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LEBO BEAT

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Mt. Lebanon Shifts Focus to E-Bike Education, Enforcement Instead of New Ordinance

Officials say existing laws provide necessary authority as residents share concerns over speeding riders, near misses and pedestrian safety *By Brion Palmer*

The Mt. Lebanon Commission has decided against adopting a new ordinance regulating e-bikes and other micromobility devices, opting instead to emphasize education and enforcement under existing Pennsylvania law.

Commission President Jeff Siegler announced at the July 28 meeting that the proposed ordinance had been removed from the agenda after officials determined existing state and

local laws already address many of the concerns raised by residents.

"Ultimately, we realized that we could address these concerns without creating a new ordinance," Siegler said. "We're going to focus on education and enforcement to achieve the same goals."

The decision follows months of public discussion about the growing popularity of electric bicycles, scooters and other battery-powered mobility

devices throughout the municipality.

Police Chief Jason Haberman said the department has developed a comprehensive education campaign in partnership with the Mt. Lebanon School District, municipal staff and public safety agencies. The initiative is designed to educate parents, young riders and police officers about the laws governing e-bikes and other micromobility devices.

Continued on page 20

A Moment to Remember



Members of the Lebo Prime 12U Gold team celebrate after a victory during the Cooperstown Dreams Park tournament in Cooperstown, N.Y. Read more about the Blue and Gold teams' memorable week on Page 18. (Photo provided)

Mt. Lebanon Reduces Number of School Crossing Guard Posts

Police chief says first review in more than 20 years reflects changing traffic patterns and student travel habits *By Brion Palmer*

As thousands of Mt. Lebanon students prepare to return to school later this month, they'll once again be greeted by the familiar faces of the municipality's crossing guards. But for the first time in more than two decades, the number of crossing guard posts throughout the community has been reduced.

Following an extensive review of traffic patterns, pedestrian activity and student travel data, the Mt. Lebanon Police Department eliminated seven crossing guard posts for the 2026-27 school year.

"We haven't changed the crossing guard posts in over 20 years," Police Chief Jason Haberman said. "We

made this decision after closely examining the patterns and data."

Haberman said the re-

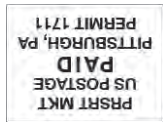
view focused on objective data rather than tradition.

"We evaluate data, we evaluate facts, we evalu-

ate statistics anytime we review any kind of mobility issue," he said. "The number of kids driving to high

school and being dropped off and picked up has increased significantly."

Continued on page 20



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News Briefs

Lifesaving Team Recognized for Saving Restaurant Patron

Medical Rescue Team South and the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association recognized local residents, healthcare professionals and first responders whose actions saved the life of a man who suffered cardiac arrest at the Mt. Lebanon Saloon on June 12.

Chief David Turkel of Medical Rescue Team South said the victim survived because every link in the "chain of survival" worked as intended, from immediate CPR and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) by bystanders to advanced care provided by police, firefighters and paramedics. Officials also recognized the restaurant's decision to purchase and maintain an AED before it was ever needed.

The patient, David Delapina, thanked those involved in the rescue, calling their teamwork the reason he is alive today.

Commission Authorizes Up to \$7.1 Million in Bond Financing

The Mt. Lebanon Commission approved an ordinance authorizing the issuance of up to \$7.1 million in general obligation bonds to finance several capital improvement projects.

Projects include the Cedar Boulevard parking improvements, Brafferton Field upgrades, lighting and turf installation at Clint Seymour Field, Main Park

improvements and the Mt. Lebanon Public Library revitalization project.

The commission approved the bond ordinance following a public hearing at which no residents commented.

Maher Duessel Retained as Municipal Auditor

The commission approved a new three-year agreement with Maher Duessel to provide independent auditing services through 2028.

The accounting firm was the only respondent to the municipality's request for proposals. Officials cited the firm's specialized municipal expertise and quality of service in recommending renewal.

The contract totals \$129,000, including \$41,500 for the 2026 audit.

Gypsy Lane Properties Approved for Consolidation

The commission granted final approval for the consolidation of two adjacent residential properties at 716 and 720 Gypsy Lane.

Owners Daniel and Elizabeth Schaefer plan to combine the parcels into a single 1.276-acre lot. The proposal includes demolition of the home at 716 Gypsy Lane while maintaining residential use of the property.

The Planning Board previously recommended approval after determining all engineering requirements had been satisfied.

Snow Removal Contract Awarded

Little Landscaping LLC will continue providing snow and ice removal services for municipal sidewalks and stairways after the commission approved a new contract.

The agreement guarantees a minimum of 35 responses during the 2026-27 winter season for \$52,000, with optional renewals of \$55,000 for 2027-28 and \$58,000 for 2028-29.

Municipal officials said the company performed the work satisfactorily under the previous contract.

Students Named Junior Commissioners

The commission appointed Henry Clark to serve as junior commissioner for the fall 2026 semester and Julia Antunes for the spring 2027 semester.

Junior commissioners attend meetings, participate in discussions and gain first-hand experience in municipal government while representing the perspective of Mt. Lebanon students.

Library Employee Begins Retirement

The commission approved the retirement and pension benefits for long-time library employee Marina Nielsen, effective Aug. 1.

Commissioners thanked Nielsen for her years of service to the Mt. Lebanon Public Library before unanimously approving the benefit commencement.

Police Car Show Rescheduled

The Mt. Lebanon Police Department's annual car show has been rescheduled for Saturday, Sept. 13, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Washington Road after weather forced an earlier postponement. Residents who previously registered do not need to register again. New registration forms are available through the Police Department and the municipality's website.

Pennsylvania Stormwater Fee Reclassified as Tax

On April 30, 2026, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that the Borough of West Chester's stormwater management charge is a tax, rather than a local fee, in *Borough of West Chester v Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education*. This reclassification has immediate effects for property owners receiving stormwater bills and municipalities that use money collected from those fees to fund local infrastructures.

Prior to the April ruling, the Borough of West Chester imposed a stream protection fee on any owners of developed property that benefited from the Borough's stormwater management system. This was challenged by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, or PASSHE, when they refused to pay and asserted that the charge was a tax that they should receive immunity from as a state entity.

The Court considered both the purpose of the municipality's stormwater service and the relationship between the municipality and the recipients of this service in their decision. Following that line of reason, the majority decided that the Borough operates its stormwater program in a public capacity because the program is driven by mandates such as the Clean Water Act, rather than a desire to benefit individual property owners.

Benefits of the stormwater charge, such as the federal and state mandates it funds and its general contribution to public health and welfare, convinced the Court to reclassify the fee as a tax. This will relieve tax-immune entities, such as state universities and Commonwealth organizations, of the charge.

Stormwater revenue is at risk as a result, and individual property owners who benefit from the fee's funded projects but aren't considered tax-immune may suffer consequences from the Court's decision.

The questions posed by the decision made in *Borough of West Chester v Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education*, such as whether a refund is issued to previously charged tax-immune entities, are left up to interpretation and may lead to inconsistencies between municipalities. The Mt. Lebanon website still lists the charge as a fee, though entities within Lebo will be expected to pay charges as they align with the new ruling. ❤️



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Good in the LEBOhood

By Tressa Glover, Creator & Host, “Yinz Are Good” podcast

It's time for your good news, Lebo! This is the place where we celebrate kindness, generosity and moments of joy. It's where we express gratitude for the people who make our lives better. Whether you drop a note into one of our Kindness Crates around town, send me an email or add a message to our Gratitude Board, your stories help create this column.

The idea is inspired by my podcast, Yinz Are Good, whose mission is to highlight good news and good people, strengthen community connections, inspire others and offer hope.

To kick things off this month, I'm excited to share a full-circle moment connected to this very column. You may remember our May issue, when I shared the heartwarming email I received from Preethi Ravi expressing her gratitude for her wonderful neighbor, Olivia Benson.

In the true spirit of paying it forward, Preethi reached out again to offer her help with Yinz Are Good community events whenever we might need an extra set of hands. I was — and still am — incredibly grateful for her generous offer. As anyone who runs a small business (or a very small one!) knows, every helping hand makes a difference. More importantly, her offer was a thoughtful act of kindness that meant a great deal to me.

So, thank you, Preethi. Yinz are good!

The story doesn't end there.

A few weeks later, Preethi and I met for coffee and had a wonderful conversation. Before long, I took her up on her offer, and she joined the Yinz Are Good team at July's Final Fridays event at Clearview Common. We set up our table,



Young Lebo residents share what they're grateful for (Photo by Yinz Are Good)

brought along the Gratitude Board and spent the evening talking with community members.

A special shoutout to our “table neighbor,” Don Zuch of Howard Hanna, who was an absolute delight.

It was a beautiful evening filled with community, connection and great music from 59 Watts. Thank you to everyone who stopped by to say hello, and especially to those who took a few moments to share what they were grateful for, including the young women pictured here.

Here's what they had to say:

“I'm grateful for...”

- Good neighbors!!
- My dog
- Walkability of our town!
- Summer
- FAMILY!
- For my health!
- Books
- Family
- My dog, Teddy
- Life & family
- Chipotle & ice cream
- My family and friends



Tressa, Preethi, KB, and Don Zuch at Final Fridays (Photo by Don Zuch)

- Mom
- Live music!
- Roblox
- My sweet family
- New opportunities
- Suzan - Julia, age 4
- My friends' & family's health!

And now, on to your notes from our Kindness Crates! Currently hosted by our friends at Commonwealth Press, Lebo Subs, and Rolli-er's, our crates house your responses to the prompt, “Please share with us who or what you're grateful for today, an act of kindness that someone did for you, or a moment that brought you hope.”

- Grateful every day for my family's good health and their love. - Liz G.
- My sweet students!
- I am grateful for the great people of PGH and their friendliness. (Commonwealth Press), thanks for the great shirts too.
- I am grateful for life, work, fun, God's blessings!
- I like my Taylor Swift book.
- Grateful for the sunshine!

