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April 30, 2026

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Vol. 53, No. 38

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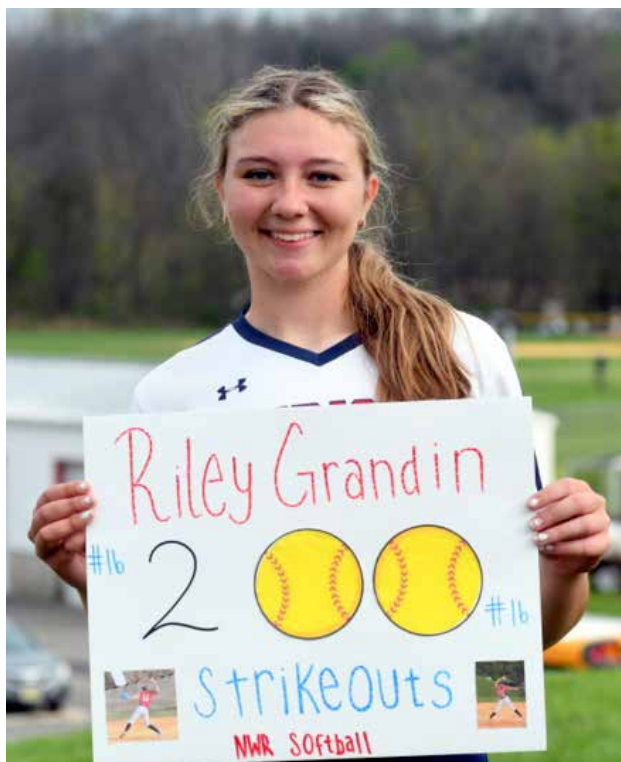


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Riley Grandin Celebrates Her 200th Strike Out for North Warren In Game Against Parsippany



North Warren took on Parsippany High School in softball on April 22nd. North Warren won, 7 to 3. During the game, Riley Grandin, pictured above, got her 200th strikeout. Congratulations Riley! Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Pen Argyl Honor's Senior Ashlyn Oessenick During Their Game Against Wilson



Pen Argyl went head to head against Wilson High School During their Senior Night Softball game on April 21st. The Lady Green Knights won, 15 to 3. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Parks, Recreation and History Volunteers Honored as Warren County, NJ, Celebrates Volunteer Month

Warren County honored its parks, history, and recreation volunteers as the Warren County Board of County Commissioners presented the 2026 Outstanding Volunteer Award to Irene Howell during a reception held

at the Richard D. Gardner Branch of the Warren County Library. "Our county would not be what it is without the expertise, advice, and hard work of so many volunteers," Commissioner Director Lori Ciesla said, adding,

"That is why recognizing these dedicated individuals is so important." Director Ciesla and Commissioner James R. Kern III were at the reception to personally VOLUNTEER Cont'd on pg 2

Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), NYC, Showcases Beautiful Designs By Students



The #1 Fashion School in America, Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC, recently held one of their yearly student exhibit last week. They also have one scheduled for May. This is a great resource opportunity for any high school students who may be interested in Fashion Design, Fashion Marketing and branding.

Boscola Announces \$1,401,907 in Funding for Dual Credit Programs at Lehigh Valley Community Colleges

State Senator Lisa M. Boscola announced that Northampton Community College and Lehigh Carbon Community College have been awarded a total of \$1,401,907 in grant funding for their respective dual credit programs, which allow high school students to take college courses and earn both college and high school credit.

“State funding for dual enrollment initiatives at our region’s communi- ty colleges is a prudent investment to improve educational opportunities and achievement that allows students to better prepare for entering college and pursuing successful careers,” Boscola stated. “Dual credit programs provide high school students the opportunity to experience college life before full-time enrollment and also makes college more affordable through the credits earned towards

their degrees.” Lehigh Carbon Community College was awarded \$1 million and Northampton Community College was awarded \$401,907 for their dual credit programs. State-wide, the Pennsylvania Department of Education awarded \$7 million in grants to 10 institutions of higher education for dual-credit programs through the Commonwealth’s Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program.

Northampton County Celebrates the 2026 Outstanding Senior Award Honorees

Northampton County recognized 11 extraordinary individuals and one outstanding community group at the annual Outstanding Senior Awards Ceremony on Thursday, April 23, 2026, at the Charles Chrin Community Center in Palmer Township. This annual celebration honors senior citizens whose leadership, service, and dedication have significantly elevated the Northampton County community.

“These individuals make a significant difference every day in our communities,” said County Executive Tara M. Zrinski. “Their efforts have reached every corner of this county—from mentoring young adults to cooking for dozens of people, from assisting Habitat for Humanity with homes, to supporting the mental health of our community members.”

This year's Outstanding Senior Award honorees are:

-Attorney William Agnew (Nazareth Borough)—He has led the effort to "keep Bushkill Township rural" by preserving its character against a proposed sewer line.
- Mark Atwood (Lower Nazareth)—He has dedicated his life to "paying it forward" through extensive service to his church and community, impacting many through his compassion and acts of kindness.

- Breaking Bread Kitchen Crusaders (Bangor)—Since 2013, The (BBK) has been a quiet but powerful force of care in Bangor, serving over 200 meals monthly with amazing dedication and compassion.

- Frank Chisesi (Bethlehem Township)—He has dedicated himself to extensive volunteer service, leadership in his church and community, and a 32 year career in the fire department, serving 12 years as Chief.

