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LEBO BEAT

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Mt. Lebanon Police Chief Addresses Privacy Concerns Over License Plate Cameras

Chief Jason Haberman outlines the technology's crime-fighting benefits, acknowledges residents' concerns and emphasizes safeguards to protect personal information *By Brion Palmer*

Mt. Lebanon Police Chief Jason Haberman outlined the benefits of the municipality's automated license plate reader cameras during a presentation to commissioners, emphasizing their importance in solving crimes while acknowledging growing concerns about privacy, government surveillance and the collection of personal information.

Haberman said the police department currently operates cameras at 27 locations throughout

Mt. Lebanon. The automated license plate reader (ALPR) system" captures license plate information from passing vehicles and allows investigators to search records when investigating crimes.

The presentation came amid increasing public scrutiny of the technology, with Haberman acknowledging that residents have contacted municipal officials with questions and concerns.

"We do hear the public. We understand the concerns," Haberman said,

adding that the department recognizes the significant amount of personal information the cameras can collect.

Haberman emphasized that the technology has dramatically improved police investigations, comparing its impact to the introduction of DNA analysis and fingerprinting.

"It's that significant in combating crime, deterring crime, and effectively allowing us to do our job," he said.

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Homecoming Royalty



Members of the 2026 Mt. Lebanon High School homecoming court are pictured in the front row, from left: , Ivy Campbell, Vivienne Volek, homecoming queen Tessa Arnold, Pyper Fleming and Gabby Beigi; and in the back row, from left: from left, Chris Bruder, Henry Clark, Finn McNamee, Brady Lowe and homecoming king Peter Goslin. (Photo by Beasley Visuals)

**Don't miss a
BEAT**

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SPECIAL DETAILS

Election Day is Nov. 3

The Nov. 3 midterm election is approaching, and Mt. Lebanon voters have several options for casting their ballots.

The deadline to register to vote in the general election was Oct. 19. If you miss the deadline, you can still register for future elections.

Allegheny County will offer satellite voting locations Saturday, Oct. 24, and Sunday, Oct. 25, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The closest satellite location to Mt. Lebanon is the South Park Ice Rink. Other locations include CCAC Homewood, North Park Ice

Rink and the Allegheny County Office Building in downtown Pittsburgh.

At these locations, registered voters can complete a mail-in or absentee ballot application, receive a ballot from a county election worker and immediately cast their vote. Any registered

Allegheny County voter may use a satellite location.

Voters who have already completed their mail-in ballots may also return them at these locations.

Registered voters can also request that a mail-in or absentee ballot be sent

Continued on page 20

What Mt. Lebanon voters need to know about candidates, deadlines and voting options *By Stacey Reibach*

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News Briefs

Registration Open for Little Lebo Preschool Program

Applications are being accepted through Nov. 1 for Mt. Lebanon High School's Little Lebo preschool program, which runs Monday through Thursday from March through May 2027. Enrollment is limited to 10 children.

Designed for children who may not be ready for full-time preschool, the program offers hands-on learning experiences in unique settings throughout the high school, including the wildlife biology room, dance studio, percussion room and commercial cafeteria kitchen.

Children must turn 3 by Jan. 1, 2027, and be no older than 4 years and 6 months as of March 1, 2027. Applicants must also be fully toilet trained and meet the program's enrollment requirements.

Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The total cost is \$75, and transportation is not provided.

For more information, contact Angie Mack at amack@mtlstd.net or 412-344-2023.

Mt. Lebanon to Dedicate Football Field in Honor of Art Walker Sr.

Mt. Lebanon High School will dedicate its football field in honor of longtime football coach and teacher Art Walker Sr. on Friday, Oct. 23, before the Blue Devils host North Allegheny.

Walker coached Mt. Lebanon from 1967 to 1987, leading the Blue Devils to five WPIAL championships. He also taught U.S. history for nearly three decades, making a lasting impression on generations of students both on and off the field.

The dedication carries special significance because North Allegheny is coached by Walker's son, Art Walker Jr., who once served as his father's ball boy on the Mt. Lebanon sideline.

The ceremony will recognize Walker's legacy as an educator, coach and influential figure in the school's athletic history.

Lebo University to Address Online Safety for Children

Parents and guardians are invited to

attend a Lebo University program focused on children's online safety Wednesday, Oct. 28, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Mt. Lebanon High School auditorium.

The presentation will explore the opportunities and risks associated with today's digital environment, offering families practical strategies to help children navigate the internet safely.

Experts from Homeland Security Investigations, the Mt. Lebanon Police Department and the Mt. Lebanon School District will discuss online threats, warning signs and steps parents can take when concerns arise.

Featured speakers include Brittany Liptak, forensic interview specialist with Homeland Security Investigations; Cpl. Ty Kegarise of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department; and Chris Stengel, director of technology for the Mt. Lebanon School District.

Attendees will receive resources and guidance to help protect children and respond to potential online safety issues.

For more information or to RSVP, visit <https://www.mtlstd.org/connect/events>.

Mt. Lebanon High School Honors 2026 Great Alumni

Mt. Lebanon High School has announced three recipients of its 2026 Great Alumni Award, recognizing graduates whose professional accomplishments and contributions have brought distinction to the school and community.

This year's honorees are Carolyn Additon Anthony, Class of 1967; Col. John Christopher Graybill, M.D., Class of 1997; and Doyle Stevick, Ph.D., Class of 1988.

The recipients were honored at a luncheon Friday, Oct. 2, and recognized during that evening's home football game.

The Great Alumni Award celebrates the accomplishments of Mt. Lebanon graduates and highlights the lasting impact of the school's alumni.

For more information about the 2026 recipients, visit <https://mtle.bo/GreatAlumni26>. Additional information about the Great Alumni Award is available at <https://www.mtlstd.org/connect/alumni/great-alumni>. ♥

STREET BEAT SPECIAL EDITION



The Mt. Lebanon High School Class of 1966 recently held a reunion weekend that included a dinner at Cefalo's Banquet and Event Center. We asked some of them to share their favorite high school memories.

"The day I met my wife on the first day of World Cultures class with Mr. Moore. She was in 10th grade and I was in the 11th grade"

- Bud Rich, lived on Vermont Drive

"I loved the Rifle Team! Our coach, Mr. Neal, was one of the nicest coaches at Mt. Lebanon. He was second only to Mr. Lamprinakos, the wrestling coach, who lived next door."

- Martha Mamule, lived on Lindendale Drive

"Senior year at Mt. Lebanon was great. Loved marching as a majorette with the band at our football games at halftime. We had a great team!"

- Mandy Tomb Dunlap, lived on Vee Lynn Drive

"Hanging out with friends at Mike's Pizza and drinking beer."

- Dave Beachler, lived on Parkway Drive

"Hanging out at The Circle."

- Jon Felder, lived on Towercrest Drive

"Friday night Rec Center after football games."

- Susie Wyatt (Paulus), lived on North Meadowcroft Avenue.

"Mr. Moore had a 75-question true-or-false test and all 75 answers were true."

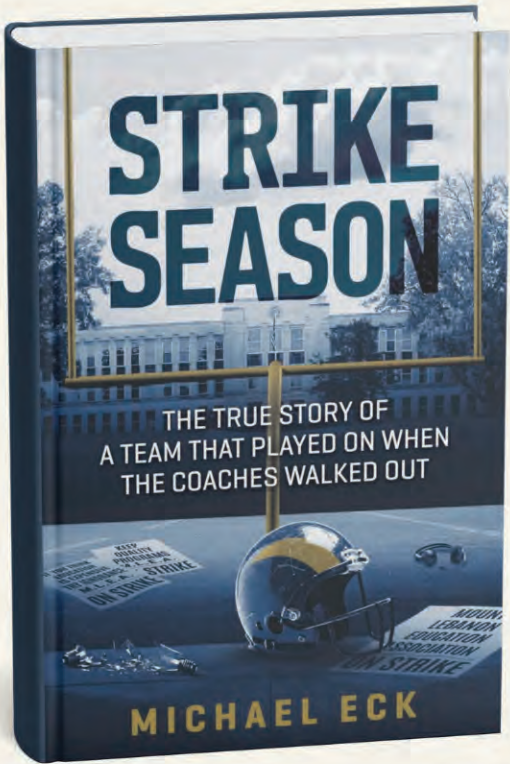
- Charlie Cox, lived on Inglewood Drive

"Friday night football games."

- Chris McGrane Maximilien, lived on Mt. Lebanon Boulevard

It was a wonderful evening as old friends reunited to reminisce, share cherished memories and create new ones. Sixty years may have passed, but while much has changed, some things remain the same. Those high school memories will last a lifetime. Cheers to the Class of 1966!

Have a class reunion coming up? Contact Lebo Beat and let us know when and where. We'd love to help spread the word!



A BOOK TALK WITH AUTHOR MICHAEL ECK, HOSTED BY KDKA'S KEN RICE

Strike Season: The Second Half

Saturday, October 24, 1:00PM at Mellon Middle School Auditorium

Author and 1979 Mt. Lebanon quarterback Michael Eck returns to share more of the stories behind his book, Strike Season: The True Story of a Team that Played On when the Coaches Walked Out. Hear more about the remarkable season when a team of teenagers had to practice, play, and coach themselves while fighting for their championship dreams. Get your tickets by scanning the QR code below or visiting lebohistory.org/events.



Student admission: \$5
Member admission: \$10
Non-member admission: \$15

Member admission + book: \$30
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(both prices include sales tax)



The
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
of MOUNT
LEBANON



Good in the LEBOhood

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

You never know where inspiration will come from.

We talk about that a lot on my podcast, usually in terms of ways we can help others, create connections and build community. We also talk about how being inspired depends on being open: open to new ideas, new experiences and listening to someone's story.

It's in that openness that inspiration takes hold.

I find that sentiment repeating in my head as I sit here, poised over my laptop, clacking away at the keys and bringing this column to life.

I hadn't planned on finding inspiration for this column at Rollier's, where my dog, Hazel, and I had stopped for her complimentary treats.. (Dog owners of Lebo, you know what I'm talking about.)

Yinz may remember Hazel from my first column back in February, when I shared how she played a huge part in connecting us with neighbors who would become like family.

Well, here she is again, in the middle of another streetside connection.

Set up just outside the doors were two tables adorned with signs reading "Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club," "Free Hot Apple Cider" and "Cash and Meat Raffle."

My interest was piqued by the signs alone, but it was the girls sitting behind the cider table, giggling and kindly asking passersby if they wanted free hot apple cider, that made me pause.

Maybe it was their joy, maybe it was the promise of cider on a fall day, or maybe it was because I saw myself and my childhood best friend in them. (I'm pretty sure it was all three, heavy on the latter.)

Whatever the reason, I stopped cold, much to Hazel's chagrin.

I was ... inspired.

Before I knew it, I was standing at the raffle table, chatting with the girls' moms as Hazel tugged impatiently on the leash. I asked if I could interview the girls about their friendship, other friendships they've formed through the Aqua Club. and why being part of the club is special to them.

I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention that seeing a sign for the Aqua Club reminded me of my niece, Rebecca, who swam with the club from third through 12th grades.

Glimpses of her meets flashed through my mind, as well as the hilarity of her mom and me trying to figure out just how one is supposed to cheer during a swim meet.

(Do you wait for the swimmer's head to pop up for a breath and blurt out one syllable of encouragement before it disappears again? Is "Keep swimming!" a valid rallying cry? How about "Way to breathe!"?)

Anyhoo, I texted Rebecca from the parking lot and asked if she'd want to share her thoughts about her time with the club.



From left, Emily Gilmore and Eleanor Shuty. (Photo by Yinz Are Good)



From left, Julia and Rebecca. (Photo provided)

She jumped at the chance.

The first thing Rebecca, now 22, said to me was, "It was just yesterday I was learning the ins and outs of girlhood and friendships through swimming."