- I'm grateful for being alive and proud of the people of Lebo for making it through hard times.
- I'm grateful for my neighbors Tom, Anna, Lucy and Wasahi who greet and offer help often.
- My baby brother Georgie makes me happy because he is so cute. - Mary, age 4
- I'm grateful for my family and friends.
- Grateful for metal music. People told me my guitar skills are good.
- My neighbors took me school shopping and the mom bought me lunch. - Evelynna
- Summer!
- I am grateful to be able to celebrate International Cat Day with my furry friend, Mr. Carl Feathers.
- I'm grateful for friends who have become family.

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



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Mt. Lebanon School District Calendar

AUGUST 17
First Day of Fall Sports

High School Walk
Your Schedule Day
9 – 11 a.m.

Jefferson & Mellon
Middle School Walk
Your Schedule Day
9 – 11 a.m.

AUGUST 18
First Day of Classes
Grades 1-12

Kindergarten
Interviews
All Elementary Schools

AUGUST 19
Kindergarten
Interviews
All Elementary Schools

AUGUST 20
First Day of
Kindergarten

AUGUST 26
Lincoln Elementary
School Picnic
6-8 p.m.

AUGUST 27
Foster Elementary
School Picture Day

SEPTEMBER 2
High School Senior
Class Yearbook Photo
7:30 a.m.
High School Stadium

SEPTEMBER 3
Jefferson Middle School
Picture Day

Rain Date High
School Senior
Yearbook Picture
7:30 a.m.
High School Stadium



Jefferson Elementary
Family Welcome
5-7 p.m.

Washington
Elementary School
Garden Party
6-8 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 7
Labor Day
Schools & Offices, and
Buildings Closed

SEPTEMBER 8
High School Gifted
Parent Orientation
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
HS Room D205

SEPTEMBER 10
High School Picture
Day

Howe Elementary
School Picture Day

Jefferson Middle
School Open House
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Mellon Middle School
Open House
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 11
Mellon Elementary
School Patriot's Day

SEPTEMBER 13
High School Senior
Class Boat Ride
Boarding 6 p.m.
Sails 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 14
Jefferson Elementary
School Walk to School
Week

School Board Joint
Discussion/Voting
Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Mt. Lebanon High
School Room D205

SEPTEMBER 15
Washington
Elementary School
Picture Day

SEPTEMBER 17
Mellon Elementary
School Circle Breakfast
7:30 a.m.

Jefferson Middle
School Writing Lab
Volunteer Training
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

High School Open
House (2 p.m. dismissal
for high school students
only)
6:45 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 18
Jefferson Elementary
School Kona Ice
3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Freshmen Tailgate
5:30 p.m.
Pavilion 2

Link Crew Tailgate
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Main Park Pavilion 2

SEPTEMBER 19
Festival of Bands
5 p.m. – 9 p.m.
High School Stadium

School Board & PTA Meetings

AUGUST 17
School Board Regular
Meeting
7:30 P.M.
Mt. Lebanon High
School Room D205

AUGUST 21
Howe PTA Welcome
Back Staff Lunch
12 – 1 p.m.

AUGUST 26
MES PTA Meeting
8:45 a.m.

SEPTEMBER 3
Jefferson Elementary
School PTA Meeting
8:45 a.m.

SEPTEMBER 8
Washington
Elementary School
PTA Meetings
6:00pm - Board
6:30pm - HR Parent
7:00pm - General

SEPTEMBER 9
Lincoln Elementary
School Picture Day
Howe PTA Meeting
5:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 15
Howe Elementary
School PTA Meeting
6 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 16
Lincoln Elementary
School ABC's of PTA
6 p.m. - HR Parent Mtg.
6:30 p.m. - General Mtg.

SEPTEMBER 17
Foster Elementary
School
PTA Meeting
9:30 a.m.

STREET BEAT



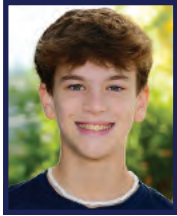
What are you most looking forward to about going back to school?



“I’m excited to have different classes than I did in 6th grade.”
- James M., 7th grade
Mellon Junior High School



“I’m excited to have a teacher both of my brothers had who they really liked.”
- Lucy M. 2nd grade
Washington Elementary School



“I’m looking forward to doing sports photography and videography for Mt. Lebanon High school this upcoming year. I want to shoot football and basketball because of the passion that the teams have, and since I’ve been taking pictures of the teams for about year it will be fun to make content about the school I’m going to now.”
- Bennett R., Freshman
Mt. Lebanon High School



“I am most excited for all my senior activities and making the most out of my last year in high school!”
- Rosa D., Senior
Mt. Lebanon High School



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BUSINESS BEAT

Carbonara’s Expands to Seven-Day Schedule

Stronger business, expanded menu and customer demand prompt restaurant to add Monday and Tuesday service By Annabelle Thomas

Carbonara's Ristorante has expanded its hours of operation, adding Monday service immediately and announcing it will be open every Tuesday beginning in September.

The move follows a change in management, an expanded menu and a surge in customer demand that co-owner Fred Snyder said has nearly tripled business since June.

"I want to thank all the people who have been coming in," Snyder said. "My staff and I are so grateful for their support."

Snyder, who has worked at Carbonara's since 1992, said one of his priorities has been bringing back many of the restaurant's longtime favorites while introducing new dishes inspired by customer feedback.

"When I was out talking with everyone, they wanted some of the older dishes that we had when I was first here," Snyder said. "So I brought back about a dozen original dishes, and I'm adding a couple of new items that I'm working on now. I'm bringing back some of the classics while adding a few of my own twists."

In addition to a seasonal summer menu, Carbonara's now offers more than a dozen permanent menu additions. Snyder said two former kitchen staff members also came out of retirement to help revive many of the restaurant's original recipes.

The decision to expand to a seven-day schedule runs counter to



Carbonara's co-owners Steven Lemme and Fred Snyder have expanded the restaurant's hours and refreshed its menu as they continue investing in the longtime Mt. Lebanon establishment and the community it serves. (Photo provided)

the common practice among many restaurants, which often close on Mondays or Tuesdays.

"A lot of people don't have anywhere to go on Mondays and Tuesdays," Snyder said. "I'm seeing a lot of new faces coming in, and many of them are returning for

a second and third visit. It's been very positive."

Founded in Mt. Lebanon in 1991, Carbonara's has been a neighborhood staple for more than three decades. Snyder said his goal is to honor the restaurant's longtime traditions while continuing to evolve



Two of Carbonara's signature dishes highlight the restaurant's refreshed menu, which blends longtime customer favorites with new offerings. (Photo provided)

based on customer preferences.

"They were so happy that I was here and that everything had changed, especially the food," Snyder said. "I'm happy to listen to our customers, and I take what they tell me into consideration with everything we do." ♥

A few things that haven't been looked at in a while.

- The dryer vent that hasn't been cleaned in years.
- The gutter that's been overflowing since the spring.
- The furnace that was going to get serviced last winter.
- The water heater that's probably near the end of its life.

Nothing urgent.
Easy to ignore.

Or it can be handled, quietly.





Move Lebo Promotes a More Walkable, Bike-Friendly Community

Grassroots organization encourages safer streets, active transportation and stronger neighborhood connections through advocacy and community events By Annabelle Thomas

Mt. Lebanon is widely considered one of the most walkable communities in Southwestern Pennsylvania, known for its connected neighborhoods and vibrant business districts. But residents involved with Move Lebo believe there is still room for improvement.

The grassroots organization advocates for safer streets, improved bicycle infrastructure and greater accessibility for pedestrians. With no school bus transportation in the district, many students walk or bike to school, making safe routes a priority for many families.

In 2024, Marty Bacik and several like-minded residents came together to form what would become Move Lebo.

"I've always been passionate about walkability, and that's one of the main reasons I moved here in the first place," Bacik said. "I've traveled to places with great urban design and experienced what that feels like as

a resident. The quality of life you get from a community that prioritizes walkability has really stayed with me, and I think Mt. Lebanon deserves that as well."

Since then, Move Lebo has expanded to include Walk Lebo, Run Lebo and Bike Lebo. Each group focuses on a different form of active transportation while organizing regular meetings, community events and advocacy efforts. The organization also works with municipal officials on projects aimed at improving infrastructure and street design.

Last month, Bike Lebo unveiled a new bike hub at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center and celebrated with a community "Bike Bash." State Rep. Jen Mazzocco attended the event with her children and praised the project as an example of what community advocacy can accomplish.

"It was a really nice accomplishment for the group and for the municipality,"

Mazzocco said. "Mt. Lebanon has made significant progress toward creating safer streets for walking and biking, and much of that has been driven by the advocacy of community members."

Walk Lebo organizes monthly community walks led by Dave Crout. Although he moved to Mt. Lebanon only last year, Crout said he quickly became involved because he believes the community's walkability must be matched by safe infrastructure.

"Mt. Lebanon calls itself a walkable community, and because students don't have bus transportation, they have to get to school on their own," Crout said. "Many parents have told me they don't feel comfortable letting their children walk or bike to school because they don't think it's safe."

Bacik also leads Run Lebo and serves as the organization's treasurer. Through weekly Friday morning runs, he encour-

ages residents not only to exercise but also to become more familiar with their community.

He also created the 86 Mile Run Club, a 31-week challenge encouraging participants to run all 86 miles of streets in Mt. Lebanon. Whether runners join organized events or complete the challenge on their own, Bacik hopes it inspires them to explore neighborhoods they might not otherwise visit.

"It's been so rewarding to see people's reactions," Bacik said. "People get excited about running every street in Mt. Lebanon. The most fulfilling part is seeing newcomers meet people and develop a real connection to the community."

Like Bacik, Mazzocco views walkability as more than a transportation issue. She believes it encourages residents to engage with neighborhood businesses, parks and public spaces while strengthening community relationships. In fact,



Move Lebo members volunteer at an organized sidewalk clean-up. The organization holds a variety of events like this one to improve walkability around Mt. Lebanon. (Photo provided)

she said her own advocacy for improved street design in Dormont helped inspire her to seek elected office.