- John Diacogiannis (Hanover Township)—His decades of dedicated service have profoundly shaped Hanover Township and the Lehigh Valley through responsible development, fiscal stability, and enhanced public safety.

- Donald Eckhart (Walnutport)—He has profoundly impacted his community through decades of dedicated teaching, environmental stewardship, and active volunteerism.

- Richard Elterich (Bethlehem)—He leverages his professional expertise and compassionate spirit to anchor his community through decades of dedicated volunteer service.

- Mary Ellen Ernie (Bushkill Township)—She is a pillar of her community, consistently dedicating her time and effort to serve others through her church and various volunteer roles.

- Reverend Keven Fet-

terhoff (Cherryville)—He leads with compassion, providing essential aid and support services to families in need through his church initiatives.

- Janice Frits (Easton)—She has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to service, actively contributing her time and recourses to her church and numerous community organizations since 2006.

- Mary Neher (Hellertown)—She is recognized for her extensive volunteer work and compassionate service across her community and in her personal life, notably providing in-home care for the elderly and leading local organizations.

- Barbara Sandbrook (Nazareth)—A formal nurse, continues to dedicate herself to her community by leading volunteer groups, supporting literacy initiatives, and aiding those in need.

The event celebrated the vital roles senior citizens play in building stronger, more compassionate communities. Each honoree's story reflects years, often decades of tireless, often unsung effort.

For more information on the Outstanding Senior Awards of senior services in Northampton County, please contact the Northampton County Area Agency on Aging at 610-829-4540. Photos available upon request.

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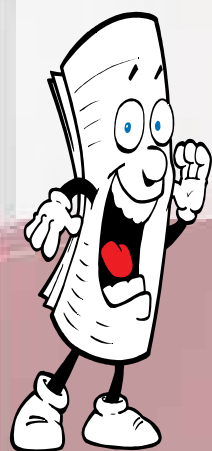
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VOLUNTEER

Continued from page 1

thank the group of volunteers, present the Volunteer Month Proclamation that was passed on April 21, and to honor Howell as the Outstanding Volunteer in the parks, recreation and history area.

A Washington Township resident, Howell has been an invaluable member of the Friends

of Shippen and an active volunteer at Shippen Manor Museum in Oxford for more than 20 years. Since 2003 she has offered her research and knowledge to visitors on local mining, industries, and the expansive history of Shippen Manor, the circa 1754 mansion that was home to the iron masters who ran Oxford Furnace.

All volunteers in attendance also received a certificate of appreci-

ation from the County.

Volunteer Month aims to recognize and honor those volunteering and serving others in their communities while also raising awareness about the importance of volunteerism to inspire more people to get involved in service activities. Volunteer Month serves as a reminder of the power of collective action and the significant role that volunteers play in building



Washington Township, Warren County resident Irene Howell (seated) receives the Outstanding Volunteer Award from (pictured L to R) Department of Land Preservation Director Corey Tierney, Commissioner James R. Kern III, Commissioner Lori Ciesla, and Warren County Division of Cultural & Heritage Affairs Assistant Administrator Gina Rosseland.

stronger, more resilient communities.

Warren County is fortunate to have many volunteers who tirelessly devote their time, skills, and resources to causes that benefit the greater good, embody-

ing the essence of civic responsibility and the spirit of service, enriching the lives of individuals and our communities.

During Volunteer Month the Warren County Board of Coun-

ty Commissioners urges all residents to take the time to thank and recognize those volunteers who help to make Warren County such a thriving community.

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New to the Bangor Public Library

Adult Fiction:

Hope Rises by David Baldacci; *Last One Out: A Novel* by Jane Harper; *The Auction* by Sadie Kincaid; *Go Gentle: A Novel* by Maria Semple

Adult Non Fiction:

Ghosts of Sicily: The True Story of the Naval Intelligence Agents Who Courted the mob to Fight Nazis in American and the Battlefields of Italy by Mark Harmon

Easy Fiction:

Raising Ruth by Deborah Niemoczynski

Young Adult Fiction:

Piper at the Gates of Dust by Patrick Ness; *The Thorn Queen* by Sasha Peyton Smith

Young Adult Non Fiction:

Banned Together: Our Fight for Readers' Rights; Ban This!: How One School Fought Two Book Bans and Won (And How You Can Too) by Christina Ellis; *From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry: The Killing of Vincent Chin and the Trial that Galvanized the Asian American Movement* by Paula Yoo; *Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre* by Brandy Colbert; *What are My Rights?: Q&A About Teens and the Law* by Thomas A. Jacobs; *The Military history Book; Bootleg: Murder, Moonshine, and the Lawless Years of Prohibition* by Karen Blumenthal; *The 21: The True Story of the Youth Who Sued the U.S. Government Over Climate Change* by Elizabeth Rusch; *Accountable: The True Story of a Racist Social Media Account and the Teenagers Whose Lives it Changed* by Dasha Slater; *The Real Rosalind: The Truth about Rosalind Franklin's DNA Discovery and How it was Erased* by Debbie Loren Dunn; *The Biology Book; The Ecology Book; Symphony for the City of the Dead Dimitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad* by M. T. Anderson; *The Classical Music Book; Game Changers: Inspirational Sports Stories: An Empowering Playbook for Teens to Build Resilience, Crush Goals and Cultivate Exceptional Character* by Dan Gold; *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith* by Deborah Heiligman; *Follow the Water; The Unbelievable True Story of a Teenager's Survival in the Amazon* by Ellen Cochrane; *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club* by Phillip Hoose; *America Redux: Visual Stories from our Dynamic History* by Ariel Aberg-Riger; *Hanged!: Mary Surratt & the Plot to Assassinate Abraham Lincoln* by Sarah Miller; *Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and its Legacy* by Albert Marrin

New to the Blue Mountain Community Library

Blue Mountain Community Library News for Early May:

The library is located at 216 S. Robinson Ave. in Pen Argyl. Open hours are Monday-Saturday 10am-12pm and Monday and Thursday 6-8pm. Questions? Call 610-863-3029 or email info@bmcl.org.

