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LEBO BEAT

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Growing Number of Young E-Bike Riders Raises Safety Questions

Community members report near misses as many children navigate streets without formal instruction in traffic laws **By Brion Palmer**

As electric bicycles become increasingly popular among children and teenagers in Mount Lebanon, residents are raising questions about how to keep riders and everyone who shares the road safe.

In recent weeks, numerous residents have posted on neighborhood social media pages describing near misses involving young e-bike riders. While no serious e-bike crashes involving children have been publicly reported

in the municipality, the recurring concerns have prompted discussion about rider education, helmet use and whether Pennsylvania's laws have kept pace with the growing popularity of e-bikes.

Among the behaviors residents have described are children riding through stop signs, crossing intersections without looking, traveling against traffic, carrying multiple riders on a single bike, using mobile phones while riding and

riding without helmets.

E-bikes have become a common sight throughout Mount Lebanon, with young riders traveling to parks, swimming pools, athletic fields and friends' homes. Unlike traditional bicycles, many electric bicycles can travel at speeds up to 20 mph with motor assistance, reducing reaction time for both riders and motorists.

Safety experts say that speed makes understanding the rules of the road especially important.

Many young riders have not yet reached driving age and may be unfamiliar with right-of-way rules, stopping distances, blind spots and other traffic laws. Drivers, meanwhile, may not anticipate how quickly an e-bike can approach an intersection or enter a roadway.

Under Pennsylvania law, an e-bike is classified as a "pedalcycle with electric assist" if it has operable pedals, weighs no more than 100 pounds, has a motor rated at no more than

750 watts and cannot exceed 20 mph under motor power. Riders are required to follow the same traffic laws that apply to traditional bicycles, including obeying traffic signals and riding in the same direction as traffic. State law also prohibits anyone younger than 16 from operating an e-bike on public roads, and riders younger than 12 must wear a helmet. Safety organizations recommend helmet use for riders of all ages.

Continued on page 4

New Sidewalks Expand Walkability

Woodland and Greenhurst projects improve pedestrian safety and accessibility **By Stacey Reibach**

Mount Lebanon has long been recognized as a walkable community, but several streets lacked one key feature: sidewalks.

To address those gaps, the municipality has launched a sidewalk expansion program designed to improve safety, mobility and accessibility throughout the community.

"Over the last five years, the commission has been focused on improving mobility and accessibility throughout the community," said Ian McMeans, Mount Lebanon assistant manager and planner. "During the comprehensive plan process, mobility issues were among the top points of public feedback that residents felt the municipality should address over the

next decade. The sidewalk expansion program is one piece of the commission's commitment to improving mobility and accessibility."

The municipal code authorizes the commission to

require sidewalk construction on streets, with property owners responsible for the full cost. However, the commission revised its sidewalk expansion policy

Continued on page 22



New sidewalks take shape along Greenhurst Drive as part of Mount Lebanon's effort to improve pedestrian safety and neighborhood connectivity. (Lebo Beat photo)



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News Briefs

Your Last Complimentary Issue

This is the final complimentary issue of the *Lebo Beat* that will be delivered to every home with a Mount Lebanon ZIP code.

Beginning with our August issue, home delivery will be available exclusively to subscribers.

The response to the *Lebo Beat* over the past several months has been incredibly rewarding. We've received countless story ideas, words of encouragement and positive feedback from readers who appreciate having a newspaper dedicated to celebrating the people, organizations, businesses and events that make Mount Lebanon such a special community.

To continue receiving the *Lebo Beat* delivered directly to your mailbox, we invite you to subscribe today.

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To our current subscribers, thank you for believing in the *Lebo Beat* from the very beginning. As a token of our appreciation, we've automatically extended your subscription through July 2028 at no additional cost.

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Subscribing is easy. Simply scan the QR code or visit LeboBeat.com to get started. (Turn to page 14 for more information)

Thank you for supporting local journalism, local businesses and the Mount Lebanon community.



Don't miss an issue! Subscribe to the *Lebo Beat* today.

Commission Weighs \$6 Million Bond for Park, Field Improvements

The Mount Lebanon Commission is considering a \$6 million bond issue to fund a series of park and recreational infrastructure improvements without increasing property taxes.

The proposed bond would finance upgrades to Brafferton Field in Sunset Hills Park, replace turf and fencing at Clint Seymour and Middle fields, and improve parking along Cedar Boulevard.

The projects stem from the municipality's 2022 Parks Master Plan, which identified Brafferton Field as a top priority after years of drainage and maintenance issues left the field underused. Proposed improvements include new drainage, pedestrian connections, additional parking, a children's play area and a multipurpose sports court.

At Middle and Clint Seymour fields, plans call for new turf and fencing, additional bleacher seating, bike racks, LED field lighting, traffic-calming measures and a redesigned parking lot that would increase capacity from 33 to 73 spaces.

Municipal officials say the improvements are intended to enhance safety, accessibility and the overall park experience while addressing longstanding parking concerns at the athletic facilities.

The commission has granted final approval for the park improvement projects. Consideration of the bond issue is expected later this year.

Newcomers and Neighbors Club Celebrates Friendship Day with Annual Picnic

The Newcomers and Neighbors Club of Mount Lebanon will celebrate National Friendship Day with its annual picnic on Sunday, Aug. 2.

The picnic begins at 2 p.m. at Pavilion No. 2 in Main Park and is open to both members and prospective members.

Despite its name, the Newcomers and Neighbors Club isn't just for recent arrivals. Many members have belonged to the organization for more than a decade. The club, which will celebrate its 85th anniversary next year, welcomes women who live, work or volunteer in Mount Lebanon.

Members can participate in a variety of activities, including dining groups, book clubs, social service projects, movie and game nights, cooking clubs, a walking group and informal get-togethers throughout the year.

"Our motto is, 'A social club where new friends are made,'" said Maura Brand, who became club president June 1. "It's a great way to meet people while exploring

many of the dining and entertainment opportunities in our area. We try interesting restaurants, attend theater performances and get to know one another through activities like our nonfiction book group."

Joining Brand on the club's board are Louise Dameron, first vice president; Abigail Gary, second vice president; Marian Huq, secretary; Lynne Bauer, treasurer; Pauline Connelly, communications chair; Michele Collum, membership chair; and Lisa Herring Basquit, immediate past president.

Founded in 1942, the organization was created to help women who were new to Mount Lebanon become acquainted with the community and meet other residents. Over time, the club expanded its mission to include longtime residents, prompting the addition of "Neighbors" to its name.

Annual dues are \$45 and include access to the club's website, online calendar, weekly email newsletter and printed membership directory. The newsletter also provides members with updates on local events and community news.

"Members are welcome to attend any of our special interest groups, from lunch groups and our monthly game group to our weekly walking group," Gary said. "There's no obligation—you can simply try something that interests you. Some members have participated in the same groups, like the Morning Book Group, for more than 20 years."

The club also hosts several social events throughout the year where members may bring spouses or guests, including a Christmas party, Valentine's celebration, annual tea and summer picnic.

For more information, visit mtlnewcomers.com or email mtlnewcomers@gmail.com.

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Good in the LEBOhood

By Tressa Glover, Creator & Host, "Yinz Are Good" podcast

Ready for some good news, Lebo? Notes from our Kindness Crates are on their way. Hosted by our friends at Commonwealth Press, Lebo Subs, Rollier's, and Sapling & Sons, the crates collect responses to the prompt: "Please share who or what you're grateful for today, an act of kindness someone did for you, or a moment that brought you hope."

But first, a good-neighbor alert! Did yinz know that, over the past 16 years, Suzan and Gary Schultz of Outlook Drive have raised more than \$200,000 and collected more than 9,000 pounds of food for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank?

Every year on a Sunday in June, they set up shop right in their driveway, eager to welcome friends and neighbors while encouraging conversation and connection. And did I mention there's a cookie table?

Dozens of homemade cookies and fresh lemonade are served by neighborhood "Cookie Ambassadors." This year, the ambassadors even helped younger children create colorful sidewalk art.

The 2026 Mount Lebanon Food Drive was a record-breaking success, with more donors than ever before. The final totals are impressive: 425 pounds of food and — drumroll, please — \$42,158.72. Every ounce of food and every dollar collected goes directly to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

Suzan and Gary's grassroots legacy is deeply inspiring and serves as a reminder of the profound impact ordinary people can have when they follow their hearts.

To Suzan, Gary, the Cookie Ambassadors and everyone who donated to this worthy cause: yinz are good!

And now, on to those Kindness Crate notes:

- Grateful for opportunities and a safe space for myself and my family.
- The Uptown Market is such a wonderful thing for the community!
- Saw a man driving by stop to rescue a soccer ball from the street during recess - the kids went WILD!!

- I'm so grateful for the time I get to spend with my family and friends.
- The town leaf mulch and wood chips - great for the garden! Everyone there is always so nice.



From left to right: Lily Havener, Addie Nayden, Charlotte Havener, Suzan Schultz, Ella Kuchera, Eliza Frenz, Regan Frenz (Photo provided)

- I'm grateful for my mom doing good at work. And my mom helps me when I need help.
- I'm grateful for my brother coming over today.
- I'm grateful for my cousins. And my friend picked up my headband. - Amelia V.
- I'm grateful for 3D printing.
- I'm grateful for my friends who I love so much.
- I am grateful for my boyfriend, Daniel, and my bestie, Mia.
- Most grateful for my children, my friends, and most of all God's help to go through each day.
- I love my family and friends. - Kate B.
- A moment that brought me joy was when my friend said I could name her 3D printed dragon.
- I am grateful for the sun that warms my skin and uplifts my spirit. Thank you, sun.
- I'm grateful for being alive today! My neighbor, Dave, took my garbage cans in and helped me remove my beeping backup battery on my garage door. He has been helping me since my husband died. Grateful for the help and kindness of volunteers for the St. Michael Archangel Rummage Sale.
- I'm grateful for my mom because she always makes me feel special and loved. - Margaret

In addition to our Kindness Crates, you can relay your good news to me directly at yinzaregood@gmail.com. To listen to the Yinz Are Good podcast, just click on the links at www.yinzaregood.com. ♥

STREET BEAT



Do you have concerns about young e-bike riders sharing the road with motorists, cyclists and pedestrians?

"There is an obvious problem with kids not yet educated in the rules of the road, riding on electric bikes and scooters. I have seen several near misses, of what could easily have been catastrophic. Rules need to be established before, not after lives are lost. Helmets should be mandatory and no earbuds!"