"I think that kind of connection is good for a community," Mazzocco said. "It brings people closer together and makes communities more resilient."

For more information about Move Lebo's events and initiatives, including sidewalk cleanups, group walks and street design proposals, visit movelebo.org. ♥

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Returning Home: Dr. Natasha Dirda begins new chapter leading Mt. Lebanon schools

Former principal returns as assistant superintendent of secondary education, focusing on student success, strong relationships and continued academic excellence

By Eleazer Gorenstein

For Dr. Natasha Dirda, a realization hit her early this past spring when she was driving to a meeting with the Mt. Lebanon School Board.

At that moment, Dirda saw a throng of students walking home from Jefferson Middle School, not buried in their cell phones, but laughing with their friends.

"That doesn't happen in other school districts," Dirda said. "It's so uniquely connected to what makes Mt. Lebanon so beautifully special."

Dirda recently accepted the role of assistant superintendent of secondary education in the Mt. Lebanon School District. This position wasn't simply the next step in her career. It was a homecoming.

After serving previously as a unit principal at Mt. Lebanon High School and principal of Markham Elementary School, Dirda spent the past several years in leadership positions at North Allegheny and South Fayette school districts before returning this summer to oversee grades 6 through 12 in Mt. Lebanon.

"Returning to Mt. Lebanon has truly felt like coming home," Dirda said. "This district means so much to me. My career journey would not have been possible without the impact Mt. Lebanon has had on me both professionally and personally. I'm honored to be back and excited for what's ahead."

Now responsible for guiding curriculum, instruction and student experiences across the district's middle and high schools, Dirda says her previous experience at both the

elementary and secondary levels give her a unique perspective on students' educational journeys.

"My role is to support our middle and high schools in providing first-class educational experiences while continuing to grow academic excellence, extracurricular opportunities and strong connections between our elementary, middle and high schools," she said.

One of her immediate priorities will be helping students navigate important transitions, particularly as the district launches its new sixth grade orientation initiative, WEB, or "Where Everybody Belongs." The program is designed to help incoming middle school students feel connected and supported as they begin a new chapter in their education.

"One of my biggest priorities is helping students successfully transition from elementary school to middle school," Dirda said. "Those transition years are incredibly important, and I want to make them as smooth and supportive as possible."

While Mt. Lebanon has long been recognized for its academic excellence, Dirda believes maintaining that reputation requires a commitment to continual growth.

"We can never become complacent," she said. "We have to continue challenging ourselves every day, fostering a culture rooted in excellence and providing every student with the support they need to succeed."

That philosophy extends well beyond academics.

"If we don't have



Dr. Natasha Dirda
(Photo provided)

healthy and happy students and staff, none of the other accomplishments matter," Dirda said. "Our responsibility is to create safe, welcoming schools where every student knows they're surrounded by trusted adults who care deeply about them."

Her leadership philosophy centers on relationships first, achievement second.

"We will deeply love and care for every student and every staff member while relentlessly pursuing excellence," she said. "If we stay focused on giving students the best education they deserve, incredible things will happen."

ble things will happen."

Dirda also recognizes that today's students are preparing for a rapidly changing world shaped by advances in technology and artificial intelligence.

"The world our students will enter is changing rapidly through artificial intelligence and technology," she said. "Our responsibility is to ensure they have the skills they'll need to thrive in whatever comes next."

Just as crucial, she believes students themselves should help shape their educational experiences.

"Student voice is incredibly important," Dirda said. "We have to create spaces where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas so we can continue preparing them in the best possible way."

That commitment to listening has been one of the biggest lessons she's learned throughout her career.

"Students will tell us exactly what they need to be successful," she said. "We just have to listen to them and create spaces where they feel safe enough to share."

Although she's worked in several highly regarded school districts throughout western Pennsylvania,

Dirda says Mt. Lebanon remains special because of its close-knit community and engaged families.

"The partnerships we have with families are what make Mt. Lebanon such an incredible place to live and work," she said. "I look forward to continuing those relationships in every way possible."

She also points to the district's neighborhood schools and walkability as its defining characteristics.

"I've loved every district where I've worked, but Mt. Lebanon has always been home," Dirda said.

"There's something special about this community, from the neighborhood schools to seeing students walking home together. It's uniquely connected, and that's what makes it so special."

As she begins this new chapter, Dirda hopes every student who graduates from Mt. Lebanon leaves with much more than academic success.

"I want our graduates to be healthy and happy, to think critically, solve problems, stay true to their values, give back to their communities and confidently apply what they've learned to the world around them," she said. ♥

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Bubbles brews up summer collaboration with Mediterra Cafe

Joe Manganiello's rescue chihuahua inspires a hot honey latte that captures her sweet-and-spicy personality Story and photos by Sarah Core

Mediterra Cafe has introduced a new summer coffee special in collaboration with a rising local celebrity: Bubbles Manganiello. Her custom-designed drink, a hot honey latte, debuted July 21 with a mystery social media reveal and giveaway.

Head barista Lilly DeVos admitted that the first time she met Joe Manganiello's 13-year-old rescue Chihuahua, she didn't even recognize the famous actor holding her.

"I was so captivated by Bubbles in his arms, I didn't notice who was holding her," DeVos said with a laugh.

Bubbles has that effect on people. She became the Pittsburgh Pirates' "rally dog" this summer after cheering the team to a record 10-run inning during its July 12 game against the Milwaukee Brewers.

Manganiello said he "lifted her like Simba" when the Jumbotron landed on them during the fourth inning. The crowd erupted, and the Pirates went on to score seven runs before the Brewers recorded an out.

He demonstrated the move over Mediterra's espresso machine while Bubbles patiently watched her captivated audience.

Manganiello and his fiancée, Caitlin O'Connor, are regulars at Mediterra and often bring Bubbles during afternoon walks through the neighborhood. It was during one of those visits that Manganiello and DeVos first discussed the collaboration.

"Joe said, 'It would have to be spicy,' just like Bubbles," DeVos said. She knew just the flavor combination to make it work.

DeVos created the hot honey latte by combining Latin American espresso, steamed milk and chili-infused honey to reflect Bubbles' one-of-a-kind personality.

"It's subtle but not overwhelming," she said. "Hot honey is more commonly associated with savory



Joe Manganiello, Caitlin O'Connor and Bubbles pose with the Mediterra team — Chrissy Wheeler, Lilly DeVos and Nicole McLean introducing the cafe's new Bubbles-inspired hot honey latte.

dishes, but it works really well in a latte."

Bubbles' hot honey latte is smooth and sweet with a subtle kick of spice. The combination makes it a refreshing choice on a hot summer day or a comforting drink on a cool, rainy evening.

Mediterra partners with Brooklyn, New York-based roaster Parlor Coffee, which ethically sources beans from small, family-owned farms in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and elsewhere in Latin America.

"We make our hot honey in-house," said Nicole McLean, Mediterra's director of operations. "It's special to Mediterra." The cafe describes the drink as "sweet, a little spicy, and impossible to forget," just like Bubbles.

Of course, when Bubbles visits the cafe, she gets her own dog-friendly "pup cup" topped with whipped cream while Manganiello and O'Connor enjoy her namesake latte.

After spending much of the year traveling for work, Bubbles



Bubbles is ready to serve her signature hot honey latte featured at Mediterra Cafe, where the seasonal drink celebrates the neighborhood's favorite sweet personality with a hint of spice.

and her parents are enjoying the summer in Mt. Lebanon, relaxing with family, attending Pirates games and visiting their favorite neighborhood spots.

When asked how long they'd be in town, O'Connor responded with a smile: "Forever!"

Bubbles' hot honey latte will remain on the menu throughout the summer. For customers in the know, DeVos said it will also be available year-round as a "secret menu" item. ♥



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Healthy Living: The Social Side of Aging in Place

Strong relationships, community involvement and neighborhood connections help older adults remain healthy, independent and engaged at home By Kate Sheets

Last month, we explored how simple home modifications — such as improving lighting, installing grab bars and reducing tripping hazards — can make it easier to age safely and independently at home. While these changes are an important part of aging in place, they are only one piece of the puzzle. Equally important is something that can't be installed or purchased: strong social connections.

Aging in place is often defined as remaining in the home you love for as long as possible. But true independence doesn't mean doing everything alone. Staying connected with family, friends, neighbors and the community provides the support, encouragement and sense of belonging that help older adults continue living safely and confidently in their own homes.

Research continues to show that social connection plays a significant role in healthy aging. In 2023, the U.S. surgeon general issued an advisory on the nation's epidemic of loneliness and isolation, reporting that chronic social isolation is associated with an increased

risk of heart disease, stroke, depression, anxiety, cognitive decline and premature death. Just as regular physical activity supports a healthy body, meaningful relationships support emotional and mental well-being.

Strong social connections also encourage healthier daily habits. Meeting a friend for a walk increases physical activity. Attending a fitness class or community event provides opportunities to stay active while meeting new people. Volunteering or participating in a favorite hobby creates a sense of purpose, which has been linked to better mental health and overall quality of life. These everyday interactions may seem small, but over time they contribute to healthier, more active lifestyles.

Perhaps most importantly, a strong support network can make aging in place safer. Friends and neighbors often notice subtle changes that might otherwise go unnoticed, such as missed routines, memory concerns or changes in mobility. They can check in during severe weather, lend a hand with small household tasks or



simply provide reassurance through regular conversations. Knowing there is someone nearby to call can help older adults feel more confident living independently while giving loved ones greater peace of mind.

The good news is that building these connections doesn't require a large social circle. Research suggests the quality of relationships matters more than the number of people you know. Even regular conversations with neighbors, weekly phone calls with family members or participation in a single community activity can reduce feelings of loneliness and strengthen a sense of belonging.

