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Markham remembers 9/11, 25 years later

Students, first responders and community members gather for a tradition rooted in remembrance, service and sacrifice Story and photos by Sarah Core

As first responders gathered outside Markham Elementary School for Patriot Day, the picture-perfect Friday morning was interrupted by the sound of jet engines overhead, their trails crossing the clear blue sky.

The peaceful scene stood in stark contrast to the terrorist attacks that occurred 25 years ago on a similarly sunny September morning in 2001, when hijacked airplanes caused devastation in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Mt. Lebanon Girl Scouts, led by Amy Nebel, solemnly carried the American flag to

the flagpole. Together, they raised it before lowering it to half-staff in honor of the 2,977 people killed in the Sept. 11 attacks.

Several fifth graders spoke, thanking first responders and reminding the audience of the words of Fred Rogers: "Real strength has to do with helping others."

Retired Markham Principal Robert Mallery was on hand to lead the Pledge of Allegiance for the roughly 400 students, teachers, local residents, veterans and first responders in attendance. After a moment of silence, Markham students

sang "America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee)."

"I think back on that day," Mallery said, recalling where he was on Sept. 11, 2001. "We were at Central Office doing last-minute hirings [for the 2001-02 school year]."

Then he received a frantic call from one of his children, who worked at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette at the time, telling him to turn on the television.

"We saw what was happening, and as we watched, the second tower was hit," Mallery said. "There was crazy confusion all through

Continued on page 16



Girl Scouts raise flag during Patriot Day Remembrance Ceremony

Demolition set for former Baptist Homes buildings

Six structures along Castle Shannon Road will be removed as Baptist Senior Family considers the property's future; Baptist Manor will remain By Sarah Core

Yellow tape and temporary fencing have gone up around Baptist Senior Family's former skilled nursing and personal care facility, marking the first visible signs of a demolition project expected to begin later this year.

The buildings, located at 1210 Castle Shannon Road, are part of a larger complex that includes Baptist Manor, a 100-unit independent living community for seniors with low or fixed incomes.

Baptist Senior Family, formerly the Baptist Homes Society, is a nonprofit, faith-based charitable organization.

"Everyone should rest assured that Baptist Manor will remain, and we will continue to own that property," said Amy Dukes, vice president of

marketing and public relations. "Manor residents won't be impacted."

Originally established in 1910 as the Baptist

Orphanage & Home Society of Western Pennsylvania, the organization served children and widows before shifting its focus to senior

care in the early 1970s.

The skilled nursing and personal care facility closed in October 2022 after rising costs made maintaining the

buildings, which had undergone several additions over the decades, financially unfeasible.

Continued on page 5

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College comes to Mt. Lebanon High School

Visits from nearly 100 colleges and universities give students a chance to explore options, ask questions and prepare for life after Lebo *By Lindi Pastorius*

Beginning this month, Mt. Lebanon High School students will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from colleges and universities without leaving the school.

From September through November, the high school will host representatives from approximately 100 higher education institutions. The visits give students an opportunity to learn more about academic programs and campus life, ask questions and gain a better understanding of what each school has to offer.

Hosted by the school's counseling office, the visits are part of the postsecondary planning process available to students. The counseling office takes a holistic approach to guiding students through high school, offering support for their academic, social and emotional needs as well as planning for life after graduation.

When discussing options after high school, school counselor Casey Bowles emphasizes the importance of finding the right college fit by considering academic, social and financial factors.

"We talk about what's a good fit academically — majors, minors, internship opportunities and career opportunities," Bowles said. "Then socially — a campus that is in the city, more rural, bigger campus, smaller campus, sports, etc. Then

the financial fit — which school is going to be a good financial fit for you and your family."

At Mt. Lebanon, 96% of graduates go on to attend a two-year or four-year college, with 81% enrolling at four-year institutions. With such a high percentage continuing their education, opportunities to connect directly with college representatives can play an important role in helping students make informed decisions.

Timing also matters. While regular-decision application deadlines are often in January, many early-decision deadlines fall in early November and early-action deadlines later that month.

For some institutions, meeting with a college representative can also become a "touchpoint" — an interaction that demonstrates a prospective student's interest. Other touchpoints can include campus visits, emails, interviews and conversations with admissions staff. The high school visits allow students to begin those conversations while learning more about schools they are considering.

This year's visitors represent a broad range of institutions.

The school will host "small schools, large schools, schools in Pittsburgh and schools that are hours away," Bowles said.

Among those scheduled

to visit are Vanderbilt University, Davidson College, Penn State, Bucknell University, Purdue University and Ithaca College.

"What I think is great about our college visit program specifically is it gives students a chance to learn about some schools that might not be easy to travel to because it's further away and they are busy on the weekends; getting off of school to visit can be challenging at times," Bowles said.

While preparing for the college visits, counselors are also meeting with seniors to help them navigate the application process.

"In the first two weeks, we have already met with the vast majority of our seniors, in small groups, to go over the nuts and bolts of the college application process," Bowles said. "We show them how they can connect their Common App and their Naviance accounts. We go over how to request transcripts and letters of recommendation from teachers and counselors here."

The goal, he said, is to make sure students are prepared while also encouraging them to think carefully about what comes next.

"The hope is that they are more than equipped to get where they need to be, are able to be as thoughtful about this process, and thinking about what life after Lebo looks like for them." ♥

Colleges scheduled to visit Mt. Lebanon High School

- | | |
|---|---|
| Allegheny College | Pace University |
| Alvernia University | Penn State University Park |
| American University | PennWest California |
| Amherst College | Purdue University |
| Auburn University | Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute |
| Berklee College of Music | Rochester Institute of Technology |
| Binghamton University, State University of New York | Rollins College |
| Boston College | Saint Vincent College |
| Boston University | Seton Hall University |
| Bowling Green State University | Seton Hill University |
| Brandeis University | Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania |
| Bucknell University | Springfield College |
| Butler University | St. Lawrence University |
| Carnegie Mellon University | Stevens Institute of Technology |
| Case Western Reserve University | Susquehanna University |
| Chatham University | Syracuse University |
| Colby College | The American University of Paris |
| Colgate University | The University of Arizona |
| College of the Holy Cross | Thiel College |
| Colorado State University | Towson University |
| Davidson College | Trinity College |
| Denison University | Tulane University |
| Dickinson College | Union College |
| Duquesne University | University at Buffalo, the State University of New York |
| Elon University | University of California, Berkeley |
| Emory University | University of Chicago |
| Fairmont State University | University of Cincinnati |
| Gannon University | University of Dayton |
| Geneva College | University of Delaware |
| Georgetown University | University of Florida |
| Hampden-Sydney College | University of Kentucky |
| Hobart and William Smith Colleges | University of Maryland, College Park |
| Hofstra University | University of Massachusetts Amherst |
| Indiana University Bloomington | University of Mount Union |
| Indiana University of Pennsylvania | University of Pittsburgh |
| Ithaca College | University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg |
| Jacksonville University | University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown |
| John Carroll University | University of Richmond |
| Johns Hopkins University | University of Rochester |
| Juniata College | University of Toronto |
| Kent State University | University of Wisconsin-Madison |
| Kenyon College | Vanderbilt University |
| Lafayette College | Washington & Jefferson College |
| Mercyhurst University | West Liberty University |
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Good in the LEBOhood

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

Need to hear some good news? I've got you covered.

I started my "Yinz Are Good" podcast in the middle of 2020 to feature the positive news that rarely made the headlines — stories of neighbors helping neighbors and strangers caring for strangers.

I wanted to create a space where we could connect through stories of kindness and gratitude and be inspired by the people who were lifting others up.

Little did I know how many people I would have the joy of meeting and the honor of talking with — or how many people in our communities spend their days figuring out how to make others' lives better.

And I've learned that those folks don't tend to talk about all the good they do. They just go out and do it.

These people are all around us, hidden in plain sight. They're sitting next to us on the T. They're behind us in line at the coffee shop. They're scanning their groceries in the self-checkout lane.

They are our neighbors.

In this month's column, I've decided to shine a light on several of these do-gooders who are our neighbors in the truest sense of the word — people who live right here in Lebo and whom I've had the great pleasure of featuring on my podcast.

Joel Burstein, CEO and co-founder of BEAM Collaborative

I dubbed the day of my interview with Joel our "Pittsburgh Day of Fun" because it turned into quite an unexpected adventure, spanning several hours and neighborhoods across the city.

Though we had met only once before, it felt as if we had known each other much longer. The conversation — and laughter — came easily, and Joel's deep care and commitment to supporting and building communities quickly became clear.

A Mt. Lebanon transplant, Joel moved here 10 years ago from Miami with his wife, Callie, a Pittsburgh native, and their family.

Simply stated, the mission of his nonprofit organization, BEAM Collaborative, is to keep local businesses local.

They do this by helping retiring owners transition with purpose and new buyers step in with confidence — keeping businesses open for, well, business.

As Joel said during our interview, "You can drive through a lot of neighborhoods and see empty storefronts. And the reality is that those storefronts are really difficult to refill. ... So what we're doing is figuring out how we can help those retiring baby boomers, those retiring business owners, successfully and responsibly

transition those businesses to support their neighborhoods and their communities."

Through Joel's leadership, BEAM Collaborative is laser-focused on preserving local small businesses and, of course, the jobs that go along with them.

Joel's dedication to community goes beyond his nonprofit work. He also serves on the boards of the Pittsburgh Walk of Fame, Neighborhood Allies and the Team Pennsylvania Foundation, where he continues to champion regional economic development and locally rooted entrepreneurship.

And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that I was connected to Joel through Caroline's cousin, a college friend of mine who was born and raised in Mt. Lebanon.

Shayna Bodi, Abby Lawler-Morycz, Sam Smith and Morgan Sulik of LeboGREEN

It was yet another Mt. Lebanon resident, Julie Ann Sullivan, who told me, "You just have to meet Sam Smith and the other fabulous women at the helm of LeboGREEN."

So she connected us, and I am incredibly grateful that she did.

LeboGREEN, if you're not yet familiar, is an all-volunteer nonprofit devoted to conserving energy and water and reducing waste in our community. The organization is also committed to connecting with residents through education, initiatives and events.

As Shayna said, "We are basically a group of citizen volunteers devoted to both a greener and more connected community and region. We provide residents with education and tools needed to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle and protect our environment."

Their biggest event is Mt. Lebanon Earth Day, which draws people from across Western Pennsylvania. They also host community workshops, winter sowing events and a sustainability series, among other initiatives.

Sam, Shayna, Abby, Morgan and I gathered around a table in Room B of the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center for our interview. At certain points in the recording, you can hear the faint sounds of a youth hockey game underway on the rink below.

I was inspired not only by their mission, but also by the genuine joy they have for connecting and collaborating with others, their passion for their work and their dedication to making a difference.

So, if you see any of these folks around town, be sure to say hello and thank them for all they're doing to make our community stronger.

Joel, Shayna, Abby, Sam and Morgan ... yinz are good!