-- Rachel Z. Robb Hollow Rd



"I am concerned with younger kids riding motorized bikes and scooters in unsafe and illegal ways. My fear is that it will take a tragedy before parents teach their kids what is legal, and what is safe."

-- Andy B. Markham Drive



Young E-Bike Riders

Continued from page 1

As e-bike use continues to increase, state lawmakers are also examining whether Pennsylvania's regulations should be updated. Earlier this year, a bipartisan resolution was introduced in the General Assembly directing a statewide study of e-bike laws. The review will examine issues such as rider safety, age requirements, vehicle classifications and whether changes to state law are needed to address the rapid growth of electric bicycles.

Parents and cycling advocates say education remains one of the most important tools for preventing crashes. They encourage families to teach children traffic laws before allowing them to ride independently, ensure helmets fit properly, eliminate

distractions such as mobile phones and earbuds, and emphasize predictable riding habits.

Mount Lebanon's walkable streets and extensive park system have made bicycling a popular way for children to get around the community. As e-bike use continues to grow, many residents hope increased awareness, rider education and any future updates to state law will help ensure riders, pedestrians, cyclists and motorists can continue sharing the roads safely.

With children spending more time outdoors during the summer months, many believe now is the right time for those conversations—before a close call becomes a serious accident. ♥



Uptown Market Brings Fresh Finds and Community Spirit to Saturdays

Weekly market on Washington Road continues to grow, connecting local vendors with Mount Lebanon shoppers By Annabelle Thomas

Every Saturday morning, Washington Road comes alive as shoppers browse fresh foods, hand-made goods and local products while enjoying live music at the Mount Lebanon Partnership's Uptown Market.

The weekly market, held from 9 a.m. to noon from late May through Oct. 24, has become a Saturday tradition, connecting local vendors with residents and visitors while supporting small businesses. This year's season extends later into October in response to strong community support.

"We get a ton of return customers here," said focaccia baker Ben Carozza. "It's been great. People come here just for me sometimes."

Carozza, who began baking as a child, refined his recipes during the COVID-19 pandemic before turning his passion into a business. He

has been a vendor at the Uptown Market since 2025 and credits the market's organizers for creating a welcoming environment.

"The people who run it are hands-on enough, but they don't micromanage," Carozza said. "I've heard that can be a problem at other markets, but they've been very accommodating and welcoming."

The Uptown Market is organized by the Mount Lebanon Partnership, a nonprofit that works with the municipality to promote economic development and support local businesses through community events and initiatives.

Partnership representatives Dorene Ciletti and Betsy Benson staff an information booth each week, often offering family-friendly activities and sharing information about the organization's work.

"It's been great to hear

from the community," Ciletti said. "Overall, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. People enjoy coming out on a Saturday morning and discovering great local vendors."

Among the returning vendors is Coyne Family Farms, which brings farm-raised beef, pork and chicken from Burgettstown to the market each week.

"Every other market we've been to hasn't been this busy," said Mason Allison, who works for the family farm. "It's clean, it's nice, it's fun. I like the people."

Another longtime favorite is Uncle Jammy's, where Jamal Etienne-Harrigan sells homemade sauces and spice blends he has been perfecting for more than two decades. He said the market's variety keeps customers coming back.

"The people are always fun," Etienne-Harrigan said. "You're going to meet people



Simmons Farm sells local produce to Mt. Lebanon residents at the Uptown Market. (Photo by Annabelle Thomas)

in different stages of business, and you're going to discover new products and new takes on everything."

The market has also helped launch successful local businesses. Anthos Bakery and Cafe and Panaderia Jazmin both began selling their products at the Uptown Market before opening permanent storefronts.

For Benson, those success stories reflect the market's larger mission.

"The overall goal is building the vibrancy of the town so it's a destination not just on Saturdays, but all the time," she said.

The Uptown Market is held Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon, May 30 through Oct. 24, across from Washington Elementary School on Washington Road.

For more information or to become a vendor, visit the Mount Lebanon Partnership's website. ♥

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BUSINESS BEAT

New Businesses Bring Fresh Energy to Mount Lebanon This Summer

Boutiques, salons, restaurants and a new primary care practice are expanding the township's business community By Sarah Core

J. Jones Evening Wear celebrated the grand opening of its Mount Lebanon boutique June 30 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring the Mount Lebanon High School cheerleading squad.

"We are thrilled to be in Mount Lebanon," owner Jill Jones said.

The South Park native owns a 10,000-square-foot prom and bridal store in Weirton, West Virginia. Her second location, at 660 Washington Road, caters specifically to the South Hills homecoming and prom market.

"We had to come here," Jones said, explaining that she saw a need for a formalwear boutique in the area. "There are no full prom stores between West Virginia and Zelienople."

J. Jones specializes in affordable evening wear from top designers, with homecoming and prom gowns ranging from \$400 to \$1,200. The boutique also plans to host bridal pop-up shows and offer tuxedo rentals and formal gowns for galas, weddings and other special events.

During the grand opening, Jones announced that one of her custom-designed gowns had been selected to



Jill Jones cuts the ribbon for the grand opening of her new store with the help of store manager Jessica Sperlazza and Mt. Lebanon Commission President Jeff Siegler, as the Mt. Lebanon cheer squad watches. (Photo by Madison Costello of Madcats Media)

be worn at the wedding of Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce, held in New York City on July 3. The celebration also featured dress giveaways, a charm bracelet bar by Charmed Creations, catering from Bravo Italia, Rowing's Italian Ice and live broadcasts from Star 100.7 FM.

After a soft opening earlier this year, J. Jones is preparing for the busy homecoming season. The 3,000-square-foot boutique offers dresses, jewelry and a variety of boutique clothing and accessories.

"I love Mount Lebanon, and I love the community," store manager Jessica

Sperlazza said. "As long as these girls walk out of here feeling more beautiful than when they came in, then I've done my job."

The Mount Lebanon cheerleaders will serve as brand ambassadors for the boutique. Every dress is registered by school to ensure no two students wear the same gown to the same dance.

Izora, a permanent makeup studio and academy that previously occupied the space, relocated to the upstairs suite.

Jones said the municipality's support for small businesses helped convince her to open in Mount Lebanon.

"They are very supportive of their businesses in the community," she said. "It just felt right."

That same sense of community attracted hairstylist Tony Joseph, who opened T2 Hair & Nails in July at 671 Washington Road.

"I had always heard such great things about Mount Lebanon," Joseph said. "It felt like such a great community."

When a client told him Davin Interiors was relocating to Pittsburgh's Strip District, Joseph seized the opportunity to lease the storefront.

An Ellwood City native, Joseph grew up working in his family's salon before attending Bella Capelli Academy, a Paul Mitchell partner school. He later worked at several South Hills salons before deciding to open his own business.

"I always had a goal of opening something of my own someday, and we have a terrific team here," Joseph said.

His staff includes hairstylist Charlotte Graham and nail technician Anna Tanner.

T2 Hair & Nails specializes in luxury hair services, including cuts, color, blow-outs and nail care for women and men.

"We create dimensional blondes and rich-looking brunettes," Joseph said.

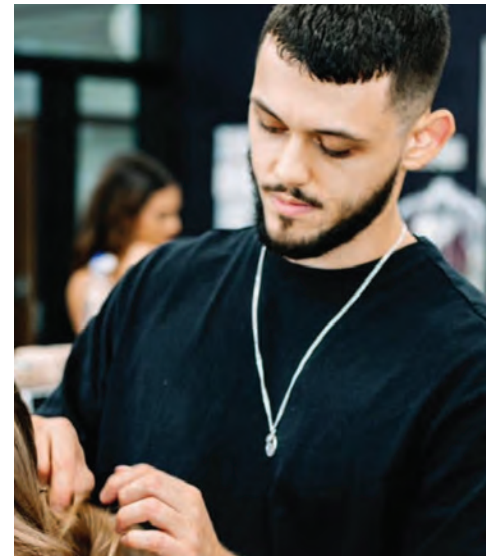
Specialty cafe and dessert shop Treats n Beans also plans to expand into Mount Lebanon later this year.

The Jordan-based company, founded in 2012, will open its third U.S. location at 698 Washington Road, the former home of Cafe Flore, which closed in January for repairs.

Treats n Beans serves French crepes, pancakes, waffles, specialty coffees and teas. The company already operates a successful Oakland location serving the college community, along with a satellite location on Bower Hill Road inside King Crust Pizza.

Meanwhile, Cochran Road is also welcoming a new business.

Mount Lebanon resident Dr. Preeya Fozdar plans to open Twin Hills Primary Care in September at 460 Cochran Road. The 3,200-square-foot office previously housed Golden Fingers Spa.



Tony Joseph putting the finishing touches on a client's hair. (Photo courtesy Tony Joseph)

Board-certified in internal medicine, Fozdar said she fell in love with Pittsburgh while completing her residency at UPMC. After spending the past year at Johns Hopkins, she decided to open a practice close to home. She and her husband, Mount Lebanon native Kyle Baicker-McKee, live nearby with their two dogs.

Twin Hills Primary Care will offer both traditional and concierge medical services for patients seeking more personalized care. Fozdar said the concierge model allows physicians to spend more time with patients because they manage smaller patient panels.

Her goal, she said, is to build lasting relationships with patients and neighbors reminiscent of the family physicians she remembers growing up.

She also plans to hold regular Tuesday afternoon office hours at Mediterra, where residents can stop in, enjoy a cup of coffee and get to know her.

"I want to be that person for people who don't have that," Fozdar said. "This is the closest to a small-town doctor we're going to have in this day and age."

Twin Hills Primary Care is expected to open in September. The practice accepts most major insurance plans, and appointments are already available through its website. ♥



Giving2Grow Combats Childhood Hunger One Grant at a Time

Mount Lebanon residents helped build the volunteer-led nonprofit into a regional force fighting childhood hunger By Stacey Reibach

When a group of philanthropically minded women came together in 2014 with a simple idea — pool their donations to make a greater impact — they could not have imagined how much that idea would grow.

Today, Giving2Grow (G2G), an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has awarded nearly \$700,000 in grants to organizations working to combat childhood hunger across Southwestern Pennsylvania.

The organization's mission is straightforward: "To alleviate hunger for the children of Southwestern Pennsylvania by providing grants to organizations addressing this need." Each qualifying nonprofit may receive a grant of up to \$10,000.