Mt. Lebanon offers a variety of opportunities for older adults to stay socially connected while pursuing hobbies and lifelong interests. The Mt. Lebanon Recreation Department's Lebo Lunch Brunch meets monthly at the Recreation Center, giving older adults an opportunity to enjoy lunch, entertainment and conversation with fellow residents. For those who enjoy creative activities, the Mt. Lebanon Public Library's Crafters Group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month in the Learning Lab, where participants

work on fiber arts and fine arts projects while connecting with others who share similar interests.

The library also hosts programs that encourage learning and discussion. The monthly World War II Era Discussion Group brings together history enthusiasts to explore historical campaigns and their lasting impact, while Travel Talks features community-led presentations where participants share travel experiences and discover new destinations. For those looking to reduce stress while meeting others, the library's Daytime Sound Bath offers guided relaxation and meditation in a welcoming environment. Whether your interests include history, art, travel, wellness or simply enjoying conversation over lunch, these programs provide meaningful opportunities to stay engaged in the community.

These activities do more than fill a calendar. They help foster friendships, establish routines and create a sense of belonging. Regular participation in community programs makes it easier to build relationships with neighbors and fellow residents, creating a support

network that contributes to emotional well-being and helps people age safely and independently at home.

One of the best ways to support aging in place is to build your network before you need it. Introduce yourself to a new neighbor, reconnect with an old friend or consider joining a local class or volunteer opportunity. These relationships often become valuable sources of encouragement and support during life's unexpected challenges. A trusted neighbor might collect your mail while you're away, a friend could offer a ride to an appointment, or someone from your walking group may simply brighten your day with a friendly conversation.

Healthy aging is about much more than maintaining physical health. It is also about creating a life that feels connected, purposeful and supported. The strongest communities are those where neighbors know one another, families stay involved and people of all ages look out for each other. These everyday connections not only enrich our lives but also make it easier to remain safe, independent and engaged in the place we proudly call home. ♥



Healthy Habit of the Month:

This month, make it a goal to strengthen one relationship each week. Invite a neighbor for coffee, call a family member you haven't spoken with recently, attend a program at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library or participate in a Recreation Department activity. Even small moments of connection can boost your mood, reduce feelings of loneliness and encourage healthy habits such as walking and staying active. Building relationships today creates a stronger support network for tomorrow — one of the most valuable investments you can make to help you age safely, confidently and independently in the place you call home.

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Vein problems may be more than cosmetic, St. Clair specialist says

By Eleazer Gorenstein

For many people, varicose veins are viewed as little more than a cosmetic concern. But according to Dr. Brandon Repko, a vascular interventional radiologist with St. Clair Medical Group and director of St. Clair's Vein and Embolization Center, vein disease can signal more serious underlying health issues that should not be ignored.

"People think of varicose veins as something that just doesn't look good," Dr. Repko said. "But symptoms like swelling, itching, aching, cramping, skin discoloration and wounds that don't heal can all be signs of underlying vein disease."

One of the biggest warning signs, he said, is a minor cut or scratch on the lower leg that takes weeks to heal.

"If you've had a bug bite or scratch that just won't heal, that's something you should talk to your doctor about," Dr. Repko said. "A family history of varicose veins is another important risk factor because vein disease is very strongly genetic."

Dr. Repko specializes in vascular interventional radiology, a field that uses image-guided, minimally invasive procedures to diagnose and treat a variety of vascular conditions without traditional surgery.

Unlike conventional operations that require large incisions and lengthy recoveries, most of the procedures performed at St. Clair's Vein and Embolization Center are completed on an outpatient basis.

"Everybody should be up and walking once they get home," Dr. Repko said. "There's really no significant downtime. We actually want patients up and moving because we know prolonged inactivity after a procedure can increase the risk of complications."

Beyond treating varicose veins and chronic venous insufficiency, the center also performs embolization procedures for a number of conditions that many patients may not realize can be treated without major surgery.

Those include uterine fibroids, enlarged prostates, hemorrhoids and certain forms of chronic joint pain.

During embolization, physicians use tiny catheters to deliver microscopic particles that block abnormal blood vessels feeding a problematic area. The treatment reduces blood flow, allowing tissue such as fibroids or enlarged prostates to shrink while relieving symptoms.

For women with uterine fibroids, embolization can



Dr. Brandon Repko

provide an alternative to hysterectomy.

Dr. Repko recently treated a 34-year-old woman whose fibroids caused months of severe bleeding that ultimately required blood transfusions. Because she hoped to have children, she wanted to avoid having her uterus removed.

"She stopped bleeding the night of the procedure," Dr. Repko said. "She's back to work, feeling much better, and statistically she has better than a 90% chance of still being able to have children because she kept her uterus."

Dr. Repko said one of the biggest misconceptions

patients have is assuming these procedures are painful or involve lengthy recoveries.

"There's always a lot of pre-procedure anxiety," he said. "One of the most common things I hear is, 'That's it? We're done?' People are surprised by how straightforward the procedures really are."

He also encourages people not to dismiss symptoms such as leg heaviness, swelling or fatigue as simply part of getting older.

"Some age-related changes are expected," Dr. Repko said. "But pain, heaviness, fatigue, cramps or itching aren't necessarily normal. If you're noticing those symptoms, especially if you have visible varicose veins or a family history, it's reasonable to be evaluated."

Although genetics play the biggest role in developing vein disease, maintaining a healthy weight and staying physically active can help reduce symptoms and slow progression.

Looking ahead, Dr. Repko believes interventional radiology will continue expanding treatment options for patients seeking less invasive care. He is particularly excited about advances in embolization therapies and new technologies designed to treat vein disease even more efficiently.

"We're finding ways to help people who may not be good surgical candidates or who want to avoid major surgery altogether," he said. "These therapies offer a unique approach to very common conditions, and the response has been very good."

For South Hills residents who have questions or concerns, Dr. Repko encourages them to simply schedule a consultation.

"If you're hesitant, just come make an appointment and talk to me," he said. "If it's something we can help with, we'll explain your options. If another specialist is a better fit, we'll make sure you get to the right person. The important thing is not to ignore symptoms that could affect your long-term health." ♥



St. Clair Health Dunlap Family Outpatient is located at 1000 Bower Hill Road, Suite 7300.

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Growing Together: School Gardens

Volunteers, teachers and students cultivate outdoor classrooms that promote

School gardens across the district are in full bloom, transforming everyday spaces into vibrant outdoor gathering places. Whether a garden is in front of a school or it is hidden between buildings, next to playgrounds or behind parking lots, the district is home to some impressive school gardens.

Brought to life through local green initiatives, each school garden tells a unique story that reflects the individuality of the school behind it. Over the years, local organizations like The Nature Conservancy, LeboGreen, Tree Pittsburgh, Next Level Gardens and many others, have contributed time and donations to various gardens, but most are currently maintained by parent volunteers, students, teachers, and the school maintenance staff.

Advocating on behalf of garden initiatives across the district are parent volunteers Jackie Svitek and Shayna Bodi. Bodi, who has a sixth grader at Jefferson, has been working to revive gardens across the district for the past four years, playing a key role in garden development at Hoover Elementary while serving as their Environmental Committee Chair. Bodi's vision for the Hoover garden took two years to come to fruition and is now housed in an open area near the cafeteria. The garden's mile high sunflowers, herbs, tiny tomatoes, and open seating area creates an ideal setting for learning outdoors.

A sustainability consultant in the green building industry, Bodi also serves as the PTA Council Environmental Initiatives Committee Chair and a core leader for LeboGreen. For Bodi these gardens are more than a place to experience, grow, and harvest, they represent a means to support students in more meaningful ways. "Our mental health professionals at the schools could utilize the gardens for therapy, maybe conducting programming around these topics," Bodi said.

Other important goals for Bodi and Svitek include using the gardens to help teachers get students off screens and engaged in nature, connecting students across schools to foster environmental awareness,

and teaching the sustainable practices they can use outside of school.

Highlighting the positive research around spending time outdoors, Bodi notes that "access to windows and fresh air have even been linked to higher test scores, better attitudes, better learning, and even better sleep. Just taking a book outside could have huge benefits." With the help of parent volunteers, the LIGHT education initiative, and PTA support, Bodi's next task is to invigorate the garden at Jefferson Middle School starting this fall.

Another notable school garden in the district is located at Howe Elementary. Principal Rizutto, and local artist Ashley Flavin, the designer and parent volunteer who maintains it, created the perfect space for Howe's garden. Its prominent display in front of the school allows students and families to access it but also encourages community members to enjoy it too. It was Flavin's vision that started the garden, but the support of the PTA and fundraising events is also a key component in its success. A quick stop at the garden reveals rabbits, butterflies and insects as a visible part of the garden's beauty. Containing brightly colored flowers, herbs, tomato plants and a Little Free Library, this garden offers a place to sit, smell, and engage with nature for anyone who walks by.

Jefferson Elementary is also home to a flourishing school garden. A large garden structure, donated by Richard Salvante of Pittsburgh Garden Company, creates a contained space where students can walk through caring for different kinds of plants, cooking herbs, and multiple types of tomatoes. Spilling over the sides of large containers, bright yellow squash blossoms with ripening squash are impressive, while multiple picnic tables make this space an inviting area for observing nature and harvesting fruits and vegetables.

Although all the school gardens in the district are producing and growing, most are thriving, while some are still developing.



Bodi & Svitek at Howe Elementary School (Photo provided)



Foster Elementary School

Echoing the support of each individual school, some gardens have encountered more challenges than others. Because they are not funded by the district directly, the financial support for these gardens isn't linear. Typically funded by PTAs, parents, student clubs, fundraising initiatives, and donations, it can be difficult to create consistency across the district, something Bodi and Svitek are hoping to change.

Svitek, a school based occupational therapist and mother of two high school students, volunteers her time co-chairing the Mellon Environmental Club and sits on the board at LeboGreen. With the goal of reaching more environmentally minded students, Svitek plans to merge the

Environmental Clubs at Jefferson and Mellon this year and partner with the High School to create a Schoolology page hub for anyone who wants to get involved.

