



The Anthracite Post

Highlighting Neighborhood News & Events

Volume 3, Edition 9, September 2026



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Freeland Celebrates Grand Sesquicentennial

By: Bobby Maso

The Freeland Sesquicentennial observances, which brought to celebration our borough's amazing 150th birthday, were a terrific success.

For the past year and a half, numerous events were held to commemorate this milestone to the fullest. From summer picnics in the park, history walks and cemetery tours, a middle school

Halloween dance, Thanksgiving food drive, history presentations, and a spaghetti dinner fundraiser, everything was meant to say one thing very clearly- Freeland was not only ready to celebrate its 150th year, it was absolutely excited to do it.

Yet, all of that was merely the appetizer for the main event. From the very beginning, it was the intention of the Freeland 150th Celebration

Committee to host the biggest and most spectacular observance in Freeland's history.

That was the birth of what we christened Celebration Weekend- the four day, three-night gathering that was to bring together numerous smaller events and ceremonies all to create a festive experience unlike any other.

For those who missed it, the following is a recap of the grand finale event schedule that kicked off the official sesquicentennial slate of activities.

On Thursday night, Sept. 10th, Celebration

Weekend began with a soft opening featuring a few craft and food vendors at the Public Park. The main portion of the evening featured Frank Balon presenting his unique slideshow on the 1976 Freeland Centennial and American Bicentennial festivities from 50 years ago. After the program, all who attended were invited to share their favorite

stories of growing up in or visiting Freeland. The stories shared ranged from humorous and comical to touching and profound. That evening, the Freeland Historical Society, St. Ann's Band, and Crime Watch offered displays to better acquaint visitors with each organization's history.

The morning of Friday, Sept. 11th is when the true 150th observance officially

began. At 8 that morning, St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church on Fern Street celebrated a special liturgy offered for the safety and prosperity of the town itself. Just a short while later, for 3 minutes, from 9:11 to 9:14 a.m., the church bells in Freeland rang in unison to commemorate not only the sesquicentennial, but also stand in remembrance of the tragic events of Sep. 11th 25 years ago. At 10 a.m., at the borough building, the opening dedicatory ceremony announcing the borough's birthday celebration took place.

(continued on page 4)



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The Anthracite Post

Highlighting Neighborhood News & Events

Letter from the Editors

Hello everyone! Fall is right around the corner. If it were up to me, it would be Fall all year - warm days, cool nights and all the beautiful fall tree colors. Then of course there's pumpkins and Halloween (my favorite) soon headed our way.

If you missed the 150th Anniversary of Freeland Celebration, you missed out on some great food, great music and a fantastic parade! The Anthracite Post, along with many other Freeland & local businesses and organizations lined up to show our Freeland Pride! A special Thank You to my brother Dale, for letting us put "The Anthracite Post" magnets on his Jeep and driving himself and me in the Parade. It was a lot of fun! Hats off to Bobby Maso for organizing such a memorable event! (You can watch the entire parade on our facebook page - Lee Ann took live video).

Another big event will be happening soon - The Bloomsburg Fair! Be sure to visit the Fair for all your favorite fair foods and to check out all the cool exhibits.

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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Celebrating Freeland's 150th Anniversary!





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Freeland Celebrates Grand Sesquicentennial (Cont'd)

Special dignitaries on hand included PA Senator Dave Argall, State Representative Jamie Walsh (both of whom provided official citations), Freeland Elementary Middle School Principal Frank Walton, FEMS students Lydia Lutz and Ayden Ego, MMI student Ian Composto, and brand new Freeland Mayor Tom Tierney. The young people shared personal reflections and commentaries on the importance of community, as well as what the annual observance of 9/11 means to them not personally being old enough to have lived through it. Opening invocation for the ceremony was provided by Fr. Ken Seeger of Immaculate Conception Parish.

It was a fitting beginning to all that was to follow for the remainder of the weekend.

At 4 p.m. that afternoon, more craft and food vendors crowded the bustling Public Park. They were joined by musical performances that stretched the entirety of the weekend; Tom Molinaro began the musical portion of the night with a great one-man show, followed by what just may be the most memorable and passionate concert conducted by the St. Ann's Band in some time, which is truly saying something given all that the band has meant to the borough in it's 127-year existence.

At 7:30, a special 25th anniversary 9/11 commemoration program began inside the historic Public Park pavilion. The opening invocation was conducted by Pastor Jeremy Yadsko of Bethel Baptist Church. He was then followed by a special prayer said by members of the Breath of Life Christian Mission, which exists on Washington Street in the very same building which once stood as Sts. Peter and Paul Slovak Lutheran Church- the very first of its kind in the entire Western Hemisphere.

From there, retired former Freeland Police Chief Dan Minor, now a successful nationwide podcaster located in Las Vegas, addressed the attendees with personal memories of what it was like to lead the borough's police force on the sad day a quarter century ago.

His remarks were further bolstered by the next speaker- Tammy Martin Leshko, former mayor of Freeland, who was the town's first lady on the day of the terror attacks. She recalled how she and her husband, then-mayor, the late Tim Martin, did their best to comfort the community and offer support to all on that historic and infamous day.

The featured speaker was Jim Rogers, who worked for a salvage company in New York City on the day the attacks happened. He, like so many others, was pressed into service to help assist with cleanup efforts at Ground Zero. Now a resident of Freeland, his firsthand account brought many to feel the true weight of the disaster from a perspective no one else could truly offer.

The Freeland Community Choir performed two moving renditions of America the Beautiful and God Bless America to complete the inside portion of the program.

Moving out of the historic pavilion, the Freeland Fire Dept., combined with Fearnots Fire Dept. of Foster Twp., set up the ladders of their trucks on Front St. to form an arch with Old Glory suspended high above. Candles were handed out and lighted to conduct a vigil, much the same way as had been done on the same night in 2001, when concerned citizens of town, still reeling from the horrific events of the day, gathered at the park to comfort one another and to mourn. For this year's memorial, the Freeland American Legion Post 473 offered their Salute to the Fallen.