I settled down across the cider table from the girls, whose names, I would learn, are Eleanor Shuty and Emily Gilmore.

Eleanor, a fourth grader at Jefferson Elementary School, has been swimming with the club for five years. Emily, a seventh grader at Jefferson Middle School, is in her first year.

When I asked what their favorite part of being in the Aqua Club was, Eleanor quickly replied, "Our coaches and how nice they are and how they really want us to have great relationships with all of our friends.

It's really nice and I've made a lot of friends over the years."

Emily agreed.

"I think that the coaches are a really big part of boosting our confidence. Like if you're feeling down or like you're not feeling the best about something. I've seen them pull aside kids and help them with a skill that they were having trouble with and then it makes them feel more confident. Like, when I was younger, I would have trouble with the backstroke but now I've learned really good drills, so it's made me more confident and the coaches are really encouraging."

Eleanor chimed in.

"Now butterfly's my favorite stroke and it's because they boosted my confidence. If I said, 'I think I'm really bad at this stroke,' they

would be like, 'No, you're great at it and you just need to keep trying.'"

And now for what I didn't see coming.

I asked the girls when and how they first became friends, and in unison they exclaimed, "Today! Just now!"

My surprise clearly visible, I asked what led them to befriend each other that day, so to speak. What led to this ease and comfort between them?

They explained that they had arrived separately with their moms, not knowing the other would be there. They were both looking at the various pumpkins on display and realized they liked the same ones.

Emily added, "And I think also (because of) our nails."

They each proudly splayed their creative and colorful nail art for me to see.

Turns out, because they're in different age groups at the Aqua Club and attend different schools, they had never spoken before that day.

And, according to Eleanor, they've already figured something out.

"I really like the butterfly and she thinks the butterfly is hard and I think the breaststroke is hard so we can help each other."

Rebecca swam the breaststroke her senior year of high school. As she reminisced with me, she noted that although friends are inevitably led down different paths as time marches on, "some people continue to remain in your life, cheering you on."

One of those people for Rebecca is her "fantastic friend, Julia."

Rebecca went on to say that as young adults, she and Julia "traded the pool and water bottles for the gym, or for a drink downtown."

Then she poignantly added, "It's beautiful to see how our friendship went from two young, sometimes nervous girls on the pool deck to cheering each other on for new jobs and new relationships.. Sharing a lane was more than just for convenience — it was for the beginning of girlhood and navigating life."

As our conversation at the free apple cider table drew to a close, these two young girls, Eleanor and Emily, fixed me a delicious cup of hot apple cider topped with whipped cream, nutmeg and cinnamon.

And Eleanor offered up some advice.

"You shouldn't ever back down from saying, 'Hi, you wanna be friends or anything?' because they might turn into your best friend or a really good friend and they might turn other people into friends too."

Like I said, you never know where inspiration will come from.

Share your good news, notes of gratitude and acts of kindness with me at yinzaregood@gmail.com. And check out the Yinz Are Good podcast at www.yinzaregood.com. ♥



The Return on a Place

Much of what makes Mt. Lebanon worth living in is something no one owns alone. In a place with bones this strong, collective investment pays back more to everyone who lives here. By Andrew Flynn

There is a common way to compare local governments. Look at the property tax rate. Look at the earned income tax rate. Put several neighboring communities side by side and ask why one charges more than another.

Taxes are real household expenses, and local government owes residents discipline about what it asks them to pay. But a tax rate is a price, not a measure of value. It tells you what a community costs. It says very little about what the community is worth or what it will take to keep that value intact.

In Mt. Lebanon, much of what makes the community worth living in is something no one owns alone.

What we own together

Most of us understand investment as a private act. We renovate a kitchen, replace a roof or plant a garden. Those investments matter, and they are ours.

But the value of every house in Mt. Lebanon depends heavily on things outside its property line. The street in front of it. The sidewalk that leads to a school or a business district. The park a few blocks away, the library, the pool, the trees that line the block and the pipes that carry water away in a storm.

No household can buy those things for itself. A family cannot build its own library or maintain its own mile of street. Together, we can, and the return reaches everyone at once: the family with young children and the retired couple, the homeowner and the renter, the resident who arrived last year and the one who will arrive in 20 years.

Collective investment is some of the most productive investment a household makes. A family paying Mt. Lebanon's municipal property tax on a home assessed at \$250,000 pays about \$1,125 a year. That is its share of streets, parks, a library, police and fire protection, recreation facilities and the public spaces that shape how the whole community looks and feels. Its share of the value those things create is far larger.

The same logic works in reverse. When shared assets decline, every property around them loses something, including those whose owners have maintained their homes perfectly.

Strong bones

Collective investment pays off more in some places than others, and Mt. Lebanon is one of the places where it pays off most.

Mt. Lebanon was built when communities used land differently. Houses sit close together. Blocks are compact. Streets connect. Neighborhoods sit near schools, parks, transit and business districts, and many daily destinations are part of the community rather than a drive away from it. People who study places call this "good bones": a physical structure worth building on.

The 2020 census counted 34,075 people within Mt. Lebanon's 6.08 square miles, about 5,606 residents per square mile. Bethel Park had about 2,869 per square mile, Upper St. Clair about 2,156 and South Fayette about 904.

Population density is not the same as tax-base density, and the better fiscal measure would be taxable value per acre compared with the infrastructure needed to support it. But the difference is large enough to make the point: Mt. Lebanon fits considerably more community into each square mile.

This matters because local government maintains networks, not just households. A mile of road has to be resurfaced whether few homes or many sit along it. Sewers, storm lines, sidewalks, signals and public safety coverage all extend across physical space. Compact development lets more households share each of those costs.

It also means each public investment reaches more people. A renovated park here is within walking distance of thousands of households. A streetscape improvement serves a business district that residents can reach on foot. A library upgrade serves a population concentrated around it. In a place with strong bones, a dollar of collective investment does more work and serves more people than it would almost anywhere else.

Density only works if the place stays desirable

There is a catch. Density is valuable when it produces a place where people want to live. A compact neighborhood with good streets, mature trees, maintained sidewalks, attractive parks,

working infrastructure and nearby businesses can be extraordinarily desirable. The same density paired with deteriorating public assets is something very different.

The public realm is part of the value proposition. Rebuilding an old street or replacing a sewer is not simply paying a bill left by earlier generations. It is maintaining the platform on which the value of the whole community rests.

Two pressures at once

The cost of renewing that platform is not new. Mt. Lebanon's streets, sewers, buildings and parks have been reaching the end of their useful lives for decades, and the community has been rebuilding them for just as long.

What has changed is the scale. Much of Mt. Lebanon was built within a few decades, so its systems age on overlapping schedules, and the obligation to replace them has been growing steadily.

At the same time, a new generation of residents is asking new things of the community. When residents were surveyed for the 2023 comprehensive plan, a majority named parks and recreation as their highest priority.

People want fields that can be used after dark, playgrounds and courts within walking distance, a library designed for how people use libraries now, a business district worth spending an evening in and streets that are safe for walking and biking, not just driving.

These are not luxuries layered on top of the real work. They are how a community stays desirable to the people deciding whether to move here, stay here and raise children here. Communities that stop investing in what the next generation wants tend to find, eventually, that the next generation has chosen somewhere else.

The two pressures compete for the same dollars, and each can crowd out the other. A community that only maintains what it inherited slowly becomes a museum of an earlier era's priorities. A community that builds new amenities while deferring renewal hollows itself out from underneath.

Mt. Lebanon needs both. Maintenance preserves the value we inherited. New



(Photo by Noel Twyman)

investment creates the value the next generation will inherit.

Efficiency matters in both. Projects should be challenged, priorities set, grants and partnerships pursued, and services delivered as well as they can be. But efficiency does not repeal the life cycle of an asset.

There is a point at which spending less stops being efficiency and becomes deferral. Deferring the work usually changes when the bill comes due rather than whether it does, and it often makes the bill larger.

This year's budget

These pressures are the real context for Mt. Lebanon's budget conversation this fall.

One pressure is immediate. On April 30, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court held in *Borough of West Chester v. Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education* that a municipal stormwater charge was a tax, not a fee, because managing stormwater is a duty government owes the whole community rather than a service individuals choose to buy.

Mt. Lebanon's stormwater fee, which raised roughly \$2 million a year, is going away as a result. The pipes, the federal permit and the flooding risk are not. That cost now moves into the general budget.

I support raising the municipal earned income tax from 0.8% to 1%, along with a property tax adjustment to be set through the budget process. Replacing the stormwater fee accounts for a significant portion of that increase. The rest reflects the two pressures above, which will not ease on their own.

How the burden falls matters. The earned income tax and the property tax reach different households in different ways, and the balance between them deserves an open debate at the commission. So does every project the revenue would support.

The standard for that

debate should not be the lowest possible tax rate. Nor should it be the highest level of spending a community can bear.

The useful question is whether we are collecting enough, and using it well enough, to sustain the place residents expect Mt. Lebanon to be and to build the place the next generation is asking for.

Stewardship means handing it forward

Mt. Lebanon inherited something unusually valuable: established neighborhoods, walkable streets, mature trees, parks, business districts, public facilities, transit connections and infrastructure built by generations who came before us.

They built it collectively, and they built it for people they would never meet.

This inheritance is one of our greatest advantages. It is not permanent.

Every generation holds these assets for a while. We can let them wear down and leave a larger bill to the people who come next. We can keep them intact. Or we can do what the people who built Mt. Lebanon did: invest together in a place worth handing forward and leave it stronger than we found it.

The question before us is how much that requires, how we pay for it and how we make sure every dollar does as much work as possible.

In a community with bones this strong, the return on getting it right is shared by everyone who lives here and by everyone who will. ♥

Andrew Flynn is a commissioner in Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania, a municipal adviser specializing in public finance and a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician. He writes about the ability of public institutions to meet the demands and expectations placed on them.

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National Merit Program Honors 20 Mt. Lebanon Students

Five seniors named semifinalists, while 15 classmates earn Commended Student recognition By Eleazer Gorenstein

Five Mt. Lebanon High School seniors are being recognized among the nation's highest-achieving high school students after being named semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program.

The five students — Matthew Burton, Joseph Curran, Eve Magleby-Lambert, Hannah Markowitz and Allie Miller — are among approximately 16,000 students nationwide selected as National Merit semifinalists this year. The distinction is based on students' performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), taken during their junior year.

For Miller, the recognition came as a welcome surprise.

"My guidance counselor told me when I was in class," Miller said. "I was so excited to find out that I had been named a semifinalist."

While the National Merit recognition highlights academic achievement, Miller's experience at Mt. Lebanon High School reflects the well-rounded approach that Principal Joel Thompson said is characteristic of many of the school's highest-achieving students.

Miller said she particularly enjoys math, physics, business and English. She likes the challenge of working through difficult problems but also enjoys reading and classroom discussions.

Outside the classroom,

Miller is a member of the Mt. Lebanon field hockey team and participates in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), DECA and Mini-THON, a student-led fundraising event supporting pediatric cancer care and research. She also plays violin in the school orchestra and enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Balancing those commitments with academics comes naturally to Miller.

"I think I do a good job balancing my extracurriculars with my schoolwork because I try my best to remain stress-free, and I love to have a busy schedule, so I enjoy having a lot to do," she said.

Thompson said engagement and curiosity are qualities he frequently sees in students who achieve at a high level.

"They are genuinely interested in learning and understanding how things work, why they work and how they might be able to contribute," he said.

He also emphasized the importance of providing students with opportunities to pursue a variety of interests. Mt. Lebanon High School offers more than 25 Advanced Placement courses, along with numerous clubs, activities, athletic programs and fine arts opportunities.

Miller said that variety has played an important role in shaping her high school experience.