In its first year, Giving2Grow distributed \$25,000 in grants. By 2025, annual grant funding had grown to more than \$127,000.

Mount Lebanon resident Margaret Hooten has been part of the organization since its beginning.

"In 2014, a friend sent me an email explaining the giving-circle concept and the need to support children facing hunger in our region," Hooten said. "The idea was simple: Each member would contribute \$500, the funds would be pooled, and together we could award \$10,000 grants to organizations already making a difference."

Inspired by the concept, Hooten became one of Giving2Grow's 61 founding members.



During her early years with the organization, she primarily contributed through her annual donation and attendance at the annual meeting. As her schedule became more flexible, she took on a more active role by participating in site visits to nonprofits seeking grants.

Those visits are an important part of the grant evaluation process. Volunteers meet with nonprofit leaders, learn about their missions and assess how grant funding would be used before reporting their findings to Giving2Grow members, who ultimately vote on funding decisions.

Many grant recipients serve communities throughout Allegheny County, including several with strong Mount Lebanon connections.

One is Kidcelerate, based at Christ United Methodist Church, which mobilizes more than 100 volunteers each summer to provide lunches for children when school is out of session. Giving2Grow helps bridge funding gaps for the program. In 2023, Kidcelerate received the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank's Childhood Hunger Hero Award.

Giving2Grow has also provided seed funding to launch or expand programs at organizations including SHIM's community fruit and vegetable gardens, the Black Breastfeeding Association of Pittsburgh, Beverly's PGH Greater Pittsburgh Infant Formula Bank and 412 Food Rescue.

Andrea Fitting, a Giving2Grow member, said the organization's grant review process is both thorough and collaborative.

"Organizations are invited to apply in June, with applications due by July 31," Fitting said. "During August, September and October, our grant and site visit committees review applications, conduct site visits and evaluate whether applicants align with our mission and will use our funds effectively. Those recommendations are then shared with our members before they vote on the grants."

Giving2Grow continues to grow as well.

In 2025, membership increased by 62%, bringing the organization to 187 donors. While many members live in Mount Lebanon, Giving2Grow welcomes supporters from throughout the region.

Expanding membership remains a priority. Membership Chair Sue Gove is available to speak with civic organizations, houses of worship and community groups interested in learning more about the organization and its mission.

Residents can meet Giving2Grow volunteers at the Mount Lebanon Farmers Market on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings or visit the organization's information center at the Mount Lebanon Public Library.

More information, including membership opportunities and a list of past grant recipients, is available at Giving2Grow.org. ♥

College Beat with Eaton Prep

Expert guidance for navigating college admissions, testing and academic success

Navigating the road to college can feel overwhelming for both students and parents. From SATs and ACTs to AP exams, applications, essays, timelines and testing strategies, there are countless questions along the way. In this new column, local college preparation experts will provide practical advice, insider tips and answers to readers' most common questions to help students feel more confident, prepared and ready for the next step in their academic journey. This question was on the March SAT and appeared in Eaton materials before the test.

Question:

Are all the geometry formulas given to students on the digital SAT?

Answer:

No, unfortunately all the formulas are not given on the digital SAT. The density formula is no longer given on the SAT. An easy way to remember the formula is to draw a heart and then to draw a horizontal line through the middle creating an "M" divided by a "V." Density equals "mass" over "volume."

Eaton Prep's fall SAT and PSAT class begin on Sunday, August 30 at the Mt. Lebanon Rec Center from 2-5 p.m. and prepares students for the November SAT. The course covers all the formulas on the test including the quadratic formula and the circle on the coordinate plane. There is also a Zoom session. The course costs \$495 which is much less than our competitors in the area. Register at eatonprep.com. ♥

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One Night, One Hill, One Last Year Together

For generations of Blue Devils, the late-night tradition has united classmates, celebrated a milestone and kicked off the final year of high school By Scarlett Sweeny

When leaving Mt. Lebanon High School onto Cedar Boulevard, it's hard to miss the steep hillside along Greenhurst Drive. What many people don't realize is that the hill is home to one of the school's most cherished traditions.

Each year, on the night of commencement, the rising senior girls gather at 2 a.m. to paint their graduating class number across the hillside, officially marking the beginning of their senior year.

Class of 2026 graduate Madeline Whalen described painting the hill as "easily one of my favorite memories of high school."

"While staying up late with your best friends and taking part in such a meaningful tradition is fun, I especially loved the sense of connection it created," Whalen said. "Even though friend groups naturally exist in high school, being together that night reminded me of the friendships I shared with all the girls in my grade, from kindergarten until graduation. It was an especially meaningful reminder at the start of senior year, knowing that soon we'd all be heading in different directions."

Whalen said she and her friends spent the evening at a nearby friend's house before walking to the hill when it was time to paint. The Class of 2026's designated class color was yellow, so the students used yellow paint to display their class number on the hillside.

"Painting the hill made senior year finally feel real," Whalen said. "It was the first major senior tradition, and after that night, I couldn't wait for everything else our class would experience together. It made me excited to make the most of every event, celebrate all the milestones and enjoy every moment because I knew the year would go by quickly, which it did."

Rising senior Lauren Tinnemeyer recently participated in the tradition. The Class of 2027 painted the hill blue, its designated class color.

"It was so fun getting to paint the hill with my class and celebrate becoming seniors," Tinnemeyer said. "It's a tradition we've looked forward to for years, and it made everything feel more real."

Tinnemeyer described painting the hill as a bittersweet experience that allowed her to reflect on her high school journey while recognizing that senior year was about to begin. She said the tradition marked the transition into her final year at Mt. Lebanon High School, making the milestone both exciting and emotional as she looked ahead to the memories still to come.

"Painting the hill made me realize senior year is finally here,

and I'm looking forward to making memories with my class before we graduate," Tinnemeyer said. "I really liked how everyone came together for this tradition. It gave me the chance to spend time with people I'm not usually around, and it made our class feel more connected."

Whalen said the history behind the tradition made the experience even more meaningful. Some of her friends' parents had participated in the tradition when they were students at Mt. Lebanon High School, creating a connection across generations.

"Painting the hill is such an important tradition because it connects generations of students while creating memories each senior class will always remember," Whalen said. "It's a tradition that gives every class a chance to leave its mark on the school and celebrate reaching such an exciting milestone."

One of Whalen's favorite parts of the evening was seeing the entire class come together.

"Whether we were painting, laughing, taking pictures or just spending time together, it felt like the entire class was united," Whalen said. "There was so much excitement and positive energy, and it was special to see everyone celebrating such an important milestone together. It also reminded me to appreciate the people I've grown up with before we start the next chapter of our lives."

Both Whalen and Tinnemeyer said painting the hill symbolizes everything their class has accomplished together while marking the beginning of senior year. For them, the tradition serves as both a celebration of the memories already made and a reminder to make the most of the year ahead.

For students who may be hesitant to participate in the future, Tinnemeyer offered simple advice.

"Everyone is going to work together and have fun," Tinnemeyer said. "We made so many memories and became even closer before our senior year even started."

Whalen agreed, saying the tradition helps unite the entire class.

"Painting the hill brings the class together because, for one night, everyone is celebrating the same thing," Whalen said. "It doesn't matter what clubs you're in, what sports you play or who your closest friends are. Everyone comes together with the shared excitement of beginning senior year. It's one of the first moments when the entire class feels united, and that sense of community carries throughout the rest of the year." ♥



Members of the Mount Lebanon Class of 2027 pose on the hillside after painting their class number during the annual tradition that marks the beginning of their senior year. (Provided photo)

Painting the Hill: A Tradition That Spans Generations

By Brion Palmer

When did Mount Lebanon's beloved "Painting the Hill" tradition begin? The answer depends on who you ask. That question was recently posted on the Mount Lebanon High School Friends Facebook page, prompting a wave of responses from alumni spanning more than seven decades. While no one could pinpoint exactly when the tradition started, the comments made one thing clear: generations of Blue Devils have been making the annual trek to Greenhurst Drive to paint their class number on the hillside and mark the unofficial beginning of their senior year.

"We did it in 1994," wrote Christa A. "Were doing it when I got there in 1982," added John B. "We painted it in 1979," Robin S. recalled. "My mom did in 1970 — so before that," Nina R. wrote. Others pushed the timeline back even further. "Mid-late '60s," Patrick S. commented. "Was painted in the '60s," Jack M. added. Betsy A., a member of the Class of 1960, remembered seeing the tradition firsthand.

"Late 1950s. I grew up on Summer Place," Eric N. reached back even further. "I moved there in 1954, Summer Place. They were painting it then." Although its exact origins remain a mystery, the tradition has clearly been woven into the fabric of Mount Lebanon for generations.

For many alumni, however, the memories extend well beyond the paint itself.

"We had an elaborate plan with brooms and buckets of paint starting at 2 a.m. on June 12, 1974," recalled Dale C. "It was our rite of passage from the Class of 1974, who had graduated only hours earlier on June 11. The Class of 1975 senior year officially started as we ran like hell from the Lebo Blue Bloods, with our rendezvous point at Bill Warnock's house on Greenhurst Drive — forever anointed in the annals of Lebo history."

The tradition became even more meaningful for Dale as the years passed. "I am proud to say my three daughters — Kassie (2005), Jourdan (2007) and Madison (2011) — carried on the same tradition as well."

Others recalled the excitement, and occasional consequences, that came with the late-night adventure.

"My brother-in-law got caught by the cops doing it in 1997," Rachel F. wrote. "Pretty sure our class started at 3 a.m.," Chris G. remembered.

For many alumni, the comments served as a reminder that Painting the Hill is about far more than leaving a class number on a hillside. It's about friendships forged during late-night planning sessions, the excitement of crossing into senior year and the shared experiences that connect one graduating class to the next.

Every class leaves its mark, but no class owns the tradition. Instead, each group adds another chapter to a story that has united Mount Lebanon students for more than half a century.

Long after the paint has faded and another class number has taken its place, what endures are the memories—of classmates working side by side in the darkness, laughing as they hurried to finish before dawn and realizing, perhaps for the first time, that they had become part of something much bigger than themselves.

Maybe that's why no one seems overly concerned that the tradition's true beginning has been lost to history. In Mount Lebanon, the hill isn't simply painted with numbers.

It's painted with generations of memories.