The BMCL plans to install a stairlift with grant funding awarded from the "Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities," an American Library Association (ALA) initiative that provides community engagement and accessibility resources to small and rural libraries to help them better serve people with disabilities.

As part of the grant, the library will host open conversations with residents about its proposed use of the grant funds on Wednesday, May 6th at 10:30am and Thursday, May 7th at 7:00pm at the library. The public is encouraged to attend either session and offer their feedback. Light refreshments will be served.

Our new mascot's name will be announced very soon; in-person voting ends April 30. "Mr. Fish" will be happy to finally have a name!

Try the new May scavenger hunt for children, with lots of new prizes in the prize basket.

The library's silent auction ends May 6. We have 20+ great items - many suitable for Mother's Day gifts! See the full list at: www.bmcl.org/support.

Library membership is not required to bid.

The library will discuss "Goodnight from Paris" by Jane Healey on Tuesday, May 12 at 6:30pm. Email info@bmcl.org to RSVP.

Now available: the opportunity to honor, remember, or celebrate someone special with a donation specifically toward library materials! See www.bmcl.org/support for more details.

New To The Circulating Collection:

Board Games:

Mad Gab
Apples To Apples Junior
Scattergories
Perfection

Adult Fiction:

Yesteryear (Caro Claire Burke)
Her Last Breath (Taylor Adams)

Adult Nonfiction:

London Falling (Patrick Radden Keefe)
Emilio Pucci (Terence Ward And Idanna Pucci)
Confronting Evil (Bill O'reilly)

Large Print Fiction:

The Bookstore Diaries (Susan Mallery)
The Final Storm (Fern Michaels)

Ya Fiction:

Better Than The Movies (Lynn Painter)
The Escape Game (Marissa Meyer And Tamara Moss)

Juvenile Fiction:

The Bad Guys (Aaron Blabey)

Juvenile Nonfiction:

Perfect Planets (John Farndon)

PEN ARGYL (15) VS WILSON (3) SENIOR NIGHT SOFTBALL



Ashlyn Oessenick with her parents, Todd & Sheri Oessenick



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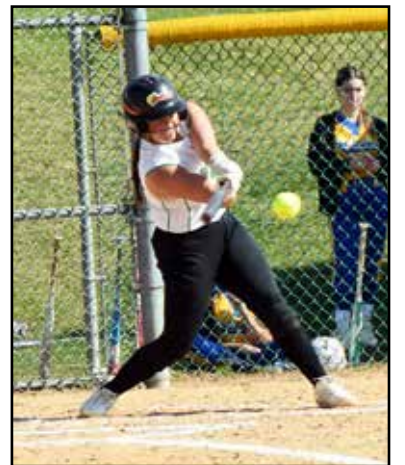
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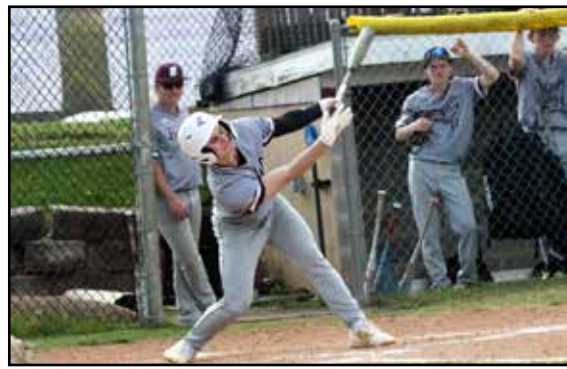
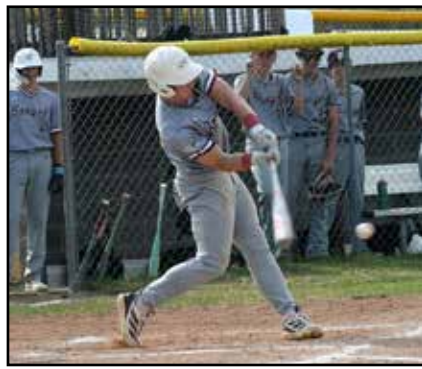
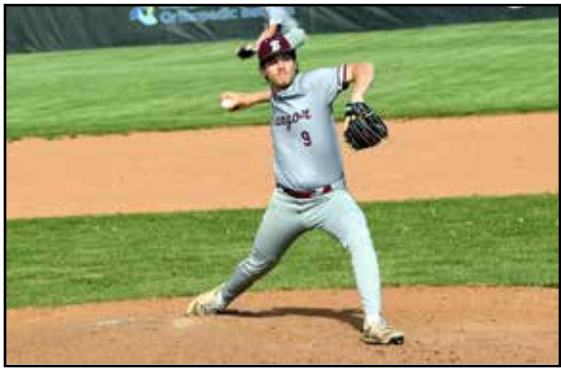
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Best Foot Forward: After Stroke, Back to Running at St. Luke's Half Marathon and 5K

Matthew Aberant was your typical 45-year-old competitive runner last September when the unthinkable happened.