Svitek, who spearheaded the gardens at Mellon, feels this is especially important to keep garden initiatives successful. She also notes how volunteering across schools creates connections and mentoring opportunities, "talking, collaborating, working together for a common goal, while being able to walk past the beautiful space each day knowing that you were a part of it and having that shared experience with peers" is a valuable vision Svitek has for district students.

The potential for each school garden is unlimited,



Mellon Middle School

a fact that is evident in the gardens at the High School. Easily visible from Cochran Road, the raised concrete bed garden and the Rosebud Garden are aesthetic highlights in the school's landscaping. Created as a partnership between Mrs. Nass's ABA classroom and Lauren Flannery from the Mt. Lebanon Nature Conservancy, the concrete bed is filled with native plants designed to invite insects and other wildlife to occupy the space. Thoughtfully created to support local species of plants and shrubs, the Redbud Garden next to the staircase was completed last spring and is a product of the hard work of math teacher and owner of Next Level Gardens Pete Bouvy, Mrs. Nass's classroom, and Lebo



Gardens Take Root Across Mt. Lebanon

learning, sustainability and community connections *Story and photos by Lindi Pastorius*



Foster Elementary School



Jefferson elementary School (Photo provided)



Jefferson Middle School (Photo provided)



Lincoln Elementary School



Markham School



Mt. Lebanon High School

Stars peer mentors. “Our long-term hope is that the ABA classroom will continue using both gardens as outdoor learning spaces, where students can help care for the plants while observing pollinators, birds, seasonal changes, and the many ecological relationships that develop over time,” said Bouvy. “The gardens were designed to be living classrooms as much as landscape features. The district’s maintenance department, of course, also plays an im-

portant role in caring for the broader campus landscape.” The garden parties hosted in Washington Elementary School’s garden is a highlight each year for students and parents alike but wouldn’t exist without the help of volunteers Beth McCabe and teacher Rose Davidson. Mostly funded by the PTA, “donations gathered during this event go towards projects for the garden, such as the annual collaborative art project created during the garden party,” McCabe

said. In addition to the parties, “we schedule garden cleanups several times throughout the year and invite the school community to join us. We usually get 10-12 volunteers each time. We intentionally designed the space to be self-sustaining so it wouldn’t require a lot of maintenance,” McCabe said, but it still takes many volunteers to make this garden a sustained success. Now with all the school gardens in motion, Bodi feels there is room for im-

plementing other environmental initiatives in the district. She may have started with the school gardens but now she hopes to expand beyond that, “reducing waste at school events and parties, composting garden waste, using the gardens more for mental health and wellness benefits, changing lightbulbs to LED’s and upgrading HVAC equipment for healthier indoor air quality,” are ideas for the district that she hopes to see in the future. Bodi says,

“I would love to have our community engaging with our gardens and sponsoring programs and learning opportunities for our students. I would love to see more priority on committing to environmental initiatives within our schools and within the municipality. In my opinion, we would all benefit from more joy in our lives and a deeper connection and prioritization on getting off our devices and making real connections to our natural world.” ♥

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A Lifetime in Lebo

From teaching refugees to delivering Meals on Wheels, Gwen Hepler continues finding new ways to serve and bring people together By Kate Goettmann

Gwen Hepler has always found ways to stay connected — through teaching, volunteering, performing and the friendships she has built along the way.

That connection to others began early in Hepler's life. After graduating from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, she began her career teaching French at Westtown School, a Quaker coeducational boarding school outside Philadelphia. She later returned to the Carlisle area, where she taught English as a second language to Vietnamese refugees, ranging from young children to older adults.

"I was speaking Dick and Jane English all day — from the little kids to the high school kids to the adults — which I loved. I absolutely loved it," she said.

While living in the Carlisle area, Hepler also met her future husband, Dan, during a pickup volleyball game, where, as she recalls, "he was impressed with my overhead smack."

After they married, Hepler and Dan built a life together with Dan's sons. In 1988, Dan's job with PPG brought them to Mt. Lebanon, where Hepler continued teaching English as a second language at the Language Center in Pittsburgh, working primarily with international business professionals. The couple



Gwen and Dan with their family. (Photo provided)

settled in Hoodridge Highlands, where they spent nearly three decades building friendships, memories and a community Hepler came to love.

Tennis became an important part of Hepler's life in Mt. Lebanon. She and Dan played on the Cedar Boulevard tennis courts, where many of her long-time friendships began. She jokes that she was the better player at first — "until he started winning."

Decades later, Hepler still plays tennis with many of the same people she met through the sport. Last month, she attended a party celebrating one of those friends, who turned 90 after

recently stepping away from tennis.

"That's what I'm hoping I can do — play for a good long time," she said.

That desire to stay connected extended beyond the tennis court. When many of her international business students traveled to warmer climates during the winter, Hepler found herself with more free time. After a neighborhood cat caught one of the cardinals she had been watching in her backyard, she was devastated.

"We have to find you a job," Dan told her.

The conversation led Hepler to Meals on Wheels, where she found another way to connect with her



Gwen with her church bell team at Southminster Presbyterian Church. (Photo provided)

community through volunteer service. She still delivers two routes each week from Brookline, including one serving the Mt. Lebanon and Castle Shannon areas.

When Hepler and Dan moved to Providence Point in 2017, she found new opportunities to stay connected while continuing many of the friendships and activities that had been important to her in Mt. Lebanon. She remains active at Southminster Presbyterian Church, where she sings in the choir, plays handbells and serves as a deacon.

As director of the hand chimes group at Providence Point, Hepler wanted to give residents more

opportunities to share their talents. After the group performed seasonal concerts but did not have a regular spring performance, she created Gwen Hepler's Variety Show, a program where residents and staff sing, dance and showcase their talents. She also became involved with the Providence Point Players, continuing a lifelong love of performing.

"I'm a natural-born ham," she said.

For Hepler, every chapter of life has presented new opportunities to learn, connect and bring people together — something she continues to do every day at Providence Point. ♥

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Lifting for the Life Ahead

Strength training is helping Mt. Lebanon women stay active, independent and resilient as they age *By Preethi Ravi*

For a growing number of Mt. Lebanon women, the goal of exercise isn't simply to lose weight or look better. It's to stay strong enough to enjoy life for decades to come.

Whether the motivation is improving bone density, reducing pain, increasing energy or maintaining independence, more women are turning to strength training as they age.

At 75, Jan Littrell considers lifting weights an essential part of staying healthy.

"We can get away with not exercising and not eating the right foods when we're younger, but not when we're older," Littrell said. "It's non-negotiable for me."

Five years ago, Littrell began strength training at Mecka Fitness in Mt. Lebanon. She started in Fit55, a class designed for adults 55 and older, before progressing to a general group fitness class alongside members decades younger.

The supportive environment, she said, helped her become stronger and more confident.

Across Mt. Lebanon, women in their 40s, 50s and beyond are approaching fitness differently. Rather than exercising primarily to change their appearance, many are training for better balance, stronger bones, less pain, more energy and the freedom to remain active as they age.

Rachel Battis, a Cross-Fit coach at Mecka Fitness who leads the gym's Women's Strength School,

said women older than 35 make up the majority of her participants.

"Most of the women who have joined my strength courses are over 35," Battis said. "The age range has been anywhere from 22 to 75, but the majority are in their 40s and 50s."

Sam Pitcairn, founder of Essential Strength and a personal trainer with a background in sports science and exercise physiology, has seen a significant shift in women's approach to fitness.

"Women have stopped training for the mirror and started training for function," Pitcairn said. "They want to feel strong, move well and slow the aging process—not just look a certain way in a photo."

Certified fitness trainer and nutrition coach Marcey Kotar Hancock said even the language women use has evolved.

"The biggest change I've seen is that women are becoming less afraid of lifting heavy and taking up space in the weight room," Hancock said. "Years ago, so many women came in saying they wanted to 'tone,' 'burn calories' or 'get smaller.' Now I hear more women say, 'I want to feel strong,' or 'I want to protect my body.'"

For many women, that shift becomes more urgent during midlife. Pain, stiffness, fatigue, slower recovery and menopause-related changes can make everyday activities more challenging.

Dr. Kira Steele, PT, DPT, owner of Physio412 and



creator of the app-based strength program Stronger With Steele, said women often seek help for back, hip, shoulder or knee pain, only to discover other underlying concerns.

"As we work together, we also uncover decreased energy, slow recovery, body image dissatisfaction and weight concerns," Steele said. "In our 40s and 50s, we have careers, families, children and aging parents. We're experiencing the transition through menopause while also navigating one of the busiest seasons of our lives."

Bone health is another reason many women begin lifting weights. According to the Office on Women's Health, osteoporosis affects one in four women age 65 and older in the United

States, and some women lose as much as 25% of their bone mass during the first 10 years after menopause.

"Many of my participants start strength training because they're concerned about bone density and osteoporosis," Battis said. "Somewhere along the way, a doctor, a book or even social media convinced them they need to strength train as they age to protect their bones."

Pitcairn said strength training takes advantage of the body's natural ability to adapt.

"Bone is not a fixed structure," he said. "It is living tissue in a constant state of remodeling. This is the single most important training window in a woman's life, and most women miss it entirely."

Hancock said nutrition is equally important, particularly during perimenopause and menopause.

"The basics still matter—protein, fiber, hydration, fruits, vegetables, healthy fats and eating enough overall—but women often need to become more intentional," Hancock said.

Her advice isn't to eat less but to fuel the body for strength, recovery and healthy aging.

"The main message I'd give women is this: As we age, nutrition shouldn't become more restrictive; it should become more supportive," Hancock said. "Strength training combined with proper nutrition is one of the best ways to stay strong, capable and healthy for the long term." ♥



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LEBO BEAT

SPORTS

Mt. Lebanon's 12U Teams Create Championship Memories at Cooperstown

Lebo Prime Blue and Gold teams combine for eight pool-play victories while experiencing youth baseball's most iconic tournament

By Brion Palmer

For a week this summer, baseball became more than a game for two Mt. Lebanon youth teams.