Anawanda Arts Festival Returns for Sixth Year

A family tradition, neighborhood roots and local artists come together for a community celebration Sept. 13 in Mount Lebanon By Lauren Cefalo Moore

As a lifelong Mount Lebanon mom who loves to write, I try to contribute a story to the Lebo Beat each month. This month's topic is a little more personal because it's about my family and the small arts festival we host at the corner of Anawanda Avenue and Castle Shannon Boulevard.

The sixth annual Anawanda Arts Festival is set for Sunday, Sept. 13, and it's shaping up to be our best yet. Free to the public, the festival features local artists selling handmade goods, live music, food, coffee, children's crafts and more. While it may be small in size, its history and heart run deep — and it captures the spirit of growing up in Mount Lebanon.

My parents, Leonard and Kathleen Cefalo, moved to 447 Castle Shannon Blvd. in 1967 as new-laws expecting their first child. They didn't know much about Mount Lebanon, but they knew it was safe and walkable — important qualities when all they owned were a guitar and an umbrella stroller.

When my dad was offered his first "real" job at Cornwell Tool Co. — along with the opportunity to rent the adjacent second-floor apartment — the decision was easy. After raising three children and years of hard work, my parents



Guests can eat, drink, shop local hand-made items, and enjoy free live music on Sunburst Sportswear's loading dock. (Photo provided)

eventually purchased both the tool company and the building.

Much has changed over the years, but one thing has remained constant: this little corner of the world means everything to my family.

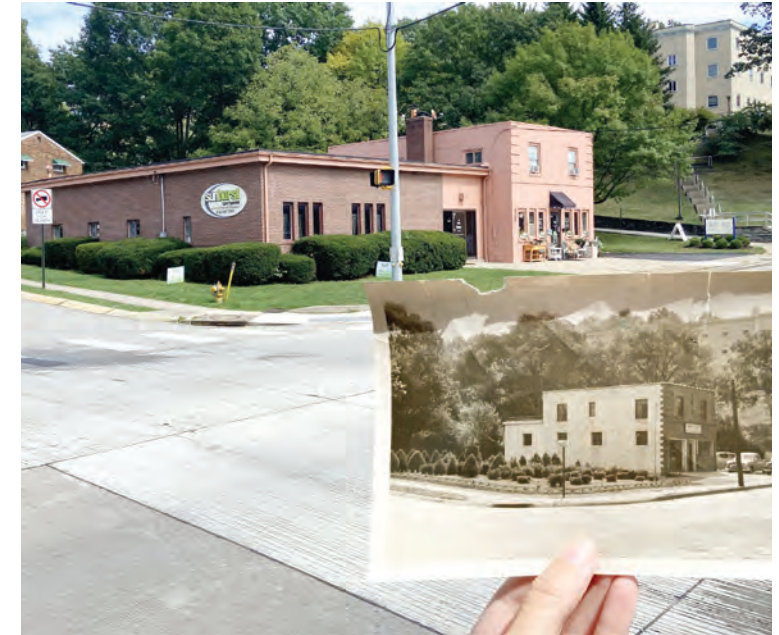
For nearly six decades, three generations of the Cefalo family have lived in the same apartment and worked in the same building. I still remember riding up and down the tool aisles in my dad's office chair, eating leftover Graham's Bakery doughnuts with my Uncle Jim on Saturday mornings and learning to ride my bike in the parking lot.

My sister, Dana, later opened her music studio in

the same room where she once lived, while a pottery business now occupies the living room where I still remember hearing my grandfather play his Kimball organ.

Then, in the summer of 2021, Dana and I started talking about how fun it would be to create a place where my daughter could sell her jewelry and handmade crafts. We shared the idea with a few local artists, and the response was overwhelming.

Before we knew it, we were organizing a neighborhood arts festival in the only place that felt right — the parking lot at the corner of Anawanda Avenue and Castle Shannon Boulevard.



The corner of Anawanda Avenue and Castle Shannon Boulevard from the 1950s to today. (Photo provided)

Since its debut, the festival has continued to grow.

This year, 20 local vendors will offer fine art, pottery, jewelry, woodworking, stained glass, candles, soaps, clothing and vintage items. The festival also will showcase work by five Mount Lebanon High School AP art students: Clare Bigham, Joey Crago, Bridget Ely, Annie Wolfe and my daughter, Charlotte Moore.

Visitors also can enjoy henna art, food, Roaming Bean coffee and our newest vendor and live music

sponsor, Arsenal Cider House.

Mount Lebanon musician Luke Williams will perform throughout the day alongside other local artists and host an open mic. With a little luck, my dad might even take the stage with the same guitar he carried into Mount Lebanon nearly 60 years ago.

We hope you'll join us Sunday, Sept. 13, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and visit my family's little corner of the world. Maybe you'll even make a few memories of your own. ♥

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A Proud Mt. Lebanon Alumni



Healthy Living: Simple Home Changes Can Help Older Adults Age Safely in Place

Small, affordable improvements can reduce fall risks, increase independence and help seniors remain in their homes longer By Kate Sheets

In last month's Healthy Living column, we discussed how aging in place allows older adults to remain independent by combining community resources, health care, transportation and social connections. An equally important piece of that puzzle begins at home. Creating a safer living environment can help prevent injuries, make everyday tasks easier and allow older adults to remain independent for years to come.

Many homes were not designed with aging in mind. A decorative rug, dim hallway or high kitchen shelves may seem harmless, but these everyday features can become safety hazards as mobility, balance and vision change over time. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of injury among adults 65 and older, and many occur inside the home. The good news is that many fall risks can be reduced with simple, affordable changes.



Healthy Habit of the Month: Make Time to Stretch

Taking just five to 10 minutes each day to stretch can improve flexibility, reduce muscle stiffness and support better balance and posture. Regular stretching helps keep joints moving comfortably and may make everyday activities — such as reaching for items, climbing stairs or getting out of a chair — easier. It can also increase circulation and relieve tension after long periods of sitting. Stretching doesn't require special equipment and can be done at home while watching television or after a short walk. The American Heart Association recommends including flexibility and stretching exercises as part of a well-rounded physical activity routine to support overall health.

Start by walking through your home with fresh eyes. Are electrical cords crossing walkways? Are frequently used items stored on high shelves? Is the lighting bright enough to safely navigate stairs at night? Removing clutter, securing loose rugs with nonslip backing and improving lighting are inexpensive improvements that can make an immediate difference.

Bathrooms are another area where small changes can have a significant impact. Installing grab bars near the toilet and inside the shower or bathtub provides additional stability, while nonslip bath mats can reduce the chance of slipping on wet floors. For those with arthritis or limited hand strength, replacing traditional faucet knobs with lever-style handles can also make daily tasks easier.

Stairways deserve special attention as well. Handrails on both sides of the stairs, clearly visible step edges and well-lit hallways can make climbing stairs safer. If stairs become more difficult to navigate, it may be worth-



while to rearrange the living space so the bedroom, bathroom and laundry area are all located on one floor whenever possible.

The kitchen is another room where simple adjustments can improve safety. Store commonly used dishes and cookware between waist and shoulder height to reduce the need for climbing or bending. Keep a sturdy step stool with handrails available if reaching higher shelves is necessary, and ensure smoke detectors are working properly throughout the home.

Older adults do not have to navigate home modifications on their own. The Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging connects residents with programs and community partners that can help make homes safer and more accessible. Through the agency, older adults can receive information about home safety assessments,

accessibility improvements and referrals to trusted organizations that provide home modification services.

South Hills residents can also work with companies such as 3 Birds Accessibility, Fayer Family Accessibility Solutions, Altamira Ltd. and 101 Mobility of Pittsburgh for services including grab bar installation, wheelchair ramps, stair lifts, bathroom modifications and other accessibility improvements. By helping older adults identify available resources and determine which modifications best fit their needs, the agency makes it easier for residents to create a safer home environment before a fall or injury occurs.

Some homeowners also may qualify for assistance through Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, a nonprofit organization that helps eligible residents complete critical home repairs and accessibility improvements. Projects

may include installing grab bars, repairing walkways, improving lighting or building wheelchair ramps when needed. These improvements can reduce fall risks while making homes more comfortable and accessible.

Making a home safer does not have to happen all at once. Completing one or two projects each month can gradually create a safer environment without becoming overwhelming or expensive. In many cases, inexpensive improvements completed today can help prevent injuries tomorrow.

As with many aspects of healthy aging, preparation is key. Waiting until after a fall or medical emergency often limits available options and adds unnecessary stress. By making thoughtful improvements early and taking advantage of local resources, older adults can continue living safely and confidently in the homes they love. ♥

Resources

Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging

Provides information, home safety referrals, caregiver support, transportation services and aging-in-place resources.

Website: <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/Human-Services-DHS/DHS-Offices/Area-Agency-on-Aging>

Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh

Offers critical home repairs and accessibility modifications, including ramps, grab bars, handrails and other safety improvements for eligible homeowners.

Website: <https://www.rtpittsburgh.org>

National Institute on Aging Home Safety Checklist

Provides a free room-by-room checklist to identify common fall hazards and improve home safety.

Website: https://www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/worksheet-home-safety-checklist_1.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Older Adult Fall Prevention

Learn about fall risks and evidence-based strategies to prevent injuries among older adults.

Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/falls/about/index.html>



New Movement Disorders Program Brings Specialized Neurology Care Close to Home

By Eleazer Gorenstein

For many people, a slight tremor or change in balance can seem like an inevitable part of getting older. But according to Dr. Mary Flaherty, a fellowship-trained movement disorders neurologist at St. Clair Medical Group Neurology, those symptoms shouldn't simply be dismissed as signs of aging.

Instead, they may indicate an underlying neurological condition that can often be managed more effectively when diagnosed early.

"Any time you notice tremors that are interfering with your daily life or just feel different from your baseline, it's worth talking to your doctor," Dr. Flaherty said. "We're here to help enhance patients' quality of life through medical treatments and other interventions."

Movement disorders encompass a broad range of neurological conditions that affect a person's ability to move. At St. Clair, Dr. Flaherty treats patients with Parkinson's disease, essential tremor, dystonia, tic disorders and other conditions that can impair walking, balance and coordination.

As St. Clair continues to expand its neurology services, local residents now have greater access to specialized movement disorder care without traveling to larger medical centers.

Dr. Flaherty said research consistently shows that identifying movement disorders early can improve patients' quality of life.

"Even if you're not ready for medication, there are a lot of different modalities we can use to enhance overall quality of life," she said. "If we're able to diagnose early, we can also recommend interventions that may slow the progression of illness."

Those interventions often extend well beyond medication.