Minutes later, the somber and the solemn was replaced with the celebratory, as talented local baker Leandra Balas unveiled a 6' long birthday cake in honor

of Freeland, bearing 150 candles, and ironically weighing 150 pounds. This was followed by the customary singing of the Happy Birthday song to punctuate the official birthday party thrown for the borough.

To complete the night, a large fireworks display lasting nearly 40 minutes was provided by the Chamber of Commerce, with special help from Principal Walton. While not set off from the park, the colorful light show was certainly visible by all who gathered there.

At 9 a.m. Saturday, Immaculate Conception celebrated a special liturgy for Freeland.

Around 11:45, a pre-parade ceremony was conducted outside the American Legion building on Centre St. The Legion provided their beautiful and stirring Color Guard. Remarks were made by MMI head of school Theresa Long and immediate past Rotary District 7410 Governor, Tim Genetti. The National Anthem played by the trumpet of Frank Balon ended the ceremony.

Noon brought the largest parade in over 50 years down the streets of Freeland. Grand Marshal Joe Stepansky, the Freeland Fire Dept. Chief, led the festivities, attended by crowds on all sides of the parade route, which led down Centre from Front, over Hazle St., and all the way up Washington, before turning onto Front and ending at the park. Beautiful blue skies overhead crowned the event.

The Hazleton Liberty Band took to the stage inside the pavilion after the parade, followed by North of 40, who played for three solid, enjoyable hours.

Non-profit groups and many other vendors, including the completely donation-driven Endless Dreams Animal Retreat out of Benton, who provided a popular petting zoo for young and old alike, dotted the park grounds. (Other vendors inside the pavilion throughout the weekend included the Hazleton Art League, Freeland Elementary Middle School PTA, and Domestic Violence Victims Resource Center of Wilkes-Barre)

On Sunday, rain and cloudy skies may have started the morning weather-wise, but it was a much brighter condition inside the churches of St. James Episcopal in Drifton, St. Michael's Orthodox on Fern St., St. John's Reformed on Washington, and Bethel Baptist on Ridge & Walnut, all of whom who celebrated special masses in honor of Freeland.

The sun emerged brilliantly a short time later as the concluding programs of the weekend got underway at the park.

Frank Balon, along with Jack James, hit the stage inside the pavilion and provided covers of many hit tunes from the 60's, 70's, and 80's. This was followed by an informative program on area coal mining history, led by John Michael Smith of the Underground Miners organization. So popular was Smith's initial program that he offered it a second time, following the annual-in-the-making cupcake bakeoff, and concert from Autumn Falls Entertainment.

The closing program of the day and event was a presentation about the Disastrous Freeland Fire of 1886, which was a day away from observing its 140th anniversary at that time.

To each and every person and organization who contributed or donated anything from time to money or help, support and love to making the sesquicentennial of Freeland a resounding success, the 150th Celebration Committee offers its eternal thanks.

The entire 150th observance was a complete success thanks to the deep love that all feel for our wonderful Freeland!

Freeland's 150th Observations have been 30 Years in the Making for Me

By: Bobby Maso

Even though Freeland officially reached its Sesquicentennial Anniversary on September 11th, our 150th Celebration Committee began organizing events to commemorate this occasion in early last 2025. But for me, you might say that the anticipation has been going on for quite longer.

Back in 1996, I was just eight years-old. At the time, my dad, Bob Maso, had been out of school for 21 years- a graduate of the Freeland High School Class of 1975. And my mom, Annette Barna, was getting ready for her upcoming Freeland High Class of 1976 20th reunion. Yet both of them were very reflective of two other events that had taken place two decades earlier- America's awesome Bicentennial and Freeland's Centennial.

As I recall, the summer of '96 found each of them frequently reminiscing about Freeland's milestone year- the one that had seen them and many others essentially entering into adulthood. I've always been close with my parents, and seeing them excitedly recall that great period in their lives, with such vivid detail, somehow brought it to life for me, almost as if I had been there myself.

They jubilantly explained the significance of both occasions - what it had meant for America to ring in its 200th year, and for our beloved little Freeland to follow right behind with pride in its 100th. Then there was the descriptions of the sights- a huge parade in late August with festive, colorful floats, the men in town bearing unique beards and mustaches, amusement rides, people everywhere waving patriotic flags. The sounds apparently had been great, too; lively music from town staples like St. Ann's Band, Freeland High School Marching Band, cheerleaders from Freeland, Hazleton, and West Hazleton high schools loudly shouting their enthusiasm into the air, and more. The costumes were bright, the faces happy, and the voices swelled with pride.

I have always loved and appreciated history. Being a kid that young, I found the idea of life before my time so interesting. And let's face it, when you're eight, hearing about something that happened 20 years in the past might as well be like learning about the dinosaur age. It's so hard to relate to, but it also fills you with fascination. I know I just loved it!

As the years went on following 1996, my parents shared their memories of that great time with semi-regularity. Eventually, after one of the recitations, I realized how much I hoped to one day be part of something like that in Freeland. I didn't think much about future dates and times in those days, so I had no concept of what a quasiquicentennial (125th-130th) or sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary might one day look like, or when it might be. I just knew that deep down, I really wanted to be here for it.

Five years ago, I was a lot more forward thinking than I had been in the 90's. And my love for history had grown exponentially. I still remember the date and what I was doing when the realization set in that in just five short years, my hometown would be ready for its next significant milestone.



FALL SPORTS

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Senator Dave Argall
29th District Pennsylvania Senate
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Schuylkill, Carbon and Luzerne counties

Celebrating the Grand Opening of the YMCA in Hazleton

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

Congressman Rob Bresnahan, Rep. Dane Watro, Mayor Jeff Cusat, Hazleton Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian Uplinger, and I were recently invited to attend the Grand Opening at the Mericle Family Center YMCA in Hazleton, which is now fully reopened after a six-year closure.

The facility features a gymnasium, exercise center, childcare center, an aquatics center, and more! This is the first time in many years that there has been water in the pool now that the renovations are complete.