"I think that the variety



Fifteen Mt. Lebanon High School students have earned Letters of Commendation in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program for their outstanding performance on the October 2025 PSAT. The students ranked among the top 50,000 scorers nationwide out of more than 1.5 million test-takers, earning recognition for their academic achievement and potential for future success. (Photo provided)



Mt. Lebanon High School students Matthew Burton, Joseph Curran, Eve Magleby-Lambert, Hannah Markowitz and Allie Miller, pictured with Principal Joel Thompson, are among approximately 16,000 students nationwide named semifinalists in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program. They are eligible to advance in the competition for about 6,700 scholarships totaling \$24 million. (Photo provided)

of classes, activities and ways to get involved have really shaped me because I am able to pursue so many things that I am interested in," she said.

Thompson said the school's goal is not simply to produce academically strong students but to help develop well-rounded young people who are prepared to contribute beyond the classroom.

"We want to develop well-rounded students, and we want to give them opportunities," he said.

That philosophy appears to resonate with Miller as she looks toward life after Mt. Lebanon High School. She plans to study business in college, building on one of the academic areas she has enjoyed most during high school.

Miller is part of an even larger group of academically accomplished students at Mt. Lebanon. In addition to the five semifinalists, 15 other students were named National Merit Commended Students this year.

The Commended Students are Conner Baird, Aigerim Bakytzhan, Molly Bozick, Caleb Campanaro, Richard Deluca, Filip Drabek, Peter Goslin, Matthew Harrold, Maya Kashlan, Henry Mitchell, Gabrielle Prasad, Caroline Rost, Henry Stiglitz, Benjamin Watterson and Yiru Yang.

For Thompson, the recognition is gratifying not only because of the students' academic accomplishments but also because of the people they are becoming.

"What I'm most proud of about these students is they're just genuinely good kids," Thompson said. "They're genuinely good people."

He said he hopes the students will carry their intellectual curiosity, ethical perspective and consideration for others with them to college and beyond.

"They're going to be the leaders that we want them to be in the future," Thompson said. ♥



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Some like to spend their Saturdays on a ladder.

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BUSINESS BEAT

From the sidelines to a startup: Lebo moms launch Field House

Friends create a women's spirit wear brand with a mission to support youth organizations and provide meaningful employment opportunities By Lauren Moore

Nearly two years ago, best friends Abby Vernon and Lizzie Chiappetta sat on the sidelines of a youth sporting event and wondered why there weren't more spirit wear options designed specifically for women.

As mothers of five children combined, they had received countless spirit wear emails over the years, offering dozens of options for men and numerous unisex styles but relatively few choices designed specifically for women.

According to Vernon, research shows that 15 million to 20 million families in the United States have children in kindergarten through 12th grade who participate in extracurricular activities. Of those families, an estimated 13 million to 18 million include a mother or female guardian.

Vernon and Chiappetta saw an opportunity to create a line of stylish clothing and accessories made by women, for women, to elevate the wardrobes of those they consider the No. 1 fans.

Both are full-time working mothers with professional backgrounds they believe will help them build a successful clothing company. Vernon has experience in fashion merchandising, while Chiappetta is an attorney.

Recognizing they needed additional help, they enlisted Vernon's sister, Carly Chanatry, to assist with design, branding and sourcing.

After months of research and preparation, the friends officially introduced their company, Field House, during a pop-up shopping event Sept. 2 in Vernon's backyard on Standish Boulevard.

Nearly 100 Mt. Lebanon women attended the event, which featured Lebo-branded T-shirts, sweatshirts, dresses, totes and bags available for purchase. Guests also enjoyed wine and fresh flowers and were greeted by Vernon's daughter, Ellie, an eighth grader at Mellon Middle School, who welcomed each visitor with a smile and a hug.

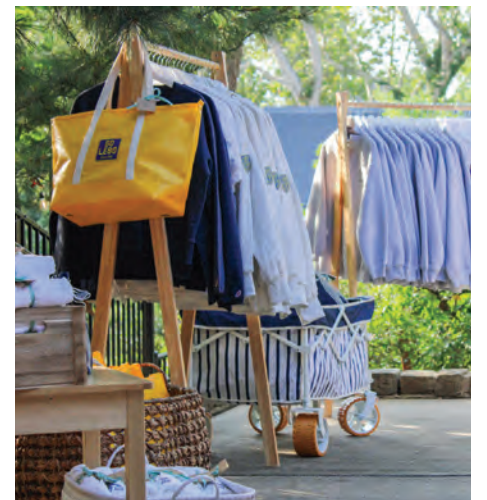
Ellie has been a source of inspiration for Vernon and Chiappetta throughout their business venture. They see firsthand the value she brings to her community and neighbors every day. Ellie also has Down syndrome, a connection that has helped shape the company's mission.

While Field House aims to fill a gap in women's spirit wear, its business plan extends well beyond clothing. The founders intend to give back to the community in two important ways.

First, they plan to return a portion of sales proceeds to the teams and clubs that partner with Field House.

"Our goal is to form partnerships with local teams and clubs. We want to work together with the organizations, not against them," Vernon said.

Second, they plan to create employment opportunities for neurodivergent individuals to assist with



Abby Vernon, Ellie Vernon (8th grader, Mellon Middle School) Lizzie Chiappetta and Carly Chanatry at Pop-Up Debut Party (Photos courtesy of Lulu Pieklik)

operations, organizing, packing and merchandise delivery.

Vernon addressed the crowd during the launch event, sharing the personal significance of the company's mission.

"Creating meaningful employment for neurodivergent individuals means so much to me... giving back to the teams and clubs who use us, helping women look and feel great on the sidelines, and doing all of this next to my best friend, sister, and daughter... That's what Field House is all about," she said.

Although Vernon and Chiappetta are launching their business with Lebo-branded

mechandise, they hope to expand into neighboring communities and eventually reach a broader regional market.

"We are thrilled and flattered by the outpouring of support and excitement about Field House," Chiappetta said. "We hope to start some collaborations with local clubs and associations very soon. We are in the process of finalizing a few. We eventually hope to be able to move towards partnering with neighboring communities. Stay tuned for what we have next!"

In the meantime, residents can follow Field House on Instagram at @fieldhouse.shop for updates and new merchandise. 🧡



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Mt. Lebanon Native Joe Manganiello Reveals Personal Struggles in New Book

In "Bloodlines," the actor recounts a seven-year medical battle, family discoveries and a journey toward healing and a new beginning By Sarah Core

Joe Manganiello is quick to say that his new book, "Bloodlines," which recounts his seven-year battle with a mysterious autoimmune illness, is no celebrity memoir.

"This isn't me at age 80 talking about all the people I slept with or didn't sleep with or all of that stuff," the actor explained. "It's me opening myself up about my own struggles, in the hopes that it sheds light, or gives hope, to people who are also suffering."

"Bloodlines" starts out like a heist film, except instead of a thrilling escape with the crown jewels, Manganiello was trying to pull off a much bigger con. He was convincing the world he hadn't just spent the previous few months recovering from major surgery after nearly dying, while his newlywed wife had to make frantic life-or-death medical decisions for him.

He also was trying to hide the colostomy bag he was wearing, uncertain whether he would ever be able to have it removed. All while continuing to act in blockbuster superhero films, where his well-known athleticism was a requirement.

"This is me coming out after living 10 years closeted because of the illness, pretending to be somebody else," Manganiello said.

Manganiello's journey to uncover the cause of his mysterious illness took him across

continents and back through the branches of his own family tree, where he discovered century-old family secrets.

The story begins with his great-grandmother, who fled Armenia during World War I after a genocide wiped out her village and family. Manganiello's vivid storytelling paints a dramatic tale that unfolds across the pages like a movie, illustrating how the past influences the present.

Contrary to the picture painted by sensationalized tabloid coverage, Manganiello's book also reveals Manganiello's book also reveals a heartbreaking account of a couple struggling to survive a series of devastating health battles that pushed them past their breaking point.

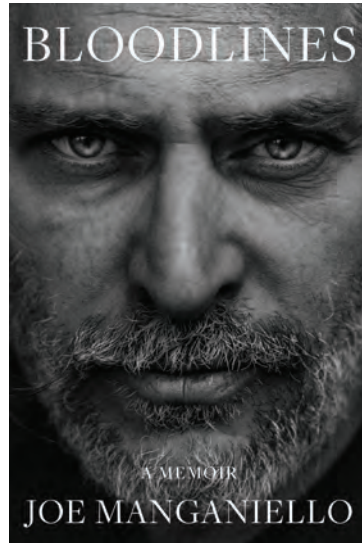
The challenges he and his ex-wife, Sofia Vergara, faced during his seven-year medical battle left them emotionally exhausted.

Manganiello writes that, at one point, he was living in a haze of pain medication and medical marijuana, convinced he was dying.

"I was completely unaware Sofia was crying openly in front of my publicist over my skeletal appearance."

After he went into remission, he realized that while he might have survived, his marriage had not.

But Manganiello sees a silver lining in his struggle.



Mt. Lebanon native and actor Joe Manganiello shares personal stories, family history and challenges in his memoir, "Bloodlines." (Book cover provided)

"One of them is that it's a hard reboot in just about every possible way. I was forced, because of the illness, to let go. It was like every molecule in my body was detonated all at once. The book is about me putting those pieces back together around the essence of the person that I actually am," he said.

As he came to grips with his illness, he also realized he wasn't alone.

"I think there's a lot of people out there suffering from a host of things that are unexplainable. There's a communion that goes along with understanding that other people struggle."



Manganiello sits with Bubbles, his 5-pound Chihuahua-Pomeranian mix, whom he credits with helping him find purpose and navigate a severe, multi-year battle with a life-threatening autoimmune illness. (Photo provided)

Being able to return home to Mt. Lebanon has been a blessing for Manganiello.

The entertainment industry has undergone significant changes over the past decade. Manganiello said that when he and his fiancée, Caitlin O'Connor, realized they could live near their families in Western Pennsylvania while continuing their film and media careers, they were elated.

"I just love the people here," he said, adding that he feels a kinship with other Pittsburghers, who treat him like a neighbor and engage him in everyday conversations.

"I want people to feel like we can have a real conversation because I feel like I've had nothing but almost exclusively small talk for the past 10 years," he said.

"Life changes, life moves, and that's really what the book's about," Manganiello said. "You know, all the leaves had to come off of the tree because new ones needed to grow, or maybe the ones that were supposed to be there needed to grow."

"I finally have my roots in the right place, and there's leaves back on the tree, and I'm where I'm supposed to be," he said.

The sold-out Pittsburgh launch of "Bloodlines" will be held in conjunction with White Whale Books at First Unitarian Church in Shadyside on Oct. 20. The event includes a signed hardcover copy of the book.

"Bloodlines" is available through major booksellers and online at <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Bloodlines/Joe-Manganiello/9781668207109>. ♥



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When a Familiar Voice Isn't Who You Think

AI-powered scams can imitate loved ones and trusted colleagues, making it more important than ever to pause, verify and report suspicious requests *By Madi Trypus*

Most people believe they can instantly recognize the voice of a spouse, child, friend, coworker or boss. Unfortunately, criminals are counting on that trust. Advances in artificial intelligence now allow scammers to create convincing audio recordings that imitate another person's voice. Using short audio clips obtained from social media, voicemail recordings or online videos, criminals can generate calls that sound remarkably real. These scams often begin with an unexpected phone call. The caller may claim that a loved one has been injured, arrested, stranded while traveling or is in immediate need of financial assistance. In other cases, scammers impersonate coworkers, supervisors or business executives with urgent requests. The goal is simple: Create a sense of panic before you have time to think.

How the scam works

You receive a call or voice message that appears to come from someone you trust. The caller describes an urgent situation and pressures you to act immediately. You may also be asked to keep the request confidential, discouraging you from contacting anyone who could expose the scam. In personal scams, criminals often request money through wire transfers, gift cards or cryptocurrency. In workplace settings, they may seek confidential information, passwords, authentication codes or access to accounts and computer systems. The voice may sound familiar, but familiar doesn't always mean authentic. The FBI has warned that criminals are using AI-generated audio to make impersonation attempts more believable. These scams may be designed to obtain money, sensitive information, login credentials or access to personal and business accounts.

