Honorable Mention recognition for her poems “yearning” and “a ceremony by the sea,” and earned a Gold Key for her poem “girlhood.”

Kayleigh’s work was submitted as part of Academic Dean Mrs. Jennifer Novotney’s Creative Writing course, in which all students participated in the Scholastic Writing Awards this year. This classroom-wide submission reflects MMI’s commitment to authentic, real-world learning experiences that encourage students to share their voices beyond the classroom.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation’s longest-running and most prestigious recognition program for creative students in grades 7–12, offering opportunities for publication, exhibition, and scholarships of up to \$12,500. Wilkes University serves as the Northeastern Pennsylvania regional affiliate for the writing competition and will host a regional awards ceremony on March 22, where Kayleigh and other regional honorees will be recognized.

Mrs. Long praised both Kayleigh’s achievement and the learning culture that made it possible. “Kayleigh’s success reflects the kind of student-centered learning we value at MMI. We encourage students to think deeply, take creative risks, and engage with opportunities that challenge them to grow. This recognition is a wonderful affirmation of that approach.”

Mrs. Novotney highlighted Kayleigh’s talent and dedication. “Kayleigh is a thoughtful writer whose poetry demonstrates clarity and emotional depth. I am incredibly proud of her work and of all our Creative Writing students who embraced this opportunity to put their writing into the world.”

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A Thousand Times a Day (Part 7)

Submitted by *Kenny Wenner*. If you have any information about people in this article, please call Ken at 570-401-4564 or email kenwennersr@gmail.com.

We will continue with our local soldiers that went MIA during war. Too often history repeats itself as is the case of **Pfc John Spock**: of 1129 Birkbeck St. MMI graduate of 1939, was 24 years of age when reported MIA March 4, 1945. John enlisted June 6th 1943, went to Europe with the 5th Inf Div. In December 44 his unit went into combat on Christmas Eve, and he was listed MIA but then later rejoined his unit. The 5th was in action for a month. His cousin **John Ondich** of upper Lehigh was KIA on Luzon, Philippines in Jan 1944.

Sgt /Donald J. Megargel: Of Jeddo, age 28, graduate of HHS 1935, was reported MIA over Guam since June 14, 1945. As a tail gunner on a B29 Superfortress with the 21st Bomber Command in the Marianas, Donald flew 20 missions over Tokyo and other targets in Japan. The day he went MIA, 520 B 29's dropped 3,000 tons of incendiaries on Osaka, a large Japanese Industrial city. Megargel Enlisted in Nov 1943, joined his B 29 crew in Pratt, Kansas, and flew to the Marianas in Feb 1944. His wife is Helene O'Donnell of 825 Walnut St.

Pvt Thomas A. Kunrod: 176 S. Washington St, was 20 years old when he went he enlisted while a senior at FHS. (Eckley) He went MIA as a Ball turret gunner on a B 17 of the 8th A.F. based in England on July 9th over France when his plane failed to return from a mission. Brother, **M Sgt Michael Kunrod Jr**, is a radio engineer with the 8th AF who returned home after two years in England. Cousin **T Sgt John Nemchick** (Eckley) is listed as MIA since Dec 29th, 1943 after a flight over Tarawa, in the Marshall Islands Group. John was a B 24 "Liberator" crew member that failed to return to base at Taroa. His plane sustained heavy damage and was headed southwest past Millie Island to Makin Island. All 10 crew members are listed MIA.

Pfc Lindsay Rowland: Age 32, of 626 Front St, was a graduate of MMI and Lehigh University. He was listed MIA over Germany since Oct 4th, 1944 which is unusual for an infantry man. Because of his

radio training he may have been an artillery observer in a light aircraft and either was shot down or had aircraft trouble. Rowland landed on D-Day and was wounded several days later. He recovered at an English hospital and rejoined his unit in mid-August. His close friend **Pfc Louis Bott** of Nuremberg was KIA in France Sept 17th. The two were together since enlisting in 1942. Rowland enlisted Apr. 27, 1942 and went to England in Aug of 1942.