Who's doing good in your neck of the Lebo woods? Let me know at yinzaregood@gmail.com.

To listen to my interviews with Joel, Episode 206, and the women of LeboGREEN, Episode 213, visit www.yinzaregood.com. ♥

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Baptist Homes *Continued from page 1*

The upcoming demolition will include the octagonal chapel and the old children's cottage, originally part of the orphanage and later used as administrative offices.

"After closing operations, we looked at a number of different options," President and CEO Timothy Myers said. "We looked at whether we could reuse those buildings."

"It couldn't be rehabbed in a way that made sense," Dukes said.

In total, six structures will be removed from the property in December after asbestos abatement is completed by the end of September. Most of the buildings were constructed in the 1960s and 1980s and sit on foundations separate from Baptist Manor, with separate building systems.

"Once spring comes around, we'll make sure that space looks pretty," Dukes said.

The short-term goal is to create an outdoor, parklike area with grass and plants for residents to enjoy.

As preparations for demolition began, the project also uncovered pieces of the organization's history.

Keystones have already been removed from the buildings, and time capsules dating to 1915, 1951 and 1964 were discovered inside them. Baptist Senior Family is working with the Historical Society of Mt. Lebanon to preserve items found in the capsules, including documents and memorabilia



Children and seniors outside the Baptist Orphanage & Home, circa 1945. (Photo by Brady Stewart)

from the orphanage, such as children's shoes.

A conservator will open the boxes, digitize the materials and preserve items for display.

"Some items will go back in the memory box for the next capstone," Myers said.

Other items found on the property, including an old safe dating to before 1942, also have been opened. Documents discovered inside will be preserved for local historical purposes and could provide information for genealogy research.

Myers recalled meeting one of the last people served by the orphanage during a visit in 2022.

"An older gentleman and his granddaughter visited, and we found his admissions folder," Myers said.

Myers said direct descendants of children who lived at the Baptist orphanage can contact the organization to determine whether their relative's records remain on file, provided at least 100 years have passed.

As for the long-term future of the Castle Shannon Road property, Dukes said Baptist Senior Family is "looking at options to see what would best benefit the community and to see what the needs are of the senior residents in the Pittsburgh area."

"What we are focusing on is, 'How do we help people live long without disease?'" Myers said, while still aligning that work with the organization's mission and goals.

To that end, Baptist Senior Family is investing in research focused on extending quality of life, as well as robotics. The organization is choosing charitable partners that share its interest in making research publicly available to benefit the broader industry.

"We are partnering with a number of national and international gerontology companies," Myers said. He believes that work



Baptist Home & Orphanage sign Circ 1950. (Photo provided by Mt. Lebanon Historical Society)

could begin producing tangible benefits within the next decade or so.

"We will be able to start to bring benefits to folks," Myers said. "It will certainly help the next generation of seniors." ♥

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BUSINESS BEAT

A Sweet Outlet for Creativity

Olivia Rose Khalil turns a passion for decorating sugar cookies into a growing custom-order business By Annabelle Thomas

Olivia Rose Khalil was looking for a creative outlet outside her 9-to-5 job when she discovered one that proved particularly sweet: custom sugar cookies.

What began as a passion project has grown into Creative Cookies by Olivia Rose, a custom cookie business that creates personalized treats for everything from graduation parties and holidays to corporate events and other special occasions.

"I've always been a creative person," Khalil said. "I've always been into the sciences, but also the arts. Me being creative with cookies has allowed me to have the best of both worlds."

Khalil, who has a master's degree in psychology from the University of Pittsburgh, balances her professional career with her growing business. Working from her home kitchen, she typically

completes three to four cookie orders each week.

And demand has been strong. Khalil is already booked through mid-December.

For Khalil, Creative Cookies is about more than a homemade sugar cookie recipe and intricate decorations. She wants customers to be involved in the creative process and see their ideas reflected in the finished product.

"I want them to have input on the design so that they feel that they've personally touched the cookie, as I did," Khalil said. "I want them to feel that their image was brought to life, that I have that detail."

Building the business also has given Khalil an opportunity to pursue another side of herself. She encourages others with an idea or creative passion to take a



Olivia Rose Khalil showcases her Creative Cookies by Olivia Rose creations during a July 19 pop-up event outside De Fer Coffee & Tea. (Photos provided)

chance rather than wonder what might have happened.

"Doing it is so much better than not doing it," Khalil said. "I've always wanted to do a little bit of everything,

and I think more people should do that."

In addition to accepting online orders through social media, Creative Cookies has appeared at pop-up



A sampling of custom sugar cookies created and decorated by Olivia Rose Khalil.

shops and events throughout the Pittsburgh area. Khalil said many of those events have sold out.

She posts booking availability, upcoming appearances and examples of her latest creations on Instagram at @creativecookiesbyoliviarose. ♥

A Sweet Outlet for Creativity

Olivia Rose Khalil turns a passion for decorating sugar cookies into a growing custom-order business By Annabelle Thomas

After a career as a defense attorney, Jill Nolan has traded the courtroom for the Pilates studio.

Nolan opened The Pointe Pilates in the Pittsburgh area in April, beginning a new chapter inspired, in part, by what she observed during her legal career. After seeing clients struggle with injuries and physical limitations, she became increasingly interested in functional fitness and body awareness.

"I saw that so many people could either have prevented their injuries or at least gotten a better result if they had better bodily function," Nolan said.

Nolan had retired from practicing law to raise her children when she began Pilates as a student. After practicing Pilates for nearly 20 years, she decided to take her interest further and become a certified instructor.

"It just struck me how many people have so little bodily awareness and so little functional fitness, and how vital that is to keeping us healthy," Nolan said. "Posture and alignment and all those things contribute to a healthy spine, and therefore a healthy body."

After completing three years of training, Nolan became certified in

classical Pilates and the BALLance Method. Nolan said she is the only certified BALLance Method instructor in the Pittsburgh area.

She eventually opened her own studio, giving her the freedom to tailor her instruction to the individual needs of each client.

"The one thing that I have learned the most about in teaching is that everybody is different," Nolan said. "Everybody comes in with a different need that day, and it could change day to day. ... The session flows according to the needs of the client."

Although Pilates shares some characteristics with other forms of exercise and movement, Nolan said its emphasis on strength and the core distinguishes it from other practices.

"Yoga is great for flexibility and for a mind-body connection, but Pilates is more about strength," Nolan said. "We teach you strength using your center, or your core, to guide every movement, and it really builds strength and functional fitness."

Classical Pilates is built around six guiding principles: centering, concentration, control, precision, breath and flow. Nolan incorporates those principles into her instruction while



Jill Nolan, founder of The Pointe Pilates, guides a client through a stretching exercise during a session. Nolan offers individual and duet instruction tailored to each client. (Photos provided)

adapting exercises to clients of different ages, abilities and fitness levels.

"Pilates is really for everybody, no matter your age, no matter your strength, no matter your level of fitness," Nolan said. "We're taught to teach the body in front of us, meaning I don't follow a script or a rote method. I can modify and give each client exactly what they need on that day."

Rather than group classes, Nolan offers individual and duet sessions, allowing her to provide more personalized instruction.

Of all the benefits she sees from teaching Pilates, Nolan said she



finds the greatest satisfaction in watching clients recognize their own progress.

"Nothing makes me happier than seeing somebody come in and a month earlier they couldn't do a roll-up, and now they can," Nolan said. "Just to see the look on their face and see how proud they are of themselves. ... And then you hear people say, 'Wow, I can bend down and pick up my grandkids now.'"

Customers can contact Nolan for bookings and inquiries on her website www.thepointepilatespgh.com or email her at thepointepilates@gmail.com ♥



Stop, think and verify

Recognizing four common warning signs can help you avoid becoming the victim of a scam

By Danielle Weber, Special to The Lebo Beat

We have all heard the warnings on the local news, from our banks and even at grocery stores: Beware of scams.

But what exactly is a scam?

Simply put, a scam is a fraudulent scheme that uses manipulation and deception to trick someone into providing money or personal information. There are many types of scams, but most share some of the same characteristics.

Deception

Is it too good to be true? It probably is.

Just like a good book, scammers need a “hook” to get your attention. A scammer will often present false or misleading information designed to be too tempting to pass up.

Investment scams are a common example. Have you ever seen a pop-up advertisement on your computer promising a high rate of return for a small investment in cryptocurrency or precious metals?

The scammer may pose as an investment firm, hoping you will click a link and send money. Unfortunately, the only investment you may be making is in the scammer.

Manipulation

Scammers use manipulation to persuade victims to do what they want — usually to send money. They may exploit trust, fear and emotions to accomplish their goal.

Romance scams can last for months or even years, with scammers continually playing on a victim’s emotions to keep the money coming. A romance scammer may patiently build a relationship and establish trust for months before asking for money.

The scammer also may have countless excuses for why the two cannot meet in person. There may be an emergency, an accident, a work problem or another unexpected situation. Often, that emergency will supposedly require the victim’s money to resolve it.

Never send money to someone you have not met in person.

Sense of urgency

Scammers often create a sense of urgency to make victims feel pressured and prevent them from having time to think. This is intentional.

Oil rig and military impersonation scams frequently use this tactic. A scammer might claim

there has been an explosion on an oil rig or that troops have run out of food and need immediate assistance.

A sense of urgency is also common in investment scams. Victims may be told that an opportunity to earn an advertised return will expire quickly and that they must invest immediately.

If you feel pressured or rushed to send money to someone you have never met, stop and think. Use resources independent of those provided by the person contacting you to verify the information.

When in doubt, ask someone you trust whether the situation makes sense. Creating that pause when you feel pressured can give you the time needed to think clearly and make a better-informed decision.

Secrecy

Scammers generally do not want anyone else to know you are communicating with them. They may explicitly ask victims to keep everything secret and sometimes even claim that other people in the victim’s life are involved in the supposed situation.

If a scammer asks you to wire money from your

bank, the scammer may tell you not to disclose the real reason for the transaction to bank employees. The scammer may even provide a false explanation for you to give them.

When scammers request payment through gift cards, they may tell victims not to discuss the reason for the purchases with cashiers or other store employees.

A request for secrecy should be a warning sign.

There are also steps you can take to help protect yourself. Developing a relationship with your bank is a good place to start. Bank employees can ask questions about suspicious transactions and may be able to identify signs of a potential scam.

Online and mobile

banking also make it easier to monitor account activity. Many financial institutions allow customers to customize alerts that notify them of transactions they may not have authorized on their accounts or debit cards.

Ask your bank about these features and other safeguards it offers to help protect you from scams.

Most importantly, remember the warning signs: deception, manipulation, urgency and secrecy. If something does not feel right, stop before sending money or providing personal information. Take time to verify the situation independently and talk with someone you trust.

That pause could prevent a costly mistake. ♥

About the author

Danielle Weber has more than a decade of experience in banking fraud prevention and recovery, including work in deposit operations and compliance. Over the past three years, she has helped recover more than \$500,000 in fraudulent funds for customers and financial institutions. She specializes in payment systems, return rights and interbank collaboration, with a focus on fraud recovery and protecting customers from financial loss.