Warning signs to watch for

Be cautious whenever a caller:

- Creates a sense of urgency and pressures you to act immediately.
- Requests money through wire transfers, gift cards,

cryptocurrency or other unusual payment methods.

- Uses an emotional story designed to cause fear or panic.
- Asks you to keep the request secret.
- Requests passwords, account information or authentication codes.
- Encourages you to bypass normal procedures or verification steps.

The Federal Trade Commission warns that urgent requests involving wire transfers, cryptocurrency or gift cards may indicate a family emergency scam. These payment methods can make recovering stolen funds difficult.

Even if the voice sounds genuine, these warning signs should prompt you to slow down and verify the request.

Pause, verify, report

A simple three-step approach can help prevent you from becoming a victim. Pause. Stay calm and don't allow urgency or emotion to drive your response. Do not send money, provide sensitive information, share an authentication code or approve an unexpected request. Verify. End the call and contact the person directly using a phone number or communication method you already know is legitimate. Do not use a phone number,

link or contact information supplied by the caller. The FTC recommends calling the person directly using a known phone number. If you cannot reach the person, contact another family member or friend to verify the situation. Report. If you believe you've encountered a scam, report it to the appropriate authorities. Prompt reporting may help prevent others from becoming victims.

- Report suspected fraud to the Federal Trade Commission at reportfraud.ftc.gov.
- Report suspected internet crimes to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at ic3.gov.

Protect yourself before a call happens

Preparation can make these scams less effective. Consider establishing a family "safe word" or phrase to help verify identities during emergencies. Review privacy settings on social media accounts and think carefully about how much audio and video content you share publicly. Families should also discuss in advance how they will verify emergency requests involving money or personal information. Having a plan before an emergency occurs can help everyone respond calmly and confidently when an unexpected call arrives.

Some community members face greater risk

While anyone can be targeted by an AI voice scam, criminals may focus on people they believe are more likely to respond emotionally to an urgent request. Parents and grandparents are common targets of family emergency scams. A caller may pretend to be a child or grandchild in distress, claiming to need money immediately. A realistic-sounding voice can make the situation seem genuine, prompting someone to act before verifying the story. Older adults may be targeted by scammers who exploit trust, urgency and fear. Family members can help by discussing common scam tactics and establishing a plan for verifying emergency requests. Children and teenagers should also understand that

not everything they hear online or over the phone is authentic. As AI-generated audio becomes more common, young people need to learn the same lesson adults are learning: Hearing a familiar voice is no longer enough to confirm someone's identity. A simple family conversation about scams, verification methods and emergency contacts can go a long way toward protecting loved ones of all ages. Remember: A familiar voice is not proof of identity. When an unexpected request involves urgency, secrecy, money, sensitive information or a change to normal procedures, take a moment to stop, think and verify before acting. That brief pause could prevent a costly mistake. **Pause. Verify. Report.** ♥

About the author

Madi Trypus is an information security professional specializing in cybersecurity governance, risk management, third-party risk oversight and security awareness. Her work focuses on making complex security topics understandable and actionable for everyday audiences. She holds a bachelor's degree in security and risk analysis from Penn State University and has several years of experience helping organizations identify, assess and manage cybersecurity risks.





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Healthy Living: Staying Ahead of Your Health Through Preventive Screenings

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, understanding your risks and keeping up with recommended screenings can make a lasting difference By Kate Sheets

As we get older, staying healthy involves more than treating health problems when they arise. Preventive care offers an opportunity to identify potential health concerns early, when they may be easier to treat or manage.

October is a particularly good time to think about preventive screenings as communities across the country recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Screenings are tests used to detect certain diseases before symptoms develop. Recommended screenings can change as we age and may depend on personal and family medical histories. Talking with your health care provider can help you understand which screenings are appropriate for you.

Breast cancer screening

With October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, breast cancer screening is an important place to start.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that women ages 40 to 74 who are at average risk receive a mammogram every two years. A mammogram can detect breast cancer before a lump can be felt or other symptoms develop.

For women 75 and older, there is currently insufficient evidence for the USPSTF to recommend for or against routine mammograms. This makes an individual conversation with a health care provider

especially important. Personal health, family history, previous screening results and individual preferences can all be considered when deciding whether to continue screening.

It is also important to pay attention to changes in your breasts. A new lump, changes in breast size or shape, nipple discharge, skin changes or persistent pain are all reasons to contact a health care provider. Not every breast change is cancer, but unusual changes should be evaluated rather than ignored.

Don't forget other screenings

Breast cancer screening is only one part of preventive care. Colorectal cancer screening is another important consideration as we age.

The USPSTF recommends colorectal cancer screening for adults ages 45 to 75 who are at average risk. Several screening options are available, including stool-based tests and colonoscopies. Patients should discuss which approach is most appropriate for them with their health care provider.

Adults ages 76 to 85 may also benefit from screening, depending on their overall health, previous screening history and personal preferences.

Other preventive screenings may be appropriate depending on age and medical history. These can include screenings for cervical cancer, lung cancer,



osteoporosis, high blood pressure, diabetes and other conditions.

For example, the USPSTF recommends annual lung cancer screening using a low-dose CT scan for adults ages 50 to 80 who have a smoking history of at least 20 pack-years and currently smoke or quit within the past 15 years. A pack-year is equivalent to smoking an average of one pack of cigarettes per day for one year.

Know your risk

Screening recommendations are not necessarily the same for everyone. Family history, previous diagnoses, lifestyle factors, medications and other aspects of your health can affect your individual risk.

For breast cancer specifically, increasing age and family history are important risk factors. Certain inherited genetic changes, including mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, can also increase risk.

Lifestyle choices can influence risk as well. The Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention recommends staying physically active, maintaining a healthy weight and limiting or avoiding alcohol to help lower breast cancer risk.

If you have a strong family history of breast cancer or other risk factors, ask your health care provider whether additional screening or genetic counseling may be appropriate.

Make preventive care part of your routine

Preventive screenings can be easy to put off, especially when you feel healthy. But that is precisely why they are important. Many screening tests are designed to identify potential problems before symptoms appear.

This October, use Breast Cancer Awareness Month as a reminder to look at the bigger picture of your health.

Check when you last had a mammogram or other recommended screening. Ask your health care provider whether you are up to date and whether your age or medical history means you should consider additional tests.

Taking an active role in preventive care does not mean trying to prevent every possible health problem. It means staying informed, understanding your personal risks and working with your health care team to make decisions that support your health and independence as you age.

A personal dedication

This article is especially meaningful to me because I am writing it in memory of my grandmother, MaryAnn Garvery, who died of breast cancer in 1976.

Although I never had the opportunity to know her, her story has always been part of my family.

Writing about the importance of preventive care and early detection is my way of honoring her memory and recognizing how far breast cancer awareness, screening and treatment have come.

I hope this article encourages others to take their health seriously, ask questions and make preventive care a priority. ♥

Healthy Habit of the Month: Stay up to date on preventive screenings

Preventive screenings are an important part of maintaining good health as we age. Rather than waiting until something feels wrong, regular screenings can help detect potential health concerns early, when they may be easier to treat.

Take a few minutes this month to make sure you're up to date on recommended screenings, including mammograms, colorectal cancer screenings, blood pressure checks, cholesterol tests and other routine preventive care.

Screening recommendations vary based on age, medical history and individual risk factors, so talk with your health care provider about what's right for you.

If you're due for a screening, take the next step and schedule an appointment. Small steps today can make a big difference in your health and well-being for years to come.



Keeping Hair, Preserving a Sense of Normality During Breast Cancer Treatment

By Eleazer Gorenstein

When Maggie was diagnosed with breast cancer, one of the first things she learned was that chemotherapy would likely mean losing her hair.

For a woman already facing the shock and uncertainty of a cancer diagnosis, that prospect was difficult to accept. Maggie, a Mt. Lebanon resident, was determined to find out whether there was another option.

“I’m a healthy person. This can’t be right,” Maggie recalled of her initial reaction to her diagnosis. “And then I had to make a lot of decisions very quickly.”

One of those decisions was whether to try scalp-cooling therapy, a treatment designed to reduce chemotherapy-related hair loss. Maggie became the first patient at the St. Clair Hospital Cancer Center affiliated with UPMC Hillman Cancer Center to use the Amma™ scalp-cooling system when the technology became available at St. Clair in 2025.

For Maggie, the decision was about more than keeping her hair.

“I didn’t want people to look at me in public and say, ‘Oh, that poor thing, what’s going on?’” she said. “I have two kids and they’re both teenagers. I wanted them to know that it was going to be OK. I was going to be OK.”

St. Clair introduced two Amma devices in 2025 through a partnership with A Glimmer of Hope Foundation. The portable system cools the scalp to approximately 65 degrees before, during and after chemotherapy. The cooling constricts blood vessels around the hair follicles, reducing the amount of chemotherapy reaching them and potentially limiting hair loss.

Dr. Vincent Reyes, chief of hematology and medical oncology, at St. Clair, said chemotherapy targets rapidly dividing cells. Because hair follicle cells also divide rapidly, they can be affected by chemotherapy even though they are healthy cells.

“Chemotherapy is not very smart,” Dr. Reyes said. “It cannot distinguish good cells from bad cells.”

By cooling the scalp, the Amma system can reduce blood flow to the hair follicles and limit their exposure to chemotherapy. The treatment is not designed to prevent all hair loss. St. Clair says successful scalp cooling generally limits hair loss to approximately 50 percent.

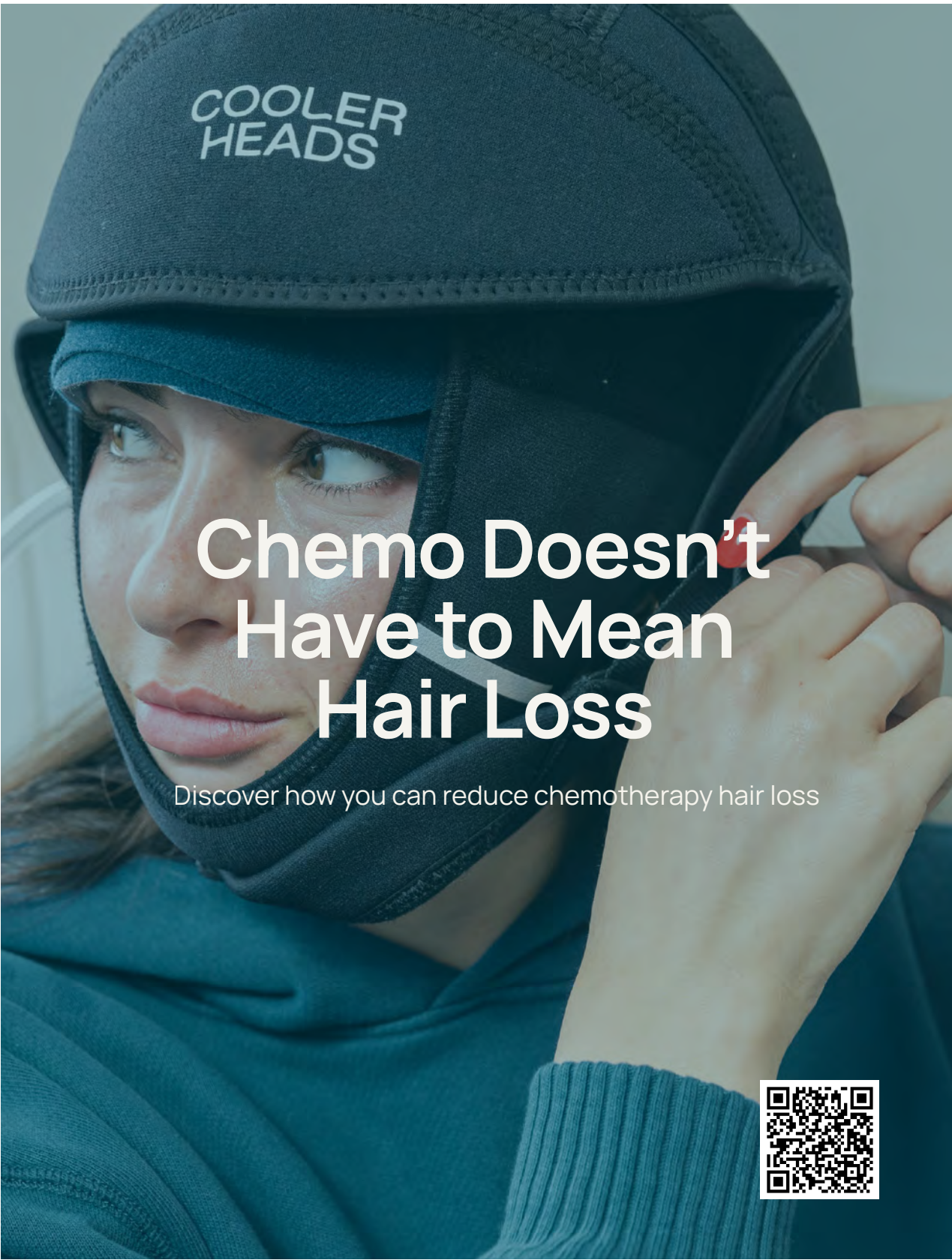
Maggie experienced that firsthand. She estimates she retained about 50 percent of her hair during treatment. Although she had hoped to preserve more, she said the difference was still significant.