Pvt Steve Kanyock: age 21, of Hollywood MIA since Nov. 21, 1944 was pronounced KIA. He had served in England, France, Belgium, and Germany. Brothers SSgt Andrew Kanyock, and Pvt Michael are serving in the US Army.

Sgt Steven Husovich: Age 27, of Walnut St, was a graduate of FHS and attended St Mary's school. Steven was listed a MIA in France since June 25th, 1944, then later as KIA. The 22nd Inf of the 4th Div took part in the D-Day invasion landing near St Mere Eglise on the right flank of the beach head. The 4th pushed toward the Cherbourg Peninsula and met stiff fighting at Montebourg. They then smashed forward to help capture and hold Cherbourg on Monday, June 26th. The 4th swept into Cherbourg on the right flank of the attack while the 79th and 9th Divs took center and left. The 4th was assigned to take the airport ½ mile east of town. Fighting raged for 3 days and it's quite possible Steven 's life ended during this operation.

Lt. John Feeley: Listed as MIA in France then KIA. Graduate HHS of 1938, and Penn State University. He was a glider officer and Adjutant of a Battalion of the 82nd Airbourne. John participated in the Normandy invasion. He first went overseas Nov. 23, 1943 and served in Africa, Sicily, and Italy, before going to England to prepare for D-Day.

T-5 Michael Feno: Age 29, of Eckley, attended St. Mary's Church. Was listed MIA then KIA in France June 17th 1944. His 4th Div landed D-Day near St Mere Eglise where they met Airbourne troops. Fought their way into Montbourg on June

17th. And then to Cherbourg. Other area soldiers in company where **Sgt George Banyas** of Hemlock St, **Pvt John Duda** of RD White Haven, and **Sgt Steven Husovich** Rd of White Haven. Banyas and Duda were wounded in June 8th, 1944, and Husovich was MIA June 25th. They had all gone overseas together in Jan 1943. Michael's brother, **Cpl George Feno Jr** is serving in England.

Pvt Harold Krouse: age 34, of Sandy Run was listed as MIA in France since Sept 30th. Harold entered the service Jan 7, 1944 and went overseas in July. His father was a mine official for M.S. Kemmerer Co. in Sandy Run.

Pvt Albert Snyder: age 22, of Japan Jeddo, served as a medical corpsman when he went MIA in France on June 16th with the 2nd Div. The 2nd followed the 1st Div ashore on D-Day near Trevieres on the left flank of the American beach head. Their unit was next to the British and Canadian units. He was last seen on a road between St Lo and Caen as his unit rushed to seal off the Cherbourg Peninsula. Albert entered the Army in the fall of 1942. His brother **Pfc Peter Snyder Jr** was among the first to establish airbases on Greenland. His uncle **Pfc Michael Fogash** of Drifton is a veteran of Tunisia and Sicily and returned stateside after being WIA.

This is in no way is a full listing of POW's and MIA's. During WWII, Freeland was a town of 7500 people plus all the surrounding villages. There were approx. 2500 service connected people at that time. I may have the accounts of 400 total. Remember them. Maybe not "A thousand Times a Day" but once as you read their names.

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Arthur and Eileen Whitaker Memorial Trade Scholarship Application Now Available

By: Pat Korb

Applications for The 2026 Arthur and Eileen Whitaker Memorial Trade Scholarship can now be found on the Hazleton Rotary Website at www.hazletonrotary.org, Hazleton Rotary Facebook Page, local Guidance Offices, and local financial aid offices. This scholarship was previously known as The Hazleton Rotary Technical Scholarship but was re-named following a generous donation from Rotarian Alan Whitaker in memory of his late parents.

Rotary President Joan Buffington says, "We are so very grateful that for the first time there will be two Whitaker Trade Scholarships for Rotary, each a one-time grant of \$2,000. This is so wonderful as it provides even more opportunity for interested area students to receive some financial assistance."

Each scholarship is a one-time award of \$2,000, which was established in 2023 to further area students' formal training and education in a bona fide trade school or similar training/educational program, including but not limited to, plumbing, welding, electrical, HVAC, masonry, truck and automotive maintenance, automotive repair, CDL licensure, beauty school, barber school, massage

therapy, and licensed practical nurse programs, but excluding education and training for which a baccalaureate or higher degree may be awarded.

