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# PRESS

January 24, 2024

GOD BLESS AMERICA

Vol. 51: No. 27



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## Bangor Wins Over Southern Lehigh In Girls Basketball Senior Night Game



Bangor took on Southern Lehigh on January 18th in their Senior Night Girls Basketball Game. Bangor won, 44 to 30. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## Bangor Goes Head To Head Against Southern Lehigh For Senior Night Wrestling Match



Bangor took on Southern Lehigh on January 17th during their Senior Night Wrestling match. Bangor was defeated, 34 to 31. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## Project Self-Sufficiency Seeks Donations for "Sister-to-Sister" Prom Shop

New and Gently Used Formal Wear and Accessories



Project Self-Sufficiency is seeking donations of new and gently used formal wear, including prom dresses, bridesmaids' dresses, gowns for mothers-of-the-bride, evening bags, jewelry, wraps and shawls, as well as shoes in good condition for display in the agency's annual "Sister-to-Sister" Prom Shop. The dresses must

be dry cleaned and on a hanger. All items will be displayed in a boutique pop-up shop housed on Project Self-Sufficiency's Newton campus; teen girls are invited to select shoes, wraps and jewelry to complement their dress. The Sister-to-Sister Prom Shop will be open 3:00 - 7:00 p.m., April 4th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th; 3:00 -

5:00 p.m., April 5th and 12th; and 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., April 6th and 13th. Open to the public; no appointment required. "The community has been particularly supportive of the 'Sister-to-Sister Prom Shop' every year, and we hope to have a large collection of beautiful gowns and accessories for display," commented Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. "We believe that every young woman deserves the chance to have a beautiful dress for that special, once-in-a-lifetime event, and we are looking forward to opening the prom shop in the spring." Donations will be accepted at Project Self-Sufficiency, **PROM cont'd on pg 2**

## Pen Argyl Boys Basketball Team Wins Over Palisades High School



Pen Argyl took on Palisades High School in Boys Basketball on January 20th. The Green Knights won over the Pirates, 45 to 29. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

## Bangor Area High School Announces New Head Coach



Bangor Area School district is excited to announce the appointment of Vinnie Andrews as the new Head Football Coach at Bangor High School. Coach Andrews has 15 years of experience coaching at the varsity level in the Lehigh Valley. For the last four seasons he has been an integral part of our football program, serving as both Offensive Coordinator and Associate Head Coach. His strategic vision and ability to motivate and inspire athletes have been instrumental in our team's success during his tenure here at Bangor. We are excited for Coach Andrews to step into the role of Head Football coach, as his track record, combined with his deep understanding of the game along with his commitment to holistic student-athlete development make him the ideal candidate to lead our program.

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# PEN ARGYL (45) VS PALISADES (29) BOYS BASKETBALL



Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



## PROM

Continued From Page 1

Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Project Self-Sufficiency is located at 127 Mill Street in Newton. The Sister-to-Sister Prom Shop is a program of the Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency. For information about the Sister-to-Sister Prom Shop, or to find out more about any of the programs at Project Self-Sufficiency, call 973-940-3500 or visit [www.projectsselfsufficiency.org](http://www.projectsselfsufficiency.org).

Project Self-Sufficiency has assisted low-in-

come individuals and families in northwest New Jersey since 1986. Services offered at Project Self-Sufficiency include high school equivalency education, computer courses, employment skills training, job placement services, support groups, parenting classes, childcare and preschool, legal assistance and education, counseling and advocacy, referrals, and help with emergency basic needs, like food and clothing. For more information about the programs and services offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, visit [www.projectsselfsufficiency.org](http://www.projectsselfsufficiency.org) or call 973-940-3500.

The Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency is a program of support which includes parenting skills training, economic self-sufficiency services, family activities, legal education services, information about health and nutrition, referrals, advocacy, and other services. All activities are free and open to the public. Family Success Centers offer services to children, youth, families, individuals, and communities. Funding is provided by the New Jersey Department of Children & Families.

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TeamTommy Inc is a 501c3 pediatric cancer foundation offering support to families of the Slate Belt community. The foundation was created to carry on the legacy of Tommy Stackhouse, a 2021 graduate of Bangor High School who was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia in 2019 and subsequently, passed from the same in May 2022. Tommy was a Special Education major at Northampton Community College and was dedicated to helping teens with disabilities.

TeamTommy Inc provides grocery and gas gift cards along with hospital cafeteria stipends to pediatric cancer families. Comfort boxes are also sent to patients with fun items to make their hospital stay a little less cumbersome. We also present a scholarship to a graduating senior at Bangor High School.