Dr. Flaherty said movement disorders can affect cognition, memory, emotional health and other aspects of daily living in



Dr. Mary Flaherty

addition to physical movement. Patients with Parkinson's disease, for example, experience higher rates of depression than the general population.

"We really need to think beyond the movement symptoms," she said. "We use speech therapists for cognitive exercises, mental health professionals when appropriate and community resources to help patients and families."

Among those resources are local support groups and exercise programs through organizations such as the Parkinson Foundation Western Pennsylvania. Dr. Flaherty said connecting patients with others facing similar challenges can

be one of the most beneficial aspects of treatment.

Looking ahead, St. Clair plans to build an even more comprehensive movement disorders program through a multidisciplinary approach.

The vision includes greater collaboration among neurologists, physical therapists, speech therapists and neurosurgeons. The hospital also hopes to develop a specialized clinic for patients undergoing deep brain stimulation, a surgical treatment that can help some individuals with Parkinson's disease and essential tremor.

"Ideally, you're utilizing all the tools in your toolbox," Dr. Flaherty said. "That

involves physical therapy, speech therapy, surgeons and a collaborative approach to patient care."

Dr. Flaherty also hopes to dispel one of the biggest misconceptions she hears from newly diagnosed Parkinson's patients.

"A lot of patients think it ultimately means they're going to end up in a wheelchair," she said. "Many of my patients remain quite ambulatory for a long time, especially if they make exercise a big part of their lives."

Although Parkinson's disease currently has no cure, she emphasized that there are numerous treatments available to help patients maintain indepen-

dence and improve daily functioning.

She recalled one patient who had previously been told they simply had essential tremor. After a specialized evaluation, Dr. Flaherty recognized symptoms more consistent with Parkinson's disease and started appropriate treatment. The patient experienced improved walking, better mobility getting in and out of chairs and reduced tremors while also benefiting from local exercise programs and support services.

For Dr. Flaherty, stories like that reinforce the importance of seeking medical evaluation when something feels different.

"If you're worried that something isn't right, it's always better to bring it up with your doctor earlier rather than later," she said. "We're either going to recommend further evaluation or provide reassurance."

Today, Dr. Flaherty said South Hills residents have access to highly specialized movement disorder care much closer to home.

"I want patients to know they have a really good local resource," she said. "Barriers like transportation don't have to keep people from getting the care they need. We're excited to continue growing the program and offering services that weren't previously available here."

Dr. Flaherty specializes in treating various movement disorders, including but not limited to parkinsonism, tremor, dystonia, Huntington's disease, and ataxia. She earned her medical degree at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed her residency in neurology as well as a fellowship in movement disorders at the AHN Allegheny General Hospital. Dr. Flaherty is board-certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, and she practices with St. Clair Medical Group Neurology. To schedule an appointment, call 412.942.6300. ♥

SPONSORED CONTENT



Beyond the Signs

The signs may be temporary, but the stories behind them leave a lasting mark on the community

Mount Lebanon Housing Market Remains Strong

By Nancy McKenna, Howard Hanna

What a strong market we're seeing. My listings received multiple offers and sold above the asking price. In today's competitive environment, buyers are becoming increasingly creative with their offers to stand out in bidding wars and secure a home.

Mount Lebanon's housing market remained strong in June, with both home sales and prices climbing as families looked to settle into the district before the start of the new school year.

According to local market

data, 57 homes were actively listed for sale in June. During the month, another 57 homes sold, a 14% increase from May. Home prices also continued to rise. The average sale price reached \$516,000 in June, up from \$472,000 in May.

June is traditionally one of the busiest months for the local real estate market as buyers work to complete their home purchases in time to move, enjoy the summer and have their children settled before the start of the school year in August. ♥



A "Sale Pending" sign at 401 Kurt Drive reflects the strong demand for homes in Mount Lebanon, where competitive bidding and quick sales continue to define the local housing market. (Lebo Beat photo)



Mount Lebanon's housing market gained momentum this spring, with pending sales reaching a 12-month high and June recording 57 active listings and 57 homes sold, reflecting continued strong buyer demand. (Source: TrendGraphix Inc.)

Wave of Kindness

By Brion Palmer

Most people drive past yard signs without giving them a second thought.

This one deserves a closer look.

It asks people to perform seven acts of kindness and encourage seven others to do the same. Behind that simple message is a Mount Lebanon family transforming profound loss into a lasting legacy of compassion.

The Wave of Kindness campaign honors the memory of Alex Pellegrino, who died on July 7, 2025. Rather than allowing that date to be remembered only with sadness, her family has

chosen to celebrate her life by inspiring others to make a difference through simple acts of generosity.

Last year, on the first anniversary of Alex's death, family members invited friends, neighbors and members of the community to write down acts of kindness and hang them on a tree outside their home. Reading those notes became a powerful reminder of Alex's impact on so many lives.

This year, the family hopes to extend that spirit far beyond their neighborhood.

Their invitation is simple: Complete seven acts of

kindness in Alex's honor, then encourage seven more people to do the same. Whether it's helping a neighbor, buying someone a cup of coffee, volunteering or simply offering encouragement, every act has the potential to inspire another.

To connect those participating, the family created WaveofKindness.org, where people can share stories of the kindness they've experienced or passed along.

Their hope is that what began as a personal tribute will continue growing into a movement that reaches well beyond Mount Lebanon.

"While July 7 holds a special meaning for us, kindness knows no calendar," the family wrote. "We want to keep this momentum going throughout the entire year and beyond."

For Paula, Andy, Sam and Charlie, the campaign is more than a memorial. It is a way to ensure Alex's spirit continues to touch lives through the kindness of others.

The yard sign may be temporary, but the family hopes its message will have a lasting impact — creating a ripple effect of compassion that extends far beyond a single day, one neighborhood or one community. ♥



A "Wave of Kindness" sign outside the Pellegrino family's Mount Lebanon home encourages neighbors to honor Alex Pellegrino's memory by performing seven acts of kindness and inspiring others to do the same. (Lebo Beat photo)

A Legacy of Love

By Brion Palmer

A sign promoting a food drive may encourage someone to donate.

What it can't tell you is the story behind the name.

Each summer, the David T. Bannon Memorial Food & Fund Drive appears in Mount Lebanon as an invitation to help neighbors facing food insecurity. For organizer Christine Patti, however, the annual fundraiser is much more than a charitable event. It is a way to honor her son, David, while bringing hope to families throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania.

David died on July 28, 2020, after battling pneumonia during the COVID-19 pandemic. He spent more than two weeks in the intensive care unit at Georgetown Univer-

sity Medical Center before his death.

Rather than allowing July to become defined only by loss, Patti chose to create something that reflects David's spirit of compassion and service.

Now in its sixth year, the fundraiser benefits the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. After five years of collecting food in person, this year's campaign has transitioned to a virtual format, allowing every donated dollar to stretch even further. According to the food bank, every \$1 donated can provide up to three meals for children, families and seniors experiencing food insecurity.

The impact has been remarkable.

Over the past five years, the fundraiser has raised more than \$229,000 and collected more than 21,000 pounds of food and household essentials. Last year's campaign alone helped provide more than 226,000 meals to local families.

Patti has also expanded David's legacy beyond the annual fundraiser by creating the Gone Too Soon Virtual Memorial, an online space where parents who have lost children can honor their memories and find support from others who understand their grief. Participation is open to everyone, with no obligation to donate.

For Patti, every contribution represents more than a meal.

It is a reminder that love can endure, even through



The David T. Bannon Memorial Virtual Food Drive has become an annual tradition, transforming one family's loss into a community effort to fight food insecurity throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania. (Lebo Beat photo)

unimaginable loss, and that one person's memory can continue changing lives years after they are gone.

The sign may invite people to support a food drive.

The story behind it is one of a mother's unwavering love, a son's enduring legacy and a community coming together to help those who need it most. ♥

More Than Youth Football

By Brion Palmer

At first glance, it's just another registration sign.

"Mount Lebanon Youth Football Association — Register Now."

For many families, it's simply a reminder that football season is approaching. But behind that sign is a program designed to do much more than teach blocking, tackling and throwing a football.

The Mount Lebanon Youth Football Association

serves boys and girls in kindergarten through sixth grade who live in the Mount Lebanon School District. While learning the fundamentals of football is certainly part of the experience, the organization's broader mission is developing teamwork, discipline, leadership and character in a safe, structured environment.

Each August, hundreds of young athletes begin practices, starting with mandato-

ry heat acclimation sessions before moving into a season of practices, scrimmages, games and playoffs.

Players are grouped by age and experience, beginning with the Termite division for students in kindergarten through second grade, followed by junior varsity for third- and fourth-graders and varsity teams for fifth- and sixth-graders.

Safety remains the program's top priority.



A Mount Lebanon Youth Football Association registration sign represents more than a fall sports season—it marks the first step for many young athletes in developing teamwork, leadership and the skills that prepare them for the Blue Devil football program. (Lebo Beat photo)

Coaches emphasize proper technique, player development and sportsmanship while helping young athletes build confidence both on and off the field.

Families also play an important role. By registering, parents commit to supporting a culture that values respect, positive sideline behavior and player development over winning.

This year's registration carries even greater significance as Mount Lebanon's football program embraces a new vision under high school head coach Bruce Fronk. Fronk has introduced a vertically aligned system that connects youth, middle school and high school foot-

ball through shared coaching philosophies, terminology and player development.

That means many of the children registering today are taking their first steps toward becoming future Blue Devils, entering a program designed to prepare them not only for Friday nights under the lights, but for the responsibilities that come with representing their school and community.

The registration sign may be temporary, but the opportunities it represents can last for years. For many Mount Lebanon children, it marks the beginning of friendships, life lessons and a football journey that extends well beyond one season. ♥

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A Lifetime in Lebo

Former Mount Lebanon cheerleader Andrea Smith reflects on growing up in the township, lifelong friendships and memories that have endured for more than 60 years By Kate Goettmann

It's Friday night after another Blue Devils football game, and Andrea Smith and her friends aren't ready to head home just yet. Like many Mount Lebanon teenagers in the 1950s and '60s, they're making their way to The Rec, a popular gathering spot where music is playing and the dance floor is filling up.

"We always danced," she recalled. "I loved to dance."

Friday nights at The Rec were a regular part of her teenage years and one of many memories she still carries from Mount Lebanon. A cheerleader at Mount Lebanon High School, she spent much of her free time with friends, whether at football games, parties or on the dance floor. Though two of the group have since died, Smith still meets one of her fellow cheerleaders for lunch at Eat'n Park near South Hills Village.