The following criteria will be used in the screening of applications for this scholarship.

- Candidates must reside in the boundaries of the Hazleton Area School District.
- Candidates must be under the age of 30 years old.
- Applications will be judged specifically on the following criteria: Academic Information, Essay, Employment-Activities & Service, and Financial Need.

Dependents of members of Hazleton Rotary are not eligible.

AI Use Policy: Essays must be written entirely by the student. Use of artificial intelligence tools for Entries suspected of AI assistance may be subject to follow-up review. Students certify upon submission that the work is their own and understand that violation will result in disqualification.

Be sure to include specific examples of your own volunteer efforts in the essay question.

"Many people in the Greater Hazleton Area are still seeking quality jobs, yet employers often struggle to find candidates with the technical skills they need." said Kim McNulty, Chair of the Scholarship Committee. "Programs like these offer education with a clear purpose. They provide hands-on learning and are taught by instructors who are skilled, experienced, and well-connected in their fields. Unfortunately, some local students overlook technical education, missing out on valuable career opportunities. We hope this scholarship will encourage more learners to consider technical careers."

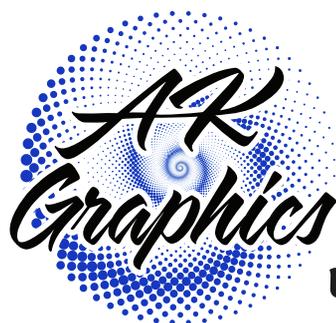
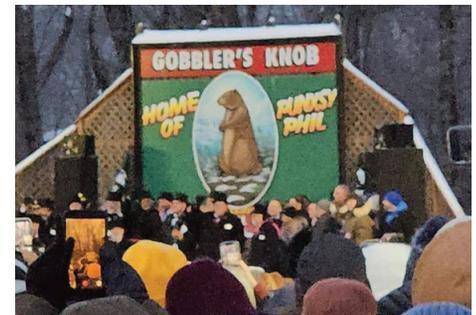
Completed applications, along with a letter of recommendation, are due no later than Wednesday, April 15, 2026.

Please contact Kim McNulty at kmcnulty@mmiprep.org or 570-636-1108 x138 with any questions. Completed applications should be emailed to kmcnulty@mmiprep.org or mailed to:

2025 Arthur and Eileen Whitaker
Memorial Trade Scholarship
c/o Kim McNulty
MMI Preparatory School
154 Centre Street, Freeland, PA 18224

Freeland Girls Take Road Trip to See Punxsutawney Phil

Lisa Crawford (originally from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania) and friend Crystal Dooley headed to Punxsutawney in the early hours of Groundhog Day 2026.



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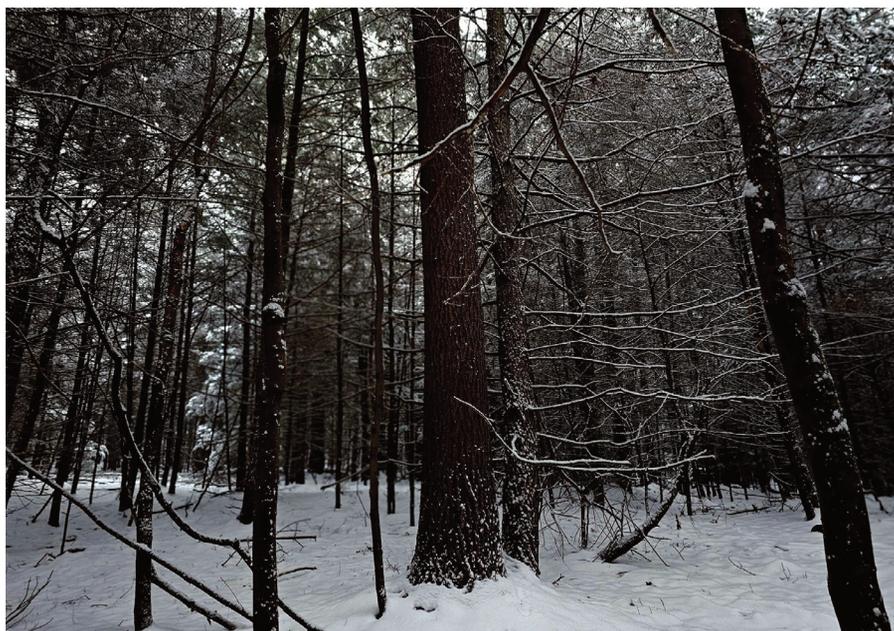
A Changed Landscape: Local Hiking During the Winter