“People would remind me that after my second treatment, I would not have had any hair, and I still had a lot of hair,” she said.

That made it possible for Maggie to continue many aspects of her normal life while undergoing chemotherapy. She continued working from home and participating in her children’s activities, including softball games, volleyball games and high school graduation events. She also attended concerts and other activities when she felt well enough.

“For the longest time, I really didn’t tell anybody else,” she said. “You really couldn’t tell that I was going through treatment when I was on video calls. That made me feel very confident.”

Dr. Reyes said that ability to maintain a sense of normality can be meaningful for patients.



“It’s already hard enough to go through chemotherapy, but the last thing you want is to have hair loss and people to kind of look at you and treat you differently,” he said. “You just want to be as normal as possible.”

Using the system does require commitment from patients. Maggie experienced what she described as a mild “brain freeze” and slight headache from the cold, and she remained at the hospital for additional time after her chemotherapy so the scalp cooling could continue.

Still, she felt the benefits outweighed the inconveniences.

“It’s a personal choice,” Maggie said. “You must have some strength and some persistence. But for me, the pros definitely outweighed the cons.”

Having the technology available at St. Clair also made the process considerably easier for Maggie and her husband. Other scalp-cooling methods require patients and their families to obtain and manage dry ice. With Amma, the portable device is provided through the infusion center and operated as part of the treatment process.

That local access was important to Dr. Reyes as well. St. Clair’s cancer center is affiliated with UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, providing patients with access to comprehensive cancer care close to home.

“Patients can go five to 10 minutes to their local hospital, local cancer center, and get this therapy rather than have to drive through tunnels and bridges while you’re getting chemotherapy and feeling lousy,” Dr. Reyes said.

The treatment is also available without an additional cost to eligible St. Clair patients when insurance does not cover it. A Glimmer of Hope Foundation provided funding for the initial equipment, while St. Clair Health’s Breast Care Fund helps cover the cost of scalp-cooling caps for patients whose insurance does not provide coverage.

For Maggie, the experience ultimately provided something valuable during a difficult period: a greater sense of control.

“I wanted to have the self-respect and dignity that I wanted to have when I went through this,” she said. “For me, it was definitely worth it.” ♥

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A Little Magic Takes

Two Mt. Lebanon sisters turn an old oak tree into a fairy garden, inspiring

Callie Fritz bounced up and down, excited to show off the “fairy tree” she and her sister had created.

“It’s my birthday today!” the newly minted 7-year-old exclaimed.

Callie and her older sister, Cameron, proudly showed off the miniature world they had created beneath the branches of a large oak tree in their front yard on Vernon Drive. Complete with tiny fairy houses, mushroom caps and miniature chairs and tables where fairies might stop to rest, the garden looks like something out of a storybook.

“It’s a living little playground for them,” explained their mother, KC Fritz.

What began as a creative project for two sisters has grown into something much bigger — a neighborhood attraction that has brought residents together, sparked conversations and inspired others to create their own miniature fairy worlds.

The Fritzes’ fairy garden has attracted the attention of neighbors, some of whom have contributed small gifts and decorations. Others have taken the idea a step further, adding fairy doors and whimsical displays to trees in their own front yards.

“I think it’s very sweet how one creative idea — the magic of it all — has sparked others,” neighbor Kelly Schraven said.

Schraven has added a fairy door to a tree in her yard and enjoys walking up the street to discover what other neighbors have created.

From a tiny fairy mailbox to a parade of winged toy fairies lounging on

fallen leaves, each garden has its own personality. Together, the displays have transformed an ordinary neighborhood walk into an opportunity for discovery, particularly for children who delight in spotting the smallest details.

The fairy garden tradition began in 2025, after the Fritz family moved back to Mt. Lebanon.

“There was a pond after it rained,” Cameron explained, pointing to a hollow between the tree’s roots where rainwater had collected.

She placed tiny plastic ducks near the water, creating a miniature scene that became the starting point for the garden. Before long, the idea began to grow.

Their grandmother “brought us some of these houses and people started to add to it,” Cameron said.

What started with a few ducks and fairy houses gradually became an elaborate collection of tiny buildings, furniture and imaginative displays.

“My kids were always in the woods and outside,” KC said.

She believes the girls might have been inspired by a family trip during the pandemic to Mason-Dixon Park in Core, West Virginia.

The park’s Fairy Door Trail is about one-third of a mile long and features fairy doors and miniature scenes created by local artists and community members. A companion book allows visitors to follow along as they explore the trail.

The experience introduced the family to the idea that a simple walk-through



Callie and Cameron Fritz pose in front of the fairy garden tree that has inspired their Vernon Drive neighborhood

nature could become an imaginative adventure, with unexpected discoveries waiting around a tree or along a path.

Back home on Vernon Drive, the girls found the perfect place to create their own version.

Because their fairy tree sits beside the sidewalk, it is easily visible to neighbors walking past. That location has helped turn the garden into an informal gathering place, where passersby can stop to admire the displays and talk with the family.

“A lot of people engage with the fairy garden and talk about it with them,” KC said.

She is pleased that her daughters’ creative outlet has become a source of joy for the neighborhood.

“That’s very Mt. Lebo,” she said. “It’s a community

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Root on Vernon Drive

g neighbors to create miniature worlds of their own Story & photos by Sarah Core



Cameron and Callie Fritz making a miniature fire pit for their fall-themed fairy decor



Neighbors have gifted decor to the Fritz sisters, and some have started adding fairy decor to their own front yards.



where you see people. Everybody enjoys the spirit of it."

The garden also demonstrates how something small can strengthen neighborhood connections. A miniature house or fairy door might seem insignificant on its own, but the shared experience of discovering and contributing to the displays has given residents another reason to stop, talk and get to know one another.

The family and neighbors said the fairy garden has helped them meet new people and connect with one another.

Cameron especially enjoys watching other children discover the tiny world she and her sister have created.

"There's a little girl who walks by with her mom every night and

she stops to play with [everything]," she said.

For the Fritz sisters, the garden is never truly finished. Its miniature landscape changes with the seasons, giving them new opportunities to imagine what their fairy visitors might be doing throughout the year.

For Halloween, the pond features a skeleton fishing. When winter arrives, it might become an ice-skating rink. The girls are already planning a Thanksgiving table where their imaginary visitors can gather for a holiday feast.

The changing displays keep the garden fresh for neighbors who pass by regularly. They also give the sisters a continuing project that combines outdoor play, storytelling

and creativity.

"This is my favorite one," Callie said, plucking a tiny wand from a small wicker table arranged to resemble a wizard's magical display.

"It's like from Harry Potter," Cameron explained.

Nearby, Cameron knelt to put the finishing touches on a miniature fire pit, complete with tiny white marshmallows on sticks. Callie joined her, carefully pulling away weeds to clear the space.

The girls worked together beneath the oak tree, absorbed in the details of their imaginary world.

For KC, one of the most amusing parts of the entire project is its location. With a yard available for playing and exploring, her daughters have chosen a spot where they

can interact with the neighborhood.

"Of all the places they want to be it's right on the sidewalk," she said, laughing.

Perhaps that is part of what makes the fairy garden so special. Rather than keeping their creativity tucked away in a backyard, the sisters have placed it where everyone can enjoy it.

And as neighbors continue adding their own miniature creations, the magic has spread beyond a single tree.

Schraven believes there is something especially fitting about the old oak becoming the centerpiece of this neighborhood tradition.

"I told the girls, 'This tree has been waiting for you for a hundred years,'" she said.♥



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From 50 States to Mt. Lebanon: Jim Lewis Finds a New Chapter

After a career that took him across the country and overseas, the author found inspiration for his mystery novels in the Pittsburgh area By Kate Goettmann

Few people have seen more of the country than Jim Lewis. Over the years, his career took him across the United States and even to Sweden. Along the way, he visited all 50 states, many of them more than once. Yet when he and his wife, Julie, moved from Oregon in 2016, they settled in Mt. Lebanon.

After deciding to move closer to family in Western Pennsylvania, the couple put their Oregon home on the market and boarded a flight east for a visit. The move unfolded faster than they expected.

"We got on the plane and it went on the market Saturday morning, and by the time we landed in Chicago we had a full-price cash offer," Lewis said.

Suddenly needing a new place to live, the couple began house hunting and soon found a townhome in Mt. Lebanon, a community they had come to enjoy during visits with family. The move brought them closer to their grandchildren while introducing Lewis to a community that would later find its way into his writing.

Born in Detroit and raised in several communities, including Astoria, Oregon; St. Paul, Minnesota; Dubuque, Iowa; and Toledo, Ohio, Lewis built a career that rarely kept him in one place for long.

He met Julie while the two were living in the same apartment complex in



Jim and Julie during his time managing WGBY in Springfield, Massachusetts. (Photos provided)

Jacksonville, Florida. Lewis jokes that she had her eye on him before they officially met, but regardless of who made the first move, the relationship progressed quickly. After six weeks of dating, they became engaged and were married eight months later.

Together, they built a life that took them across the country and around the world.

One of their earliest adventures came when they moved to Stockholm, Sweden, with their first daughter, who was just 9 months old. Lewis spent a year working in the news department of a Swedish public radio organization before the family returned to the United States.

Additional moves followed as he transitioned from journalism into fundraising, station management and consulting in

public broadcasting, with stops in Florida, Texas, Massachusetts and Oregon along the way.

By 2016, family ties were drawing them back east.

Mt. Lebanon quickly felt like home. Lewis and Julie embraced Pittsburgh's cultural scene, held season tickets to the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, attended library programs and became regulars at local restaurants.

"We've spent many an afternoon and evening at Jade Grille," Lewis said. "It was a favorite and remains so."

Lewis also became active in the local literary community, attending author events at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library and recently participating in a local author showcase at the Galleria.

The community also provided inspiration for his fiction.



Jim and Julie with family.



Jim and Julie with daughter and grandkids at Galleria Book Fair 2024.

Although writing had been a constant throughout his career, Lewis did not publish his first novel until 2017.

"I decided a good way to get to know Pittsburgh was to write about it," he said.

That decision became the foundation for much of his work. Several of his mysteries draw inspiration from communities throughout the Pittsburgh area, including Mt. Lebanon.

What began as a way to learn about the region developed into a productive second career.

"I've done a book a year

since I moved to Pittsburgh," Lewis said.