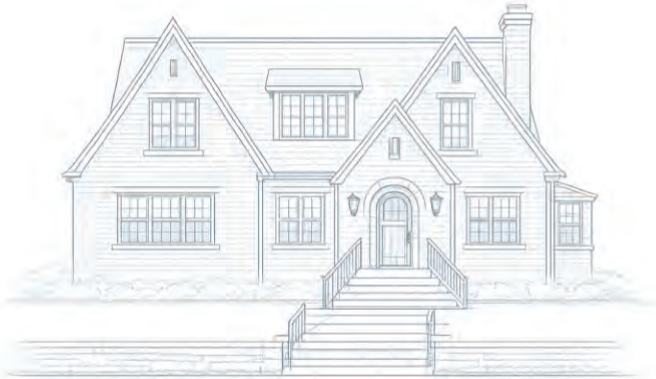


A few things that haven’t been looked at in a while.

- 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.

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Taking the guesswork out of home maintenance

A homeowner discovers a service designed to identify problems early and keep track of the systems that keep a house running By Stacey Reibach

When I was a child growing up in South Georgia, my family lived in a three-bedroom ranch house. My dad was fairly handy, so I don't recall having many service workers come in to fix things. Because he made it look so easy, I don't think I fully grasped all that it takes to keep a home in good working order.

After years of apartment living and Army base housing, my husband and I were finally able to buy our first house. I quickly realized that while I had dreamed of owning a home, I hadn't fully appreciated that renting has its advantages — namely, the ability to call maintenance when something goes wrong and the peace of mind that expensive replacement items such as HVAC equipment, a roof, plumbing, electrical

systems and appliances are not your responsibility.

I recently discovered a company that can help homeowners like me. When something fails, such as an electrical or plumbing system, I know how to find someone to fix it. What I lacked was knowing what needs to be maintained to, ideally, prevent a system failure in the first place.

Homelio is a company that visits your home three times a year to check and service its systems. According to its website, Homelio is “not a repair service. Not a warranty. Not an app. A company built around the ongoing care of your home: consistent, structured, accountable.”

The company says it does not perform repairs or accept referral fees.

During the four hours Homelio representatives

spent at my house on their first visit, they measured the cooling performance of my air conditioner and cleaned its coils, checked my sump pump and made sure all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors were working properly.

They determined that my air conditioner's readings were off and recommended that I have it evaluated. Because Homelio does not perform the repairs it recommends, I was free to call the service provider of my choice. The company will make a recommendation if a homeowner needs help finding someone.

Homelio also provided me with a report detailing everything that was done. In my case, I was able to call an HVAC company and explain the problem in more technical terms.



Dave Sienerth, Homelio technician performs routine maintenance on an air-conditioning unit. (Photo by Stacey Reibach)

The report included a list of my home's important systems, a summary of the visit, before-and-after photos and notes explaining what I should plan for and what could wait or simply be monitored. The company adds to the home's report

after each visit, creating an ongoing maintenance history that could also be useful when selling a home.

On future visits, Homelio will perform services such as flushing my water heater — something I didn't know was recommended as regular maintenance — checking my furnace's efficiency, cleaning my gutters and dryer vent, and inspecting my electrical panel.

Jordan Smoke, co-owner of Homelio, said new homeowners are among those who frequently express interest in the service.

“We receive a lot of interest from new home buyers,” Smoke said. “They just bought a house that came with no manual, and nobody has ever shown them what's needed to maintain it.”

For more information, visit www.homelio.com. ♥

Three Mt. Lebanon graduates named 2026 Great Alumni Award recipients

Three Mt. Lebanon High School graduates whose careers have made an impact in their professions and communities have been selected as recipients of the school's 2026 Great Alumni Award.

Carolyn Additon Anthony, Class of 1967; Dr. John Christopher Graybill, Class of 1997; and Doyle Stevick, Class of 1988, will be honored at a luncheon Oct. 2 and recognized that evening during Mt. Lebanon's home football game.

The Great Alumni Award, established in 2004 as a project of the Mt. Lebanon High School Student Council, recognizes graduates for exceptional professional achievement, community service, volunteer work or efforts to improve the lives of others. Students participate in researching and recognizing the honorees.

Anthony spent 31 years as director of the Skokie Public Library in Illinois, where she worked to

expand access to library resources and programming. She co-founded the Skokie Festival of Cultures and introduced programs ranging from teen mentorship and employment assistance to multilingual and accessible library resources. Under her leadership, the library received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service in 2008.

Graybill recently retired from active duty after more than 21 years with the U.S. Army Medical Corps. A

trauma surgeon, he deployed six times to locations including Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Honduras and Chad. He now serves as a trauma, burn, critical care and acute care surgeon at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore.

Stevick is director of the Anne Frank Center and an associate professor at the University of South Carolina. His work focuses on Holocaust and civic education and the role schools can play in combating hatred and extremism. A two-time

Fulbright Scholar, Stevick has co-authored six books and presented his work on four continents. Since 2018, the Anne Frank Center has expanded its educational programming to 25 states and brought traveling exhibitions to 45 states.

The three honorees join a group of Mt. Lebanon graduates recognized through the program for sustained achievement and contributions extending beyond their professions and immediate communities. ♥

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An ancient story of war through a veteran's eyes

Mt. Lebanon author and Iraq combat veteran Josh Cannon finds timeless lessons about friendship, grief and the human cost of battle in Homer's "Iliad" By Eleazer Gorenstein

For Mt. Lebanon resident Josh Cannon, the ancient Greek epic "*The Iliad*" is more than a story about heroes, battles and mythology. As an Iraq combat veteran, Cannon sees in Homer's epic a remarkably familiar account of the fear, friendship, grief and human cost of war.

Cannon, who holds a doctorate and serves as director of research at the University of Pittsburgh's Frederick Honors College, explores that connection in his book, "*Fatal Second Helen: A Modern Veteran's Iliad*."

"I describe it as a discussion of the *Iliad* through the eyes of a combat veteran that both tries to make the *Iliad* more accessible and also tries to teach those things the *Iliad* got right about war and those things that it got wrong," Cannon said.

Cannon was 20 when he participated in the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, turning 21 while serving there. His experience gave him a different perspective on a work he had previously viewed simply as mythology.

"Before I went to war, I thought it was just mythology," he said of the *Iliad*. "I thought it was just like a fun story, like most of mythology is."

His experience in Iraq changed that.

Cannon came to see that Homer had captured some

fundamental truths about warfare, particularly the relationships between soldiers and the devastating consequences of combat.

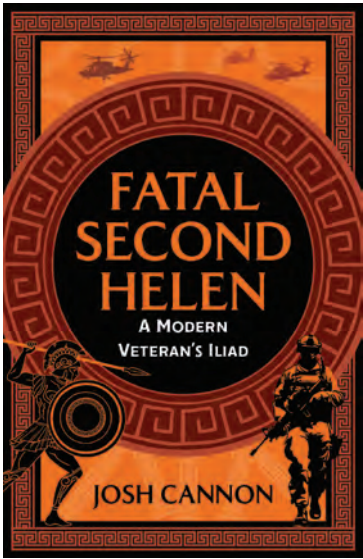
One of the strongest examples is the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus. Their friendship and love, Cannon said, form much of the emotional heart of the *Iliad*. When Patroclus is killed, Achilles is consumed by grief and rage and seeks revenge.

The story also focuses on those on the other side of the battlefield. Cannon points to Hector, a Trojan warrior who briefly leaves the fighting to visit his wife and infant son. When the baby becomes frightened by Hector's helmet, Hector removes it so he can comfort his child.

"It's a really soft and beautiful reminder that these are real people," Cannon said. "There's real people and there's real consequences to what war does to them."

For Cannon, that is one of the central messages of the *Iliad*: War may contain moments of courage and glory, but it also destroys lives.

"I think a major point of the *Iliad* is trying to emphasize to us that as much glory as you can find in war and excitement, it also really reminds you of how terrible war is and how destructive it is and how it kills good



"Fatal Second Helen: A Modern Veteran's Iliad," by Mt. Lebanon resident and Iraq combat veteran Josh Cannon. (Photos provided)

people," he said. That perspective also challenges a common perception of combat.

"I think one common misunderstanding is that combat is glorious and exciting," Cannon said.

While combat can be exciting, Cannon compared the feeling to the fear of a roller coaster, except that in combat "you don't know that you're safe."

His book's title comes from a World War I poem written by British soldier Patrick Shaw-Stewart while he was serving near Troy during the Gallipoli campaign. The poem reflects on the ancient Trojan War and the recurring pull toward conflict. Shaw-Stewart later



Mt. Lebanon resident Josh Cannon holds a copy of his book, "*Fatal Second Helen: A Modern Veteran's Iliad*," on Mt. Lebanon Boulevard.



Josh Cannon in Iraq in 2003 while heading to Babylon during his military service. Cannon was 20 when he participated in the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

returned to battle in France and was killed.

Cannon sees the story as another poignant reminder of war's human cost. He hopes veterans who read his book will recognize that their feelings about war are not unique.

"I think veterans, combat veterans and non-combat

veterans would certainly be able to see that and maybe recognize that their own feelings are perfectly reasonable and very human," he said.

He also hopes civilian readers will think more deeply about what war actually means for the people who experience it.

Cannon recently shared those ideas with his own community during a presentation at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library. He said the audience was particularly interested in the mythology and ancient Greek art he used to illustrate his discussion.

As co-chair of Pitt's Veterans Affinity Group, Cannon also works to encourage greater interaction between veterans and the academic community.

"I think as an academic, I really benefit from having a veteran perspective," he said. "And I think other academics who aren't veterans could also really benefit from having conversations with veterans and learning more about their perspectives."

After spending years examining Homer, war and his own experiences in Iraq, Cannon has arrived at a simple conclusion about the ancient epic.

"I think the *Iliad* is there to remind us that warfare kills good people and that that's a tragedy," he said. "I think that kind of sums it all up." ♥

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Healthy Living: Staying independent behind the wheel

Don't wait until you can no longer drive to figure out how you'll get around By Kate Sheets

For many older adults, driving is closely connected to independence. A car makes it possible to get to a doctor's appointment, pick up groceries, visit friends or attend a community event without relying on someone else. But changes in vision, mobility, reaction time or other abilities can make driving more difficult over time. Exploring other ways to get around does not mean giving up independence. Instead, having reliable transportation alternatives can help older adults continue participating in the activities and routines that are important to them.

Transportation needs often change gradually. Someone who once felt comfortable driving anywhere may eventually choose to avoid driving at night, in bad weather, during busy traffic or on unfamiliar roads. Others may begin relying more frequently on family members or friends for rides. These changes do not necessarily mean it is time to stop driving, but they can be a good opportunity to consider other options. Becoming familiar with transportation services before they are urgently needed can make future changes easier and less stressful.