By William M. Dempsey

For people who enjoy hiking in the warmer months, winter hiking can offer a breathtaking change of pace. A winter hike is not just a change of season; it is a significant shift in how you see things. It takes away the familiar and presents you with the stark, appealing scenery of the Anthracite region. When the canopy of leaf-covered hardwoods gives way to bare branches, the forest is no longer a sealed-off world but a vast open cathedral that provides you a view of the terrain that you can't see at any other time of year.

The most rewarding change of the winter season is how clear the views become. The distant horizons look sharper, allowing hikers to fully appreciate the intricate network of mountains and valleys. You can see for miles from the ridges that look down on places like the Lehigh River Gorge, a strip of water that often runs dark against the white snow. It can also be seen from Campbell's Ledge, another excellent destination, in Luzerne County. This geographical discovery is abundant during the winter. These features provide us a deeper understanding of the area by revealing features previously hidden by leaf-covered trees, bushes, and plant life, such as subtle glacial erratics, the winding paths of long-abandoned rail grades and logging roads, and the dramatic curves of the local rivers.

The stark beauty of the snow and ice adds to the experience. The new snow covers the ground in silence, making it feel very lonely, unlike a busy summer trail. The green colors of late spring and summer of local woods change to a striking mix of grays, shades of brown, and pure snow whites. In this backdrop, the vivid emerald colors of hemlocks and pines stand out with remarkable visual intensity. The area's cascading waterfalls are even more captivating. The water often freezes into



Snow blankets Carbon County during a recent hike through the winter landscape.
- Photograph by William M. Dempsey

temporary ice sculptures. These columns of frozen water and crystal formations can change with temperature fluctuations. This unique opportunity to witness nature's power is worth pursuing.

Precautions are needed to enjoy this winter scenery safely. Hiking in the snow and ice can be unique, so you need two essential pieces of gear for your boots: Microspikes are vital for trails that are frozen, packed with snow, or glazed with ice. These small steel spikes strap easily over regular winter boots and provide the traction you need to safely walk on the potentially dangerous, icy terrain you will likely encounter. Another essential for deep, fresh, or soft snow (usually 6 inches or more) is snowshoes. They help distribute your weight and prevent "post-holing," which occurs when you sink deep into the powder.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) assists beginners by allowing them to borrow snowshoes at state

parks like Hickory Run and Nescopeck. Borrowing snowshoes lets you try the sport and become familiar with their use before you make the investment.

Here are some winter hikes in the area that offer everything from wide-open views to impressive ice formations. Before going out, always check the weather and trail conditions in your area:

- Hawk Falls Trail (Carbon County): Offers spectacular views of a frozen waterfall and river vistas. The trailhead is located in Hickory Run State Park (near Rt. 534).
- Lehigh Gorge Trail (Carbon/Luzerne County): A flat, scenic route through the river gorge, perfect for viewing ice formations. Access is often through the Rockport Access Area (Carbon Co.).
- Campbell's Ledge (Luzerne County): Provides a panoramic vista of the Wyoming Valley. The trailhead is near the Seven Tubs Recreation Area (off Rt. 115).
- Shades of Death Trail (Carbon County): A hike through a unique stream valley that features dramatic ice cascades. The trailhead is located within Hickory Run State Park.

Those who are prepared and willing to brave the cold will discover that our local winter landscape is a gift. Winter hikes allow you to experience the quiet side of nature and the beautiful world that the summer leaves hide. It is an exciting and rewarding perspective that turns a well-known path into a winter scene viewed through an entirely different lens.