In addition to the generosity of so many generous donors from across our region, large and small, Rep. Watro and I were pleased to secure several highly competitive state grants to help complete these important renovations—and now, after years of blight, it's so important to the people of this area to see the lights on, once again, with so much good happening on this property!



Good Samaritan Ministry of Templo Oasis de Salvacion visited Kadima at Luzerne Skilled Nursing Home in Drums to pass snack care packages out to the residents.

“Racing to Raffles”

Returns to Catholic Social Services

Catholic Social Services of Greater Hazleton is excited to announce the return of “Racing to Raffles,” a fun-filled two-day fundraising event benefiting the programs and services of Catholic Social Services.

The festivities kick off with Preview Night on Friday, October 9, 2026, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Guests can stop by to purchase horses for \$10 each and get an early start on raffle tickets for gift cards, lottery boards, themed baskets and more. You do not have to be present to win.

Light snacks will be available for purchase.

Race Night takes place Saturday, October 10, 2026. Doors open at 4:00 p.m., with dinner served at 6:00 p.m. Guests can enjoy an evening of horse racing, food and fun, with raffle drawings held between the races.

Admission for Race Night is \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door.

Both events will be held at the Catholic Social Services Family Center, 106 S. Church St., Hazleton.

For more information or to purchase advance tickets, call Catholic Social Services at 570-455-1521.

All proceeds benefit the programs of Catholic Social Services of Greater Hazleton, a member of the United Way of Greater Hazleton.

Celebrating Freeland’s 150th Anniversary!



Gene Della Croce manned the Freeland Historical Society's display in the pavilion.



Kenny Wenner of St. Ann's Band displayed items from throughout the band's history.



Mary Krone, left, represented the Freeland Crime Watch and James Lucas, right sold commemorative Freeland T-Shirts.



Anthony Piccione, owner of Cosimo's Food Truck, had a busy weekend serving up his delicious cheesesteak hoagies.

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New Artwork for the Hazleton Art League



Standing with Stratton are Mark Peterson (left), executive director, and Dr. Carl Frankel (right), president of the Hazleton Art League Board of Directors.

The Hazleton Art League has added an acrylic painting by artist Kyle Stratton, 26, titled Squeeze 2, to its permanent collection through a private donation. The work will become part of the Art League's Anthracite Artists series.



Representative Jamie Walsh
117th Legislative District
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
 717-260-6474
RepWalsh.com / Facebook.com/RepJamieWalsh



Upcoming Events!

By State Rep. Jamie Walsh (R-Luzerne)

Residents living in the 117th Legislative District are invited to my upcoming events:

E-Recycling and Shredding Event: Saturday, Sept. 26, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Luzerne County Fairgrounds. We are once again partnering with Shred-It and Mammoth to provide residents with the opportunity to dispose of paper documents containing personal, financial and medical information, as well as hard-to-recycle electronics. Check my website, www.RepWalsh.com, for more information. Some electronic items require a small recycling fee.

Concealed Carry Event: Thursday, Oct. 8, 6-8 p.m. (Doors open at 5:30 p.m.) at the PA Game Commission Northeast Regional Headquarters, 3917 Memorial Highway in Dallas. Luzerne County District Attorney Sam Sanguedolce and Luzerne County Sheriff Genesis Arias will provide a presentation of Pennsylvania firearms laws and the Castle Doctrine. There will also be game wardens present to answer any hunting-related questions. Seating is limited. Reservations are required by calling 570-675-6000 or going to www.RepWalsh.com.

Annual Veterans Recognition Event and Expo, in conjunction with Misericordia University: Saturday, Nov. 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Lemmond Theater and Insalaco Hall, Misericordia University, 301 Lake St. in Dallas. The event will include a recognition ceremony along with dozens of vendors offering programs and services for veterans and their family members. Light refreshments will be served. Registration is required for this event; veterans can each bring one guest. Those who would like to provide a service photo to be displayed at this year's breakfast are asked to email the photo to CSweeney@PAHouseGOP.com or bring the photo to the Dallas district office for scanning. A donation box will also be available for FSB Initiatives Inc. They are collecting toiletries for homeless veterans. Please RSVP by Oct. 30 by calling 570-675-6000 or going online to www.RepWalsh.com.

The 117th District includes the townships of Black Creek, Butler, Conyngham, Dennison, Dorrance, Fairmount, Foster, Hollenback, Hunlock, Huntington, Lake, Lehman, Nescopeck, Ross, Salem, Slocum, Sugarloaf and Union; and the boroughs of Conyngham, Dallas, Freeland, Harveys Lake, Jeddo, Nescopeck, New Columbus, Nuangola, Penn Lake Park, Shickshinny and White Haven.

By: Donna Thornton - Physician Liaison, Eye Care Specialists & Northeastern Eye Institute

Your Eyes Are Aging Too — What's Normal and What Isn't?

September is Healthy Aging Month, and while we often think about staying active, eating well and keeping our bodies healthy as we get older, our eyes deserve a little attention too.

The truth is our vision changes as we age. Some of those changes are completely normal. Others may be our eyes' way of telling us it's time to schedule an exam.

If you've found yourself holding the restaurant menu a little farther away, reaching for your reading glasses more often or needing brighter light to read, you're certainly not alone. As we get older, the natural lens inside the eye becomes less flexible, making it harder to focus up close. This is called presbyopia, and it happens to just about everyone eventually.

You may also notice that it takes a little longer for your eyes to adjust when you walk into a dark room or that driving at night isn't quite as comfortable as it used to be. While some changes like these can be part of getting older, we shouldn't automatically assume that every change in our vision is simply "old age."

Some Changes Are Worth Checking

Cataracts become increasingly common with age and can cause blurry or cloudy vision, glare from headlights, halos around lights or colors that don't seem as bright as they once did. Cataracts usually develop gradually, so sometimes people don't realize how much their vision has changed.