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# BANGOR (31) VS SOUTHERN LEHIGH (34) SENIOR NIGHT WRESTLING



Manager Megan Engle with her parents, Dan and Lindsay



Noah Hillis with his parents, Michael and Jennifer



Landon Smith with his parents, Salena and Brad



Sam Woolverton with his parents, Hope and Marshall



Riley Stapp with his parents, Josh and Melissa



Not Pictured: Manager Sammi Tucker. Sammi is the daughter of Chris and Jennifer Tucker



Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



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Blairstown Township Annual Reorganization Was Held On January 1st, 2024. On the agenda was the swearing in of the new members of the committee for 2024, the appointment of the mayor and deputy mayor and the officers of the Blairstown Hose Company # 1.

Newly Elected.....Eric Lohman.  
Reelected .....Walter Orcutt.  
Oath Of Office For Mayor.....Rob Moorhead.  
Oath Of Office Deputy Mayor...Walter Orcutt.

Blairstown Hose Company # 1  
Chief.....Mark Slater.  
Deputy Chief.....Stuart Kise.  
Captain.....George Curreri.  
Lieutenant.....Mike Pirello.

Photos by Bob Halberstadt/  
The Free Weekly Press

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# BANGOR (44) VS SOUTHERN LEHIGH (30) SENIOR NIGHT GIRLS BASKETBALL



Amy Blaha with her parents, Christine and Scott



Jensyn Buist with her parents, Jeff and Julie



Kyleena Gonzalez with her parents, Jose and Tennille



Sarah Hartzell with her parents, Andrew and Tanya



Addison Karasek with her parents, Ronold and Krista



Julia Pinter with her parents, Karyn and Martin



Jace Polowy with her parents, Andrew and Jennifer



Chloe Proko with her parents, Chantal and Joe



Ashley Richards with her parents, Eric and Jennifer

Photo by Dale Young/  
The Free Weekly Press

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# WARREN COUNTY (NJ) FIRE ACADEMY HOLDS COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES



On January 18th, The Warren County Fire Academy held the commencement exercises for class 90 at the Belvedere Manor. After about 200 Hours of classes, which included a battery of physical and agility skills required of all attending recruits, plus written tests and a knowledge of hazardous materials and conditions, the twenty graduates received their Fire Fighter 1 certification. In addition to their FF1 certificates there were awards for the most improved recruits and one for academic excellence. Among those who graduated were eight local residents of this area, one from the Knowlton Fire Department, two from Belvedere, (Goodwill Fire Company) and five of them now are the first members of the newly formed, Freylinghusen Fire Department. Bob Halberstadt/The Free Weekly Press

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# Warren County Preserves More Than 846 Acres of Land in 2023

Warren County's open space preservation efforts protected more than 846 acres of land from development in 2023, the Board of County Commissioners and the county Land Preservation Department announced.

Located in northwest New Jersey, Warren County still retains much of its wilderness and rural charm compared with other parts of the nation's most densely populated state. Bounded along the west by the Delaware River, the County is home to dense forests, babbling streams, active farmlands, and inviting town centers. For decades, Warren County residents and public leaders have been working hard to protect this landscape against unwise development while promoting sustainable economic activity.

Despite mounting development pressures of late, Warren County remains firmly committed to protecting this landscape and continues to aggressively preserve both open space and farmland.

"Warren County's greatest assets are our forests, meadows, streams and lakes. Preserving these resources has been a top priority for the past decade and will continue to be so into the future," explained County Commissioner Director James R. Kern III. "By partnering with our municipalities, nonprofits and other local groups, we will continue to protect the rural nature and beauty of this county," Kern added.

Open Space and Park-



Last year, Warren County acquired two open space properties totaling about 125 acres. These properties expanded the County's Oxford Mountain Natural Resource Area, bringing that park to a total of 693 acres. With these newest additions, the County's park system now includes more than 2,582 acres of permanently preserved lands. The lands not only help improve water quality and minimize flood damage, but they provide critical habitat that helps sustain biodiversity and offers areas where residents and visitors can experience nature and enjoy outdoors recreation.

The Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners is responsible for recommending the acquisition of open space and coordinating the use and improvement of parkland. Guided by the County Open Space Plan and the Morris Canal 25-Year Action Plan, they have focused on acquiring key tracts of land along the Morris Canal Greenway, as well as expanding existing natural resource areas. Among

other things, the county looks for unique features and sites of interest that are near population centers and accessible to residents.