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Amaryllis

By: Joan E. Banyas, Penn State Extension Master Gardener for Luzerne County



Waxed Amaryllis Bulbs

As winter approaches, many gardeners look for a way to keep live flowers and plants as a part of their winter home décor. Nature helps us by providing hardy outdoor plants like evergreens and holly bushes. However, popular indoor winter plants often come from warmer regions of the globe. Potted poinsettias and Christmas cactuses are two familiar examples. Similarly, a third popular indoor plant is the amaryllis. A large bulb potted in planting medium and cared for with watering and sunlight sends forth a tall green stalk with stately lily-like flowers, usually in shades and patterns of red, pink, and white. However, another version of the amaryllis is becoming popular as an easy-to-grow, trendy alternative. This is the waxed bulb amaryllis, and it requires only sunlight to provide colorful, fresh blooms throughout the dark winter months.

What's in a name?

The name "amaryllis" is derived from the Greek word amarysso, which means "to sparkle." However, the plants we commonly refer to as the amaryllis today are hybrids and aren't considered to be true amaryllis. They are part of the genus Hippeastrum, which is native to tropical areas of Central and South America. The true amaryllis (Amaryllis spp.) is native to Africa.

However, both Hippeastrum and Amaryllis are part of the amaryllis family.

Traditional amaryllis plant

The amaryllis plant begins as a bulb, a specialized, self-contained underground structure with thick, fleshy scales serving as food reserves. The scales surround a flat, modified stem on the bottom of the bulb from which the roots grow. The bulb's center contains the buds for the leaves and flowers. Most amaryllis available from garden centers are planted in narrow pots. Only about 1 inch of space is left on each side of the bulb, as they like to be a bit root-bound. Additionally, 1/3 of the bulb sits above the soil line to prevent rotting, which could occur if it is planted too deeply. The pot is placed in bright indirect sunlight away from drafts, cold windows, or drying heat and watered sparingly, allowing the soil to dry slightly between waterings. If these care instructions are followed, blooms usually appear in approximately 6 to 8 weeks.

Waxed amaryllis bulbs plants

In contrast, the waxed amaryllis plant is a popular twist to traditional planting and growing methods. Ease of care and decorative variety are two important reasons why many people opt for the waxed version. Instead of being prepared for planting, the bulb is trimmed to remove its roots, and a wire may be inserted into the bottom to allow it to stand on its own. The bulb is then coated in thick wax to seal it. The wax locks in the bulb's essential nutrients and moisture, allowing them to contribute to foliage and flower development rather than root development. Since the bulbs are sealed in wax, they don't have to be planted in soil, in a pot, or even watered. They can be displayed almost

anywhere as long as the spot is warm and has bright, indirect light. In addition, the waxy coating can be a design element, as many plants are festively colored, patterned, or decorated with beads or glitter.

Using the stored carbohydrates and water, bulbs will produce stalks with beautiful blooms in 4 to 6 weeks. There are usually two flowering stalks per bulb, lasting approximately 3 weeks. To keep the stalk growing straight, it is a good idea to turn the bulb every few days to give it even sunlight. Remove each flower stalk when the last blooms on it fades.

When choosing a waxed amaryllis for purchase, look it over carefully for any insect damage, signs of infection, or spent flower stalks. Also, avoid waxed bulbs that have already begun to bloom. They may not bloom properly at home or may have a reduced bloom time.

Reblooming waxed amaryllis bulbs

Waxed bulb amaryllis are generally intended to be single-use plants and discarded when done blooming. The bulb can't grow without roots, and the wax coating and even glitter are not compostable. You can try to compost the bulb, but remove the wax first.

Some gardeners, however, have been successful in getting waxed amaryllis bulbs to rebloom. In order to do this, you must first gently remove the wax, which may come off in small pieces or as a large section that peels off easily. Try to avoid disturbing the brown outer layer of the bulb, leaving as much of it on as possible. You can start removing the wax from either end of the bulb, but if you begin at the base, cutting a "V" into the edge with a sharp knife may help in pulling off the wax more easily.