It became late-night Wif-fl e ball games, trading pins with players from across the country, visiting the National Baseball Hall of Fame and building memories that several players simply described as "the best week of their life."

The Lebo Prime Blue and Gold 12U teams represented the Mt. Lebanon Baseball Association at Cooperstown Dreams Park in Cooperstown, New York, where more than 100 teams from around the country gathered for one of youth baseball's premier tournaments.

While both teams competed at a high level on the field, coaches agreed the experience extended far beyond wins and losses.

"This experience is basically summer camp with baseball," Blue coach Ian Smith said. "This experience is about a shift of perspective with no expectations that we will win it all."

Instead, Smith said, the week is about friendship, teamwork and creating memories that will last long after the final out.

The Blue team, coached by Smith, James Angelo and Scott Deemer, enjoyed one of the strongest Cooperstown performances in Mt. Lebanon history.

The team went a perfect 5-0 in pool play, highlighted by a walk-off home run and a combined no-hitter. The Blue squad earned the tournament's No. 7 seed among 102 teams before falling in the opening round of bracket play to the team that ultimately finished as tournament runner-up.

Along the way, the Blue team faced opponents from Minnesota, Florida, California, New Jersey, New York and Virginia.

The Gold team, coached by Ramiro Sigala, Jeff Shellenberger and Brent Losee, also turned in a memorable tournament.

The team posted a 3-2 record in pool play, earning the No. 46 seed in the



The Lebo Prime 12U Blue team finished 5-0 in pool play and earned the No. 7 seed out of 102 teams at the Cooperstown Dreams Park tournament in Cooperstown, N.Y. (Photo provided)



The Lebo Prime 12U Gold team finished 3-2 in pool play and advanced to bracket play at the Cooperstown Dreams Park tournament in Cooperstown, N.Y. (Photo provided)

102-team field before bowing out in bracket play. Two of Gold's victories came

in dramatic fashion with late-inning comebacks, demonstrating the team's resilience throughout the week.

Gold competed against teams from New Hampshire, California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Virginia.

Combined, the two Mt. Lebanon teams hit 28 home runs during the tournament.

Between games, players competed in Dreams Park's signature skills competitions, including King of Swat, Road Runner, Golden

Arm and Around the Horn Plus. They also visited the National Baseball Hall of Fame, where they explored the history of the game and its greatest players.

For many of the boys, however, their favorite memories came away from the ballfields.

Players stayed together in the Dreams Park clubhouse barracks, where they lived alongside teams from across the country, traded collectible pins, played pickup Wif-fl e ball games and formed

Continued on page 21

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From Heartbreak to Championship: Lebo Soccer Alumni Complete Full-Circle Journey

Former Blue Devils capture second consecutive Greater Pittsburgh Soccer League title on the same field where their 2019 WPIAL championship hopes ended By Annabelle Thomas

Seven years after walking off the field disappointed following a loss in the 2019 WPIAL championship match, a group of Mt. Lebanon soccer alumni returned to the very same stadium to celebrate a championship of their own.

The Lebo Lions, a men's soccer team made up primarily of former Blue Devils players, captured their second consecutive Greater Pittsburgh Soccer League championship this summer. For co-captains Steven Vines, Bryce Andra and Zach Nellas, the victory meant more than another trophy. It represented a full-circle moment.

"Coming back to that same field and winning a championship made it pretty special," Vines said.

Vines founded the Lebo Lions after college as a way to stay connected with long-time friends while continuing to play the game they love. He noticed there were few opportunities for players in their 20s, with most recreational leagues geared toward athletes 30 and older.

"Like all good ideas, the team started at The Saloon," Vines said with a laugh. "We got everybody together, and I didn't really know how good we were going to be. Some guys played in

college, but most hadn't."

Building the team wasn't always easy. Between careers, families and busy schedules, the co-captains had to coordinate practices and games while bringing together players with different levels of experience.

For Andra, however, the commitment has been well worth it.

"I probably care a little too much," Andra said with a smile. "I just love doing this and seeing everybody every week. We all had some unfinished business, and we wanted to get back to playing competitive games together. That's been really fun."

The Lions have now won championships in each of their first two seasons, a success Nellas credits to the chemistry the group developed years ago while playing together at Mt. Lebanon.

"I think we always knew our team had a lot of chemistry," Nellas said. "We knew we'd compete, we'd have fun, but we'd also take it seriously and play to win."

Although their high school careers have long since ended, the players remain connected to the Blue Devils program. Many recently returned to Mt. Lebanon to participate in an alumni game, reconnecting



The Lebo Lions captured their second consecutive Greater Pittsburgh Soccer League championship this summer. The team is made up primarily of Mt. Lebanon High School soccer alumni. (Photo provided)

with former teammates and longtime coach Tim Gullo.

One of Vines' favorite moments with the Lions didn't involve one of the team's former stars. Instead, it belonged to teammate Fadi, who never made the Mt. Lebanon varsity squad but delivered one of the biggest moments in club history.

During last season's playoffs, Fadi converted the winning penalty kick in a

double-overtime shootout.

"It was a full-circle moment seeing him step up and score the winning kick," Vines said. "Having him do that was something special."

For the players, the championships are gratifying, but they say the friendships have always been the real reason they keep coming back.

"Getting the chance to be part of something you care

about and do it regularly with people you care about is always rewarding," Nellas said. "We all really love the game."

As the Lebo Lions prepare to defend their title again this fall, they're chasing more than another championship. They're continuing a tradition that began years ago on the fields of Mt. Lebanon—one built on competition, camaraderie and a shared love of the game. ♥

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2026 Mt. Lebanon High School Sports Schedules

August-September 2026

BOYS

VARSITY FOOTBALL	
8/22	@ Pine-Richland.....7 p.m. (Scrimmage)
8/28	@ Upper St. Clair.....7 p.m.
9/4	Thomas Jefferson7 p.m.
9/11	@Peters Township.....7 p.m.
9/18	Pine-Richland7 p.m.
9/25	@Norwin.....7 p.m.

JUNIOR VARSITY FOOTBALL	
8/29	Upper St. Clair10 a.m.
9/5	@Thomas Jefferson10 a.m.
9/12	Peters Township10 a.m.
9/19	@Pine-Richland.....10 a.m.
9/26	Norwin10 a.m.

VARSITY GOLF	
8/25	@Baldwin.....TBA
8/27	Trinity.....TBA
8/28	@Chartiers ValleyTBA
9/1	@Ringgold.....TBA
9/2	@TJ (Butler Course)TBA
9/3	@Peters (VB CC).....TBA
9/8	Canon-Mac2:15 p.m.
9/9	Central CatholicTBA
9/10	@Bethel.....TBA
9/11	@USC.....TBA
9/14	BaldwinTBA
9/16	@TrinityTBA
9/21	PetersTBA
9/22	Section Qualifier.....TBA
9/28	WPIAL IndividualTBA
9/29	WPIAL IndividualTBA
9/30	WPIAL IndividualTBA

JUNIOR VARSITY GOLF	
8/25	BaldwinTBA
8/27	@TrinityTBA
8/28	Chartiers Valley.....TBA
9/1	@Ringgold.....TBA
9/2	@TJ (Butler Course)TBA
9/3	PetersTBA
9/8	@Canon-Mac.....2:15 p.m.
9/9	@Central Catholic.....TBA
9/10	Bethel.....TBA
9/11	USCTBA
9/14	@Baldwin.....TBA
9/16	Trinity.....TBA
9/18	@Ringgold.....TBA
9/21	@Peters.....TBA

VARSITY SOCCER	
8/22	Quaker Valley10 a.m.
8/25	@Taylor Allderdice7:30 p.m.
8/28	Fleetwood Area7 p.m.
8/29	@ Quaker Valley12 p.m.
9/1	Norwin.....7:30 p.m.
9/3	@Moon Area7:30 p.m.
9/8	@Pine-Richland.....7:30 p.m.
9/10	Peters Township7:30 p.m.
9/12	Central Catholic6 p.m.
9/15	@Bethel Park.....7 p.m.
9/17	@Baldwin.....7:30 p.m.
9/22	Canon-McMillan.....7:30 p.m.
9/24	@Upper St. Clair.....8 p.m.
9/29	Fox Chapel.....7:30 p.m.

JUNIOR VARSITY SOCCER	
8/22	Quaker Valley10 a.m.
8/25	@Taylor Allderdice6 p.m.
8/28	Fleetwood Area6 p.m.
8/29	@ Quaker Valley10 a.m.
9/1	Norwin.....6 p.m.
9/3	@Moon Area6 p.m.
9/8	@Pine-Richland.....6 p.m.
9/10	Peters Township6 p.m.
9/12	Central Catholic6 p.m.
9/15	@Bethel Park.....6 p.m.
9/17	@Baldwin.....5 p.m.
9/22	Canon-McMillan.....6 p.m.
9/24	@Upper St. Clair.....6 p.m.
9/29	Fox Chapel.....6 p.m.

GIRLS

VARSITY CHEERLEADING	
8/28	@ Upper St. Clair.....7 p.m.
9/4	Thomas Jefferson7 p.m.
9/11	@Peters Township.....7 p.m.
9/18	Pine-Richland7 p.m.
9/25	@Norwin.....7 p.m.

VARSITY FIELD HOCKEY	
8/26	Fox Chapel/Peters.....6 p.m. (Scrimmage)
8/31	Shady Side7:30 p.m.
9/3	Norwin7:30 p.m.
9/8	North Allegheny7:30 p.m.
9/16	@Hempfield7:30 p.m.
9/17	Pine-Richland7:30 p.m.
9/22	Norwin7:30 p.m.
9/24	North Allegheny7:30 p.m.
9/29	@Fox Chapel7 p.m.