For Mt. Lebanon residents, one of the most familiar alternatives is Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT). Bus and trolley services connect the South Hills with destinations throughout the Pittsburgh region, including shopping areas, medical facilities and other communities. Adults 65 and older can ride PRT fixed-route services for free with a Senior ConnectCard. Residents who are new to public transportation can start by identifying routes to places they visit

regularly. Taking a practice trip with a friend or family member can also help build confidence before using the system independently.

For those who need more assistance than traditional public transportation can provide, Allegheny County offers several shared-ride programs. ACCESS 65 Plus is available to Allegheny County residents age 65 and older and provides transportation to a variety of destinations. Eligible riders receive an 85% discount on ACCESS fares. Because rides generally need to be scheduled in advance, the service can be particularly useful for planned medical appointments, errands and other necessary trips. Residents should check current eligibility and scheduling requirements when applying.

Older Persons Transportation, or OPT, is another option sponsored by the Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging. OPT provides transportation for eligible older adults to destinations such as medical and health-related appointments, grocery stores, senior centers and adult daycare. These services can be especially helpful for residents who have reduced their driving but still need dependable transportation for essential activities. Since eligibility and scheduling requirements may apply, residents should contact the Area Agency on Aging for current information.

For individuals who cannot use regular public transportation because of a disability, ACCESS also offers transportation through its Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) program. Eligible riders can receive door-to-door shared-ride



transportation throughout Allegheny County and to certain destinations outside the county. Trips generally need to be scheduled ahead of time, making this another option for people who need additional assistance getting to appointments, errands or other destinations.

Transportation does not always have to come from a bus or specialized service. Friends, neighbors, volunteer programs and community organizations can also become part of an older adult's transportation network. The Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging's Senior Companion Program, for example, connects older adults with trained volunteers who can provide companionship and accompany participants on errands or medical appointments using public or shared-ride transportation. Having someone alongside can make unfamiliar transportation options feel more comfortable while also providing an opportunity for social connection.

For older adults who are

concerned about losing access to activities they enjoy, transportation planning can also help maintain social connections. A reliable way to get to a library program, recreation class, community event, religious service or visit with friends can make it easier to remain involved outside the home. This is particularly important because staying socially connected can contribute to overall well-being as people age. Transportation is therefore not simply about getting from one place to another; it can help people maintain routines, relationships and a sense of community.

The key is to explore these resources before a transportation change becomes urgent. Learning a PRT route, finding out whether you qualify for a shared-ride program or saving important transportation phone numbers can provide peace of mind. Taking a trial ride with someone familiar can also make using a new service feel more manageable. Keeping a list of transporta-

tion options at home or in a phone can make it easier to quickly find an alternative when a car is unavailable.

Families can be part of this planning process, too. Rather than waiting for a sudden change in driving ability, family members can have open conversations about transportation and help identify options that fit an older adult's needs and preferences. Creating backup plans for situations such as illness, severe weather, vehicle repairs or temporary driving restrictions can prevent transportation from becoming a last-minute problem.

Planning ahead allows older adults and their families to approach transportation changes gradually rather than treating them as a sudden loss of independence. With a combination of public transit, shared-ride programs, volunteer support and help from friends and family, residents can continue accessing the people, places and services that make life in Mt. Lebanon fulfilling. ♥

Healthy Habit of the Month: Keep your brain active

Keeping your brain active is an important part of healthy aging. Make time each day for activities that challenge your mind, such as reading, doing a crossword or Sudoku puzzle, learning a new skill, playing an instrument or trying a new hobby. Social activities can also provide mental stimulation, whether it's joining a book discussion, attending a community program or having a conversation with a friend. The National Institute on Aging recommends staying mentally, socially and physically active as part of supporting one's cognitive health. Even setting aside 15 minutes a day for an activity you enjoy can be a simple way to keep yourself engaged.

National Institute on Aging, Cognitive Health and Older Adults
CDC, Healthy Aging at Any Age - identifies mental stimulation and social connection as important parts of healthy aging.
Pittsburgh Regional Transit , "ReadyFare" / Senior ConnectCard information.
Allegheny County , "Transportation Resources."
Allegheny County , 2025 Senior Resource Guide.
Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging , "Older Persons Transportation Program (OPT)."
Allegheny County , "Senior Companion Program."
Allegheny County , "SeniorLine."



Local urologist encourages men to take prostate cancer screening seriously

By Eleazer Gorenstein

For Dr. Christopher Ferari, returning to the South Hills has been about more than coming home.

Dr. Ferari, who grew up in Mt. Lebanon and graduated from Mt. Lebanon High School in 2013, recently joined St. Clair Medical Group Urology. Now, he cares for patients in the same community that helped shape him.

One of the issues Dr. Ferari hopes to raise awareness about is prostate cancer, a disease that can often be detected before a man experiences any symptoms.

"Prostate cancer is not like other cancers you may have heard about," Dr. Ferari said. "It's usually very, very slow growing."

Because many prostate cancers grow slowly and may not affect a man's life for some time, Dr. Ferari said the goal of screening is to identify cancers that are more likely to become significant during a person's lifetime and could benefit from treatment.

One of the most useful tools available is the prostate-specific antigen, or PSA, blood test.

Dr. Ferari said current guidelines allow screening to begin as early as age 40 to 45, with earlier screening particularly important for men at higher risk. For men at average risk, he said a baseline PSA in the range of 45 to 50 can be a good starting point.

Men with a family history of prostate cancer should

consider talking with their doctors about screening earlier, particularly in their early 40s, Dr. Ferari said. African American men also can face a higher risk of prostate cancer and may benefit from earlier screening, particularly when combined with a family history.

"Family history is especially important in prostate cancer," Dr. Ferari said.

PSA testing, however, does not diagnose prostate cancer.

Dr. Ferari said one of the biggest misconceptions he encounters is that an elevated PSA automatically means a man has cancer. It does not.

PSA stands for prostate-specific antigen, not prostate cancer antigen. The test helps identify men who may be at higher risk and need additional evaluation.

PSA levels also can fluctuate for reasons unrelated to cancer. An enlarged prostate, which becomes more common as men age, can contribute to an elevated PSA. Infections and other factors also can cause the number to rise.

For that reason, an elevated PSA generally is followed by another test to confirm whether the elevation persists or represents a trend.

If the PSA remains concerning, physicians may recommend additional evaluation, including a prostate MRI or a biopsy. MRI technology has become particularly important in recent years, Dr. Ferari said, because it can provide



Dr. Christopher Ferari

detailed information about the size of the prostate and identify areas that may warrant further investigation.

MRI-guided fusion biopsy technology can then allow physicians to target suspicious areas more precisely when obtaining tissue samples.

The approach to prostate cancer treatment also has changed. Dr. Ferari said not every prostate cancer requires immediate treatment.

Patients with very low-risk or low-risk prostate cancer may be candidates for active surveillance. Rather than immediately undergoing surgery or radiation,

these patients are monitored over time with PSA testing, imaging and, when appropriate, repeat biopsies.

Studies following men with low-risk prostate cancer have shown that carefully selected patients who undergo active surveillance can have outcomes comparable to those who receive immediate surgery or radiation, Dr. Ferari said.

For patients who do require treatment, the decision is individualized.

Depending on the cancer, treatment options can include focal therapy, surgery or radiation. Dr. Ferari said St. Clair offers focal ultrasound therapy for select patients, while surgery and radiation remain highly effective options for many patients with localized disease.

The potential effects of treatment on quality of life also are part of the discussion.

Robotic prostate surgery has allowed surgeons to be more precise when attempting to preserve nerves and the urinary sphincter, Dr. Ferari said. While side effects involving sexual function or urinary control can still occur, treatment options are available for patients who experience them.

Ultimately, Dr. Ferari said men should not wait for

symptoms to begin thinking about prostate health. Early prostate cancer typically does not cause symptoms.

Changes such as blood in the urine or problems with urinary flow should prompt a conversation with a primary care physician or urologist, but PSA screening can help identify potential problems before cancer becomes advanced enough to cause symptoms.

His advice to men in the South Hills is straightforward: maintain a healthy lifestyle and talk to a primary care physician about PSA screening.

"It starts with your primary care doctor and living a healthy lifestyle," Dr. Ferari said.

For Dr. Ferari, the opportunity to deliver that message to the community where he grew up makes his return to the area particularly meaningful.

After graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School, Dr. Ferari attended the University of Notre Dame for undergraduate studies and West Virginia University for medical school. He completed his five-year urology training at Indiana University before returning to the Pittsburgh area.

His parents still live in Mt. Lebanon, and Dr. Ferari said returning to the South Hills has been a welcome experience.

"It's great to be back and to be able to treat the South Hills community that I grew up in and that gave me so much growing up," he said. "I'm really excited to be able to offer expert urologic care to the patients that are from the community I grew up in."

St. Clair Medical Group Urology will also offer a free prostate cancer screening event Sept. 28 as part of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. The screening is scheduled for 4 to 5 p.m. and will include PSA testing and prostate exams. Free parking will be available in the Dunlap Outpatient Center garage.

For men who have never had their PSA checked, Dr. Ferari's message is simple: Start the conversation with your primary care doctor. ♥



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



Pizza-Palooza puts loc

Mt. Lebanon mahjong group turns a friendly debate over the best pizza into a blind

What started as a friendly debate among a group of Mt. Lebanon mahjong players over who makes the best pizza eventually turned into a full-fledged blind taste test, complete with scorecards, spreadsheets, prizes and 22 hungry judges.

The result was “Pizza-Palooza,” a neighborhood pizza competition hosted by Mt. Lebanon resident Laura Young on Aug. 16.

The idea began during a mahjong gathering when the conversation somehow turned to pizza and, more specifically, what makes a pizza good.

“There were people vying for who made the best pizza,” Young said. “People were starting to disagree with one another over what makes a good pizza because if you like a thin crust or you like a thick crust, it’s very different.”

The discussion eventually led Young and fellow mahjong player Marcy Gelman to come up with the idea for a taste-test party. They decided to take the competition seriously — or, at least, as seriously as one can take a neighborhood pizza party.

The pizzas would be tasted blind, the boxes would be covered to conceal identifying information, and each pizzeria would provide two pizzas.

“We started brainstorming it right there,” Young said. “What if we could do it blindfolded or something to really determine and make it a more legit taste test?”

The group invited its members to submit their favorite pizza places. Young created a Google Form where participants could submit their first, second and third choices.

In the end, the group had 20 pizzas from 10 pizzerias in the official competition, with additional pizzas arriving as unofficial last-minute entries. Those were not included in the official competition because the judging form had already been set up for 10 pizzerias.

The 10 participating pizzerias were Caliente Pizza & Draft House, F&F Pizzeria, Little Nippers, Crust! Café and Pizzeria, Fiori’s Pizzeria, Giovanni’s

Pizza & Pasta, Mm! Mm! Pizza, Pizzeria Davide, Badamo’s Pizza and La Vera Brooklyn Pizzeria.