Other eye conditions can be much less noticeable. Glaucoma, for example, can slowly damage vision without causing obvious symptoms in its early stages. Macular degeneration can affect the central vision we rely on for reading, driving and recognizing faces.

Diabetes can also affect the small blood vessels in the retina. A person may have diabetic eye disease before noticing any change in vision, which is one reason regular dilated eye examinations are so important.

Knowing the Signs That Shouldn't Wait

Some changes should never be chalked up to aging. A sudden increase in floaters, flashes of light, a dark curtain or shadow across your vision, sudden vision loss, significant eye pain or a sudden change in vision should be evaluated promptly.

When it comes to our eyes, sudden is an important word. If something changes quickly or simply doesn't seem right, don't wait for your next routine appointment to mention it.

Take Care of the Eyes That Have Taken Care of You

Healthy aging isn't about trying to stop the clock. It's about taking care of ourselves along the way. Protect your eyes from the sun, manage conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure, don't smoke, eat a balanced diet and keep up with regular comprehensive eye examinations.

And perhaps most importantly, pay attention to changes in your vision. You know when something doesn't seem quite right.

We get one set of eyes to carry us through a lifetime. September's Healthy Aging Month is a good reminder to give them a little extra care, too.

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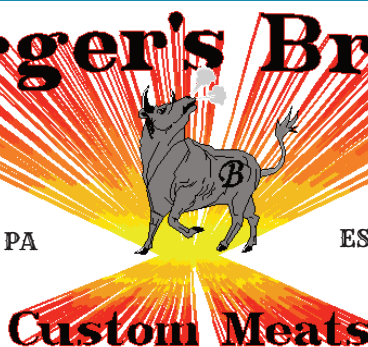
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116th Legislative District

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Rep. Watro's Senior Expo on Sept. 17 at Hazleton's Laurel Mall

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

Rep. Dane Watro will be hosting his annual senior expo on Thursday, Sept. 17, from 9 a.m. to noon at Hazleton's Laurel Mall.

Various health-related screenings, including cholesterol, glucose levels and blood work, will be offered.

If you have any old, unwanted or unused prescription medications, you can bring them to the expo for the Drop the Drugs Hazleton van. The Drums Lioness Lions Club will be collecting used or unwanted eyeglasses.

For more information, you can call Watro's district office at 570-453-1344.

Veterans – Don't Fall for This Scam

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is warning veterans and their spouses about a postcard promising extra monthly benefits. But the "Veterans Savings Program" mentioned in the postcard doesn't actually exist. It's just a scammer phishing for personal or financial information.

While the postcard might list the state you're living in and mention real VA benefits like CHAMPVA or TRICARE For Life, those programs are just being mentioned in an effort to make the mailing look legitimate and trick veterans into sharing personal information like your Social Security number or bank account details.

If you get a postcard like this:

- Don't respond. Legitimate VA communications will not pressure you to respond immediately or give sensitive information over the phone.
- Contact the VA directly if you have questions about your benefits. Always use a number you know is real, never the one on the postcard. Start with the VA Benefits Hotline at 1-800-827-1000.
- Spread the word. Scammers typically don't just contact one person. Sharing this advice can help others in your community spot and avoid the scam. Sign up for email updates to get the latest on scams like this one at MilitaryConsumer.gov.

If you spot this or another VA benefits scam, report it to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov and to the VA at VSAFE.gov or 1-833-38V-SAFE.

Treasury Announces Bonus for Families' Education Savings

Pennsylvania families with qualified PA 529 College and Career Saving Program Guaranteed Savings Plan (GSP) accounts could receive a \$1,000 bonus contribution, enhancing education savings for about 107,000 Pennsylvania families.

The bonus is being paid for through surplus dollars in the GSP Fund. As of June 30, the GSP fund was 156.04% funded, reflecting a surplus of \$1.06 billion. Nearly 107 million in surplus funds will be distributed across 106,914 PA 529 GSP accounts, representing 89% of participants in the plan.

PA 529 GSP savers with at least a \$1,000 account balance, or those with at least a \$100 balance with contributions made since 2022, as of July 31, are eligible for this bonus deposit. Account owners will see this deposit reflected in their third-quarter statement.

Visit pa529.com to learn more.



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Harvest Celebration - Dozynki

In Honor of Polish-American Heritage Month, The Polish Harvest Celebration – Dozynki will be celebrated by The Greater Hazleton Area Polonaise Society on Saturday, October 17, 2026, at Capriotti's in McAdoo, PA. The festivities will begin at noon and will continue until 5:00 pm. with entertainment by Joe Stanky & The Cadets. The tickets are \$30 for adults and \$15 for children 4 – 12 years old. There will be a Buffet, Bake sale, Cash Bar, Raffles and Polish Pottery sale.

The word Dozynki is derived from the Polish verb dozynac meaning to cut down or reap, thus relating to the harvest. Poland being an agricultural country for centuries traditionally held harvest festivals on or about August 15, Assumption Day, known as the Feast of Our Lady of Harvest. Owners of large estates or farms would hold this celebration for the people who worked during the sowing and reaping.

On the chosen afternoon after the crops had been harvested, the farm folk of the village, in their most impressive costumes would gather at the manor house. This group always included the best reapers. A huge wreath either round or cone shaped was made of vegetable, fruits, grains, nuts and streamers of red, and white ribbon. This wreath was carried by the best reapers, both male and female and presented to the owner or Lord of the estate. The village priest would impart the blessing on the harvest bounty, represented by the wreath. After the blessing the village folk responded with songs of praise to God for the abundant harvest. The owner in turn would treat his workers with vodka, bread, which was baked by the hostess, and cheese. There would be dancing and singing around the first "snop" or sheaf of wheat. After this all were invited to a large barn which was cleared for dancing and a hearty supper was served by the landlord to all who participated. This merrymaking would continue into the hours at dusk when all would return to their homes.