What he described as a feeling of immense pressure in his head followed by a headache led to his wife Laura rushing him to the St. Luke's Anderson Campus Emergency Room. While en route, he became nauseous and started vomiting.

He was diagnosed with a subarachnoid hemorrhage stroke, a medical emergency identified by bleeding into a space between the brain and the tissue that covers it. Matthew's headache is what is known as a thunder-clap headache, one that comes on suddenly and is so intense it is often described as the worst headache of a patient's life.

After spending 12 days in the St. Luke's Bethlehem Campus neuro-ICU with around-the-clock



care and two neurosurgical procedures, Matthew was thankfully able to continue his recovery at home. In the long run, he faced no permanent symptoms of a stroke, like facial paralysis, loss of hearing, or arm and leg issues.

On Sunday, April 26, Matthew will make his triumphant return to racing by taking part in the St. Luke's 5K, part of the St. Luke's Half Marathon that starts at William Allen High School in Allentown. He and Laura will be running with a team of friends from all over the East Coast to celebrate his return to

competitive running. "I'm a little nervous," admitted the sustainability consultant from Bethlehem, "but definitely excited to see how it feels when I get back out there."

The couple picked this race "because it was sponsored by St. Luke's and we wanted to show some small support for everything St. Luke's did for us when I was going through my stroke."

Matthew's story is just one of many for runners taking part in either the St. Luke's 5K or the St. Luke's Half Marathon.

From first-timers and people looking to celebrate overcoming odds like Matthew, to running in memory of loved ones, overcoming personal struggles and more, there are plenty of stories of why runners and walkers will toe the line and commit to the finish line for the St. Luke's Half Marathon.

Two Northampton County Senior Centers Forced to Close Due to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Funding Gap

In Northampton County, we are facing a nearly \$400,000 reduction in our Area Agency on Aging (AAA) budget due to state budget cuts. As a result, the County will be required to consolidate the senior center network, and the Lower Nazareth Senior Center and the Northampton Senior Center will close as of June 30, 2026.

The reason for this funding gap is that the Commonwealth has eliminated a key revenue generating function previously available to county Agencies on Aging: aging well "desk reviews." Desk reviews are review and comparisons of data from Functional Eligibility Determination assessments that Area Agency on Aging staff still complete to determine eligibility for long-

term care services, in home or in a nursing facility. In 2025 alone, Northampton County's AAA completed 1,440 of these reviews, generating \$373,464 in revenue that directly supported services for local seniors. The loss of this function represents a loss of capacity that will force difficult decisions.

Executive Zrinski expressed her dismay at this immediate and significant funding gap—which she says arrives at the exact moment when state leaders are expressing concern about oversight, performance, and outcomes in elder protection.

"Across Northampton County, these centers are a lifeline for older adults, providing not only meals, but connection, wellness support, and a place to engage with their community and live vibrant, healthy lives," said County Executive Tara Zrinski.


Northampton County's AAA serves thousands of older adults each year. The professionals doing this work are navigating complex

cases involving medical fragility, cognitive decline, isolation, and, at times, individuals who are unable or unwilling to accept help. These are not simple interventions, and outcomes are not always within an agency's control.

"We must be honest about the broader system in which these agencies operate" said Zrinski. "When funding is reduced at the scale we are experiencing, the impact is not theoretical. It means fewer home visits, slower response times, reduced oversight, and fewer opportunities to intervene before situations escalate. It means a system that is being asked to do more with less—something that is true not only in Northampton County, but across many aging agencies in Pennsylvania."

For seniors now attending the Lower Nazareth Senior Center and the Northampton Senior Center, the County will make accommodations to help them attend a neighboring Senior Center.

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Round Valley Upper Boat Ramp Will Be Closed April 27th through May 1st for New Dock Installation



The Round Valley upper boat ramp will be CLOSED from Monday, April 27, 2026, through Friday, May 1, 2026, for the installation of new docks.

The lower boat ramp, kayak launch area, and gravel parking areas will be open for use during this time.

Boaters with trailers and users of kayaks,

canoes, and other personal watercraft are encouraged to use the lower ramp with newly installed docks and the gravel parking area during this time.

NJDEP Fish & Wildlife sincerely appreciates your patience and understanding while this important work is being completed and improvements are made.

Boscola Announces \$2.3 Million in State Investment into Stormwater Project in Palmer Township

State Senator Lisa Boscola announced today that PENNVEST has approved \$2,332,000 in state investment for the Palmer Township Stormwater Authority for the Wedgewood Drainage Improvements Phase I Project.

“This PENNVEST funding will enable the Palmer Township Stormwater Authority to repair a catastrophic failure of a 48-inch corrugated metal storm sewer pipe running between Wedgewood Drive and Chain Dam Road caused by a flash flooding event in 2023,” Boscola stated. “Damage included massive scour hole, slope instability, roadway damage, and uncontrolled erosion that extended beyond Chain Dam Road into private property and downslope drainage channels. While emergency measures have been in place since to prevent further roadway collapse, this state investment makes it possible for the Au-

thority to implement permanent repairs to the existing failed system.”