When the wax has been removed, take a sturdy, flat plastic container with sides, such as a coffee can lid, and fold a paper towel to at least double thickness to fit inside. Lightly dampen the towel and place the bulb on top, and put it in a sunny window. Check the bulb every day or two, and keep the paper towel evenly damp. Make sure there is no standing water in the tray, or conditions may be too wet for root formation.

In approximately 4 to 6 weeks, small white roots should begin to grow. Gradually increase the towel's dampness, but, again, don't leave standing water in the tray.

When the bulb forms four or five roots, each about 3 inches long, you can now place it in a small pot with drainage holes. As with the traditional amaryllis planting, the pot should be no more than 1 to 2 inches wider than the bulb on all sides. Regular potting soil should be used, and again, keep the top one-third of the bulb above the soil line and fully visible.

You may line the container with a standard coffee filter with sides to keep the soil from washing out. At this point, water your new planting sparingly and place it in bright, indirect light in a warm spot. Now you can follow instructions to care for the plant just as you would a traditional amaryllis bulb.

You can keep the vibrancy of living, growing plants and flowers in your home, even on the coldest, snowiest days of winter. With minimal care and maximum beauty, you can enjoy the waxed bulb amaryllis plant almost anywhere in your home until hints of spring start appearing!

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2026 Hazleton Rotary Memorial Scholarships

By: Pat Korb

Applications for four 2026 Hazleton Rotary Memorial Scholarships are now available for seniors graduating this spring/summer. Applications can be found at the Hazleton Rotary Website at www.hazletonrotary.org, Hazleton Rotary Facebook Page, and the Guidance Offices of all applicable schools.

"We are proud to announce that there are four Hazleton Rotary Scholarships available for 2026. The first award will be \$6,000 annually for four years for a total scholarship of \$24,000. The second award will be \$3,500 annually (\$14,000 scholarship total), the third award will be \$2,000 annually (\$8,000 scholarship total) and the fourth award will be \$1,000 annually for four years (\$4,000 total)." reports Scholarship Committee Chair Kim McNulty.

Eligible applicants must reside within the geographic boundaries of the Hazleton Area School District, must be in good academic standing and must achieve a grade point average of 2.75 or equivalent average each semester in their post-secondary studies in order to renew the scholarship.

An additional eligibility requirement is that the recipient must attend at least one meeting of Hazleton Rotary each year to give a report and update to Rotarians.

Dependents of members of Hazleton Rotary are not eligible.

The selection of the four scholarship recipients shall be based on the following criteria:

- Academic Information
- Employment, Activities, and Civic Involvement
- An essay explaining how volunteering makes a difference in our world being sure to include specific examples of one's own volunteer efforts in the essay question.

"I am so very honored to be President of a Rotary membership that works so hard to be able to provide this sort of scholarship to four deserving area students," explains Rotary President Joan Buffington. "Hazleton Rotary always looks forward to helping members of the Greater Hazleton community, especially our young people and their families. Our first scholarship, for \$1,000 was awarded in 1989, and as you can see, we have been able to dramatically increase the number of scholarships and their value thanks to the efforts of our Hazleton Rotarians and area donors."

Each applicant shall be required to submit the application which includes an essay, official transcript, and one letter of recommendation from a teacher, administrator, guidance counselor or a responsible community person who knows the applicant. This application packet is due no later than Wednesday, April 15, 2026. Please contact Kim McNulty at kmcnulty@mmiprep.org or 570-636-1108x138 with any questions. Completed applications should be emailed to kmcnulty@mmiprep.org or mailed to:

2025 Hazleton Rotary Memorial Scholarships
c/o Kim McNulty
MMI Preparatory School
154 Centre Street, Freeland, PA 18224

A Veterans Journal #107

By Joseph Barna • Freeland
USMC, Korea 1952-1953



When I think back to my time in the Korean War and stood feet away from a bullet hitting a young Marine or shrapnel ripping into a Soldier, I know what my New Year's resolution would be. I would trade my life for either of them. I have lived through enough years. Let them see their grandkids as I have seen and held mine in my arms. As I get older, I sometimes feel that I'm running out of tomorrows. I accept this.