The symbols of the harvest had meaning: *Wheat* - has a twofold representation not only of the harvest, but also the bread of life as in Communion with God. *Wine* - represents the wine used by Christ at the Last Supper, the bountiful fruit of the vine. *Cheese* - represents the land of milk and honey or an abundant harvest. *Colors* – red and white ribbons or streamers represent the colors of Poland. *Costumes* – Polish costumes are colorful, they include vests for women with beads onto red, wine blue or black velvet or suede cloth. The skirts are made of white cloth with several rows of colored ribbons for the small girls. Shirts and blouse are white with long puffy sleeves. *Money* – was considered good luck for the following harvest when a guest outside of the harvesters would redeem himself with a monetary gift to the harvesters.

If you would like to join us for the merriment, tickets are available in advance by calling Cheryl Sabol – 570- 401-2555. Deadline to purchase tickets is October 8, 2026.

United Way Greater Hazleton Helps Prepare Local Students for a Successful School Year



Local barbers from The Repair Shop, Gentlemen's Barbershop and The Refinery Barber Lounge volunteered their time and talents on August 24th for our Back to School Energizer initiative offering complimentary haircuts to Hazleton Area School District students.

HAZLETON, PA — September 11, 2026 — With another school year underway, United Way Greater Hazleton has been working throughout the community to help ensure local students have the basic resources they need to arrive at school prepared, confident, and ready to learn. Through its Back to School Energizer, Backpacks and Beyond, and Nurses Pantry initiatives, United Way Greater Hazleton is providing support to students and schools throughout the Hazleton Area School District, Early Childhood Centers, Head Start classrooms in Hazleton and MMI Preparatory School.

At the end of August, United Way Greater Hazleton hosted its 4th annual free haircut event as part of its Back to School Energizer initiative where 43 students received complimentary haircuts. The local barbers and hairstylists who donated their time and talent included: The Repair Shop Gentlemen's Barbershop, The refinery Barber Lounge, and hairstylists from Lux + Lunar. In addition, United Way partnered with Hazleton Area Career Center to utilize their cosmetology space in order to provide services. "This program provides more than a haircut. It gives students an opportunity to begin the school year feeling confident and ready to walk into the classroom", explains Amorette Barr Fiscal Director for United Way Greater Hazleton.

In addition to receiving a free haircut each child also received a mesh backpack filled with school supplies and basic hygiene items thanks to funds received from Honesdale National Bank and private donors.

United Way Greater Hazleton also recently completed its annual Backpacks and Beyond initiative, packing and delivering 1,200 backpacks to every school in the Hazleton Area School District. Thanks to community partners from Nucor Towers and Structures and Associated Bank for volunteering and helping pack backpacks and van Hoekelen Greenhouse for donating their time and trucks to deliver the backpacks to each school. Backpacks were filled with pencil cases, pencils, erasers, highlighters, crayons, markers, colored pencils, notebooks, and folders and are distributed by the nurses at each school ensuring that the students with the greatest need have the tools needed as they begin another year of learning.

United Way Greater Hazleton support continues beyond the first day of school through its Nurses Pantry program, which is funded by All One Foundation, First Federal Charitable Foundation, Giant, and private donors. Every school within the Hazleton Area School District, Hazleton Head Start classrooms, Child Development Council and MMI

Preparatory School have fully supplied nurses pantries stocked with deodorant, soap, underwear, lip balm, lice kits (thanks to Lehigh Valley Hospital Hazleton), orthodontic tooth wax, toothpaste, toothbrushes, socks, t-shirts, sweatpants, leggings, feminine products, and hair ties that school nurses can make available to students when a need arises.

The success of these initiatives are made possible through the continued support of local businesses, organizations, volunteers, and community members.

United Way Greater Hazleton's commitment to local children extends throughout the year. In addition to Back to School Energizer, Backpacks and Beyond, and the Nurses Pantry programs, the organization partners with the - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, providing young children age newborn to 5 with one free book each month until their 5th birthday which helps encourage early childhood literacy.

Community members or businesses who would like to volunteer, support, partner or learn more about United Way Greater Hazleton's initiatives are encouraged to contact Amorette Barr at *amorette.barr@unitedwayhazleton.org or *amorette.barr@unitedwayhazleton.org or 570-455-9515, ext. 204*. There are many ways to get involved, and community support helps United Way Greater Hazleton continue providing resources and opportunities to local children and families.



Local hairstylists from Lux + Lunar volunteered their time and talents on August 24th for our Back to School Energizer initiative offering complimentary haircuts to Hazleton Area School District students.

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Our dancers stay active in the community by performing for residents of local personal care homes. Each December, we present a Christmas Recital, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Freeland YMCA.

Our season's biggest performance is the Spring Recital, held in early June at MMI Preparatory School in Freeland.

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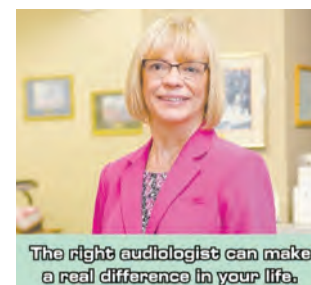


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- 2026 SEASON -

LOCAL TEAMS FOOTBALL SCHEDULE



Hazleton Area

8/28 vs. West Scranton
9/4 @ Williamsport
9/11 @ Pocono Mtn. West
9/18 vs. Crestwood
9/25 vs. Pittston
10/2 @ Dallas
10/9 @ Berwick
10/16 vs. WVW
10/23 vs. Wilkes Barre
10/30 @ Pottsville



Berwick

8/28 @ North Pocono
9/4 @ Pittston
9/11 vs. Wyoming Area
9/18 vs. Wilkes Barre
9/25 @ Pottsville Area
10/2 @ Hanover Area
10/9 vs. Hazleton Area
10/16 vs. Williamsport
10/23 @ Crestwood
10/30 vs. Dallas



Crestwood

8/28 vs. Hanover Area
9/4 vs. Valley View
9/11 @ Carbondale
9/18 @ Hazleton Area
9/25 vs. Honesdale
10/2 @ Wyoming Area
10/9 vs. Pittston
10/16 vs. Shenandoah
10/23 vs. Berwick
10/30 @ WVW