The Palmer Township Stormwater Authority was approved for a low interest loan of \$2,332,000 for the project with a 240-month term that has a 1% interest rate for the first five years and a 1.743% interest rate for the balance of the term.

“This PENNVEST loan will provide the grant-equivalent of \$780,394 over the life of the loan, which means that ratepayers are not expected to see an increase in rates due to this project,” Boscola added. “This is another important example of the Commonwealth partnering with local authorities to assist with critically important environmental and public safety projects,” Boscola added.

The project includes the installation of approximately 1,219 feet of smooth-lined corrugated polyethylene pipe, rang-



ing in size from 18-inch to 48-inch in diameter, three 2-foot by 6-foot custom inlet tops with 4-foot by 6-foot boxes, and one endwall, and the riprap drainage swale

will be stabilized and reconstructed.

Established in 1988, PENNVEST provides funding for sewer, storm water and drinking water projects.

The East Bangor UMC Church will observe the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 7th. The sanctuary will be open from noon through 7:00 p.m. for those who wish to pray in the presence of the altar. Prayer prompts will be available for your use. The church is located at 136 W. Central Ave. (Rt. 512). FMI: 610-588-4453 or www.ebumc.org

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Warren County Presents 2026 Health & Wellness Field Day

The Warren County Board of County Commissioners, in partnership with the Warren County Department of Human Services and the Warren County Prosecutor's Office, will host the 2026 Health & Wellness Field Day on May 1 at 6 p.m. at the Warren County Technical School, 1500 NJ-57, Washington (Franklin Township). This event is made possible through the continued support of school superintendents, law enforcement agencies across the county, local mental health providers, healthcare facilities, and other community partners.

This free event is open to all Warren County residents and is designed to promote both mental and physical well-being through a range of interactive and community-based activities.

Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities led by local organizations, connecting residents with services and resources that support overall wellness. The event will also feature a friendly volleyball tournament, bringing together middle and high school students

with local law enforcement in a collaborative and engaging setting. Additional activities will include food, music, a photo booth, and prize giveaways, creating a welcoming environment for individuals and families of all ages.

Originally introduced in 2020 by former Assistant Prosecutor Kelly Shelton, the Health & Wellness Field Day was developed in response to growing concerns surrounding mental health, particularly among youth. In the years following the pandemic, challenges related to stress, anxiety, and depression have remained a priority for community leaders and service providers.

The 2026 Health & Wellness Field Day is funded, in part, by the Office of the Attorney General through the ARRIVE Together Grant, which supports the continuation, expansion, and county-wide integration of the ARRIVE Together program. ARRIVE Together is a public safety initiative that pairs law enforcement officers with mental health professionals when responding to individuals in crisis. In Warren County, the program

has been developed to meet local needs and includes on-scene response, follow-up support, and the use of telehealth services to expand access to care.

This event continues to serve as a platform to raise awareness, strengthen community connections, and provide residents with access to meaningful resources and support. Warren County Prosecutor Jessica L. Cardone stated, "We look forward to this event each year, and it continues to grow in meaningful ways. The collaboration among law enforcement, county departments, and mental health providers is strong. What stands out most is how the community comes together to build trust, break

down barriers, and create an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome."

"It has been wonderful to see how this event has grown in its reach and popularity" Commissioner Director Lori Ciesla said, adding "Our goal is to connect our county students with our law-enforcement officers to build relationships and also let the residents of Warren County know of all the amazing organizations that exist for them. Health and wellness for our residents of all ages is a huge priority and I thank Laura Richter from the Department of Human Services, our Prosecutor Jessica Cardone, and everyone else that has been part of the planning for this event for making sure that it

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is a success year after year. It is also great to see our Warren County Technical School host the event again this year. Put it on your calendar and hope to see you there!"

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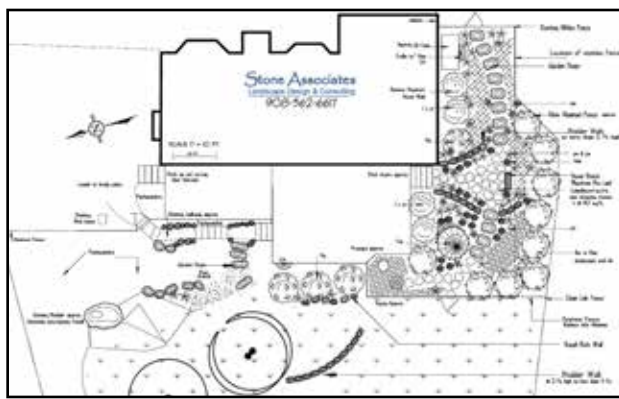
Mary E. Stone
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Hello fellow readers, It's always such a joy to hear from clients—those from long ago and those I visit each year for garden tune-ups. Recently, I heard from Pam in Sparta, New Jersey, whose garden I designed ten years ago. Together with my associate installer, we transformed a very steep backyard into something special—garden steps among tiered boulder walls, and a

quaint stone patio overlooking what became a meadow of sorts, a lawn mixed with wildflowers, where their dogs can run freely within a deer fence. And in Sparta, that's no small thing—the deer pressure there is among the worst.