Your life is what's behind you. It's what is ahead of you. But it all lies within you. How have you lived your life? We know the tradition that says: I'm going to make a New Year's resolution. Was there something in the past year that you wish you had done differently? I have always believed what I was doing was the right thing to do. If I was wrong, I was to blame, no one else. It all comes down to believing in yourself. Resolutions to me, are a way of saying, I could have done something a little different, but now it's too late.

All my life, I found out that the greatest things you can possess are strong friendships. Friends that will help you make the right decisions in life.

Never worry too much about what's in front of you. What you have done to that point, will get you through whatever comes your way. If you live with friendship, love, faith,

hope, courage and think of others, you don't have to say "Wait till next year, that I will do things differently."

Are resolutions the hope of what may happen? I believe when I was born, God left a message on the bed next to my mother. The message read: When this boy is growing up, teach him to think with his head, but act with his heart. I spent two years in the Marines. There, you don't think for yourself. Others tell you right from wrong, when to sit and when to stand. When to run and when to walk. You may find yourself in combat where there are no times for resolutions. Each day you live, you had one supreme goal, to stay alive.

Many parents prayed that their sons would come home and live a long life. Other parents had to bury a young boy who never got to be a father, who never got to be a grandfather, and who never got to be an old man. What would have been their last resolution?

You are the only one who can decide what kind of life you want to live. Take life one day at a time. When I sat in a trench for many nights, I only asked God for one thing. To see the sunrise the next morning. There are many things one asks for, but never receives. Be who you are and what you are, and only you can decide. No one controls your life but you. Happy New Year!

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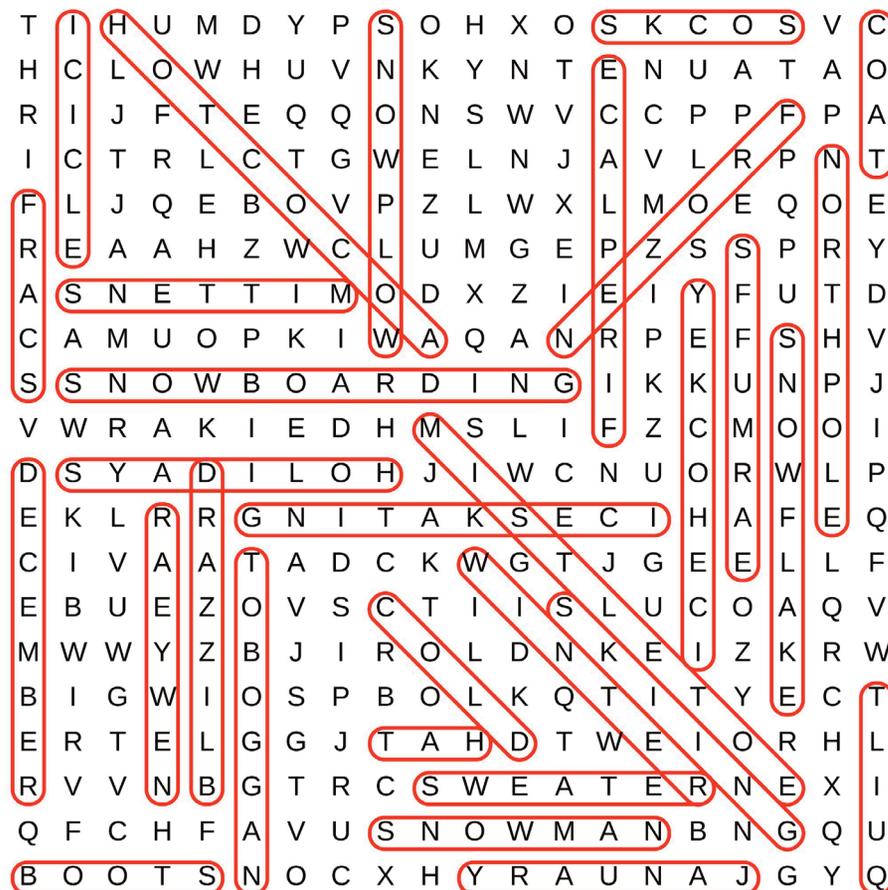
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WINTER WORDSEARCH