Tamaqua

8/28 vs. Lehighton
9/4 vs. Schuylkill Haven
9/11 vs. Marian
9/18 vs. Exec Ed Academy CS
9/25 vs. Blue Mtn Area
10/2 @ Pottsville
10/9 @ North Schuylkill
10/16 vs. Panther Valley
10/23 @ Selingsgrove
10/30 @ Pine Grove



Shenandoah Valley

8/28 @ Columbia Montour VT
9/4 @ Pine Grove
9/11 vs. Panther Valley
9/18 vs. Tri-Valley
9/26 @ Marian
10/2 vs. Minersville Area
10/8 vs. Schuylkill Haven
10/16 @ Nativity BVM
10/23 vs. Williams Valley
10/30 @ Mahanoy Area



Marian Catholic

8/28 vs. Palmerton
9/4 @ Panther Valley
9/11 @ Tamaqua
9/18 vs. Minersville
9/26 vs. Shenandoah
10/2 @ Tri-Valley
10/9 vs. Nativity BVM
10/16 @ Williams Valley
10/23 vs. Mahanoy Area
10/30 @ Schuylkill Haven



Mahanoy Area

8/28 vs. Panther Valley
9/4 @ Catasauqua
9/11 @ Pine Grove
9/18 vs. Schuylkill Haven
9/25 @ Williams Valley
10/1 vs. Nativity BVM
10/9 vs. Tri-Valley
10/16 vs. Shenandoah Valley
10/23 @ Marian Catholic
10/30 vs. Minersville



Panther Valley

8/28 vs. Mahanoy Area
9/4 vs. Marian Catholic
9/11 @ Shenandoah Valley
9/18 vs. Greater Nanticoke Area
9/25 @ Tunkhannock Area
10/2 @ Blue Mountain
10/9 @ Pottsville Area
10/16 @ Tamaqua
10/23 vs. Pine Grove
10/30 @ North Schuylkill

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Hazleton Rotary Welcomes New District 7410 Governor

Submitted by: Pat Korb

Hazleton Rotary welcomed the current District 7410 Governor Andy Lane Chapman as she made her "official" visit to the club on Wednesday, September 2, 2026, providing the members with an update on upcoming district events and activities.

The District Governor also awarded Immediate Past President-Rotary District 7410 Tim Genetti for his work which went "above and beyond for District 7410 during his administration". Tim is a member and Past President of Hazleton Rotary.

"Our club membership appreciates and welcomes this visit by our new District Governor and we all extend our wishes to her for a very successful Rotary year." explains Hazleton Rotary President Paul Oswald. "We will continue with our efforts to put "service above self" for the Greater Hazleton Area and our Rotary District."



From left: President Paul Oswald, Seargeant-at-Arms Pat Ward, Vice President-Anne Frey, District Governor Chapman, Immediate Past Governor Tim Genetti and Hazleton Rotary President Elect-Steve Seach.



Pat Ward, Andy Lane Chapman and Tim Genetti.

Remembering the ACS Telethon Pioneers

Submitted by: Pat Korb



Leona and Henry Kreisl



Irene and Joe Gans

"Cancer is a dreaded disease and if we can make one cancer patient's life a little easier or save one life by detecting cancer early all our efforts have been worthwhile!"

That quote, made by the very first American Cancer Society Telethon co-chairs, Henry & Leona Kreisl, at the end of the first telethon effort, still applies to the work being done to prepare for the upcoming Telethon this November.

At that time, it was called the first annual American Cancer Society Benefit Dance-A-thon-Telethon as dancing, especially area polkas, was very popular in the early years.

In addition to the Kreisls, Joe and Irene Gans are also remembered for their years of dedication to developing and continuing to bring the telethon to the area as a televised event.

In addition to Clemie Yamona who actively participated in most years of the Telethon and still makes a brief appearance every year, another name to be included is the late Bill Genetti who welcomed the Greater Hazleton American Cancer Society Telethon into his Best Western Motor Lodge for many years

The Kreisls had "The Deam" and devoted hours working on it after Vic Diehm, president of WAZL and WVCD radio stations urged them to have a "polka ball" to raise funds for the local unit of the American Cancer Society

They brought professional quality entertainment and superior organizational skills to the project idea, which would give hope to cancer patients and their families. Just as important, they found a way to give very important cancer prevention and education information to the local population, which continues to be an integral part of the event.

Although the Kreisls were most optimistic, they informed the Hazleton cancer group that they needed help with local television stations and a cable system to transmit their production throughout the area.

Thus, Joe and Irene Gans entered the picture, putting together the technical expertise needed to get the show out to the people.

This desire to do what can be done to help area cancer patients continues Saturday, November 21st when the annual Greater Hazleton Telethon, "Year 48! Let's Make it Great" is scheduled to air from 11:00am to 10:00pm on WYLN and PTN. The public is invited to attend the event to be held at the PTPA (Pennsylvania Theatre of Performing Arts), 212 W. Broad Street, Hazleton

"Over the years, there have been countless telethon volunteers and each and every one earns respect for taking the time and energy needed to bring the telethon with its entertainment, education and inspiration to the public." explains Chair Jane Dougherty. "Many have done so, time and again and to say the American Cancer Society-Greater Hazleton is grateful, is an understatement."

"Of course, all of us currently involved with the telethon, wish that there would be no more need for one," explains volunteer Pat Korb "but although things have improved, cancer is unfortunately, still here and thus the need to raise funds and to, most importantly, provide insight and education continues."

Phones will be once again be manned by local volunteers and pledges can be made by calling 570-459-1212 or going to the website www.acsmove.org/hazletontelethon.

In Memory of Joseph Barna



On the morning of August 19th, I received a text that Joe had passed away.

Joe wrote his monthly "Veterans Journal" for my magazine, "The Freeland Progress" for eight years and has continued to write his article for "The Anthracite Post" which Lee Ann and I started in Sept. 2024.

I always enjoyed running into Joe at various functions in Freeland. Joe was always smiling and pleasant and always had a joke or story to tell.