JUNIOR VARSITY FIELD HOCKEY	
8/26	Fox Chapel/Peters.....6 p.m. (Scrimmage)
8/31	Shady Side6 p.m.
9/3	Norwin6 p.m.
9/8	North Allegheny6 p.m.
9/16	Hempfield6 p.m.
9/17	Pine-Richland6 p.m.
9/22	Norwin6 p.m.
9/24	North Allegheny6 p.m.
9/29	@Fox Chapel5:30 p.m.

VARSITY GOLF	
8/24	@Peters Township.....TBA
8/25	@USC.....TBA
8/26	Moon AreaTBA
8/28	BethelTBA
9/2	@TrinityTBA
9/3	@Peters (VB CC).....TBA
9/4	USCTBA
9/8	@South FayetteTBA
9/9	@Chartiers ValleyTBA
9/10	@Bethel.....TBA
9/15	@Moon Area.....TBA
9/16	@Fox Chapel4 p.m.
9/17	@Bethel.....TBA
9/21	@Seneca Valley.....TBA
9/22	Section Qualifier.....TBA
9/23	Section Qualifier.....TBA
9/24	Section Qualifier.....TBA
9/28	WPIAL IndividualTBA
9/29	WPIAL IndividualTBA

JUNIOR VARSITY GOLF	
8/24	Peters TownshipTBA
8/25	USCTBA
8/26	@Moon Area.....TBA
8/28	@Bethel.....TBA
9/2	Trinity.....TBA
9/3	PetersTBA
9/4	@USC.....TBA
9/8	South Fayette.....TBA
9/9	Chartiers ValleyTBA
9/15	Moon AreaTBA
9/16	Fox Chapel.....TBA
9/17	BethelTBA
9/21	Seneca ValleyTBA
9/22	@TrinityTBA

VARSITY SOCCER	
8/22	@North Allegheny10 a.m.
8/25	Hampton.....6 p.m.
8/29	@ South Park (Tournament)
8/29	@ South Park (Tournament)
9/2	Armstrong.....7:30 p.m.
9/9	Peters7:30 p.m.
9/12	West Allegheny2 p.m.
9/14	@Bethel.....7:30 p.m.
9/16	@Baldwin.....7:30 p.m.
9/18	Penn Trafford12:00 p.m.
9/21	Canon-Mac7:30 p.m.
9/23	@USC.....7:30 p.m.
9/28	Pine-Richland7:30 p.m.
9/30	@Peters.....7:45 p.m.

JUNIOR VARSITY SOCCER	
8/22	@North Allegheny10 a.m.
8/25	Hampton.....6 p.m.
9/2	Armstrong.....6 p.m.
9/9	Peters6 p.m.
9/12	West Allegheny12:30 p.m.
9/14	@Bethel.....6 p.m.
9/16	@Baldwin.....6 p.m.
9/18	Penn Trafford10:30 p.m.
9/21	Canon-Mac7:30 p.m.
9/23	@USC.....6 p.m.
9/28	Pine-Richland7:30 p.m.
9/30	@Peters.....6:15 p.m.

VARSITY TENNIS	
8/25	@Allderdice3:30 p.m.
8/27	@South Fayette3:30 p.m.
8/28	@Shady Side3:30 p.m.
9/1	Peters3:30 p.m.
9/3	Sewickley3:30 p.m.
9/8	Chartier Valley.....3:30 p.m.
9/9	North Allegheny.....3:30 p.m.
9/10	@Canon-Mac.....3:30 p.m.
9/14	@Bethel.....3:30 p.m.
9/16	Sectional SinglesTBA
9/17	Sectional SinglesTBA
9/18	Cathedral Prep3:30p.m.
9/22	Fox Chapel.....3:30 p.m.
9/23	WPIAL Singles.....TBA
9/23	WPIAL Singles.....TBA
9/25	@USC.....3:30 p.m.
9/28	Trinity.....3:30 p.m.
9/30	Section DoublesTBA

JUNIOR VARITY TENNIS	
8/25	Allderdice.....3:30 p.m.
8/27	South Fayette.....3:30 p.m.
8/28	Shady Side3:30 p.m.
9/1	@Peters.....3:30 p.m.
9/3	@Sewickley.....3:30 p.m.
9/8	@Chartier Valley3:30 p.m.
9/9	@North Allegheny3:30 p.m.
9/10	Canon-Mac3:30 p.m.
9/14	Bethel3:30 p.m.
9/22	@Fox Chapel3:30 p.m.
9/25	USC3:30 p.m.
9/28	@Trinity3:30 p.m.

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL	
8/27	@South Fayette7 p.m.
9/1	@Seton LaSalle7:30 p.m.
9/3	Upper St. Clair7:30 p.m.
9/5	Lebo Tournament9 a.m.
9/8	North Allegheny.....7:30 p.m.
9/14	Montour7:30 p.m.
9/15	Hempfield7:30 p.m.
9/17	@Butler7:30 p.m.
9/19	@USC Tourney.....TBA
9/22	@Norwin.....7:30 p.m.
9/24	Bethel7:30 p.m.
9/26	@S Fayette TourneyTBA

JUNIOR VARSITY VOLLEYBALL	
8/27	@South Fayette5 p.m.
9/1	@Seton LaSalle6 p.m.
9/3	Upper St. Clair6 p.m.
9/8	North Allegheny.....6 p.m.
9/14	Montour6 p.m.
9/15	Hempfield6 p.m.
9/17	@Butler6 p.m.
9/22	@Norwin.....6 p.m.
9/24	Bethel6 p.m.
9/26	@USC.....TBA



Mt. Lebanon Shifts Focus to E-Bike Education, Enforcement

Continued from page 1

Haberman said police documented six micromobility-related incidents during the past year, three of which involved riders younger than 16. During recent bicycle patrols, officers also contacted more than 30 young riders to explain where the devices may legally be operated and the traffic laws that apply to them.

“We really want to make sure everyone understands the boundaries when it comes to these things,” Haberman said, adding that community cooperation will be essential to improving safety.

Commissioner Andrew Flynn said the discussion reflects a broader challenge as transportation technology continues to evolve.

Flynn noted that laws and regulations often struggle to keep pace with new technology. Rather than having municipalities adopt different rules, he said he would like to see the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and state lawmakers work together to modernize and simplify the state’s approach to micromobility devices, so communities have clearer guidance moving forward.

Public comment reflected both the opportunities

and challenges presented by the growing popularity of e-bikes.

Several residents described witnessing young riders traveling at high speeds, rolling through stop signs, riding against traffic and creating close calls with motorists and pedestrians.

Resident Becky Campanaro shared two recent incidents that reinforced her concerns, including one in which her newly licensed teenage son narrowly avoided striking an e-bike rider after hesitating before entering an intersection.

“The important point is that a serious collision was narrowly avoided because a newly licensed driver exercised patience and good judgment,” Campanaro said.

Patty Lowe described a young rider speeding past her on a sidewalk in Washington Square.

“If I had been hit with that at my age, I might not be here talking tonight,” she said, while adding that she still wants children to enjoy the freedom of riding bikes.

Not all the public comments, however, focused on restrictions.

Speaking on behalf of young riders, Mt. Lebanon resident Enzo Alisa said e-bikes provide teenagers

with independence in a community where steep hills, limited public transportation and the absence of school bus service can make getting around difficult without relying on parents.

“E-bikes aren’t just about breaking the law,” Alisa said. “They’re an escape.”

He said riding gives many teenagers an opportunity to spend time outdoors, away from screens, while also benefiting their mental health.

“If we ride them safely and follow all the traffic laws, we should be allowed to ride them,” Alisa said.

Alisa also noted that many young riders work for months to save enough money to purchase an e-bike and said banning them outright would unfairly penalize responsible riders.

He added that Mt. Lebanon’s lack of bike lanes leaves young cyclists with few practical transportation options.

“I would also like to point out how there’s really no other option because Mt. Lebanon doesn’t have any bike lanes,” he said.

Others echoed the need for better bicycle infrastructure.

Sean Battis said he has witnessed unsafe riding



behavior and recently experienced a close call while walking on a sidewalk. At the same time, he urged officials to remember that children need safe ways to travel independently and argued the municipality should invest in bicycle infrastructure.

“We have no cycling infrastructure in our municipality, and it’s clear that the need is urgent,” Battis said.

Resident Kirill Tropin said he felt comfortable commuting by bicycle while living near Seattle because of its protected bike lanes. After moving to Mt. Lebanon, however, he said he has never felt safe enough to ride to work or local businesses.

“I don’t feel safe riding a bike in Mt. Lebanon,” Tropin said, urging the municipality to move beyond planning and begin building bicycle infrastructure.

Although opinions differed on the best path forward, speakers largely agreed on one point: no one wants to wait until a child, or pedestrian is seriously injured before taking action.

For now, that action will focus on educating riders and parents, enforcing existing laws and continuing the conversation as e-bikes become an increasingly common part of daily life in Mt. Lebanon. ❤️

School Crossing Guard Reduction

Continued from page 1

The crossing guard posts eliminated for the upcoming school year are:

- Larchdale Road and Arrowood Drive
- Robb Hollow Road and Sylvandell Drive
- Broadmoor Avenue and Crystal Drive
- Ruth Street and Linda Drive
- Crescent Avenue at Markham Elementary
- Inglewood Drive and Crescent Avenue
- Washington Road and Lebanon Avenue

Despite the changes, the crossing guard program remains one of the municipality’s largest investments in student safety.

Jointly funded by the Mt. Lebanon School District and the Mt. Lebanon Police Department, the program includes 54 crossing guards, including substitutes, and one supervisor. The program’s 2026 budget is \$584,930.