The restaurants represented favorites of members of the group, including several Mt. Lebanon establishments and others from nearby communities. Each participating pizzeria was represented by two pizzas: one plain cheese and one specialty. If a restaurant was known for a particular specialty, the group encouraged participants to choose it. The restaurants generally did not know they were part of the competition until the orders were placed.

Then came the most important rule: No one could know which pizza came from which restaurant.

Boxes were covered with electrical tape, newspaper, wrapping paper, aluminum foil or whatever else was necessary to conceal identifying information. Some restaurants already used generic boxes, making the job easier.

Young was the only person at the party who knew which pizza came from which pizzeria.

Once the pizzas arrived, they were assigned letters and the tasting began. The group wanted everyone to have an opportunity to sample the crust, cheese and sauce, so each pizza was ordered in a medium size and cut into 16 pieces.

There was plenty of pizza to go around. In fact, there was more than enough.

“We ended up with 22 pizzas,” Young said.

The judging was surprisingly methodical. For the plain pizzas, judges evaluated the crust, sauce, cheese and sauce-to-cheese-to-crust ratio. The crust category included the bake, crispiness and char. Judges evaluated the sauce for its balance of sweetness and acidity, seasoning, texture and quantity. Cheese was judged on its melt, coverage and flavor.

Specialty pizzas were judged on flavor harmony, crust structure, concept and creativity, and execution and presentation.

The maximum score possible was 40. The overall winners barely topped 30,



The judges dig in for the taste test. ((Photo provided)

suggesting the judges took their jobs quite seriously.

Young created paper scorecards for the event and then used a Google Form to collect the results. Responses automatically populated a spreadsheet, allowing her to calculate the scores and determine the winners that evening.

“I was very serious about the Google forms and not knowing where the pizzas came from,” Young said. “Once you get me the idea, I’ll blow it out. I can

execute really well.”

The blind tasting produced some clear winners.

And the winners are ...

Best plain pizza: Pizzeria Davide, brought by Naomi Crown — 28.7/40

Best specialty pizza: Crust! Mediterranean pizza, brought by Lara Henke — 30.5/40

Overall winner/highest overall score: Crust! Mediterranean pizza — 30.5/40

Best crust: Giovanni’s — 7.4/10

Most popular pizza: Badamo’s white pizza with red onions and hot peppers — 30.2/40

Pizza aficionado: Naomi Crown, who correctly identified six pizzas.

One of the closest competitions was in the specialty category, where Crust! finished with a score of 30.5, just ahead of Badamo’s at 30.2. Badamo’s also earned the distinction of being the “most popular” pizza because it was the first to be completely eaten.

Crown proved particularly adept at the blind-tasting challenge, correctly identifying six of the pizzas by their pizzeria. She also happened to be the person who brought the winning plain pizza from Pizzeria Davide in the Strip District.

For Young, one of the biggest surprises was discovering some highly regarded pizza outside Mt. Lebanon. Pizzeria Davide was unfamiliar to several members of the group before the competition. Young said a friend who works in the Strip District immediately endorsed it when she mentioned the restaurant.

“Even when you get out of Lebo a little bit, there’s some good stuff to be had,” Young said.

The event was not intended to create a serious rivalry among restaurants. The real goal was to bring people together. The mahjong group invited husbands, children, friends and



Local favorites to the test

Blind taste test complete with scorecards, prizes and 22 hungry judges *By Eleazer Gorenstein*



Jason Andrus and Lara Henke displaying the awards to be presented to the winning pizzerias. (Photo provided)



Pizza names were concealed, and judges used designated spatulas during the blind taste test to keep each entry's identity secret. (Photo provided)

family members, including people who did not necessarily know one another.

"It was just really people getting an opportunity to meet our friends' families," Young said.

Italian music played in the background as people sampled pizza and socialized. The group also turned the competition into a celebration, handing out a collection of pizza-themed prizes.

There were small trophies, a pizza-shaped 1,000-piece puzzle, pizza-themed shirts, a pizza dog toy, pizza-flavored Pringles, a dish towel, pizza candy and even ingredients such as Parmesan cheese, oregano and crushed red pepper.

One particularly memorable prize was a small sign originally intended to say "Best Pizza in Town." The group crossed out "town" and replaced it with the Pittsburghese "tahn."

Henke, who brought the winning Crust! pizza, planned to take the sign back to the restaurant. Another taster took a small trophy to Giovanni's, which supplied the winning pizza in the crust category. Young said restaurant employees were excited to see it and took pictures with the trophy.

"It was just really fun," Young said.

Despite the mountain of pizza, the event appears to have left the group hungry

for another competition. Young said members are already considering a different food theme for next year, with "Taco-Palooza" or "Pierogi-Palooza" among the possibilities.

The timing may even remain similar. Pizza-Palooza was held the Sunday before the start of the school year, when many families were back home and looking for a social activity before the busy fall schedule began.

For now, though, the mahjong group's pizza debate has been settled — at least according to the numbers.

Or perhaps it has simply created a new debate.

After all, there are always more pizzas to try. ♥



Some of the judges who participated in the blind pizza taste test are, from left, Aimee Conrardy, Jason Andrus, Lara Henke, Naomi Crown, Michael Jurczak, Henry Jurczak and Martha Jurczak. (Photo provided)



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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

Pat Miyamoto's paintings fill nearly every room of her apartment.

Miyamoto has been painting for more than seven decades, but her life has never been limited to a canvas. She has traveled the world, studied languages and embraced new adventures well into her 80s. Through it all, art has remained a constant thread.

Born at McKeesport Hospital in 1940, Miyamoto grew up in the Pittsburgh area, where art became an important part of her life at an early age. During the 1950s and 1960s, art teachers from public schools throughout Allegheny County recommended talented students for a Saturday morning program at the Carnegie Museum. Miyamoto participated throughout her teenage years and later studied art and English at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Virginia.

After graduating, she moved to New York City and joined the Art Students League, where she met her future husband, Ken. Their friendship endured even as life took them in different directions.

Miyamoto spent four years in Spain after her father was transferred there. When she returned to the United States, she reconnected with Ken. After knowing each other for about 10 years, they married.



Pat in her apartment surrounded by her artwork.

The couple eventually moved to Hawaii, where they lived for 15 years while raising their two sons. For a time, painting competed with the demands of everyday life.

"I had a bag for Scouts, a bag for church because I was a Sunday school teacher, a bag for PTA, and every night I had some kind of meeting," she said.

Even when she wasn't spending as much time at the easel, Miyamoto continued pursuing new experiences. Travel became one of her passions, taking her to destinations around the world. Over the years, she has taken numerous trips, including a cruise around the southern tip of South America. She often travels alone and views each trip as an opportunity to experience something new.

"I have taken some of the best trips," she said.

After returning to Pittsburgh, Miyamoto was able to devote more time to painting. Today, she works primarily in oils.

A member of South Arts since 1995, she regularly enters exhibitions and has earned numerous awards, including Gold Keys from Scholastic Magazine's annual art contest. In 2020, at age 80, she won the Merrick Masters Exhibition at Merrick Art Gallery for her painting "I Yam American."

The title reflects an experience she had after moving to New York.

"When I got to New York and got my first job in New York City, people from all over, they'd ask, 'Where are you from? What's your country?'"



Pat and her two sons. (Photos provided)

She would tell them she was as American as anyone could be.

Mt. Lebanon was familiar to Miyamoto long before she moved there. She remembers taking Sunday drives through the community with her father, who would say that one day he would have a house there.

He eventually did, purchasing a home while Miyamoto and her brother were away at college. As a result, they never really had the opportunity to experience living in Mt. Lebanon at the time.

Years later, Miyamoto found her own way back to the community.

She moved to Baptist Manor nearly 20 years ago and continues to paint, read and stay active. She has participated in a Spanish

literature group at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library for about 15 years and still reads and discusses books in Spanish.

"I'm trying to keep my Spanish awake and living," she said.

Miyamoto recently connected with a 92-year-old art professor through Facebook Dating. The two discovered their shared interest in art and now exchange photographs of their paintings, with him offering critiques and compliments on her work.

At 86, Miyamoto remains as engaged and curious as ever, surrounded by paintings that tell the story of a lifetime spent creating, traveling and learning.

"I really try to take advantage of what's here in Lebo, and there's a lot," she said.♥



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Strength for life

For women new to weight training, experts say starting gradually can build muscle, confidence and the ability to stay active as they age *By Preethi Ravi*

For women new to strength training, “lifting heavy” can sound intimidating. Trainers say it means gradually using enough resistance to challenge the muscles while maintaining control and proper form.

Rachel Battis, a CrossFit trainer at Mecka Fitness in Mt. Lebanon, hears two common concerns from beginners: getting “bulky” and getting hurt.

“I’ve heard a few concerns about getting too bulky, but I think social media is actually doing a good job of dispelling that myth,” Battis said. “The biggest misconception is that lifting heavy weights will cause injuries. When most women first start, they aren’t lifting heavily enough to effect change.”

Dr. Kira Steele, PT, DPT, owner of Physio412, is careful not to promise that exercise can prevent every injury. Strength training, she said, prepares the body for more activity and may reduce risk.

“It’s impossible to prevent injury, just like we can’t stop the rain from falling,” Steele said. “If anyone says differently, they’re lying to you. But we can take steps to reduce our risk of injury. Strength training can help with that.”

That preparation becomes increasingly important as women age. Muscle loss can eventually show up in ordinary moments — climbing stairs, carrying groceries, lifting luggage or getting up from the floor.

A useful strength-training program does not require one specific piece of equipment.

“A good program includes hinging, squatting, upper-body pulling, upper-body pushing, power exercises and moderate- to vigorous-intensity cardio,” Steele said. “The most important part of any program is liking what you’re doing. That’s a key part of consistency.”

Body weight, resistance bands, dumbbells, machines and barbells can all work. The essential ingredients are appropriate resistance, gradual progression and regular practice.

“Ultimately, do something you love so you can do it consistently, and do it with enough intensity to make strength gains,” Steele said.

Nutrition coach Marcey Kotar Hancock said women also need enough food to recover and become stronger. One of the biggest misconceptions, she said, is that eating less produces better results.

“A lot of women are under-fueled and then wondering why they feel tired, aren’t recovering, or aren’t getting stronger,” Hancock said. “Strength training requires fuel.”

Hancock said protein, carbohydrates, fluids and adequate calories help the body rebuild after training.

“Strength training breaks muscle tissue down in a good way. Nutrition helps rebuild it,” Hancock said. “If women are not eating enough protein, carbs,



fluids and overall calories, they may feel sore longer, tired in class, weaker during workouts or frustrated by slow progress.

“Food is not the enemy of results. Food supports the results.”

Beginners must also decide whether to start in a group class or work one-on-one with a trainer. At Mecka, Battis said coaches simplify movements, prioritize form and modify workouts for injuries, pregnancy, menstrual cycle changes, perimenopause and menopause.

Sam Pitcairn, founder of Essential Strength, believes many beginners benefit from an individual assessment, especially if they have injuries, mobility restrictions or little lifting experience.