Pam shared that her rhododendron has been declining over the past few years. Nursery professionals attributed it to drought and advised more watering, but unfortunately, that hasn't helped. Her pachysandra, once lush and established before I ever arrived, has nearly disappeared.

I'm hearing more and more about rhododendrons struggling in our region. Extended periods of drought, followed by intense rain events, can stress their shallow root systems. Add to that erratic temperature swings, and it's no wonder we're seeing an increase in root rot, lace bug damage,



and general decline.

As for pachysandra, what Pam is experiencing is widespread here. *Pachysandra terminalis*, the familiar Japanese pachysandra, has been hit hard by *Volutella* blight, a fungal disease. It causes yellowing, thinning, and dieback, especially in stressed or overcrowded plantings. What once seemed like an indestructible groundcover is, in many gardens, fading away.

Instead of replacing it, I favor our native Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*). It has a softer, more natural habit, forming lovely colonies with hints of silver and purple that deer don't favor. Unlike its non-native cousin, it is not overly aggressive, squelching out other plants, and supports wildlife, including early pollinators.

The good news is that much of Pam's garden is still thriving, including oakleaf hydrangea along the back deck (*Hydrangea quercifolia*),

a plant for all seasons I rave about. And her pink flowering tree peonies (*Paeonia suffruticosa*) are standing tall and elegant. These grafted woody shrubs have the strength to hold their magnificent blooms upright, unlike their herbaceous counterparts, which tend to flop.

I'm looking forward to meeting with Pam and Ed for a Landscape Review & Recommendation consultation—to assess the declining plants and explore thoughtful replacements and adjustments.

Pam and Ed are also the same clients who once had an ant dilemma in their bluestone patio. What a treasure to revisit that story from 2017. Their shady patio has welcomed a soft carpet of moss between the stones that they adore. The dilemma? Ants have taken up residence.

"What do you recommend for keeping ants out and the moss in?" they asked. (Ants Be Gone is archived on AskMaryStone.com)



And now, a new twist—she's wondering about the front lawn, where grass struggles and moss thrives. But moss isn't the problem. It's the messenger.

Moss lives where conditions favor it—shady areas with 4–6 hours of sunlight or less, compacted or poorly drained soil, low fertility, and often acidic conditions (typically a pH around 5.0–5.5). In these environments, grass struggles, and moss steps in to do what it does best.

Lawn enthusiasts try to "fix" moss by removing it, liming the soil, or forcing turf to grow where it simply doesn't want to. But instead of fighting the moss, let's embrace it—or consider planting groundcov-

ers that naturally thrive in the same conditions, such as foamflower, wild ginger, or golden ragwort, all high in deer resistance. Combined, they would make a beautiful tapestry—one that supports pollinators and enriches the soil.

The question is not how to force what we want, but how to recognize what belongs.

In the garden—and in life—we're often better off accepting conditions rather than resisting them. When we do, what once felt like a problem can reveal itself as an invitation for something else more beautiful to thrive.

Garden Dilemmas? AskMaryStone.com or tune in on your favorite Podcast app.

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NJ GOP Budget Members Demand Hearings on FIFA World Cup Costs, Transparency

Republican members of the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees are calling for immediate joint hearings with the NYNJ FIFA 2026 Host Committee, chaired by former first lady Tammy Murphy, to answer questions about taxpayer costs, financial risks and planning tied to the upcoming World Cup matches at MetLife Stadium.

In a letter sent Thursday to Senate Budget Chairman Paul A. Sarlo and Assembly Budget Chairwoman Eliana Pintor Marin, GOP lawmakers

said the Legislature and public still lack clear answers about the state's financial commitments despite years of planning.

With New Jersey set to host one of the largest sporting events in the world, it is imperative that the Legislature and the public have a clear and complete understanding of the commitments made on behalf of taxpayers," the lawmakers wrote. "While the event presents an opportunity to showcase our state, it also raises significant and unanswered questions about costs, risks and

transparency.

The letter outlines several key concerns lawmakers want addressed, including the state's obligations for transit, security, infrastructure and operations; the extent of taxpayer subsidies; whether New Jersey is exposed to financial risk if projected revenues fall short; and what safeguards exist to prevent cost overruns.

Concerns intensified following recent testimony before the Assembly Budget Committee.

During a hearing with the Department of Law



and Public Safety, Attorney General Jennifer Davenport indicated that funding is in place to meet the event's security needs. At the same time,

NJ Transit is reportedly considering charging up to \$150 for train tickets and \$80 for shuttle services for fans traveling to MetLife Stadium.

Lawmakers also raised concerns about the timeline, noting that New Jersey has been preparing for the World Cup for more than three years and was awarded matches more than two years ago, yet key details remain unclear.

"The apparent disconnect between planning, public cost and execution demands immediate legislative oversight," the letter states.

The lawmakers said hearings with the Host Committee, particularly those involved in site selection and negotiations with FIFA, are critical to understanding the full scope of the agreement and ensuring accountability for taxpayer dollars.

With World Cup matches set to begin in New Jersey on June 13 and budget deliberations for fiscal year 2027 underway, lawmakers emphasized the urgency of holding hearings now.

"Time is of the essence," the lawmakers wrote. "Conducting these hearings now will allow the Legislature to fully understand the scope of the state's commitments and, if necessary, take appropriate action before costs escalate further."

Wildlife Refuge Expands With New Rehabilitation Facility In Sussex County

The Last Resort Wildlife Refuge has opened a wildlife rehabilitation facility in Sussex County as demand for animal care continues to rise across northern New Jersey.