"It was great growing up in Mount Lebanon," she said.

Smith was born during World War II in an apartment

on Central Square. When she was 5, her family moved to Shady Drive West, to a home that no longer exists.

Today, the site is the Roller's Hardware parking lot.

Driving by, she still points to the pavement and jokes, "That's where I was born. That parking lot."

She remembers a neighborhood where students walked to school, often picking up friends along the way and stopping at a small store at the end of Cedar Boulevard for a cup of coffee before class.

While her childhood and teenage years were rooted in Mount Lebanon, her life took her elsewhere after graduation. She attended Shenandoah Junior College in Winchester, Virginia, where she also was a cheerleader. After returning home, Smith began working at Industrial Rubber Products in Pittsburgh, where she met her future husband, the company's vice president and a widower 18 years her senior. Friends and family predicted the marriage would not last, but the couple

proved them wrong, remaining together for 46 years until his death in 2020.

After marrying, the couple settled in South Park before later moving to Jefferson Hills. Smith remained active in the community through volunteer work with Pleasant Hills Community United Presbyterian Church and Meals on Wheels. She also crocheted hats and blankets that were donated through St. Thomas More Church.

When her husband retired, the couple found more time to travel. They visited Ireland, where he fulfilled one of his bucket-list dreams by kissing the Blarney Stone. Smith climbed to the top with him but decided to leave that tradition to her husband.

For her 50th birthday, they traveled to the Grand Canyon, where Smith hiked partway down despite her fear of heights.

"That was quite an experience," she said.

While she has checked many destinations off her bucket list over the years, one dream remains.



Andrea Smith with her beloved dog, Ali. (Photo provided)

"It's still my dream to drive Route 66 to California with my dog," she said.

Before her husband's death, the couple had begun exploring communities that could provide security and future health care needs. She moved to Providence Point shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic.

She credits her dog, Ali, and the support of her cousin, who also lives at Providence Point, with

helping her through the transition. Ali, a mix of shih tzu, bichon, poodle and Maltese, settled in right away and helped make the new community feel like home.

Though she left Mount Lebanon decades ago, she has never forgotten the community where she grew up. More than 60 years after her days at The Rec, many of the memories — and friendships — remain. ♥



The 1959-1960 Mt. Lebanon cheering squad was composed of Janis Beachler, Carolyn Tamplin, Peggy Colvin, Mary Head, Nancy VanGundy, Judy Dickinson, Dana Simpson, Caddy Durkin, Carla Mueller, Bonnie Hoskin, Mark Wise, Lynn Ricca, Jeanne Heid, Wendy Turner, Hope Steverman, Barb Clinton, Sandy Berg, Cindy Hussing, Andy Gamble, and Jerry Delisi.

Andrea "Andy" Gamble, second from the right in the top row, was a member of the 1959-60 Mount Lebanon High School cheerleading squad. (Provided photo)



Former members of the Mount Lebanon High School cheerleading squad reunited to celebrate decades of friendship. Shown, from left, are Cindy Hussing Conway, Jeanne Heid Berezinski, Amy McDonald Gilmer, Andrea "Andy" Gamble Smith and Hope Stevenman Linge. The inset photo shows Conway, left, with her sixth best friend, Sandy Berg Seymour, who now lives in Arizona. (Provided photo)

Pickleball Finds a Home at Mount Lebanon Racket Center

The new six-court facility expands the township's racquet sports offerings as the nation's fastest-growing sport continues to attract players of all ages and skill levels

By Eleazer Gorenstein

The country's fastest-growing sport has come to Mt. Lebanon Park, providing both beginners and seasoned pickleball players with a brand-new facility in which to hone their skills.

Opened since this past April, the six pickleball courts got a splash of color with fresh blue and green paint and permanent lines in June. Residents and non-residents alike can reserve a court for \$12 an hour. Players can reserve courts online with Court-Reserve, or walk up to the front desk to reserve a court. A minimum of one hour is required for reservation.

Mt. Lebanon Racket Center Facility Manager Darin Rauso sees the park's newest addition as a necessity.

"Pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in the country," Rauso said. "As we transitioned to a full 'racket center' model, we knew we needed to add pickleball to our offerings. Residents have been asking for it, and we wanted to provide dedicated courts alongside tennis and platform tennis."

The new Racket Center model at the park includes 13 tennis courts, six pickleball courts and four platform tennis courts all in one location. Having all three racket sports together gives residents more opportunities to play and makes the facility a destination, Rauso added. The construction of the six courts necessitated the reduction of two of the park's tennis courts. However, so far, that's been well-received by the community.

"We knew there would be some concern anytime you reduce the number of tennis courts, but we felt comfortable making the change because we started with 15 courts," said Rauso. "Even after the conversion, 13 tennis courts is still a significant number, and we can continue to meet demand while expanding opportunities for pickleball."

The pickleball courts are located along Cedar Boulevard, which makes them highly visible. People driving or walking by can see the activity and discover what's happening at the Racket Center. The location



The Mount Lebanon Racket Center now features six dedicated pickleball courts, expanding recreational opportunities as the nation's fastest-growing sport continues to gain popularity. (Photo provided)

also helps with staff supervision and minimizes concerns about noise, according to Rauso.

Rauso also noted that the pickleball courts are just one part of a larger investment in the Racket Center. They have replaced fencing, upgraded the tennis court lighting to LED and

added a state-of-the-art hitting wall as well.

Pickleball's popularity, said Rauso, is largely because of its low barrier to entry for players.

"It's a very approachable sport," he said. "Someone who's never played before can pick up a paddle and start having fun right away."

We offer beginner clinics, instructors and loaner paddles, so it's easy for anyone to give it a try."

"I think one of the biggest draws is that people can learn the game quickly and enjoy it almost immediately. It's similar to tennis, but the learning curve is much shorter." ♥

One Program, One Purpose: Fronk Unites Mt. Lebanon Football

New head coach Bruce Fronk is building a vertically aligned program that connects middle school and high school players while strengthening the Blue Devils' tradition

Story and photos by Lindi Pastorius

Metallica blared from the speakers as seventh-graders, eighth-graders and high school players spread across the practice field.

Together they shouted, "One. Two. Three," driving their knees high before sprinting across painted white lines. Younger players watched older teammates for cues, while veterans encouraged them through every drill.

It wasn't just another summer workout.

It was the first glimpse of new head coach Bruce Fronk's vision for Mt. Lebanon football: one program, one philosophy and one Blue Devil tradition.

Although August marks the official start of football season, Blue Devils players have been preparing since spring through conditioning, weight training and combined practices designed to unite athletes from middle school through high school.

At the center of Fronk's plan is a concept known as vertical alignment — creating a consistent football experience across every level of the district's program.

By bringing middle school and high school players together under a unified coaching philosophy, Fronk hopes to better prepare student-athletes as they progress through the district's football program. Through consistent coaching, shared terminology and aligned offensive and defensive

systems, the goal is to develop more confident, fundamentally sound players before they reach the varsity level.

Fronk, a Mellon Middle School teacher and interim assistant principal, will move to Mt. Lebanon High School this fall to teach and coach. Drawing on his experience as both an educator and coach, he introduced the concept of unifying the district's football program during the interview process for the head coaching position. The vision was well received.

Recognizing that the initiative required coaches who shared his philosophy, Fronk recruited longtime colleague Matt Mikesell to serve as the eighth-grade head coach.

"Along with being a great teacher, he's a great mentor," Fronk said. "At the end of the day, that's what coaching is — great teaching and leadership."

Fronk then assembled a coaching staff committed to supporting every level of the program, from seventh through 12th grade. Coaches attend practices and games across multiple teams, creating continuity while building relationships throughout the program.

"Our program begins in seventh grade with the idea of establishing connections," Mikesell said. "By the time they're in ninth grade, it's not their first year in the high school program. It's more like their third."

The philosophy extends well beyond football. Fronk believes the structure promotes leadership, accountability and teamwork while creating opportunities for learning on and off the field.

"It creates teachable moments in our weight room sessions, classroom sessions and combined workout sessions," Fronk said. "It also allows players to understand this is their team, and everyone has to bring value for this thing to go where it needs to go."

Rising ninth-graders began practicing with the high school team in April, followed by rising eighth-graders in May. The younger players are already building relationships with varsity athletes, learning from older teammates while becoming familiar with the expectations of the high school program before they ever play a varsity snap.

Fronk previously coached under legendary coach Bob Palko when Mt. Lebanon won the 2021 WPIAL championship. He describes the current program as being built "brick by brick" on the foundation established by those who came before him.

"When you put on those gold horns in the fall, it means something," Fronk said. "You're representing yourself, a community and all of the alumni who have come before you. It's making sure that tradition continues while also adding a new positive chapter to that foundation."



Matt Mikesell, left, the new eighth-grade head football coach, and Bruce Fronk, the new Mount Lebanon High School head football coach, will work together to strengthen the district's vertically aligned football program.

The district also enters the season under new athletic director Danny Bonaventura, a former Robert Morris football player. Fronk has already connected with leaders of the district's youth and flag football programs, as well as the marching band, to create a more unified Friday night experience for players, students and the community.

Several events are planned this fall, including a football kickoff celebration, a ceremony naming the field after Art Walker Sr. when Mt. Lebanon hosts North Allegheny, and recognition of the 1966 team

Continued on page 20

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College Signing Day Celebrates 42 Mt. Lebanon Student-Athletes

Blue Devil Club honors seniors who will continue competing at 35 colleges and universities across 17 sports By Eleazer Gorenstein, Photos by Marilee Kline

Years of early mornings, long practices and unwavering dedication culminated June 1, as 42 Mt. Lebanon High School senior athletes participated in College Signing Day, an event sponsored by the longstanding booster organization, the Mt. Lebanon Blue Devil Club.

This was a significant day that honored student-athletes from Mt. Lebanon who will continue competing at the collegiate level, said Blue Devil Club president Peter Darcy.

"Signing Day is probably my favorite event the Blue Devil Club puts on," said Darcy. "It's a chance to recognize years of hard work and sacrifice and celebrate these student-athletes with their families one final time before they begin the next chapter."



Lily Cramer signs her National Letter of Intent to continue her track and field career at Virginia Tech, joined by her parents and siblings.



Carson Cannone shares the moment with his parents after signing his National Letter of Intent to wrestle at Chatham University.