“We do not coach to biological age. We coach to training age,” he said. “Start with an honest assessment. Build the training age. Let that, not the calendar, determine what you are capable of.”

When coaches can monitor form and offer modifications, group training can create consistency and a sense of belonging. For 67-year-old Jane Collins, who had never lifted weights before, the payoff has extended beyond the gym.

“I am stronger; this has positively impacted other workouts like Pilates and TRX,” Collins said. “It has enhanced my self-esteem and self-confidence.”

Battis said the most meaningful changes often happen in everyday life.

“Being able to move

heavier barbells in the gym is great, but being able to put your own luggage in an airplane’s overhead bin without assistance is empowering,” she said.

“The real benefits of strength training are the freedom and confidence to participate fully in your life,” Battis said.

Women can begin with two strength-training sessions a week, learning movements such as squatting, hinging, pushing, pulling, carrying and core work. Those with osteoporosis, pain, a recent injury or another medical condition should first speak with a health care professional.

The goal is not to prove anything in the weight room. It is to build a body that remains capable outside it. ♥

Markham remembers 9/11 *Continued from page 1*

the streets of Pittsburgh that day, even in Mt. Lebanon.”

Mallery said he is honored that the school district continues the ceremony for the community.

“It’s been wonderful that even after all these years, the tradition remains, even after I’ve left,” he said.

The remembrance ceremony holds particular significance for the close-knit Markham community, which was directly affected by the events of Sept. 11.

“Two of our families here at Markham had an immediate family member lost [from the events] on 9/11,” Mallery said.

Mallery also experienced loss in his own family. His son, John, died in Iraq in 2004 while working as a civilian project manager supplying dining supplies to the U.S. military.

That loss inspired Mallery to establish the remembrance ceremony at Markham. What began as a simple flag-raising has grown over the years into a larger community event.

“The part that amazes me is even after all these years, the first responders are still so grateful and appreciative,” Mallery said.

Mt. Lebanon Police Chief Jason Haberman said the cer-



emony serves as an important reminder to never forget what happened and the



sacrifices that were made.

“We will always participate in this event because what the school district does we hold in high regard,” Haberman said. ♥

LEBO BEAT

SPORTS

Remembering the teammate who lifted everyone up

New MLSA award honors Evan Gingo and the leadership, friendship and encouragement he brought to Mt. Lebanon soccer By Lindi Pastorius

Rain poured down on the Mt. Lebanon High School field as the Blue Devils boys soccer team faced Central Catholic during its annual Boys Night event. Supporters braved the weather with umbrellas and raincoats to cheer on the team and attend a special halftime awards ceremony honoring the memory of former Mt. Lebanon Soccer Association and district soccer players.

Hosted by the Mt. Lebanon Soccer Association, or MLSA, in partnership with the high school boys soccer team, the memorial awards were presented to outstanding players from across the district who exemplified excellence on and off the field.

Created to pay tribute to MLSA and Mt. Lebanon soccer players John Doctor, Mark Leo and Evan Gingo, the awards were presented at halftime by high school soccer coach and MLSA Vice President Chris Clark, along with MLSA directors Jason Blezard and Mike Kovalcik.

At the center of the ceremony was the Evan Gingo Award.

Gingo, who played for MLSA and the Mt. Lebanon High School team, was a Mt. Lebanon graduate and a freshman at Slippery Rock University. A beloved son, teammate and friend, his memory continues to resonate throughout the community following his death earlier this year.

Finding a way to capture Gingo's character in an award took time, thought and purpose. MLSA and Gingo's parents, Matt and Leslie Gingo, ultimately chose to recognize the qualities that defined him: leadership, character, sportsmanship, commitment, teamwork, friendship and a positive influence on others.

Players receiving the award are recognized for more than soccer skill and performance. They are honored for the way they treat, support and inspire those around them.

Throughout his 10 years with MLSA, Gingo demonstrated a commitment to serving others. But it was his investment in his teammates and his easygoing leadership style that made a lasting impression on those around him.

During the ceremony, Matt and Leslie Gingo stood alongside the award recipients, supporting players who exemplified many of the same qualities as their son.

"Evan loved to recognize talents in his teammates," Leslie said. "If they needed some encouragement, or if they were doing something



Evan Gingo, a Mt. Lebanon High School graduate and longtime Mt. Lebanon Soccer Association player, is remembered for his leadership, sportsmanship and commitment to his teammates. (Provided photo)



Zack Frenie, left, and Evan Gingo share a lighthearted moment at the Bird Park soccer field after a rainy match. Frenie is the son of coach Chris Frenie. (Provided photo)



Matt and Leslie Gingo are pictured with the award recipients, including the inaugural recipients of the Evan Gingo Award, created to honor their son's legacy of leadership, sportsmanship and friendship. (Photo provided)

great, he was there. If they were down about missing a goal, Evan would say, 'It's all right. I can play goalie and you kick, and we'll practice together.' He was a great teammate because he always seemed to understand how his teammates felt."

Amid their own grief, Matt and Leslie said they are grateful to see their son's legacy remembered in a way that can positively influence MLSA, soccer players throughout the district and the larger Lebo community.

"He was that teammate that built his friends and teammates up," Leslie said. "He wanted to celebrate the wins and cushion the losses, then worked hard to turn them back into wins. That was just who he was, even from the time when he was little with his younger sister; and that's the

spirit of this award — not being in it just for himself, but for his friends and teammates."

Working alongside Matt and Leslie to create the award was MLSA President Tim Defeo, who also coached Gingo. Defeo wanted the award to reflect Gingo's character as both a player and a friend.

Defeo knew Gingo well, both as his coach and mentor. Defeo's son, Noah, also was a longtime teammate and friend of Gingo's.

"Evan was a big part of MLSA. He played every year, in multiple leagues. He was on our top travel team," Defeo said. "But he wasn't just a role player, he just loved everyone. When our team wasn't playing well or we weren't putting the effort in, Evan was, and he would get the

Award Recipients:

John Award:
Harrison Snyder

Mark Leo Award:
Atticus Fimognari

Evan Gingo Award:
(7 recipients, one from each age group)
Emiliano Vasquez
Anthony Campanaro
Oliver Rosenthal
Desmond Casella
Owen Montgomery
Yuvaan Asawa
Colin Clark

team pumped up, but he was also silly and had fun with the team."

In addition to the Evan Gingo Award, MLSA presented an award in memory of former Mt. Lebanon soccer player Mark Leo to a player who exhibits excellence in soccer skills and sportsmanship.

The John Doctor Award was presented to an outstanding goalkeeper who has demonstrated exemplary enthusiasm and dedication to the position. Doctor, whose name also is memorialized on a field at Bird Park, was an active member of MLSA and a passionate goalkeeper.

Gingo's death deeply affected the Lebo community and those who knew him, prompting Defeo to find a meaningful way to honor his former player.

Giving back is nothing new for MLSA, which participates in service projects to support the broader community. But Defeo wanted to ensure Gingo's memory would live on in a way that reflected who he was.

"Evan was a deeply caring person," Defeo said. "I wanted to do something for him, so the award was an easy choice. I just don't want him to be forgotten."

Defeo hopes Gingo's memory will continue to be honored in other ways throughout the community, something Matt and Leslie also hope to see.

Overwhelmed by the support and kindness they have received from the community, the Gingos hope to give back while honoring Evan's memory through future efforts. In partnership with the Mt. Lebanon Community Foundation, they are exploring opportunities to continue that work. ♥



New coach, three nonnegotiables for Mt. Lebanon hockey

Josh Werner takes over the Blue Devils with a focus on punctuality, respect and hard work as the program looks to rebound from a 3-17 season By Dean Cefalo

After a difficult 2025 season and the graduation of 14 seniors, 2026 could be a rebuilding year for the Mt. Lebanon Blue Devils varsity hockey team.

New head coach Josh Werner, along with returning assistant coaches Tony Attanucci and Dave Hornack, is ready to face the challenge head-on.

During a preseason off-ice meeting, Werner and the players established three nonnegotiables for the upcoming season:

Be on time. Respect your teammates, opponents, officials and the game. Work hard on and off the ice.

The priorities reflect Werner's belief that high school hockey is about more than wins and losses.

"Hockey is a wonderful sport that can teach young athletes to learn valuable traits that come in valuable throughout life," Werner said.

Returning players and newcomers alike appear to be buying in. Offseason workouts, summer league play and a preseason tournament have helped kick-start the Werner era.

It is a fresh start for coaches and players.

"Clean slates from last year to this season mean every player will have to earn playing time and



New Mt. Lebanon varsity hockey head coach Josh Werner leads the Blue Devils during a recent practice. Photo provided)

trust," Werner said. "I believe in building a team with strong defense, and that doesn't succeed without tremendous effort by the entire team."

Werner said one of the challenges of being a first-year coach is getting to know each player beyond what he sees on the ice.

"It's easy to see how well they skate but seeing how they adapt and cope with bumps in the road, that takes some time," he said. "We have a lot of work to do to get back into the playoffs, but that is definitely a goal this season."

Werner and his staff bring decades of playing and coaching experience

to the program.

Werner spent eight seasons coaching Latrobe's varsity hockey team and also has collegiate coaching experience at California University of Pennsylvania, now PennWest California. He hopes to bring a winning formula to Mt. Lebanon.

Returning assistant coach Attanucci played for West Virginia University's ACHA Division I program and has extensive coaching experience, including stops at Buffalo State University and with the Pittsburgh Penguins Elite U16 team.

Hornack has been a fixture in the township and at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation

Center for nearly 40 years. A longtime presence in the Pittsburgh hockey community, he brings decades of experience and steady leadership to the program.

The Blue Devils will be led by several returning players.

PIHL all-stars Xavier Bias, who recorded 14 points last season, and goaltender Sam Shinn, who appeared in 18 games, return to the lineup. Senior Cameron Mayer led the team with 16 points in 2025, while junior William White recorded 14.

"On the back end, we have returning varsity players (Cooper) Church, (Henry) Mitchell, (Keller) Dungan and (Will) Norton who will help with our emphasis

on team defense," Werner said. "We are also looking for some players to step into bigger roles this year. Players like (Burk) Moore, (Jonas) Eger, (Tucker) Klasnick and (Beau-Arthur) Barlow will be leaned on to make an impact throughout the season."

The regular season begins Oct. 1 at North Allegheny. Mt. Lebanon's home opener is Oct. 8 at 9:10 p.m. against Central Catholic.

The full schedule is available at pihlhockey.com.