Today, Lewis has published 11 novels, written numerous short stories and is working on another book.

After Julie's death, Lewis eventually moved to Providence Point. He still returns to Mt. Lebanon regularly to shop, dine and meet with former neighbors through the Woodridge book club.

He also enjoys spending time with his grandchildren, whose presence in the Pittsburgh area helped inspire the move from Oregon a decade ago.♥



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The Tent Stayed Up: A Father-Son Camping Adventure

One father's first camping adventure with his son brings outdoor fun, a little anxiety and plenty of reasons to return Story & photos by Eleazer Gorenstein

Mt. Lebanon Recreation recently hosted its 27th annual father-son campout at Bird Park, a unique outdoor adventure that I had the pleasure of attending with my son.

It was 16 hours of father-son bonding in about as secluded a setting as one can find in our municipality. As a first-time camper with my child, I appreciated the convenience of staying close to home. If anything went wrong, we could simply pack up and leave.

Fortunately, that wasn't necessary.

My son and I enjoyed all the activities the recreation department provided. Signing up through the Mt. Lebanon website was easy, but once we arrived, it was up to the dads to pitch their tents on the soccer field — a task that wasn't quite as easy as I remembered.

Still, within an hour, everyone was settled in, and the hardest part of the evening was behind us.

What followed was a night filled with outdoor activities and memorable experiences.

We started with a short hike along Bird Park's trails to the pavilion, where a cookout dinner of hamburgers, hot dogs, macaroni and cheese, and other favorites awaited. It was a pleasant walk through nature and a great way to begin the evening.



Eleazer Gorenstein and his son successfully pitched this tent for Mt. Lebanon Recreation's 27th annual father-son campout at Bird Park.

After dinner, we returned to the soccer field for a "fire and ice" science demonstration that captivated the children. My son alternated between expressions of wonder and bursts of laughter as the experiments unfolded.

Two local Boy Scouts then joined our group to build a campfire and give a presentation on fire safety, followed by a question-and-answer session. By the end, my son was so impressed that he was practically an honorary Boy Scout in spirit.

Next came the obligatory campfire s'mores.

Thankfully, the dads were up to the challenge of keeping eager children in check as they wielded marshmallows on metal roasting

sticks and competed for prime spots around the fire. The Scouts' safety message clearly made an impression, as everyone managed to roast, char and devour as many s'mores as their hearts desired without incident.

Meanwhile, an inflatable movie screen had been set up on the soccer field. Families gathered with their camp chairs to watch "The Iron Giant," an animated science fiction film about a young boy who befriends a massive alien robot during the Cold War.

By the time the movie ended, it was nearly 9:30 p.m., and everyone headed back to their tents to settle in for the night.

As my son and I stretched out on our self-inflating,



An inflatable movie screen provided outdoor entertainment as campers gathered to watch "The Iron Giant" during Mt. Lebanon Recreation's annual father-son campout at Bird Park.

4-inch-thick camping mattress (highly recommended!), we read a book together and talked until he drifted off to sleep.

Then, a sliver of self-doubt crept in.

I lay awake listening to gusts of wind shake our tent.

Had I secured the stakes tightly enough? Would the tent come uprooted in the middle of the night? And, perhaps most concerning, would this destroy the illusion of the dad-who-can-do-everything that I had worked so hard to project for my son?

I began to sweat a little at the thought.

Despite my concerns, I eventually fell fast asleep.

When morning arrived, I was relieved to discover that no tents had blown

away and not a single stake had come loose.

Our 7 a.m. wake-up call sent everyone trudging back through the woods to the pavilion for a breakfast of doughnuts, bagels, juice and coffee.

After breakfast, we returned to the soccer field, packed up our tents and belongings, and headed home with a sense of accomplishment — and some wonderful memories of our night outdoors.

The experience was so enjoyable that my son and I are already talking about attending next year's campout.

And if we do, you can be sure I'll drive those tent stakes a little deeper into the ground. ♥



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LEBO BEAT

SPORTS

Who Was Frank Gill?

Beloved coach, mentor and volunteer left a lasting mark on Mt. Lebanon hockey and the community he called home By Dean Cefalo

For nearly 50 years, it was known as the Mt. Lebanon Ice Center, but most locals simply called it 'The Rink.'

For five decades, multiple generations of figure skaters, hockey players and recreational skaters pulled open those heavy brown steel doors, heard that familiar metallic clank and stepped inside to the distinctive smell of cool rink air.

For many, The Rink became a second home.

Young athletes didn't just practice there; they grew up there. Families and teams didn't simply use the facility; they became part of the fabric of The Rink.

Perhaps no one embodied that sense of family, community and selflessness more than Frank Gill.

Frank the hockey parent. Frank the hockey player. Frank the coach. Frank the mentor. Frank the volunteer.

Frank Gill was the kind of citizen every community needs.

Gill and his wife, Deborah, raised their young family — sons Micah and Charlie and daughter Mollie — on Woodhaven Drive. When their eldest son, Micah, began playing ice hockey at a young age, Frank and the Gill family embarked on a nearly

two-decade journey that would change not only their lives but the lives of many others.

Ice hockey, like so many youth sports, requires a tremendous amount of time, commitment and energy. Frank fell in love with the game — and embraced all the unglamorous parental duties that came with it.

He became the model volunteer, focusing much of his attention on youth hockey and the Mt. Lebanon Hornets organization. For more than a decade, he worked tirelessly as an assistant coach, head coach and director of communications, eventually becoming president of the Mt. Lebanon Hockey Association.

Frank believed hockey should always be fun for the kids. Along the way, he seamlessly mixed lessons about respect, teamwork and positive thinking with the joy of playing the game.

He became a role model without even knowing it.

At a time when parents and coaches can sometimes lose sight of the pure joy of youth sports, Frank was a welcome exception. Every practice and every game was about the kids.

"Frank taught many critical non-hockey lessons that the kids learn while



Frank Gill (Photos provided)

playing hockey: how to win, how to lose, how to respect an opponent and how to be a good teammate," said hockey parent and friend Pete Eberhart.

Sadly, in May 2023, at age 46, Frank Gill died after a six-month battle with cancer. The Rink was silent.

Soon, much of the hockey community he had touched rallied behind an idea: renaming the rink in his honor.

On Sept. 19, 2026, The Rink officially became the Frank Gill Ice Rink.

During the renaming ceremony, Frank's son Micah reflected on what the honor meant to his family.

"I want to thank my family, the Mt. Lebanon community, and the hockey community for making this possible. I want to give a huge thank you to



The Gill family, from left: Frank, Deborah, Micah, Mollie and Chuck.

my mom, who has been the rock that has held this family together. I love you so much. And thank you to my dad for being someone that people love. Every day I am prouder and prouder to be his son."

Deborah Gill also spoke about the significance of seeing her husband's name become a permanent part of the community he loved.

"It is a tremendous honor for us to be able to recognize Frank this way. He loved Mt. Lebanon. He believed in giving back to this community and appreciated all that it offered to our family and to so many others. It is difficult to put into words what it means to know that Frank's name will become a permanent part of a place where people of all ages come together to skate, play hockey, learn, compete

and make memories. I can't imagine a more fitting way to honor his life and his love for this community."

The Mt. Lebanon Blue Devil Club also recognized Gill posthumously with its 2026-27 Sportsman of the Year Award. The organization honored him as a tireless supporter of youth athletics, a father of three and a true connector between youth sports and Mt. Lebanon High School programs.

And perhaps there could be no more fitting continuation of Frank's story than what happened back on the ice.

His son Charlie Gill, a junior at Mt. Lebanon High School, scored a goal in his first game of the season at the rink that now bears his father's name.

Today, as families pull open those heavy steel doors and step into that familiar cool rink air, perhaps they'll take a moment to remember Frank the hockey parent, Frank the coach, Frank the mentor, Frank the volunteer — and, to so many who knew him, Frank the legend.

May his legacy of goodness and kindness, and his love for hockey, community and family, live on forever at The Frank. ♥

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Mt. Lebanon High School and Middle School Athletics Schedule

Oct. 16-Nov. 23, 2026

BOYS SPORTS

FOOTBALL

Oct. 22 – Freshman vs. Pine-Richland B (Home), 3:30 p.m.

Oct. 23 – Varsity vs. North Allegheny (Home), 7 p.m.

Oct. 24 – JV vs. North Allegheny (Away), 10 a.m.

Oct. 26 – Freshman vs. Moon Area (Home), 3:30 p.m.

Oct. 30 – Varsity vs. Canon-McMillan (Home), 7 p.m.

Oct. 31 – JV vs. Canon-McMillan (Away), 10 a.m.

WPIAL Playoffs Start Nov. 6

Championship Game is Nov. 21 @ Pine-Richland

HOCKEY

Oct. 16 – JV vs. Upper St. Clair (Away), Ice Castle Arena, 8:50 p.m.

Oct. 19 – JV vs. Thomas Jefferson (Home), Frank Gill Ice Rink, 8:30 p.m.

Oct. 22 – Varsity vs. Pine-Richland (Away), Baierl Ice Complex, 9:10 p.m.

Oct. 26 – JV vs. Bishop Canevin (Home), Frank Gill Ice Rink, 8:30 p.m.

Oct. 29 – Varsity vs. Penn-Trafford (Home), Frank Gill Ice Rink, 7:10 p.m.

Nov. 9 – JV vs. Neshannock (Away), Hess Ice Rink, 7:15 p.m.

Nov. 12 – Varsity vs. Upper St. Clair (Home), Frank Gill Ice Rink, 9:10 p.m.

Nov. 13 – JV vs. Thomas Jefferson (Away), Ice Castle Arena, 8:50 p.m.

Nov. 23 – Varsity vs. South Fayette (Home), Frank Gill Ice Rink, 7:10 p.m.

SOCCER

Oct. 20 – JV vs. South Fayette (Home), 6 p.m.

Oct. 20 – Varsity vs. South Fayette (Home), 7:30 p.m.

WPIAL Playoffs Start Oct. 22

CROSS-COUNTRY

Oct. 22 – Varsity, White Oak, 1:45 p.m.

WPIAL Championship is on Oct. 29 @ White Oak in McKeesport, PA

GIRLS SPORTS

SOCCER

WPIAL Playoffs Start Oct. 22

VOLLEYBALL

Oct. 20 – Jefferson Middle vs. Moon Middle School (Home), 3:45 p.m.

Oct. 20 – JV vs. Baldwin (Away), 5:30 p.m.

Oct. 20 – Varsity vs. Baldwin (Away), 7 p.m.

Oct. 22 – Jefferson Middle vs. Mellon Middle School (Away), 3:45 p.m.

Oct. 22 – Mellon Middle vs. Jefferson Middle School (Home), 3:45 p.m.

Oct. 22 – JV vs. Canon-McMillan (Home), 6 p.m.

Oct. 22 – Varsity vs. Canon-McMillan (Home), 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 24 – JV vs. North Allegheny (Away), 8:30 a.m.

WPIAL Playoffs Start Oct. 26

Championship Matches are Nov. 5-7 @ Peters Township

FIELD HOCKEY

Oct. 20 – JV vs. Hempfield Area (Home), 6 p.m.

Oct. 20 – Varsity vs. Hempfield Area (Home), 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 22 – JV vs. Pine-Richland (Home), 6 p.m.

Oct. 22 – Varsity vs. Pine-Richland (Home), 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 26 – JV vs. Upper St. Clair (Away), 6 p.m.

Oct. 26 – Varsity vs. Upper St. Clair (Away), 7:30 p.m.

WPIAL Playoffs Start Oct. 28

Championship Matches are Nov. 3-5 @ North Allegheny

CROSS-COUNTRY

Oct. 22 – Varsity, Baldwin, 1 p.m.

WPIAL Championship is on Oct. 29 @ White Oak in McKeesport, PA

CHEERLEADING

Oct. 23 – Varsity, North Allegheny (Home), 7 p.m.