Joe's legacy will carry on thru his family, friends, published articles and his book.

Joe, you will be missed by so many. It was an honor to help spread your messages of the Korean War. ~ Shari.

Life is but a stopping place

Life is but a stopping place, a pause in what's to be,
a resting place along the road to sweet eternity.

We all have different journeys, different paths along the way,
we all were meant to learn some things, but never meant to stay.

Our destination is a place far greater than we know,
for some, the journey's quicker, for some the journey's slow.

And when the journey finally ends, we'll claim a great reward,
and find an everlasting peace, together with the Lord.



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GOOD BEER STYLES FOR SWEATER WEATHER

Fall is the perfect time to trade light summer beers for something a little richer, maltier, and more comforting. Cooler weather opens the door to beer styles with deeper flavors, and spices.

Oktoberfest and Märzen Beers

These styles are the obvious starting point. They're smooth, toasty, slightly sweet, and very easy to drink.

Brown Ales

Another great fall choice, bringing flavors of caramel, toasted nuts, and bread without becoming too heavy.

Pumpkin Ales

Yes, they can be divisive, but a good one balances pumpkin pie spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, and clove without tasting like somebody dumped a candle into your beer.

Basically, fall beer should taste like the season feels: warm, flavorful, comfortable, and just a little indulgent.

-Jeff & Desiree Bonomo

Watch Jeff & Desiree talk about all things in the craft beverage world on
Wine, Hops & Road Stops online at www.youtube.com/@drinkerguide
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A Thousand Times a Day (Part 13)

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.

PFC Michael Yanish Jr: 943 Burton St, Received a Bronze Star for action with the 26th Inf Div, Co, D against the enemy in North Africa from Jan 24, 1943 to May 8, 1944. Yanish was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds in action in France. Michael entered the Army in 1942, went to England in Aug 1942, where he received amphibious training in Scotland and then joined in the invasion of North Africa. He fought in Morocco, Tunisia, and then landed with assault forces in Sicily. Yanish then returned to England in Sept 1943 to prepare for D-Day. After landing on D-Day, he fought in France until wounded, and then later saw action in Belgium and Germany. He was eventually discharged and returned home. He has two brothers in the Armed Forces.

Commander Albert Maier: Native of White Haven, Penn State graduate and studied law at New York University. Albert volunteered for the Navy in 1940, and worked in Naval Intelligence. He served in the far east Pacific area. He would later work for the FBI for several years prior to opening a practice in the White Haven, Freeland Area with an associate Atty M.S. DePierro. He Married Esther Seitzinger.

Norman "Slim" Zeisloft: was an aerial photographer with the 57th Air Group and left the states in June 1942. Crews were flown to Palestine while their fighters were ferried to Accra on the Gold Coast of Africa, then on carriers to Palestine. There the planes were outfitted for combat.

The Group then jumped to Egypt to support the British Air Force which suffered many loses during the battle of El Alamein. The 57th helped drive German aircraft from the sky during Montgomery's drive of Oct 23rd, 1942, and joined up with the Americans in the spring of 1943.

Pfc John Yanochko: age 19, MMI grad, 717 Ridge St, Received the Silver Star for action against the enemy on the night of April 28th 1945. That day at 1500 hrs, his battalion established a beachhead across the Danube River. At 1900 hrs the Germans counterattacked and tried to push the battalion back across the Danube. Under intense artillery fire, mortar and machine gun fire, Yanochko protected his units left flank for 3 hours until help arrived and the enemy was forced to retreat. He had killed 22 of the enemy and wounded an undetermined more. He served with the 63rd Battalion "Blood and Fire" Inf Div. They were one of the first to spearhead the Bavarian redoubt of the nazi's headquarters. John entered the Army in July 1944 and was sent overseas in Feb. 1945.

Major Edward Bonner: 312 South Washington St, was promoted in the Phillipines. He has been a member of the U.S. Army Engineers for the past three years. In a letter home he stated "it is quiet in our sector as all the enemy (Japs) are dead". "The best part of the Pacific Islands cannot compare to good old Pennsylvania. Winters may be tough in Freeland, but not nearly as bad as the mosquitos

and bugs in New Guinea and the Phillipines." Edward has been in foreign service for the last twenty months.

Sgt Thomas J Matte: age 32, of 76 Main St Upper Lehigh. Was awarded the Silver Star and is recovering at the 159th U.S. Gen Hospital in England from shrapnel wounds to the face while fighting near Linnich Germany. The evening prior to being wounded, his rifle squad captured a Nazi who reported a counterattack in the morning. After nightfall, he and a Lt went out to lay mines while the enemy was barely 250 yards away. In bright moonlight they were observed, fired upon, and both were wounded. Matte crawled back to his lines but the Lt couldn't move. Matte got a volunteer and crawled out to retrieve the Lt. while under heavy barrage of white phosphorous shells. Matte earned the Silver Star. The next morning the attack began, "I was standing in a foxhole when a mortar round landed 10 feet away. The piece that hit me in the face knocked out two teeth and caused the lost of three more. I was relieved from my position and returned to the command post aid station." He returned to England via a hospital ship and received the Purple Heart.

Lt Jg Joseph Greshko: of 306 Centre St, is a Navy Hellcat pilot assigned to Naval Air Station Jacksonville as an instructor. He is a veteran of 7 ½ months service and holds the Air Medal. Joseph took part in carrier air strikes in the Marshall Islands, Guam, Tinian, Saipan, the

battle of the Phillipine Sea and the fight for Manila. He has several Japanese planes to his credit.

S/Sgt Frank J Dallas: of 903 North St, he suffered his 1st wound on Dec 27, 1944 at Manhay, Belgium and was wounded again Feb 9th, 1945 in Bergstein, Germany. Frank is a paratrooper with the 517th Para Inf Co of the 13th Airborne Div. He led his squad and French Forces in capturing St Ceszoir in Southern France on Aug 27th 1944. All those troops died but four men in his squad. He was awarded the Bronze Star. Frank entered service April 5, 1943 just after his 18th birthday. He wears 4 battle stars on his European Campaign Ribbon plus jump operations in the invasion of southern France.