Joined by his parents, Rick and Jahna, and his sister, Frannie, Jackson Steiner signs his National Letter of Intent to continue his football career at Duquesne University.



Surrounded by her parents, Isabella Shane signs her National Letter of Intent to play volleyball at Waynesburg University.

Being invited to the signing day event means you've dedicated years to your sport, Darcy said. He added that the opportunity to continue competing in college shows the level of commitment and caliber of performance that the athletes had during their time as a Blue Devil.

"It's our opportunity to say, 'Thank you for all you did,'" said Darcy. "It was fun to watch over the last four years, and good luck in everything that comes next."

NAME	SCHOOL	SPORT
Dane Barber	Seton Hill University	Baseball
Lillian Beasley	College of Wooster	Volleyball
Grayson Beck	Princeton University	Football
Carson Cannone	Chatham University	Wrestling
Shiloh Cowher	Messiah University	Field Hockey
Lily Cramer	Virginia Tech	Track
Rebecca Davis	Frostburg State University	Softball
Lilly Dziedzic	Oberlin College	Track and Field
Jase Engle	Washington & Jefferson College	Cross Country & Track
Lilly Evan	College of the Holy Cross	Swimming
Brandon Frameli-Metz	Washington & Jefferson College	Tennis
Cole Gibbons	New York University	Wrestling
MJ Gill	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Field Hockey
Carter Gould	Westminster College	Basketball
Alina Heineman	Washington College	Rowing
Paige Jox	Washington & Jefferson College	Wrestling
Tess Kanche	Washington & Jefferson College	Golf
Cole Kappeler	Muskingum University	Baseball
Ben Kraemer	Rochester Institute of Technology	Baseball
Jackson Kraemer	Villanova University	Football
Leena Leja	University of Kentucky	Dance
Zachary Lynam	North Greenville University	Lacrosse
Joseph Malone	Cornell University	Football
Ben Mares	Wheaton College	Wrestling
Simon Marks	Westminster College	Soccer
Lucy McCord	Colorado College	Volleyball
Marisol Montoya	American University	Track and Cross Country
Quinn Murdoch	University of Cincinnati	Lacrosse
Eli Page	Ohio University	Rugby
Max Prezioso	Robert Morris University	Lacrosse
Isabella Shane	Waynesburg University	Volleyball
Liam Sheely	John Carroll University	Basketball
Chase Smith	University of South Carolina Beaufort	Baseball
Evelyn Smith	University of Notre Dame	Rowing
Patrick Smith	University of Pennsylvania	Football
Jackson Steiner	Duquesne University	Football
Ben Tan	Grove City College	Track
William Thomas	Washington & Lee University	Swimming
Quinn Thompson	East Stroudsburg University	Swimming
Cooper Wertz	Washington & Jefferson College	Volleyball
Evan Yurasko	Duquesne University	Cross Country

What stood out to Darcy was the depth of this year's class, both in the number of sports represented and the variety of colleges and universities the athletes are attending. Of this year's senior class, 42 athletes are attending 35 different colleges and universities in 17 distinct sports.

"It really speaks to Mt. Lebanon's ability to develop exceptional student-athletes," Darcy said. "I was truly struck by how humble this group of young adults was. Their humility and



overall disposition really speak to their character."

It is extremely difficult and competitive to reach the level of playing a sport at the collegiate level, Darcy noted, as the competition for college roster spots can be quite intense. According to Darcy, seeing the number of athletes that are continuing to play collegiately really shows how exceptional these student-athletes are.

"Nobody picked up these sports a year or two ago," Darcy said. "They've been developing their skills for many years. These athletes balanced demanding academics, athletics and even the challenges created by the pandemic. To earn the opportunity to continue competing in college is very impressive."

Signing day is just one aspect of what the Blue Devil Club does. Without a booster organization like it, there would be missed opportunities to provide support for student-athletes across the community. Darcy said that the club always asks itself how to make sure communitywide opportunities aren't missed.

"Our goal is to make sure student-athletes have the best possible experience," Darcy said. "That's what we are all about."

Additionally, something that sets Mt. Lebanon High School apart is the number of selfless volunteers who give considerable time to ensure a positive experience for the township's athletes.

"There's no expectation of recognition," he said of the volunteers. "It's really like servant leadership, and so many people and parents simply give of themselves for the benefit of the students."

This tireless support by community members helps athletes to learn valuable lessons in navigating life's challenges, according to Darcy.

"Athletics give you the opportunity to face adversity, face challenges and give selflessly of yourself," he said. "Those are leadership skills that stay with you throughout life. It's easy to succeed when everything is going well. Real leadership is revealed when things aren't going well, and athletics gives young people the opportunity to develop those skills."

Though the road to playing college sports can seem daunting, Darcy encourages younger athletes not to give up. Exploring different opportunities and not limiting oneself to one sport can be a key to finding one's passion, and ultimately to competing at the next level.

"Find what you're passionate about," he said. "Because that passion is what gets you up for a 5 a.m. practice or an early spring workout. That passion is what will take you as far as you want to go." ♥



Mount Lebanon High School student-athletes who committed to continue their academic and athletic careers at the collegiate level pose for a group photo during National Signing Day.



Joined by his mother, Chase Smith signs his National Letter of Intent to continue his baseball career at the University of South Carolina Beaufort



Surrounded by her parents and siblings, Leena Leja signs her commitment to join the University of Kentucky dance team.



Joined by her parents, Lillian Beasley signs her National Letter of Intent to continue her volleyball career at The College of Wooster.



With his father and brother at his side, Cole Kappeler signs his National Letter of Intent to continue his baseball career at Muskingum University.



Ben Mares shares the moment with his mother and sister after signing his National Letter of Intent to wrestle at Wheaton College



Joined by his parents, Dane Barber signs his National Letter of Intent to continue his baseball career at Seton Hill University.



LebOlympics Record Book Updated

Mt. Lebanon Recreation Department releases the latest list of event record-holders following four new marks set this year

Last month, the Lebo Beat reported that four young athletes set new records during this year's LebOlympics. The Mt. Lebanon Recreation Department has since provided an updated record book reflecting those performances. The following list, compiled by Bob Weet of the recreation department, recognizes the current record-holders across all LebOlympics events.

5 & 6 YEAR OLDS	BOYS	RECORD/DATE	GIRLS	RECORD/DATE
Tennis Ball Throw	Bryce Bellanca	93/2024	Mae Kiley/Paula Carnevale	45/2023/2025
Long Jump	Easton Davis	6/2024	Savannah Rentschler	5'8"/2023
50 M	James Allen	8.75/2026	Clare Cramer	8.90/2012
100 M	Landon Glock	16.83/2016	Sydney Dyer	18.12/2024
200 M	Charlie Walker	40.15/2025	Dani Prunzik	36.8/2011
400 M	JJ Dela Vega-Harris	1:33/2024	Lily Cramer	1:37/10/2014
7 & 8 YEAR OLDS	BOYS	RECORD/DATE	GIRLS	RECORD/DATE
Softball Throw	Messiah Torti	111/2026	Mae Kiley	87/2026
Long Jump	Levi Mayer	6'4"/2025	Mary McElhattan	6/2015
50 M	Evan Gingo	7.63/2015	Isla Henderson/Jeea Prinzo	6/2024
100 M	David Colwes	15.53/2019	Savannah Rentschler	6/2025
200 M	Nicholas Zundel	33.69/2015	Ann Tinnemeyer	7.4/2017
400 M	Jeremy Wytiaz	1:22/2009	Martha Schmidt	15.96/2007
9 & 10 YEAR OLDS	BOYS	RECORD/DATE	GIRLS	RECORD/DATE
Softball Throw	Cole Young	129/2013	Dani Prunzik	34.5/2013
Long Jump	Mac Stout	7/2013	Jenna Lang	122.15/2014
50 M	Sullivan Antonelli	6.59/2024	Jenna Lang	1:14.13/2016
100 M	Connor Kytka	14.7/2023	Jenna Lang	1:14.13/2016
200 M	Leo Hatley	30.90/2026	Jenna Lang	1:14.13/2016
400 M	John Hamilton	1:16.5/2015	Jenna Lang	1:14.13/2016
11 & 12 YEAR OLDS	BOYS	RECORD/DATE	GIRLS	RECORD/DATE
Softball Throw	Dylan Roberts	141/2012	Nadia Haser	126/2012
Long Jump	Ejiro Montoya	7'8"/2016	Leah Drozda	7'3"/2024
100 M	Joe Gibbon	13.5/2014	Molly Mangan	14.1/2013
200 M	Elijah Schaepli	28.3/2023	Molly Mangan	28.9/2013
400 M	Brady Napoleon	1:08.86/2014	Clair Dougherty	1:09/2010
800 M	Ian Baun	2:42/2008	Jenna Lang	1:09/2018
13 & 14 YEAR OLDS	BOYS	RECORD/DATE	GIRLS	RECORD/DATE
Softball Throw	Trevor Buda	189/2010	Gabriella Owens-Demarco	126/2012
Long Jump	Trevor Buda	8'6"/2010	Sophia Taborski	7'6"/2007
100 M	Chris Ferari	12.47/2008	Molly Mangan	12.8/2015
200 M	Andrew Freeman	25.19/2024	Molly Mangan	26.9/2015
800 M	David Konrad	2.23/2009	Olivia Bianco	2:32.15/2016
1600 M	Ian Baun	5:17.2/2011	Hillary Boxheimer	5:26.67/2007

Fronk Unites Mt. Lebanon Football

Continued from page 17

that captured the school's first WPIAL football championship. "Friday nights are a celebration of the entire Mount Lebanon community," Fronk said. "The marching band, the cheerleading team, the parents and community members. It's a celebration of all of us, our kids and their accomplishments." Fronk's passion for football and Mt. Lebanon is reflected in the Blue Devil creed, which reminds players to "play for each other and for those who have come before you." But perhaps the creed's most fitting description of Fronk's vision is the line he doesn't quote: "Greatness comes from countless hours of training together to sharpen our skills and establish rock-solid trust. On game day, performance becomes second nature." If the first combined practice is any indication, that vision is already taking shape. The district's youngest and oldest players are learning together, competing together and building relationships that Fronk hopes will strengthen the program for years to come. On that field, there were no separate teams. There was only one Blue Devil football program. ♥



Mount Lebanon middle school and high school football players practice together as part of the district's new vertically aligned football program, which emphasizes shared coaching, player development and teamwork across all levels. (Photo by Linda Pastorius)



Lebo Gift Gals

Your guide to gift giving — Wedding Registries

Wedding season always brings one question to the forefront: Is it ever OK to buy a wedding gift that isn't on the registry? As your Gift Gals at Barefoot Stitches & Gifts, we hear this question all the time. While we always respect a couple's carefully chosen registry, we also enjoy helping shoppers who prefer to support local businesses, add a personal touch or, as some jokingly call themselves, become "registry rebels." Today's wedding registries are typically created online through large retailers, making gift-giving simple and convenient. Some even include honeymoon funds, pet expenses or contributions toward a down payment on a home.