Oct. 30 – Varsity, Canon-McMillan (Home), 7 p.m.

WINTER SPORTS

Nov. 20 – First day of winter sports. No games currently listed.

Schedules are subject to change. Additional postseason games may be announced.

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Blue Devils Battle Through Fall Sports Season

Mt. Lebanon athletes earn victories in football and field hockey as fall competition continues

Mt. Lebanon High School's fall sports teams have experienced a mix of victories, difficult losses and memorable individual performances as the Blue Devils move toward the final weeks of the regular season.

From a hard-fought football victory over Seneca Valley to strong performances on the field hockey field, Mt. Lebanon athletes continue to compete across Western Pennsylvania.

Football: Blue Devils earn road victory

Mt. Lebanon's varsity football team picked up a 21-14 victory over Seneca Valley on Oct. 9, providing a highlight in a challenging season.

The Blue Devils traveled to Seneca Valley's NexTier Stadium and emerged with the seven-point victory. Jacob Zaber scored the go-ahead touchdown in the fourth quarter, helping Mt. Lebanon secure the win.

The victory followed a

difficult 62-0 loss to Central Catholic on Oct. 2.

Mt. Lebanon will look to build on its momentum with upcoming games against Hempfield Area, North Allegheny and Canon-McMillan.

Field hockey: Blue Devils show offensive strength

Mt. Lebanon's varsity field hockey team has demonstrated its scoring ability this fall, recording a pair of 9-0 victories over Norwin on Sept. 23 and Sept. 26.

The Blue Devils also defeated North Allegheny 3-2 on Sept. 28, adding another victory to their season record.

The team has faced tough competition, including a 4-0 loss to Pine-Richland on Oct. 6.

With additional games scheduled against Hempfield Area, Pine-Richland and Upper St. Clair, the Blue Devils will have opportunities to finish the season on a strong note.

Ice hockey: Mt. Lebanon falls in close contest

Mt. Lebanon's ice hockey team opened October with a competitive matchup against North Allegheny, falling 3-2 on Oct. 1.

The Blue Devils took an early lead when Xavier Bias scored a short-handed goal late in the first period.

Will White extended the advantage with a power-play goal in the second period, assisted by Cameron Mayer and Cooper Church.

Mt. Lebanon carried a 2-1 lead into the third period before North Allegheny scored twice to complete the comeback.

The game highlighted Mt. Lebanon's ability to compete against a strong opponent, despite the narrow loss.

Girls' soccer: Strong results continue

Mt. Lebanon's girls' soccer team has been one of the school's strongest performers this fall.

The Blue Devils defeated Bethel Park 7-1 on Oct. 5, delivering an impressive offensive performance. Two days earlier, Mt. Lebanon edged Norwin 1-0.

The team also recorded a 1-0 victory over Peters Township on Sept. 30 and a 2-0 shutout of Upper St. Clair on Sept. 23.

The victories reflect a combination of offensive production and effective defense as the Blue Devils prepare for the postseason.

Looking ahead: Playoff season approaches

October marks an important stretch for Mt. Lebanon's fall athletic programs as teams compete for postseason opportunities.

The WPIAL soccer playoffs are scheduled to begin Oct. 22, followed by girls' volleyball on Oct. 26, field hockey on Oct. 28 and cross-country championships on Oct. 29. Football playoffs begin in November.

For the Blue Devils, the coming weeks will provide opportunities to build on regular-season accomplishments and compete for postseason success. ♥



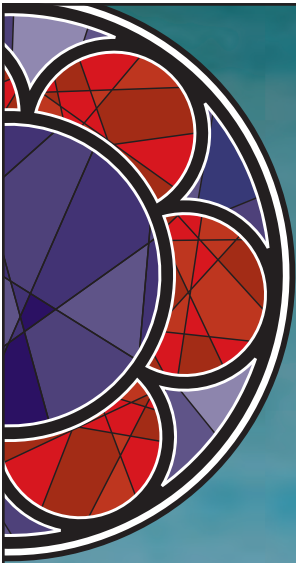
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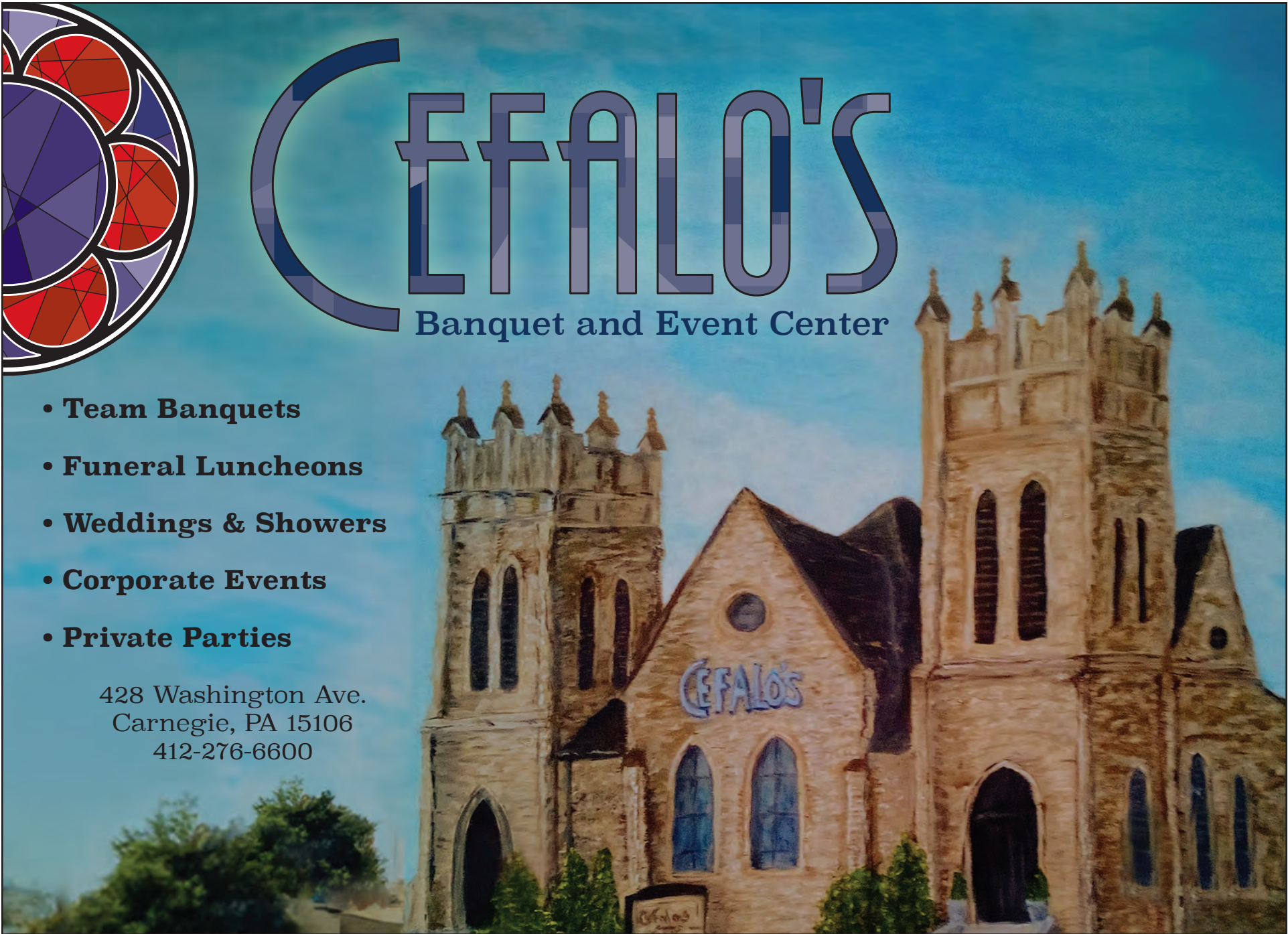


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License Plate Cameras

According to Haberman, the cameras can capture license plates with approximately 90% accuracy, even when vehicles travel at speeds exceeding 70 mph. Earlier generations of the technology had accuracy rates below 70%.

He said the department's crime clearance rate is approaching 90%, a figure he believes is substantially aided by ALPR technology.

The cameras have helped investigators solve cases ranging from hit-and-run accidents and fraud to investigations involving potentially dangerous individuals, Haberman said.

He cited a 2020 case in which an

automated license plate reader alerted officers to a wanted individual traveling along Washington Road. Police stopped the vehicle and discovered firearms and explosive devices, according to Haberman.

He also described a recent \$83,000 fraud investigation in which a suspect posing as an Uber driver collected money from a victim. Investigators used license plate reader information to locate the vehicle, leading to the suspect's apprehension in a neighboring community.

Despite those successes, Haberman acknowledged that the technology raises legitimate privacy questions.

Continued from page 1

"We are gleaning and gaining a ton of information on people," he said. "And we have to use that in a very transparent, sensible way."

He noted that license plate records could potentially reveal personal habits, including where individuals shop and their daily travel patterns.

Haberman said officers are permitted to access the information only for legitimate investigations and that the department is committed to auditing searches and maintaining records of system usage.

"We can't lose the trust of the public," he said.

Mt. Lebanon contracts with Viper, a license plate reader

technology provider used by numerous Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies. Haberman said the municipality operates under an agreement involving the Allegheny County district attorney's office, which maintains the primary license.

He said the arrangement provides security safeguards and helps ensure that information introduced as evidence in criminal proceedings can be authenticated.

Haberman also distinguished Mt. Lebanon's system from Flock Safety, another license plate reader provider that has attracted national attention.

The chief stressed that the cameras are not used for routine

traffic enforcement, including identifying expired or suspended vehicle registrations.

"ALPR is not utilized for traffic violations," he said.

Instead, the department is adjusting its software to eliminate certain automated alerts involving registration-related offenses.

Haberman said the technology has developed faster than laws and court decisions governing its use. He expects additional legislation and judicial rulings to address privacy protections and permissible access to collected information.

Until then, he said, police departments must establish responsible practices and maintain public confidence.

The municipality has gradually expanded its camera network since approximately 2016, generally adding about one intersection annually. During the presentation, Haberman said equipping an additional intersection costs approximately \$10,000.

While emphasizing the cameras' investigative benefits, Haberman said the department remains committed to evaluating its practices and responding to residents' concerns.

The challenge, he indicated, is preserving a technology police consider essential while ensuring its use does not undermine the public's trust. ♥

Election Day

Continued from page 1

to their homes. The Allegheny County Elections Division must receive ballot applications by 5 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 27.

Completed mail-in ballots returned through the U.S. Postal Service must be received by the county elections office no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3. A postmark alone does not satisfy the deadline.

Ballot return locations

Voters may also return completed mail-in or

absentee ballots at designated locations throughout Allegheny County.

Two convenient locations for Mt. Lebanon residents are Dormont Pool and South Park Ice Rink.

Ballot return locations will be open on the following dates:

- Friday, Oct. 30: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 31: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 1: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Monday, Nov. 2: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

On Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3, completed mail-in and absentee ballots may be returned to the Allegheny County Office Building, 542 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. The other satellite and ballot return locations will not be available that day.

Voters generally must return their own ballots unless they have completed the required authorization permitting a designated agent to return a ballot on their behalf.

What if you requested a mail-in ballot but want to vote in person?

If you received a mail-in ballot but have not returned it, you may surrender the ballot and its outer return envelope at your polling place on Election Day and vote using a regular ballot.

If you requested a mail-in ballot but never received it, or if you misplaced your ballot and cannot surrender it, you may vote using a provisional ballot at your polling place.

Provisional ballots are counted only after election officials verify that the voter is eligible and has not already cast a ballot.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Who's on the ballot?

Mt. Lebanon voters will have the opportunity to vote in four legislative and statewide races, along with a proposed amendment to the Allegheny County Home Rule Charter.