Sgt William C. Bredbenner: 548 Walnut St, 1942 grad FHS, USMC Silver Star for gallantry in action on Iwo Jima on March 10th. When his platoon leader was wounded, William left concealment while under machine gun and sniper fire, crossed a large draw, and maneuvered his men into position to seize a vital ridge. He entered service in Aug of 1942, and went overseas in Dec 1943. William was with the 4th Div and participated in the Kwajalein Atoll Campaign in the Marshal Islands, and the Saipan-Tinian Campaign in the Marianas prior to Iwo Jima.

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Joseph Barna passed peacefully on the morning of August 19th at his home in Freeland at the age of 96 years and 5 months. Anyone reading this piece is most likely aware of Joe's monthly articles in the Anthracite Post and in the previous Progress and Freeland Progress Magazines dating back to June of 2014.

Joe's writings promoted and told the shared stories of all veterans. Even though Joe wrote and spoke of his experiences, he always tried to convey the message: "It's about THEM": All the other veterans.

I would like to share something of Joe's last few months. On New Year's Eve of 2026, Joe suffered a stroke. In the snap of a finger, his normal day to day routine was gone. Even though, he thankfully had few lingering

physical effects, he was no longer able to do many of things that he was used to doing by himself, for himself. For a man as fiercely independent and proud as Joe, his family and I knew what a serious blow and challenge this would be going forward. Through the good days and not-so-good days, he would often say, "I'm not going to quit." Several times his progress was derailed with serious setbacks. One of these was a life-threatening collapse of both lungs. Again, he fought back, amazing his doctors, nurses and therapists. The not-so-good days, however, took their toll. Joe had several long hospital stays, including a rough two weeks when his spirits were terribly down. During this dark time, I visited him everyday. I will always remember this incident: As we walked toward his room down the hospital hallway, he stopped by another patient, a middle-aged lady who was confined to a wheelchair. He leaned over, spoke something quietly, and cupped her cheek with his hand. It was a simple, beautiful gesture of tenderness and compassion that I will always hold dear in my memories of my buddy. And as Joe was reaching out to give comfort to this poor lady, in his other hand, he was clutching a copy his book God Makes Angels and Navy Corpsmen. I saw this as his way of holding on to who he was and "not quitting."

On the morning that he passed, his Great-Granddaughter Alexis was with him. Alexis heard him go into the kitchen. He was, almost certainly, going to put the coffee on. The coffee that he and I would share, after I would arrive at 7 am to stay with him for the day. He didn't make it as far as the coffee pot. He never did quit. My first sip of coffee, everyday forward, I will think of him.

Frank Balon

A Veterans Journal #114

By Joseph Barna • Freeland
USMC, Korea 1952-1953



The following is a continuation of Joe's article published in the August issue of "The Anthracite Post".

This is Joe's final article as he has passed away to join his wife, family members, friends and fellow Marine's in Heaven.

Ryan Walkowski writes in his book:

What a coincidence two marines, not only from the same regiment, but the same platoon. One here in Wisconsin, only 20 minutes from me, and both sharing the same foxhole during the craziness of one of the most intense battles of the war. What could have been Bert's exact thoughts during the chaos of such an intense The Marine with the flamethrower who jumped into Bert Reuchel's Foxhole was Joe Barna, who was in the very same weapons platoon at the Battle for Bunker hill. A close high school buddy of mine, Cole Reuchel had mentioned that his great uncle was a Korean War veteran and was willing to be interviewed. After my first contact, there was no further communication. I chalked it up as a loss, speculating Bert changed his mind, probably not wanting to talk about his wartime experiences. I don't blame him. For many veterans, some of their wartime memories are pushed too far back to bring forward. One day however, I was surprised to receive a message from Cole's dad, saying

he'd shown Bert my Facebook page that included a video of Joe Barna talking about using the flamethrower on Bunker hill, to which Bert immediately responded with, "Son of a bitch, he hopped in my foxhole! There were only two flamethrowers in our company, so it must be him."

Bert would go on to say "There were no bunkers where I was, just trenches. There were a group of Marines just below me in the shell hole. I yelled get out of there! Get out of there! And they yelled that they couldn't. I hollered and told them to dig a hole there. And right as I did that an artillery shell hit them." Amid all this chaos, Barna had hopped into Bert's machine gun hole to catch some cover from the heavy fighting. Joe using his flamethrower, was shunting from one position on the trench line to another, unleashing his lethal weapon, when he stumbled across Bert's machine gun nest.

Ryan was able to arrange a zoom call meeting for these two old Marines, separated by more than 7 decades and many hundreds of miles.

"In Combat in Korea" includes the wartime stories of 18 Korean War Veterans. The book is available on Amazon.com and from the publisher...

All excerpts from "In Combat in Korea" are used with the permission of the authors.



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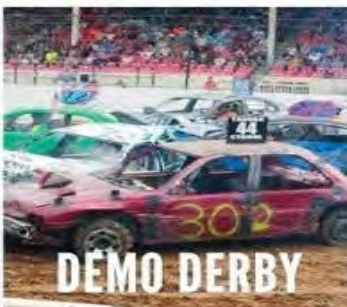
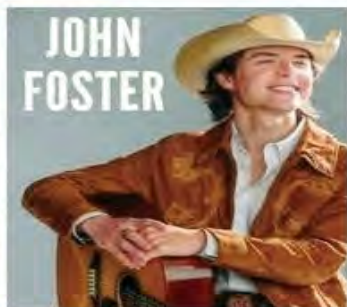
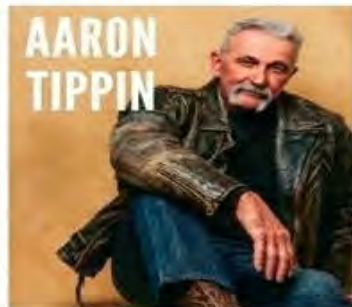
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