Thanks to these efforts, the County's park system has grown to comprise three natural resource areas and six parks along the Morris Canal. These include the White Lake, Marble Hill and Oxford Natural Resource Areas, as well as canal sites such as the Port Warren, Bread Lock, Port Murray, and Mount Rascal parks. "Even with all of these great sites, county open space and parkland only accounts for about 1 percent of all land in Warren County," said Corey Tierney, administrator of the Warren County Department of Land Preservation, "but we are also fortunate to have so many federal, state, and municipal parks here for our residents to explore." More information about these parks is available at [www.warrenparks.com](http://www.warrenparks.com).

In recent years, the County also has overseen substantial improvements to its parkland and related structures, as well as coordinated the

increasing maintenance of these areas. For example, in order to accommodate increased visitation to White Lake, the County expanded both the main and secondary parking areas, and installed a new floating dock for use by visitors fishing and paddling.

"Over the past 10 years, not only have we seen record visitation levels at White Lake, but many of our other parks have also seen an increase in visitation as interest in the Morris Canal Greenway has spread across the state," said Tierney. "Fortunately, we have been able to partner with the New Jersey Youth Corps and Warren County Parks Foundation volunteers to help maintain these areas."

According to Tierney, open space preservation is a good investment because it's important for environmental, health, and economic reasons. "Not only does it help strengthen the resiliency of the ecosystem," Tierney explained, "but studies show that access to parks can help improve people's health, spur commerce, and even increase nearby property

values. These efforts continue to enjoy the public's support because they improve our residents' quality of life."

According to the most recent New Jersey State-wide Comprehensive Recreation Plan, in 2021 outdoor recreation accounted for 1.5 percent of New Jersey's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP), equaling \$20.3 billion.

**Farmland Preservation:** In addition to open space preservation, last year Warren County and its partners also permanently preserved 11 farms totaling more than 732 acres. The total cost of preserving these lands was \$3,975,392 with the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) contributing about 38.5 percent, the County of Warren about 56.6 percent, and municipalities about 4.9 percent. According to the Warren County Department of Land Preservation, the County has now permanently preserved 337 farms comprising more than 29,216 acres of land.

Out of the State's 21 counties, Warren County ranks fourth in total farmland acres preserved and third in total farms preserved, behind only Hunterdon County (466 farms preserved) and Salem County (409 farms preserved). While these farms remain in private ownership, a perpetual development easement is placed on the property which restricts it to agricultural use only.

"In Warren County, agriculture isn't just a way of life - it's over a \$93 million a year industry," County Commissioner Lori Ciesla said. "Farm-

ing also supports many other local businesses and requires very little municipal services. It's a wise investment for taxpayers," she added.

Although the county has now preserved in excess of 29,000 acres of farmland, Tierney cautioned, "Some people hear that big number and think we've done enough, but that's only about 40 percent of the county's 72,000 acres of farmland and about 12.5 percent of the total area of Warren County. With increasing development pressure here, we are continuing to pursue farmland preservation as aggressively as we can." The County is currently processing 14 farmland preservation applications totaling 1,451 acres. It expects to permanently preserve these farms in 2024.

"By preserving our farms, parks, and historic sites, we are investing in Warren County's agricultural, recreational, and tourism industries," explained County Commissioner Jason Sarnoski.

"We can see returns on these investments as more people visit our parks and downtowns, local farms grow their operations, and families move to here from elsewhere. This is a wonderful place to live, work, and explore - and there's real value in sustaining that," Sarnoski noted.

To learn more about the farmland preservation program, visit [www.warrencountynj.gov/government/land-preservation-department/farmland-preservation](http://www.warrencountynj.gov/government/land-preservation-department/farmland-preservation) or contact the Warren County Department of Land Preservation at 908-475-7750.

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### Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



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Hello, fellow readers,  
After the first snow, followed by heavy rains, I roamed the property looking for beauty amongst the dreary skies, muddy lawn, and lack of frosting. I came upon festive Partridge Berry, a charming native ground cover I didn't know we had.

Along Jacksonburg Creek, where I am blessed to live, there's a welcome swath of green – a carpet of moss I always admire. Sadly, we have downed trees on each side of the brook that fell during last winter's trifecta. Some have moved "down-river" in the heavy rains; the creek has swollen to twenty-five

feet wide. Thankfully, Mother Nature froze the ground before bringing on the most recent snow, so more beautiful trees didn't topple.