Only time will tell whether the Blue Devils can improve on last season's 3-17 record, but one thing appears certain: They will be expected to show up on time, show respect and work hard — on and off the ice. ♥

2026-27 varsity roster

Beau-Arthur Barlow	sophomore, forward
Xavier Bias	senior, forward
Cooper Church	senior, defense
Beau Conaway	junior, forward
Keller Dungan	senior, defense
Jonas Eger	senior, forward
Sean Hough	junior, forward
Cameron Keefer	freshman, forward
Gen Kitani	junior, forward
Tucker Klasnick	junior, forward
Cameron Mayer	senior, forward
Henry Mitchell	senior, defense
Burk Moore	freshman, forward
Garrett Noll	junior, goalie
Will Norton	junior, defense
Quin O'Brien	junior, forward
Cooper Saracco	senior, defense
Sam Shinn	junior, goalie
Declan Sowerby	freshman, forward
Henry Spier	freshman, defense
William White	junior, forward

Regular-season schedule

Thursday, Oct. 1	at North Allegheny, Baierl Ice Complex, 9:10 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 8	vs. Central Catholic, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 9:10 p.m.
Tuesday, Oct. 13	at Peters Township, Printscape Arena at Southpointe, 9 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 22	at Pine-Richland, Baierl Ice Complex, 9:10 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 29	vs. Penn-Trafford, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 7:10 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 12	vs. Upper St. Clair, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 9:10 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 23	vs. South Fayette, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 7:10 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 30	at Seneca Valley, Baierl Ice Complex, 7 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 10	vs. Greater Latrobe, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 7:10 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 17	at Thomas Jefferson, Ice Castle Ice Arena, 7 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 7	at Central Catholic, Alpha Ice Complex, 8:20 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 14	vs. Peters Township, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 9:10 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 21	at Greater Latrobe, Kirk Nevin Arena, 9:15 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 28	at South Fayette, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 7:10 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 1	at Upper St. Clair, Ice Castle Ice Arena, 7 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 4	vs. Seneca Valley, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 7:10 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 8	at Penn-Trafford, Palmer Imaging Arena, 7 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 11	vs. Pine-Richland, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 9:10 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 18	vs. Thomas Jefferson, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 7:10 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 25	vs. North Allegheny, Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, 9:10 p.m.



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Mt. Lebanon seventh grader twirls her way to national title

Elizabeth Baldrige captures a championship at Notre Dame in her first year of baton twirling competition By Annabelle Thomas

In just her first year of competition, Mt. Lebanon seventh grader Elizabeth Baldrige won a national title at the National Baton Twirling Association Championships at Notre Dame in July.

Competing in the 10-12 age division, Elizabeth captured the title in a competition consisting of modeling and interview, strut and twirling.

"Usually when I'm out on the floor, I run it through my head, and I'm like, 'OK, I've done this so many times,'" Elizabeth said. "The judges also don't know the routine, so if you forget a part, you can make up a little part of it. So, for me, that kind of calms me down. I go out there and I shake it off, and I just go for it. If I get more nervous, I remember that I just do it for fun."

Elizabeth and her mother, Tricia, drove directly from a separate national competition to the Notre Dame event, which spanned an entire week. Elizabeth competed in all three events.

For Elizabeth, who has been twirling since she was 6, the national title was the result of a passion for a sport she intends to pursue

for years to come.

"Elizabeth is the one that really drives the sport," Tricia said. "She constantly has a baton in her hand, to the point where we have to take it off of her. She loves it, so it makes it very easy as a parent when she wants to be at practice. She has the drive. It doesn't take a lot of motivation on my end."

The competition's three events test different aspects of a twirler's ability. Modeling and interview is a one-minute presentation that evaluates poise and confidence. Strut is a two-minute routine in which performers display marching technique and timing. Twirling is a two-minute baton performance involving tricks, speed and accuracy.

Last year, Elizabeth fractured her kneecap and was unable to compete in the event. Her return to competition made this year's national title particularly meaningful.

But for Elizabeth, twirling is about more than competition. It also provides an opportunity to spend time with some of her closest friends.

"I'm with most of my



Elizabeth Baldrige poses with her sash, trophy and plaque after winning a national title at the National Baton Twirling Association Championships at Notre Dame in July. Photo provided)

closest friends when I twirl, even if they're not from the same district as I am," Elizabeth said. "I get to see them almost every day, and sometimes we go to practice at the YMCA just for fun or we have team practice, and I really like it

because it's fun."

Elizabeth competes with Passion Twirl and Poms, a South Hills-based team coached by LeAnn Chamberlin. The team includes athletes ages 8 to 19.

Despite her early success, Elizabeth has no

plans to put down the baton anytime soon.

"I hope to become a college twirler, or maybe I'll be a coach one day," Elizabeth said. "I just love twirling so much that I definitely want to do it in college." ♥

A photograph of a white t-shirt with a blue and black graphic design. The design features a sunburst pattern and the text "Established 1995 Sunburst SCREEN PRINTING & EMBROIDERY CUSTOM TEES, HOODIES, CAPS, POLOS, BAGS FOR YOUR BUSINESS, SCHOOL, TEAM OR EVENT". Below the text is a phone number "412.561.3383" and an email address "sunbursttz@comcast.net". The t-shirt is laid out on a wooden surface next to a straw hat and some lemons.

A flyer for Jill Nolan, a Certified Pilates Instructor. The flyer features a photograph of Jill Nolan performing a Pilates exercise. The text includes "THE POINTE PILATES", "CERTIFIED PILATES INSTRUCTOR", "Studio in Mt. Lebanon", "FEATURING GRATZ APPARATUS", and three types of sessions: "CLASSICAL PILATES", "PRIVATE SESSIONS", and "VIRTUAL SESSIONS". A quote from Joseph Pilates is also included: "Change happens through movement and movement heals." The flyer provides contact information: "WWW.THEPOINTEPILATES.COM", "THEPOINTEPILATESPGH@GMAIL.COM", and "MT. LEBANON, PA".

A flyer for Creative Cookies by Olivia Rose. The flyer features a photograph of various custom-decorated sugar cookies. The text includes "Creative Cookies by Olivia Rose", "CUSTOM DECORATED SUGAR COOKIES", and three icons representing "MADE TO ORDER", "BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED", and "PERFECT FOR ANY OCCASION". The flyer provides contact information: "714-334-1017", "creativecookiesoliviarirose@gmail.com", and social media handles "@creativecookiesbyoliviarirose" on Instagram and Facebook. A thank you message is at the bottom: "Thank you for supporting small & local!"



More than a halftime show

Mt. Lebanon Blue Devil Marching Band returns to competition and invites the community to experience the artistry behind the performance *By Annabelle Thomas*

After a brief hiatus from local marching band competitions, the Mt. Lebanon Blue Devil Marching Band is back for a new season, performing its competitive show, “Paint It Black,” at events throughout September and October.

Mt. Lebanon’s marching band has been around for decades, but in recent years, numerous changes to the high school’s music department have helped increase membership and community involvement. Mt. Lebanon Band Builders, a nonprofit booster organization that raises money for the band, is helping build awareness of a side of marching band that co-president Mary Ullman said many community members may not know exists.

“Most people don’t even know that this exists,” Ullman said. “That for one, marching band is actually a competitive activity and that it has its own festivals and competitions, and for two, that the community can go out and support 10

regional marching bands do their thing. It’s a really cool opportunity to experience all the hard work and artistry of these kids.”

Multiple competitive circuits in the Pittsburgh area give high school marching bands opportunities to travel to other districts, perform their shows, watch other bands and receive feedback from judges. One is the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Marching Band Association, or PIMBA.

At competitions, bands from schools across southwestern Pennsylvania take the field one after another to perform their shows before fellow musicians, families and spectators.

Mt. Lebanon hosted its own Festival of Bands on Sept. 19. Festivals operate similarly to competitions, though they may not be affiliated with organizations such as PIMBA and do not necessarily involve judging or scoring. Instead, they provide an opportunity for bands, families and communities to gather

and support the participating musicians.

“It’s not about the scores,” marching band director Brett McCutcheon said. “Imagine you spend all summer working really, really hard for seven minutes of field time. ... It’s energetic, it’s fun, and you get to see students achieving things that you probably didn’t think high schoolers, and sometimes middle schoolers, can achieve.”

McCutcheon began his role as marching band director this year after joining Mt. Lebanon High School as a concert band teacher in 2024. A Mt. Lebanon graduate, he studied music education at Slippery Rock University before returning to the community that helped inspire his career.

“It’s been a great experience,” McCutcheon said. “We’re trying to continue the momentum that we’ve had for the decades before I’ve been here, and the kids have been pretty great at it.”

Katrielle Nicholson, a senior tuba player and the band’s brass captain, joined as a middle school student and is now in her fifth season of marching band. She remembers being drawn to the activity because it offered a new challenge.

“It allowed me to play my instrument in a nontraditional setting and pushed me out of my comfort zone,” Nicholson said.

McCutcheon has also brought changes to music classes offered during the school day at Mt. Lebanon High School. He introduced a music technology course in which students can learn about music production and technology skills that could be useful in pursuing careers in music.

Ullman said that is one example of how McCutcheon has used his expertise to expand opportunities for students.

“He brings a new level of music technology knowledge and education into the program as a whole,” Ullman said.

While recent changes have brought new opportunities to the marching band, Nicholson said the pride and passion its members have for their school remain at the heart of the program.



The Mt. Lebanon Blue Devil Marching Band performs its 2026 show, “Paint It Black,” featuring music by the Rolling Stones and Mozart’s “Lacrimosa,” with visual inspiration from the Netflix series “Wednesday.” (Photos provided)



Drum Majors Anche Libai (left) and Alex Neergaard (right).

She plans to continue playing the tuba in college but said she will miss the community she has found in the Blue Devil Marching Band.

“At the end of the day, we’re Lebo marching band,” Nicholson said. “Lebo pride. I get to see all of my favorite people doing my favorite thing. I really think I’m going to miss the community that I found in the marching band.”

The marching band performs throughout the year at numerous community events, from block parties to Earth Day celebrations. Ullman

hopes community members will return that support by attending the band’s competitive performances.

“People love seeing it and hearing it,” Ullman said. “The kids are so talented, and I think that to get more community support mirrored back at us, to have more folks come out and support our competitive endeavors, would mean a lot to the kids in the community.”