The organization said the new location, situated on nearly 30 acres, will expand its ability to treat and house injured and orphaned wildlife. Nearly 30% of the refuge's annual animal intake comes from Sussex County, officials said.

The property includes a 6,500-square-foot heated barn, multiple



outbuildings with utilities and a renovated structure that will serve as a hospital. Plans also call for the site to develop into a teaching campus for wildlife care and

rehabilitation.

Officials said the facility was made possible largely through the support of a longtime donor.

The new location will

operate alongside the refuge's existing facility in West Milford, which will continue handling local intakes, daily care and pre-release conditioning.

Staffed around the clock by volunteers, veterinarians and licensed wildlife rehabilitators, the organization said it has already taken in hundreds of animals this season, including fox kits, raccoons, coyote pups, bobcats and other species.

The expansion is expected to significantly increase the refuge's ca-

capacity to care for wildlife, though officials said additional support, supplies and equipment will be needed to sustain operations.

The refuge said it plans to work with the local community as it expands its presence in Sussex County. Officials said those interested in supporting the organization can find more information, including donation and supply needs, on its website and online platforms, including at <https://a.co/04poER6N>.

**Article by: Jay Edwards wrnradio.com*

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Residents Reminded To Check Your Polling Place Before the May 19 Primary Election: Implementation of Redistricting Plan Rollout to Improve Voter Services

Northampton County Election Division is implementing the redistricting plan recently approved by the Court of Common Pleas in preparation for the May 19, 2026, Primary Election. Some voters will have new polling locations and/or district names for this election. All voters are encouraged to check their polling place in advance and can do so by using the "Find Your Polling Place" tool at: www.NorthamptonVotes.com.

Several suburban districts have seen significant population growth in recent years, particularly in Forks Township and Palmer Township. To keep pace with that growth and ensure a

smooth voting experience, the County has adjusted polling districts to better balance voter populations. The goal of the redistricting is to reduce wait lines and improve access for residents across Northampton County.

As part of this plan, voters may see two types of changes: some polling districts have been divided to better distribute voters, while others have been consolidated to improve efficiency and better align with available polling locations.

Polling District Boundary Changes (New or Expanded Districts)

In some municipalities, district boundaries have been adjusted

to reduce crowding and better balance voter populations. These changes may result in new district names or new polling locations. Forks Township will change from four districts to seven. Lower Nazareth Township will change from two to four districts. Palmer Township will add two districts and will now have nine polling locations. Upper Nazareth Township will change from two to four polling locations. A full list of updated district names and polling place addresses is available in the attached "Boundary Changes in Northampton County" document and at www.NorthamptonVotes.com.

Polling District Con-



solidations

In other areas, existing polling districts have been combined. Voters in these districts will vote at a single, updated polling location. A complete list of consolidated districts and their corresponding polling places is available in the attached

"Consolidated Districts in Northampton County" document and at www.NorthamptonVotes.com.

Residents affected by these changes have been mailed updated voter registration cards reflecting their new polling district and location. If you have not

received an updated card, please contact the Northampton County Elections Division at 610-829-6260 or election@norcopa.gov.

Even if you have voted at the same location in the past, your polling place may have changed. All voters are encouraged to confirm their polling location prior to Election Day using the "Find Your Polling Place" tool at: www.NorthamptonVotes.com.

Please see the link below for complete information about polling location changes and addresses: files.constantcontact.com/6d5f1902501/681ff2d7-3ebc-4388-af72-7b83fcc7394e.pdf?rdr=true

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Sherrill Administration Delivers Nearly \$15 Million In Grant Awards To Protect New Jersey Communities From Flooding

Marking Earth Week, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Acting Commissioner Ed Potosnak today announced the award of \$14.8 million in grants through DEP's Natural Climate Solutions Grant Program for three projects that protect communities in Cape May, Cumberland, and Ocean counties from flooding by restoring coastal ecosystems to provide natural storm-surge and flood protection.

"These projects deliver on Governor Sherrill's mission to protect our communities from flooding and will directly protect property, infrastructure and local economies, and help avoid more costly repairs caused by severe storms," Acting Commissioner Potosnak said during a news conference in Point Pleasant.

The innovative grant program supports projects that enhance salt marshes, tidal estuaries, and forests to improve communities' flood resilience. The grant awards, part of the program's latest funding round launched in August 2025, were announced during a press confer-

ence at a salt marsh restoration project site in the northern Barnegat Bay region that will protect a school, drinking water infrastructure and homes.

Nellie Bennett Salt Marsh Project: The Barnegat Bay Partnership will receive \$4.8 million to restore 13 acres of the Nellie Bennett Salt Marsh in the Borough of Point Pleasant, Ocean County, located at the confluence of Beaverdam Creek and the Metedeonk River in northern Barnegat Bay. It includes elevating and rebuilding the marsh platform using 29,000 cubic yards of dredged material from nearby lagoons, supplemented by municipal compost placed within coir logs (biodegradable tubes used for erosion control) in high marsh areas.

Once complete, the restored marshland will provide valuable wildlife habitat and serve as a buffer that protects the Nellie Bennett Elementary School, nearby drinking water infrastructure, local roadways, and more than 150 homes in surrounding neighborhoods vulnerable to flooding

and erosion. Acting DEP Commissioner Potosnak "On the first Earth Day in 1970, children could walk across this entire marsh as it protected the Boro from storm surge. With this grant, the marsh will protect the community for decades to come," said Borough of Point Pleasant Mayor Bob Sabosik.