I noticed a charming little red berry as I crouched down to appreciate the many kinds of moss that had gathered to create a magnificent tapestry. Attached to it are dainty dark green leaves with veins in pale yellow. I've seen this little beauty on hikes along the Appalachian Trail but never noticed it creeping around the moss.

Partridge Berry is a native woody evergreen perennial that trails along forest floors and riverbanks in shady areas. It roots from the nodes (where branches and leaves sprout from the stems) and can form thick colonies, making a delightful ground cover.

It is vine-like, though it meanders, not climbs, and does not propagate easily from seed, instead, by cuttings. But please don't pilfer unless you have permission. Native plant nurseries have them for sale.

Partridge Berry looks festive, with



deep green leaves and scarlet berries, which is why it is often used in holiday pots and terrariums. (Building a terrarium is a perfect project to relieve the winter blues. For the how-to, visit a previous story—Terrariums-a Mini Gardening Warmup archived on AskMaryStone.com.)

As I took photos of this little cutie and the moss surrounding her, I felt like a Troll lurking amongst a furry carpet in a miniature forest. It made me feel small in comparison to the world around me. Yet big amongst the moss.

Do you remember Troll dolls as a kid? I called Mom a Troll when things didn't go my way – it became a standing joke as I grew up. She thought Trolls were ugly. I always thought they were cute, which is likely why the Christmas Troll gift to



Mom came back to me (smile).

Troll dolls originated in Denmark in the 1950s. Thomas Dam started the Danish company after his wife encouraged him to sell the wooden dolls he carved for his children. He called them Good Luck Trolls, and they quickly became popular. Thomas sold the wood dolls door-to-



door, but by 1956, the demand became too high so he opened a factory and switched to a rubber body stuffed with wood shavings to keep up with demand. (This bit of history is from TheTrollHole.com, the website for The Troll Hole Museum in Alliance, Ohio.)

Native American women made the leaves and berries of

Partridge Berry into tea and drank it during childbirth. The little berries are edible, too. They say they taste like sweetish-tart cucumbers, but I didn't nibble. Let's leave them for the wildlife and admire them amongst the moss and the trees.

Garden Dilemmas?  
AskMaryStone.com and your favorite Podcast App.



On Saturday, January 13th, six students from Bangor Area High School participated in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association District 10 band. They were Nicholas Janneck – Clarinet, Rachel Finkbeiner – Trumpet, Sarah Moore – Trumpet, Bean Cesari – Horn, Eric Goffinet - Euphonium (1st chair) and Brandon Martinho – Tuba. They were among hundreds of students who auditioned from schools in the counties of Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, and Schuylkill. Of those, 130 were selected to create the District 10 Band. Congrats to Nickolas Janneck, Rachel Finkbeiner, Eric Goffinet & Brandon Martinho on advancing to Region Band next month!

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# Warren County Revamps Public Records System to Promote Accessibility

Warren County started the new year with a new system for making public records available, including posting more commonly requested records online.

Changes include new online portals hosting the Warren County Health Department's septic and well records, and another for submitting requests to the County under New Jersey's Open Public Records Act, commonly referred to as OPRA. Access to these portals and links to other information is available at [www.warrencountynj.gov/government/public-information/requesting-government-records-opra](http://www.warrencountynj.gov/government/public-information/requesting-government-records-opra).



mitted to providing as much information online as possible. Uploading these documents and files eliminates archaic requests, reduces work on county staff and gives the

public information they are entitled to," Commissioner Director James R. Kern III said. The Health Department's public records portal contains all the department's

septic and well records searchable by Municipality, Address or Block & Lot, Warren County Health Officer Pete Summers explained, adding that the records are available for immediate review and download anytime.

"The new portal will reduce the delay in obtaining septic records for homeowners, engineers and realtors. Records that might have taken hours or even days to obtain are now available in minutes whenever they are needed by the public," Summers noted.

"The public may be pleasantly surprised to learn there are a number of records readily accessible to them without filing an

OPRA request," said Holly Luberto of the Warren County Public Information Department, who took the lead on implementing the new OPRA request system for the County and updating the Public Records page on the website.

Public Land Records, such as deeds, liens, and more, were already available through a searchable index of Warren County property records online, and can be accessed through the updated Public Records page on the county website, as well as through the Warren County Clerk's Office section of the website.

Some of the other commonly-sought records, including construction per-

mits, Certificates of Occupancy, information on underground/above ground storage tanks, fire inspections, and vital records (birth, marriage and death certificates) are municipal, not county, records but the county page includes a link to find municipal contact information.

The new portal for filing an OPRA request allows requestors to upload documents with their request. It also generates an automatic acknowledgment to let the requestor know the request has been received.