Governor and lieutenant governor

- Josh Shapiro and Austin Davis, Democratic incumbents
 - Stacy Garritty and Jason Richey, Republicans
 - Ken Krawchuk and Rob Thomas, Libertarians
- ### U.S. House of Representatives, 17th Congressional District
- Chris Deluzio, Democratic incumbent

- Tony Guy, Republican Pennsylvania Senate, 42nd District
 - Wayne Fontana, Democratic incumbent, unopposed
- ### Pennsylvania House of Representatives, 42nd District
- Jen Mazzocco, Democratic incumbent, unopposed

Allegheny County Home Rule Charter amendment

Voters will also be asked to consider a proposed amendment to the Allegheny County Home Rule Charter.

The ballot question reads: *Shall Article III, Subsection 7(c) of Allegheny County's Home Rule Charter be repealed in order to remove restrictions on County Council members' ability to receive County funding for personal staff, district offices, and fringe benefits?*

Voters may select "Yes" or "No."

A "Yes" vote would repeal the existing charter restriction, allowing county funding for council members' personal staff, district offices and fringe benefits.

A "No" vote would retain the existing restriction.

For additional information about voting procedures, registration status and polling locations, visit the Pennsylvania Department of State at vote.pa.gov or the Allegheny County Elections Division at alleghenycounty.us. ♥

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Plans change every year, and premiums, covered drugs, networks and out-of-pocket maximums can all shift. Even if you are happy with your current plan, it’s worth doing your homework. A Part D plan that covered your medications affordably last year might restructure its formula or raise copays for the

coming year. We recommend that every retired client review their Explanation of Benefits and Plan Summary each fall, even if they don’t plan to change plans. A “set it and forget it” approach can quietly cost you hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars over a year.

For those individuals who are still working past age 65 and covered by a qualifying employer plan, you may have deferred Medicare enrollment. However, once that employment or coverage ends, you have a limited Special Enrollment Period. Missing this window can trigger permanent penalties on Part B and Part D, which is a timing issue we build directly into retirement conversations.

If you carry a Medigap (Medicare Supplement) policy, those aren’t technically tied to the same October–December window, but it’s still a smart time to review pricing and coverage alongside everything else, especially since Medigap underwriting rules can make switching later more difficult or expensive.

One item that is often missed about Medicare is IRMAA. Your Medicare Part B and Part D premiums are income-adjusted based on your tax return two years prior through what’s called the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA). This means a large one-time income event such as a Roth conversion,

a big capital gain, or an RMD surge can temporarily push your Medicare premiums significantly higher two years later. This is exactly the kind of multi-year tax and income planning we do with clients, so decisions made today don’t create surprises down the road.

Open enrollment isn’t just an employer-benefits exercise for retirees. It’s a once-a-year checkpoint worth taking seriously. A 20-minute review each fall can meaningfully affect your health care costs, and, when layered with income and tax planning, it can protect you from costly surprises like IRMAA surcharges.

If you’d like help reviewing your Medicare options or understanding how a planned withdrawal might affect your premiums, that’s exactly the kind of conversation we’re happy to have.

If you would like to have your question answered in a future edition of *Lebo Beat*, please email it to Pittsburgh@carsonwealth.com.

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. ♥

Lebo Gift Gals *Your guide to gift giving — Mahjong Mania: Gift Ideas for Your Favorite Players*

As the leaves begin to turn and the air gets a little cooler, the holidays still feel comfortably far away. The rush of September has settled down, but before we know it, we’ll be gearing up for the sprint through the end of December.

Now is the perfect time to start thinking about who’s on your holiday shopping list. Take a moment to consider each person and their interests. If nothing immediately comes to mind, start looking for clues and paying attention to the little things. A bit of thoughtful planning now can save hours of shopping and plenty of stress come December.

If you have a mahjong player on your list, you’re in luck! There’s no denying that mahjong is having a “mahj-moment.” Whether taking lessons from a pro at Mediterra on Beverly Road or gathering regularly at a friend’s house, mahjong has become the new book club, girls’ night out and “keep your brain sharp” activity all rolled into one.

And we’re here for it! From gifts for your mahjong-loving girlfriends to a thoughtful surprise for the hostess of your next “Dots & Drinks” gathering — or even your wife who’s just learning to play — there are plenty of fun and creative options.

With its colorful tiles, quirky terminology, cocktails and growing fan base, it’s no wonder mahjong has inspired an entire category of playful gifts.

Gift ideas for the mahjong enthusiasts in your life include cute “carry-it-all” totes, bracelets crafted from mismatched vintage bone and bamboo tiles, cocktail napkins, cocktail mixes, dice dishes, colorful playing mats, holiday ornaments, stemless drinkware, tea towels, interchangeable serving trays, handmade fabric clutches, decorative throw pillows, Nora Fleming minis and plenty of other mahj-must-haves.

As always, we’re here to help you navigate your gifting decisions with a personal, face-to-face local perspective and a passion for meaningful gifts for every season of life.

We’d love for readers to join the conversation! Have a gifting dilemma or a topic you’d like us to explore? Send your ideas and questions to info@lebobeat.com. ♥



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

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The Home Beat

By Jordan Smoke

“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 Journey of a Thousand Gallons

The gutter is only the first stop. Four places to look before the basement gets wet.

An inch of rain on a typical Mt. Lebanon roof is about a thousand gallons of water. The gutter’s job is to make a successful hand-off. Gutters are the first stop in a system designed to carry water away from your home’s foundation. They need to be clear and pitched toward the downspout. If they’re clogged or sagging, water spills over the edge and lands beside the house. Stop two is the downspout. Leaves and debris can collect at the elbows, where a blockage can be hard to see from the ground.

Stop three is the one that matters most in Mt. Lebanon’s older homes. Many downspouts disappear into the ground and run through clay pipes as old as the home itself. Those pipes can crack, collect roots or collapse. When they do, water may back up or escape into the soil near the foundation. It’s a frequently missed source of basement water. Stop four is the ground. If water exits at ground level, soil should slope away from the house. Mulch beds, landscaping or settled fill can gradually create a slope toward the foundation instead. Clean the gutters this fall. Just don’t stop there. Next time there’s a hard rain, walk the perimeter of your home. Look for water spilling over a gutter, water pooling at the bottom of a downspout, swelling up out of the ground beside it, or flowing back towards the house. The gutter is where the water starts collecting. The basement is where it can end up if any stops along the journey fail. ♥

Police Beat

Recent incidents reported by Mt. Lebanon police from Sept. 13 through Oct. 10.

Alcohol violation | Oct. 1, 3:06 p.m. | 100 block Cochran Road
Purchase, consumption, possession or transportation of alcoholic beverages.

Theft | Oct. 1, 9:07 a.m. | 1100 block Bower Hill Road
Theft by unlawful taking from a building; property valued at more than \$50 but less than \$2,000.

Vandalism | Oct. 1, 8:17 a.m. | 700 block Vermont Avenue
Criminal mischief involving property damage of \$500 or less.

Retail theft | Sept. 30, 7:55 p.m. | 1600 block McFarland Road
Retail theft involving merchandise valued at \$150 or more.

Neglect | Sept. 30, 7:09 a.m. | First block Academy Avenue
Neglect of a care-dependent person; failure to provide care.

Harassment | Sept. 29, 6 a.m. | 1300 block Bower Hill Road
Harassment involving physical contact, including striking or kicking.

Fraud | Sept. 29, 3:40 p.m. | 100 block Mt. Lebanon Boulevard
Unauthorized use of another person’s access device.

Theft | Sept. 29, 1:46 p.m. | First block North Meadowcroft Avenue
Theft by unlawful taking from a building.

Harassment | Sept. 29, 9:36 a.m. | 1100 block Arrowood Drive
Harassment involving physical contact, including striking or kicking.

Theft | Sept. 28, 2:14 p.m. | 1100 block Bower Hill Road
Theft by unlawful taking from a building.

Vandalism | Sept. 28, 2:39 a.m. | 600 block Washington Road
Criminal mischief involving property damage of \$500 or less.

Theft | Sept. 27, 9:54 a.m. | 100 block Vernon Drive

Theft by unlawful taking.

Identity theft | Sept. 25, 10:49 a.m. | First block Mt. Lebanon Boulevard
Identity theft involving a victim age 60 or older and an amount less than \$2,000.

Fraud | Sept. 25, 10:18 a.m. | 200 block Parker Drive
Theft by deception involving a false impression; amount exceeding \$2,000 but less than \$100,000.

Simple assault | Sept. 23, 4:45 p.m. | 300 block Old Gilkeson Road
Simple assault.

Fraud | Sept. 21, 5:52 p.m. | 600 block Osage Road
Unauthorized use of another person’s access device.

Simple assault | Sept. 20, 11:38 a.m. | 1100 block Driftwood Drive
Simple assault.

Alcohol violation | Sept. 20, 2:23 a.m. | 700 block Washington Road
Purchase, consumption, possession or transportation of alcoholic beverages.

Theft | Sept. 19, 5:35 p.m. | 200 block Buchanan Place
Theft by unlawful taking.

Theft | Sept. 19, 1:29 p.m. | 300 block Orchard Drive
Theft by unlawful taking.

Fraud | Sept. 18, 7:15 p.m. | 100 block Main Entrance Drive
Deceptive business practices involving the sale or offer of less than the represented quantity.

Theft | Sept. 18, 11:30 a.m. | 400 block Washington Road
Theft by unlawful taking from a building.

Aggravated assault | Sept. 16, 10:10 p.m. | 300 block Old Gilkeson Road
Aggravated assault involving a firearm and injury to a police officer or other protected person.

Theft | Sept. 16, 3:46 p.m. | 300 block Washington Road
Theft by unlawful taking from a building.

Retail theft | Sept. 16, 2:41 p.m. | 400 block Washington Road
Retail theft involving merchandise valued at \$150 or more.

Fraud | Sept. 16, 8:08 a.m. | 400 block Kurt Drive
Theft by deception involving a false impression; amount exceeding \$100,000 but less than \$500,000.

Disorderly conduct | Sept. 15, 2:11 p.m. | 1000 block McNeilly Road
Disorderly conduct involving fighting or threatening violent behavior.

Theft | Sept. 15, 9:44 a.m. | 800 block Ella Street
Theft of leased property valued at \$200 or more but less than \$2,000.

Harassment | Sept. 14, 1:36 p.m. | 100 block Cochran Road
Harassment involving a course of conduct serving no legitimate purpose.

Theft | Sept. 14, 3:24 p.m. | First block Cedar Boulevard
Theft by unlawful taking.

Theft | Sept. 14, 2:06 p.m. | 2900 block Midland Avenue
Theft by unlawful taking from a building.

Vandalism | Sept. 14, 12:58 p.m. | 600 block Washington Road
Criminal mischief involving property damage of \$500 or less.

DUI | Sept. 13, 6:38 p.m. | Washington Road and Beadling Rd.
Driving under the influence.

Disorderly conduct | Sept. 13, 2:16 p.m. | Oak Way and South Meadowcroft Avenue
Disorderly conduct involving hazardous or physically offensive behavior.

Bark Beat

Celebrating Mt. Lebanon’s beloved dogs

Meet Finnegan and Sadie

Finnegan is a St. Bernard and Sadie is a yellow Labrador retriever.

Favorite Humans?
Our dear dad/grandfather, aka “Gido” and sweet Auntie Alice, aka “Umptee”

Also, Joseph who always plays with them.

Favorite Treat?
Peanut butter!!! We’re not picky, we’ll eat anything, but peanut butter is the best.

Favorite toy?
A good ole bone is always fun to chew on.

Favorite thing to do besides eat and sleep?
We’re always up for a car ride. We love barking and chasing the deer out of our backyard.

Why do my humans think we are special?
We are part of the family. We give unconditional love, always drool, and stay close to our humans.

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



Finnegan and Sadie, just your typical lapdogs.



Finnegan & Sadie are ready for a ride! (Photos provided)



Table for three, please!



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