Crossing guards do more than assist students before and after school. They are often the first and last adults to greet children each

2026-27 Mt. Lebanon Crossing Guard Locations		
All 32 posts include start and dismissal. Those that include lunch are marked with an (L)		
FOSTER ELEMENTARY • Vermont Avenue at Foster Elementary (L) • Vermont Avenue at Woodland Avenue (L) • Vermont Avenue at Hoodridge Drive	JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY / JEFFERSON MIDDLE • Bower Hill Road at Moffett Street • Scrubgrass Road at Elm Spring Road	MARKHAM ELEMENTARY / MELLON MIDDLE • Washington Road at Woodhaven Drive
HOOVER ELEMENTARY • Robb Hollow Road at School • Larchdale Drive at Firwood Drive	JEFFERSON MIDDLE • Bower Hill Road at Lakemont Drive • Beverly Road at Cochran Road • Cedar Boulevard at Salem Drive • Bower Hill Road at Cochran Road	MELLON MIDDLE • Scott Road/Castle Shannon Boulevard/Sunset Drive
HOOVER ELEMENTARY / JEFFERSON MIDDLE • Bower Hill Road at Firwood Drive	LINCOLN ELEMENTARY • Bower Hill Road at Ralston Place • North Meadowcroft Avenue at Edward Avenue • Beverly Road at North Meadowcroft Avenue • Beverly Road at Overlook Drive • Beverly Road at Ralston Place (L) • Arden Road at Overlook Drive	WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY / MELLON MIDDLE • Castle Shannon Boulevard at Walkway • Washington Road at Castle Shannon Boulevard • Washington Road at Washington/Mellon (L) • Castle Shannon Boulevard at Shady Drive East • Washington Road at Jefferson Drive • Castle Shannon Boulevard at Hemlock Street • Washington Road at Cedar Boulevard
HOWE ELEMENTARY • Broadmoor Avenue at Anawanda Avenue • Broadmoor Avenue at Audubon Avenue • Sleepy Hollow Road at Country Club Drive • Broadmoor Avenue at Sunset Drive	MARKHAM ELEMENTARY • Beadling Road at Crescent Drive	

school day and also assist at community events, including Final Fridays.

For the 2026-27 school year, crossing guards will staff 32 locations throughout the municipality during morning arrival and after-noon dismissal. Four locations also will be staffed during lunchtime.

The remaining crossing guard posts are located throughout the district to serve each elementary and middle school, including intersections near Foster, Hoover, Howe, Jefferson, Lincoln, Markham, Mellon and Washington schools.

Haberman emphasized that the department will continue reviewing crossing patterns and student travel habits to ensure crossing guards are assigned where they are needed most.

“Our goal remains the same,” he said. “We want students to have safe routes to and from school.” ❤️



Lebo Gift Gals

Your guide to gift giving — Honoring a Loved One

Gift-giving is a timeless expression of love and connection. Whether welcoming a new baby, celebrating a milestone, expressing gratitude or offering comfort during a time of loss, a thoughtful gift can strengthen relationships and remind others they are cared for.

At Barefoot Stitches, we're known for our colorful gift wrap and signature grosgrain ribbon bows as we help celebrate life's special moments. Most often, those occasions involve birthdays, babies or weddings. But more frequently than you might expect, we're also asked to help customers choose gifts for someone grieving the loss of a loved one.

Finding the right words during a difficult time isn't always easy. A thoughtful gift can express compassion, acknowledge shared heartache and remind someone they don't have to walk through grief alone. It can honor the memory of a loved one while providing comfort to those left behind.

Just as every relationship is unique, so is the gift that best expresses sympathy. For some, it may be a weighted "Heavy Heart" designed to provide comfort. For others, it might be an embroidered handkerchief personalized with a name or special message, or a handmade journal where memories and stories can be preserved.

Many people find comfort in their faith through a Scripture necklace, a wooden cross or an embroidered cross from Rifle Paper Co. Others find hope in the tradition



Dear Gift Gals

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

that cardinals symbolize the presence of loved ones who have passed. A beaded cardinal bracelet, a picture frame or a decorative pillow featuring a cardinal can become a meaningful reminder of someone dearly missed. An art tile featuring forget-me-not flowers can also serve as a lasting tribute.

No matter which gift is chosen, the most important gesture is acknowledging someone's loss and offering your support while honoring the memory of the person they loved.

We're here to help you navigate life's most meaningful gift-giving moments — including the difficult ones.

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. ♥

Mt. Lebanon's 12U Teams at Cooperstown

Continued from page 17
friendships that extended well beyond baseball.

Those moments, coaches said, are what make Cooperstown unlike any other youth tournament.

The week also represented another milestone for the Mt. Lebanon Baseball Association.

The Blue team's unbeaten pool-play run marked the first time a Mt. Lebanon team has finished 5-0 in pool play at Cooperstown. Likewise, the Gold team's 3-2 record represented the most pool-play victories ever by a Mt. Lebanon Gold team.

Those accomplishments reflected the talent and competitiveness of both teams, but Smith believes the lasting value of the trip can't be measured by wins, losses or tournament seedings.

The memories, laughter and shared experiences between players, coaches and families, he said, were championship caliber.

As the players returned home, they brought back more than souvenirs and



Max Bagnato belts one of the Mt. Lebanon 12U teams' 28 home runs during the Cooperstown Dreams Park tournament in Cooperstown, N.Y. (Photo provided)

tournament T-shirts. They returned with lifelong friendships, unforgettable experiences and stories they'll be telling for years to come.

For many of them, Cooperstown wasn't just the highlight of their baseball season.

It was the highlight of their childhood. ♥



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Sunday, September 13, 2026
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Bark Beat

Celebrating Mt. Lebanon’s beloved dogs

Meet Bailey Buttons

Bailey is an Aussie Labradoodle

Favorite humans?
That's a trick question! I know my human's will be reading this so...I love them all equally. They each bring a unique joy to my life. My dad takes me on tons of walks, my mom feeds, plays, cuddles and cares for me and my siblings let me lick them!

Favorite treat?
Dental treats! If I can't eat them in one sitting, I like to hide them around the house for later.

Favorite toy?
I prefer to play with someone. I like when human's throw toys for me, play tug of war with me, wrestle or chase me.

Favorite thing to do besides eat and sleep?
I love being with people, running and digging. I also love barking at anyone that passes my house and playing in the snow during the winter.

Why my humans think I am special?
They think I'm special because I'm incredibly loving, happy, sweet and gentle. I'm also a very social dog, both in person and online. Check what I'm up to @baileysdoodlediary on instagram.

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



Bailey Buttons (Photos provided)

The Home Beat

“The Home Beat” is a 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.

Take This One Off Your List
Duct cleaning, and the few times it matters.

If you’ve owned a home, you’ve probably received a postcard offering whole-house duct cleaning. It can raise a question that’s hard to ignore: “Is this something I’m supposed to have done?”
For most homes, probably not.
A light coating of dust is normal. Cleaning it hasn’t been shown to prevent health problems, and the EPA doesn’t recommend doing it on a schedule. Not every three years, not every five. There’s no interval you’ve missed.
Airflow is where it's easy to get misled. When a house isn’t moving air, it’s usually

By Jordan Smoke

a filter nobody changed or a coil slowly coated in dust, but the postcard says ducts. The ducts get cleaned, along with the filter and coil, and the airflow does improve. The wrong component gets the credit, and the cheap fix becomes a reason to repeat the expensive one.
A few situations deserve a look: construction dust after a remodel, signs of rodents or insects, smoke residue after a fire, particles that are blowing into your home from supply vents, or if there’s confirmed mold.
Unless something above describes your house, take duct cleaning off your list.
If it does, look for someone who inspects before quoting and shows you your own ducts rather than a stock photo. Be careful with the add-ons. Sprayed-in sanitizers and sealants are where much of this industry’s margin lives, and you can decline them and still have your ducts clean.
The question was never how long it’s been. It’s whether there’s a sign of a problem. ♥

Police Beat

The Mt. Lebanon Police Department reported the following crime incidents over the past 28 days: 8-11-26 thru 7-11-26

- 7/19/2026 @ 12:40 PM
700 Block Castle Shannon
DUI

7/18/2026 @ 4:08 PM
000 Block Seneca Drive
Fraud
Use Another's Device Without Authorization-Enhanced Grading - Value I

7/17/2026 @ 12:48 PM
700 Block Valleyview Drive
Fraud
Access Device Fraud-Use Another's Device Without Authorization

7/17 @ 10:55 p.m.
600 Block Dorchester Avenue
Assault
Simple Assault-General

7/17 @ 10:03 a.m.
1200 Block Cedar Boulevard
Fraud
Theft by Deception-False Impression- Amount Taken Exceeds \$2,000 But is Less Than \$100,00

7/16 @ 8:08 a.m.
300 Block Castle Shannon Boulevard
Fraud
Access Device Fraud-Use Is Unauthorized for Any Reason-Enhanced Grading - Value Is \$500 or less

7/15/2026 @ 2:28 p.m.
1000 Block of McNeilly Road
Fraud
Financial exploitation of an older adult or care-dependent person, \$2,000 to \$100,000
- 7/15/2026 @ 5:47 a.m.
Bower Hill Road & Carleton Drive
Disturbing the Peace
Evading Arrest/Detention on Foot-Felony or Misdemeanor Underlying Charge

7/14/2026 @ 11:48 p.m.
800 Block Washington Road
Drugs / Alcohol Violations

Purchase/Consumption/ Possession/Transportation of Liquor/Malt/Brewed Beverage

7/14/2026 @ 9:29 AM
1100 Block Bower Hill Road
Theft/Larceny
Theft of Mail, Unlawful Taking, 1st or 2nd Offense and value exceeds \$200

7/13/2026 @ 9:16 p.m.
800 Block McNeilly Road
Vandalism
Criminal Mischief - Damage Real or Personal Property-Enhanced Grading

7/13/2026 @ 9:01 p.m.
1100 Block Sunrise Drive
Assault
Simple Assault-General

7/13/2026 @ 8:50 a.m.
200 Block Edward Avenue
Fraud
Identity Theft Enhanced Grading -\$2000 Or More

7/11/2026 @ 4:39 a.m.
600 Block McNeilly Road
Assault
Aggravated Assault-Injury To Police, Etc. -Hands, Fist, Feet, Etc.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MOUNT LEBANON

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