If someone prefers to print out an OPRA request form, fill it out by hand and submit it on paper, the document is available online to download.

# PA State Rep. Emrick Bill Will Give Voters Final Say Over New High-Impact Warehouses

Rep. Joe Emrick (R-Upper Nazareth) announced today he has introduced legislation that would give voters the final say over whether new high-impact warehouses and distribution centers should be approved in their community.

"These high-impact warehouses and distribution centers have had a devastating impact on our region. The loss of open space and farmland coupled with a lack of adequate infrastructure magnified by increased truck traffic and higher amounts of air, sound and light pollution are just some of the negative

effects warehouses and distribution centers have had on our area," Emrick said. "While high-impact warehouses and distribution centers are approved by local governments, the people who are most affected—the community—have no say in whether they should become part of the fabric of our region."

According to House Bill 1960, approval by voter referendum would be required for a warehouse or distribution center that is a development of regional significance at least 100,000 square feet in size and on three acres of land or



more. Current law states that a "development of regional significance" is any land development that, because of its

character, magnitude or location, will have substantial effect upon the health, safety or welfare of citizens in more than one municipality.

This designation ensures smaller businesses open for retail sales would not be impacted by the referendum requirement.

"I have heard loud and clear from local officials about the need for more local control in the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code," Emrick added. "That is why I introduced House Bill 1960: To maximize local control by giving the people a voice

at the ballot box in the final approval of these high-impact warehouses. This way the com-

munity can say with one voice when and how this kind of growth should continue."

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## Flood Announces Nearly \$180,000 in Grant Funding Awarded to Bushkill Township Park (Buskill Twp., PA)



Rep. Ann Flood (R-Northampton) is pleased to announce a grant of \$172,604 has been awarded by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) to benefit residents in Northampton County. These funds will be used to improve

the Bushkill Township Park in Bushkill Township.

"I am delighted that this terrific park and recreation area has been awarded grant funding for vital improvements," said Flood. "Community parks are hubs for recreation and connection. This grant is a significant stride toward improving the park, ensuring that it continues to be an enjoyable and accessible space for everyone."

The Bushkill Township Park is located at 1114 Bushkill Center Road, directly across the road from the township building and police headquarters. The park facilities are available for township residents at no fee, on a first come, first-served basis, for personal use only.

The CFA was established in 2004 as an independent agency of the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to administer Pennsylvania's economic stimulus packages. The CFA holds fiduciary responsibility over the funding of programs and investments in Pennsylvania's economic growth.

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## Parents Needed to Serve on Advisory Board - Project Self-Sufficiency Seeks Input From Parents About Needs and Services

Local parents are invited to attend an information session about the Journey Family Success Center Parent Advisory Board at Project Self-Sufficiency, Tuesday, January 30th, 5:00 p.m. Organizers are seeking input from families regarding area services, parenting challenges and concerns, and ideas for upcoming events. Family Success Center staff will highlight ways the agency can address issues facing local parents and incorporate feedback into future programs. Dinner and childcare will be provided for those in attendance. Advance registration is encouraged.

"Input from parents is crucial to the success of the Family Success Center and we are excited about offering residents the opportunity to meet area providers, express their concerns about gaps in services, and identify strategies for moving forward," remarked Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. "The Family Success Center has supported Sussex County parents and children for

many years. Expanding the Parent Advisory Board will allow us to further respond to the needs of area families and incorporate their feedback into existing and new programs for the community."

Project Self-Sufficiency is located at 127 Mill Street in Newton. For information about the Parent Advisory Board, or to find out more about any of the programs sponsored by the Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency, call 973-940-3500 or visit [www.journey-fsc.org](http://www.journey-fsc.org).

Project Self-Sufficiency has assisted low-income individuals and families in northwestern New Jersey since 1986. Services offered at Project Self-Sufficiency include high school equivalency education, computer courses, employment skills training, job placement services, support groups, parenting classes, childcare and preschool, legal assistance and education, counseling and advocacy, referrals, and help with emergency basic needs, like food and clothing. For more information about the



programs and services offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, visit [www.projectsselfsufficiency.org](http://www.projectsselfsufficiency.org) or call 973-940-3500.

The Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency is a program of support which includes parenting skills training, economic self-sufficiency services, family activities, legal education services, information about health and nutrition, referrals, advocacy, and other services. All activities are free and open to the public. Family Success Centers offer services to children, youth, families, individuals, and communities. Funding is provided by the New Jersey Department of Children & Families.

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