So, is it acceptable to shop off the registry? The answer is yes — with thoughtful consideration. A registry is designed to make gift-giving easier for everyone. It reflects the couple's needs, style and often the look they hope to create in their new home. Starting there is always good etiquette. But there are times when a carefully chosen gift outside the registry can be just as meaningful. The key is selecting something that reflects the couple rather than simply choosing an item to match a price point. Although Barefoot Stitches & Gifts doesn't offer an online registry, we're happy to create a curated in-store collection selected by the couple so friends and family can shop locally while still honoring their wishes. Some of our favorite off-registry gifts are practical pieces



From left: Jennifer Brandenstein and Karin Smith, owners of Barefoot Stitches & Gifts on Beverly Road. (Photo provided)

the couple may not have considered. Embroidered guest towels, monogrammed cocktail napkins, elegant picture frames for wedding photos, salt and pepper mills, rechargeable accent lamps, decorative clocks and locally crafted personalized charcuterie boards are all gifts that combine beauty with everyday use. If you decide to go off the registry, do it with intention. A thoughtful, personal gift often becomes one of the most treasured because it reflects the care that went into choosing it. That's what the Dear Gift Gals column is all about — taking the guesswork out of gifting and replacing it with confidence, thoughtfulness and a personal touch. Whether you shop directly from the registry or choose something more unexpected, the goal is the same: to celebrate the couple with a gift they'll enjoy for years to come. Have a gifting question you'd like us to answer? We'd love to hear from you. Send your ideas and questions to info@lebobeat.com. ♥

Lebo Financial Answers

Ask the Advisor

Readers with personal finance questions can now get expert insight through the *Lebo Beat*. John McGowan, financial advisor with Carson Wealth will answer select reader-submitted questions and provide professional guidance on topics such as investing, retirement, estate planning, taxes, and other financial matters. If you have a question, you would like considered for a future column, email it to info@lebobeat.com. Here is the first answer to question submitted by a Lebo Beat reader. **Hi, I would like to invest some money for my child/grandchild, but I am not sure which type of account is best?**

— Beth Whitfield

Hi Beth. Thank you for your question. There are a number of great options out there, and the right choice can vary based on your specific situation. Any recommendation should first consider the financial goal you are saving towards. For education savings, a 529 account is likely the best option. If you prefer an account with less restrictions and would like the beneficiary to have some extra spending money after graduation, for a major purchase like a home, then a custodial account is best. If the child is currently working, a Roth IRA would be a great option, or if simply seeking a jump start for retirement, a Trump account might be best. In certain states, including Pennsylvania, you can receive a tax deduction for contributions to a 529 account. Withdrawals can be taken tax free, and, with the recent tax law changes, the funds can be used for trade schools and certifications in addition to traditional college tuition. For any funds that are not spent on college, up to \$35,000 can be transferred to a Roth IRA for future retirement. Keep in mind, however, if the funds are used for any purposes other than education,

there is a 10% penalty on the withdrawals in addition to ordinary income tax. A custodial account offers flexibility since the funds can be used for any purpose that benefits the child. In Pennsylvania, the account is managed by the owner until the beneficiary reaches age 21, at which point ownership transfers to the child, and they gain full control of the assets. If the child is working, a Roth IRA can be one of the most powerful tools for retirement savings. In 2026, you can contribute up to \$7,500 of their annual earnings to a Roth IRA. These funds will grow until retirement at which time can be withdrawn tax free. In addition, contributions can generally be withdrawn at any time without taxes or penalties. Trump accounts are new and carry similar characteristics to traditional IRAs with some extra benefits. If the child was born between 2025-2028, the U.S. government will contribute \$1,000 to the account. These funds grow tax deferred until retirement — there is, however, a flexibility clause that allows the funds to be withdrawn for major life events after age 18 such as college, buying a home, or starting a business. Keep in mind, again, that every dollar taken is taxed as ordinary income. If you withdraw prior to age 59.5, aside from a major life event, the withdrawal carries an additional 10% penalty on top of the ordinary income taxes. John McGowan, CFA, MBA, of Carson Wealth will answer select reader-submitted questions and offer professional insights on investing, retirement planning, estate planning, taxes and other personal finance topics. Have a financial question you'd like addressed in a future column? Email your question to Pittsburgh@carsonwealth.com. Selected questions may be featured in an upcoming edition. ♥

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Bark Beat

Celebrating Mt. Lebanon's beloved dogs

Meet Willow!

My name is Willow and I would like to share some wonderful details about myself. I am a ten-year-old Chocolate Labrador Retriever.

Favorite Humans?

I love my mom and dad so much and I also love my brothers Jackson, Grey, Matt, and Zach. I especially enjoy when they lie down with me to give hugs and rubs.

Favorite Treats?

My mom calls me a "Fruit Bat" because I love all kinds of fruit, especially bananas, cantaloupe, and strawberries. I always know the sound of a fruit salad being prepared by my mom and will come running to share some with her. I also enjoy vegetables like cucumbers, broccoli, and carrots.

Favorite Toy?

My favorite toy is a plush Christmas Tree toy from Santa. I bring it to my mom whenever I am ready to eat or go for a walk.

Favorite things to do besides eat and sleep?

I love being outside in the sun. I am a "chocolate chunk" melting in the sun.

Why my humans think I am special?

I am incredibly watchful over my mom, especially when her blood sugar drops due to diabetes. I stay by her side to be sure she is safe and doesn't fall. I stay with her until she feels better. My dad, Grey and Jackson really appreciate my care and realize how amazing truly I am.

Want your dog to appear in Bark Beat? Submit photos along with the answers to the questions above to info@lebobeat.com.



Willow is a ten-year-old Chocolate Labrador Retriever. (Photos provided)

The Home Beat

By Jordan Smoke

One of the things that makes Mt. Lebanon special is the pride residents take in their homes. Many have been cared for by generations of the same family, and that tradition of stewardship continues today.

Still, even the most conscientious homeowners can't be expected to remember every maintenance task. Knowing what needs attention, when it should be done and why it matters can be just as challenging as completing the work itself.

That's the goal of "The Home Beat", a new monthly column by Jordan Smoke of Homelio. Each month, Smoke will share practical advice to help homeowners better understand the systems that keep their homes safe, efficient and well-maintained.

Your Smoke Detector Has an Expiration Date

Most homeowners don't ignore maintenance because they don't care. More often, they're simply unsure what should be done, when it should be done or how often.

Replace the furnace filter. Flush the water heater. Clean the dryer vent. Clear the gutters. Test the smoke alarms.

None of these tasks is especially difficult, but together they create a growing list of

responsibilities competing with work, family and everyday life.

That's why many home maintenance problems begin not with neglect, but with uncertainty.

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are a perfect example.

When an alarm chirps, most people replace the battery. Some even test their alarms once or twice a year. Both are important, but neither tells the whole story.

The battery powers the alarm. The sensor is what detects smoke or carbon monoxide. Like any electronic component, that sensor loses reliability over time. Most manufacturers recommend replacing the entire detector after 10 years, although some models have shorter service lives.

When a smoke or carbon monoxide detector is needed, it instantly becomes one of the most important safety devices in your home.

This month, take a few minutes to check the manufacture date printed on the back of each detector. If it's approaching 10 years old, it's time to replace it — even if it still beeps and appears to be working properly. ♥

Mount Lebanon Expands Sidewalk Network

Continued from page 1

to establish a cost-sharing program. Under the revised policy, participating homeowners pay 10% of installation costs, while the municipality covers the remaining 90%.

All property owners on Woodland and Greenhurst drives signed cost-sharing agreements.

Last summer, sidewalks were installed on Woodland Drive at a total cost of \$534,400. Of that amount, 29 homeowners contributed a combined \$61,725, with the municipality funding the balance.

Residents on Woodland Drive also launched a GoFundMe campaign to help neighbors who might have difficulty covering their share of the project costs.

Construction on Greenhurst Drive is nearing completion, although final costs have not yet been determined because they are based on actual labor and material expenses. In April, the commission awarded the construction contract to Niando Construction with a bid of \$196,123.

The next sidewalk project is scheduled for Lakemont Drive in summer 2027.

"Once funding is allocated, residents will be notified and the project will be bid in early 2027," McMeans said. He added that sidewalk construction is typically scheduled during summer break to minimize disruptions for students and families.

Additional streets also may be considered.

"In 2023, the commission directed the municipal engineer to conduct a type, size and location analysis on seven streets to determine the feasibility of sidewalks," McMeans said. "In addition to Woodland, Greenhurst and Lakemont, Gateway Engineers analyzed the potential for sidewalks on Sleepy Hollow, Country Club, Kelso

and Robb Hollow. Resident requests have also been made for sidewalks on Salem Drive."

The commission is expected to discuss priorities for future sidewalk projects during its July 14 discussion session.

Greenhurst Drive resident Anna Noack said the municipality kept homeowners informed throughout the process through mailed notices, although she was unable to attend the community meeting held in February.

She contacted the project manager after expressing concerns about protecting the roots of a large silver maple tree in her front yard.

"They were very responsive and addressed my concerns," Noack said.

Her primary concern involved the uncertainty surrounding the final cost because homeowners were provided only with estimates of their 10% share.

"I didn't want us to say yes to something and then have to deal with project creep and amounts that increased without having any say in how it happened," she said. "I think they handled it well, but not knowing the exact amount introduced a little concern initially."

Overall, Noack said most neighbors supported the Greenhurst Drive project because of the area's heavy pedestrian traffic.

"We've all seen so many people walking on the road or across our front yards for so long," she said. "It's such a pedestrian-heavy neighborhood, and there are always kids, dog walkers and people pushing strollers. It's also a fairly busy road that sometimes carries hospital traffic, including ambulances in emergency mode, so I'm glad the sidewalk will offer a little more safety." ♥



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