"Restoring the Nellie Bennett Marsh improves coastal resilience in the Borough of Point Pleasant, restores a natural carbon sink along the New Jersey coast, and brings back important wildlife habitat in a highly developed part of the Barnegat Bay," said Barnegat Bay Partnership Director Andrew McGowan. "We are very appreciative of the support and funding from NJDEP, the many partners of the Barnegat Bay Partnership who have shared their thoughts and suggestions as we developed the project, and the Borough of Point Pleasant for working with us to make this happen."

Mouth of Maurice River Project: The American Littoral Society will receive \$5 million to build upon work initiat-

ed during the first round of NCS funding to restore 13 acres of marsh along a highly vulnerable marsh island in the Northwest Reach of the Maurice River mouth in Delaware Bay. Historical agricultural practices and severe wave energy have caused extensive marsh loss in this region.

This second phase includes installing several 200-foot hybrid breakwaters, structures typically made from rock and natural elements such as oyster shells that are designed to reduce the impact of incoming waves. Additional low-profile breakwaters and permeable barriers will help trap suspended sediments and rebuild marsh elevation over time. The project will establish a continuous line of protection for the Northwest Reach, reducing storm energy, elevating marshland, and advancing long-term goals to restore 375 acres of degraded marsh that will protect nearby communities.

"Building hybrid breakwaters and protecting marsh at the mouth of the Maurice River not only advances carbon seques-

tration goals but also delivers meaningful resilience benefits in one of the most vulnerable areas along the Bayshore. It's a powerful example of how nature-based infrastructure can address multiple climate-related impacts at once, making it a smart investment," said Danielle McCulloch, American Littoral Society Executive Director. "The Society and our team are grateful for our continuing partnership with the NJDEP through the Natural Climate Solutions Program, and proud to implement solutions that secure the future of communities, fish and wildlife in our state."

Shooting Island Project: Ocean City will receive \$5 million to restore 136 acres of salt marsh on Shooting Island, situated along the Intra-coastal Waterway west of Ocean City in Great Egg Harbor Bay. The multi-phase project begins with the placement of approximately 11,200 cubic yards of dredged sediment to reestablish the island's historical wetland footprint. Subsequent phases will entail application of thin

layers of dredged sediment to interior ponds and low-lying areas to support marsh creation and improve vegetation growth.

Restoring elevation across degraded areas of the marsh will enhance ecological resilience to sea-level rise, protect community infrastructure and nearby homes, and support habitat goals for threatened and endangered bird species, including the black rail and salt marsh sparrow. degraded salt marsh

"Ocean City has been a leader in investing in solutions related to habitat restoration and living shorelines during an era of rising seas," said Ocean City Mayor Jay A. Gillian. "The city is deeply grateful to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for the grant funding and the opportunity to partner in this important work."

For more information on DEP's celebration of Earth Week 2026, including a proclamation signed by Governor Sherrill, press releases, social media and other resources, visit <https://dep.nj.gov/>

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Another CJWS event so it's gonna be good!

Parents and Children Invited to Family Expo at Project Self-Sufficiency

Parents, caregivers, and children are invited to attend a special Family Expo hosted by the Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency, Thursday, April 30th, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. The Family Expo will combine educational forums, interactive exhibits, and fun activities for the whole family. Participants will receive valuable information about childhood development, community agencies will be present to provide additional resources, and dinner will be provided.

"The Family Expo promises a delightful experience for families, with hands-on exhibits that encourage participation and various activities that are designed to educate as well as entertain," remarked Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. "This event will also highlight summer family activities, making it a perfect opportunity to plan summer outings while connecting with other families. We are grateful to the social service agencies and health-care organizations who will be on hand to share their expertise with local families."

Participants will be able to climb onboard Dot, the Sussex County Library



System's mobile library, and receive ambulance tours from the Newton Volunteer First Aid & Rescue Squad. In addition to Project Self-Sufficiency, numerous community agencies will provide valuable resources and information, including Atlantic Health System, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern NJ, Care Plus New Jersey Kinship Navigator Program, Caring Partners of Morris & Sussex, Center for Evaluation & Counseling, Inc., Center for Family Services, DASI: Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Intervention Services, DAWN Center for Independent Living, Elizabethtown Gas, Family Promise of Sussex County, Family Support Organization of Morris & Sussex Counties, Ginnie's House Children's Advocacy Center, Mental Health Association, Mental Health Urgent Care, New Jersey Division of

Child Protection & Permanency, Office of Resource Families, NJ4S of Morris & Sussex Counties, Northern NJ Safe Kids/Safe Communities, NORWESCAP Child Family Resource Services, Partnership for Maternal and Child Health, Riverstone Therapies, Sussex County Community & Youth Services, Sussex County Division of Social Services, Sussex County Skylands Ride, Sussex County Special Child Health Services, Sussex County YMCA, and others.

Those who attend the Family Expo will be eligible to receive a gift card. Project Self-Sufficiency is located at 127 Mill Street in Newton. For information about Family Expo, or to find out more about any of the programs sponsored by the Journey Family Success Center or Project Self-Sufficiency, call 973-940-3500 or visit www.journeyfsc.org.

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