Sports Trivia Treats

By Ron Marchetti

100 Anniversary of the Rise and Fall of the Pottsville Maroons

In 1925, THE POTTSVILLE MAROONS, from the heart of Pennsylvania coal country, joined the fledging National Football League. Built by an eccentric owner, molded by a visionary coach, and led by hardscrabble miners, the Maroons did the unthinkable by dominating the NFL in their inaugural season. The team so thoroughly humiliated one opponent that angry fans shot up its train car as Pottsville rode out of town. In the final game of the season, the Maroons traveled to the Midwest to face the league leading Chicago Cardinals in what was viewed as the championship game of 1925. The Maroons overcame a windy city snow storm to defeat the Cardinals 21. But the fans wanted more. College ball was still king at that time. As news of Pottsville's success was splashed across newsreels and headlines throughout the country, a movement was ignited to have the Maroons face a team of all-stars from the University of Notre Dame featuring the legendary Four Horsemen. Experts believed the NFL was still decades away from competing with college football. But on a neutral field in Philadelphia (Shibe Park), in a battle described as "The Greatest Football Game Ever Seen". the Maroons turned the football establishment upside down, defeating Notre Dame 9-7 on a last second field goal Pottsville's victory over Notre Dame legitimized the NFL, but it also destroyed the town and team that made it all possible. Claiming the Maroons had violated the territory of another franchise by playing Notre Dame, the NFL suspended Pottsville and awarded the 1925 championship to the Cardinals. For more than 99 years, fans of the Pottsville Maroons - the team Red Grange said was "the most ferocious" he ever faced, have fought to have the 1925 title returned to its rightful owner.

Snubbing Notre Dame From the 12-Team Layoff Was a Travesty

11-2 BYU, 11-2 Texas and 10-2 Notre Dame were eliminated from the 12-team playoff of the best teams in the country to compete for the College football National Championship. Notre Dame lost their first 2 games this season by a total of 4 points (27-24 to Miami and 41-40 to Texas A&M) in the last week of September. However, since then the Irish have won 10 straight very handily while outscoring those 10 opponents 482 to 171 (over 30 pts average per game). Their 2 losses were to ranked teams that are in the top 12. 18 of the points yielded were touchdowns scored on the game's final play. James Madison and Tulane are good teams but certainly not in the top 12. They both will be destroyed by Oregon and Ole Miss. by at least 25 points. If I am wrong, I will eat crow in my next article. I don't think so. Change the format! Thanks for reading. Til next time, be a good sports and stay loose.



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Forgotten Apples: A Brief History of Cider

Long before craft beverages were a thing humans were accidentally inventing hard cider. It likely started when someone forgot apples in a basket, nature did that fermentation thing, and ancient people said, "Whoa! This makes everything just a bit more tolerable."

Yes, cider goes back thousands of years. The ancient Romans loved it, Vikings drank it and medieval Europeans treated it almost like a food group. Remember water wasn't always safe back then, but fermented apples were!

When settlers came to America, they planted apple trees like it was their job because it kind of was. Johnny Appleseed wasn't spreading apples just for pie, he was doing it for the cider business.

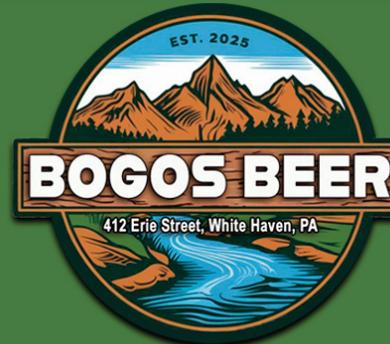
Then Prohibition showed up and ruined everything for a while, pushing cider into the dusty corner of history for a bit.

Today cider is back, it's cooler, more creative, and finally getting the modern respect it deserves. This proves once again that if you wait long enough, everything comes back in style.

-Jeff & Desiree Bonomo

Watch Jeff & Desiree talk about all things in the craft beverage world on

Wine Hops and Road Stops on Service Electric Cable and Blue Ridge Cable or online at
www.youtube.com/@winehopsroadstops and facebook.com/winehopsandroadstops



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