Find more information about upcoming events, performance schedules and how to donate at www.lebobands.com or @mtlband on Instagram. ♥

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Lebo Financial Answers Ask the Advisor

I keep reading how inflation is out of control. Why is this happening and is there anything I can do to protect myself? - James Moore

Hi James, since 2022, inflation has been on the top of all our minds, and it's a topic of a lot of conversations we have heard in the news. First, it is important to understand that inflation is driven by a supply-and-demand imbalance, which occurs when consumers are looking to purchase more goods or services than are available. The two options for suppliers to meet this increased demand are to produce more goods or to raise prices on current goods because they are unable

to produce more. In most cases, producers choose the latter option. Our current inflation situation is being driven by several factors. First, we have the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, which is causing less oil to flow through the Strait of Hormuz, consequently lessening the supply of oil and pushing prices higher. These higher prices not only affect the price of gas we put in our vehicles, but also the prices of other physical goods as companies need to pass on the extra fuel costs for shipping those goods across the country. We are also experiencing excessive demand from consumers. Whether it is from travel or going out to restaurants, there seem to be plenty of people moving

about. While consumer prices are affected by the higher fuel prices, companies also attempt to find a sweet spot where they can charge people more without losing customers to those higher prices. An additional component we're seeing add to the inflation landscape is the current buildout for artificial intelligence (AI). Companies are spending billions of dollars on data center construction and equipment associated with AI. The suppliers to the AI industry cannot meet demand and are being forced to continue increasing prices on those goods and services. In all these instances, we do not see a definitive end in sight at present. This is not to say we expect to see hyperinflation,

but we are in the camp that believes consistent inflation will stick around longer than we would all like. The concerns with longer-term inflation are that it eats away at the value of our cash so that we cannot purchase as much tomorrow as we can today. The first thing that you can do to help battle this inflation prolongation is to ensure any idle cash you have is in an account that is earning interest. Typical money market products can earn 3.% to 3.5% at most banks and are easily accessible without lockups or penalties. CDs will have a very similar return, requiring short-to-long-term lockups. For the long term, the stock market has always been the best place to outpace infla-

tion and grow the money you do not need over the short term. There are certainly risks in this area, and it might be best to consult a financial professional to understand your level of risk tolerance before making any investment decisions. 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. ♥

Police Beat

The Mt. Lebanon Police Department reported the following incidents from Aug. 12 through Sept. 12. The information is based on police department records. The listing of an incident does not indicate that an arrest was made or that anyone was found guilty of an offense.

- Sept. 10 | Criminal mischief 6:43 p.m. | 000 block of Ralston Place Police reported an incident of destruction/damage/vandalism of property of less than \$500.
- Sept. 10 | Disturbing the peace 3:14 p.m. | 100 block of Beverly Road Police reported an incident of harassment.
- Sept. 9 | Fraud 12:49 p.m. | 300 block of Newburn Drive Police reported a theft by deception involving more than \$2,000 and less than \$100,000.
- Sept. 9 | Criminal mischief 9:40 a.m. | 1100 block of Bower Hill Road Police reported an incident of damage/destruction/vandalism of property more than \$500.
- Sept. 8 | Theft 2:36 a.m. | 2800 block of Banksville Avenue Police reported property valued at \$200 or more but less than \$2,000 was taken.
- Sept. 8 | Fraud 12:34 p.m. | 400 block of Mapleton Avenue Police reported a theft by deception involving more than \$2,000 and less than \$100,000.
- Sept. 4 | Simple assault 7:36 p.m. | 000 block of Alfred Avenue Police reported a simple assault of mutual combatants resulting in bodily injury.
- Sept. 4 | Fraud 11:58 a.m. | 900 block of Rockwood Avenue Police reported a theft by deception involving more than \$2,000 and less than \$100,000.
- Sept. 4 | Terroristic threats 6:36 a.m. | Mt. Lebanon Boulevard and Washington Road Police reported an incident involving terroristic threats.
- Sept. 2 | Reckless endangerment 11:41 p.m. | Mt. Lebanon Boulevard and Roycroft Avenue Police reported an incident involving recklessly endangering another person.

- Sept. 2 | Simple assault 11:17 p.m. | 800 block of Eisenhower Drive Police reported a simple assault in which a person age 21 or older was accused of causing bodily injury to a child under age 12.
- Aug. 30 | Strangulation 7:30 a.m. | 1700 block of Theodan Avenue Police reported a strangulation incident.
- Aug. 28 | Deceptive business practices 12:52 p.m. | 300 block of Avon Drive Police reported an incident involving the sale or offer of less than the represented quantity.
- Aug. 26 | Retail theft 7:24 p.m. | 700 block of Castle Shannon Boulevard Police reported merchandise valued at less than \$150 was taken. The offense was classified as a first offense.
- Aug. 26 | Simple assault 8:44 a.m. | 400 block of Parkside Avenue Police reported a simple assault.
- Aug. 25 | Criminal mischief 10:23 p.m. | 100 block of Cochran Road Police reported property damage or vandalism involving \$500 or less.
- Aug. 25 | Simple assault 9:39 p.m. | 300 block of Old Gilkeson Road Police reported a simple assault.
- Aug. 24 | Fraud 6:30 p.m. | 200 block of Kingsberry Circle Police reported a theft by deception involving more than \$2,000 and less than \$100,000.
- Aug. 23 | Drug violation 4:40 p.m. | 500 block of Washington Road Police reported possession of a controlled or counterfeit substance by an unauthorized person.
- Aug. 22 | Driving under the influence 8:34 p.m. | Woodhaven Drive and Washington Road Police reported a driving under the influence incident.

- Aug. 22 | Theft from a vehicle 2:52 p.m. | 600 block of Washington Road Police reported property valued at \$200 or more but less than \$2,000 was taken from a vehicle.
- Aug. 20 | Fraud 2:31 p.m. | 200 block of Allenberry Circle Police reported a theft by deception involving more than \$2,000 and less than \$100,000.
- Aug. 19 | Drug violation 8:44 p.m. | 1600 block of McFarland Road Police reported possession of a controlled or counterfeit substance by an unauthorized person.
- Aug. 19 | Financial exploitation 6:19 p.m. | 400 block of Beverly Road Police reported financial exploitation of an older adult or care-dependent person involving \$2,000 to \$100,000.
- Aug. 19 | Retail theft 8:34 a.m. | 700 block of Castle Shannon Boulevard Police reported merchandise valued at less than \$150 was taken. The offense was classified as a first offense.
- Aug. 17 | Marijuana possession 3:17 p.m. | 1500 block of Washington Road Police reported possession of a small amount of marijuana.
- Aug. 15 | Harassment Time not provided | 500 block of Kenilworth Drive Police reported physical harassment involving kicking or striking.
- Aug. 15 | Retail theft Time not provided | 1600 block of McFarland Road Police reported a retail theft classified as a third or subsequent offense.
- Aug. 15 | Indecent exposure 7:38 a.m. | First block of Academy Avenue Police reported an indecent exposure incident.
- Aug. 14 | Theft 5:52 p.m. | 600 block of Crystal Drive Police reported property valued at \$200 or more but less than \$2,000 was taken.

Ask Eaton Prep

Question: When is it appropriate to use a colon in standard written English? Answer: An independent clause always precedes a colon. The elements that follow must relate to the first clause. Before using a colon, ask yourself two questions: 1. Is the first clause independent — that is, does it contain a subject and a verb and express a complete thought? 2. Does the material that follows introduce content that explains or expands upon the first clause? Incorrect: In order to take the Digital SAT, you must bring a few items, your fully charged testing device with the Bluebook application installed, your up-to-date admission ticket, photo ID, pencils or pens for scratch work, and a calculator. Correct: In order to take the Digital SAT, you must bring a few items: your fully charged testing device with the Bluebook application installed, your up-to-date admission ticket, photo ID, pencils or pens for scratch work, and a calculator. Eaton Prep covers all the grammar rules, which make up more than one-fourth of the reading and writing section, in its course. You can register for our fall SAT program, which begins Aug. 30 at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center from 2 to 5 p.m. and prepares students for the PSAT and November SAT, at Eatonprep.com.



Bark Beat

Celebrating Mt. Lebanon’s beloved dogs

Meet Charlie Oliver

Charlie shares a birthday with his human sister, Skylar. Charlie turned two on Sept. 1.

Favorite humans?

By his actions, Charlie is a self-proclaimed (Connie) “momma’s boy.” However, he loves his dad, (Jamey), Brudda (Hunter), and Sissy (Skylar). He loves his Pappy Duce and Maw, too.

Favorite treat?

He can smell a rotisserie chicken a mile away!! He never met a piece of chicken, that he didn’t love.

Favorite toy?

Charlie loves his mom’s yellow leather loafers! She gave up the fight. She said the amount of joy that it brings him to chew and whip around those shoes, would never match her joy of wearing them.

Favorite thing to do besides eat and sleep?

Charlie loves to take rides with his Momma. He also loves to bark at all the kids who come into his house.

Why do my humans think we are special?

Because I love these crazy people, unconditionally! That’s not always easy! Plus, not to brag, but DOG=GOD. We really are the chosen animals. Sorry for your luck, cat and bird!

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



Charlie chilling.



Charlie wearing a gift a friend of the family gave him. (Photos provided)

Lebo Gift Gals

Your guide to gift giving — Sibling Gifts



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

“Our friends just had a second baby. I gave the first child a gift when they were born; should I get them a sibling gift now?”

If you have had more than one child or grandchild, it isn’t hard to imagine how early sibling rivalry can start especially when all the fuss is over the fresh newborn. The sweet sibling doesn’t require a large gift but it certainly is a thoughtful gesture to bring something along for them especially if they will be present when you give the baby a gift.

We like to think about giving the sibling something that makes them feel special and grown up and even teaches a bit about caring for another. Of course, the age of the sibling is a consideration. If the child is old enough, parents often do appreciate gifts that can keep them busy with little supervision. Younger children do love the one-on-one time of being read a book as well.

Sibling Gifts:

- a small stuffed animal
- boxed book and stuffy set like “Just One Me” reminds them they are irreplaceable
- cuddle and kind little animals can help them learn to care for another
- candylab classic wooden food trucks
- Young Wild and Friedman sensory dough kits
- picture books for time to read with mom or dad
- Mushi rechargeable silicone night lights

Every gift has a story. While generosity is never the wrong answer, every occasion brings up a question or two. At Barefoot Stitches & Gifts, think of us as your friendly neighborhood Gift Gals guiding your gift-giving. Send your own gifting conundrums to info@lebobeat.com and we may just unwrap your answers in an upcoming column. ♥

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.

The \$49 Furnace Tune-up

Why the same furnace visit costs \$179 somewhere else, and how to choose.

This fall in Mt. Lebanon you can book a “seasonal HVAC tune-up” for \$49, a “furnace tune-up” for \$69.95, or a “furnace maintenance service” for \$129 to \$179. Others might call it a precision tune-up or a maintenance visit or sell it inside a membership plan.

None of these names mean anything in particular. A “tune-up” is whatever the company says it is. The price can tell you a lot about what you’re paying for. A \$49 visit doesn’t cover a technician’s hour, so this company is only profitable if an issue is found and a repair is needed or you use them for a replacement when the time comes. Usually a \$150 visit or more is priced to cover the hour spent focused

By Jordan Smoke

on your furnace. Neither is a scam, but you should know which one you booked.

When you book, ask these three questions: How long will the technician be here? A meaningful visit is a full hour, sometimes closer to two. Thirty minutes is a look, not maintenance.

What will you test for? Combustion efficiency and carbon monoxide concentration are real numbers. Ask for them in writing. “Looks good” means nothing.

If you find a problem, what happens next? The best answer is a written explanation and time to think. Any recommendation from a cheap visit should get a second opinion before you spend more than the visit cost.

If you’re also wondering if you should get this yearly, the answer is yes. Mostly for safety.

Boilers too; the safety valve and water pressure need checked. If you heat with oil, you need a real cleaning every year. It costs more because it takes longer.

Ask the three questions. The answers will sort the companies for you. ♥



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