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Bangor Field Hockey
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North Warren Football
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North Warren Battles Kinnelon High School on the Gridiron



North Warren High School took on Kinnelon High School in football on September 22nd. However, North Warren lost, 42 to 28. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Thousands Bask in Music at Festival in the Washington Borough, NJ



Thousands of people flocked to Washington Borough on Sept. 16 for the Washington Business Improvement District's 19th Annual Festival in the Borough, the region's largest street and music festival. With three stages of music, a kids fun area, dozens of vendors, food and perfect weather prevailing, this year's event was hugely successful. Among the musical acts that performed were national recording artist Stanley Jordan as Jimi Hendrix, Philadelphia Funk Authority, Blairstown-based Water street (pictured on the Scotty's Stage), and Heather Thompson (pictured on the Broad Street stage). C3 Soul Revue kicked off the weekend on Friday night at the event pre-party. Expect another great one next year when the Festival in the Borough celebrates its 20th anniversary! Courtesy Dan Hirshberg

Hemorrhagic Disease Outbreak In Deer Present In Crawford County, PA - Hunter's Urged To Be Aware

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has announced that 30 to 40 deer found dead in the vicinity of State Game Lands 214 in North Shenango and Sadsbury townships, Crawford County, the week of Sept. 8, succumbed to hemorrhagic disease. Hemorrhagic disease (HD) affects wild cervids and is caused by viruses — either epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus or bluetongue virus — that are spread by biting midges. Disease outbreaks typically occur in late fall when biting midges are in abundance.

While both elk and deer in Pennsylvania are susceptible to infection, white-tailed deer are far more susceptible and large-scale mortality events involving that species have been recorded within the Commonwealth over the past few years. Historically, the Game Commission has monitored HD to keep track of what viral strains occur from year to year, as well as determine if there are population-level implications. To date, no significantly negative disease impacts have been identified and local populations quickly recover following an

Bangor Goes Into Overtime Against Southern Lehigh in Field Hockey



Bangor took on Southern Lehigh in Field Hockey on September 22nd. Bangor lost, 0 to 1, in overtime. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Downtown New Jersey (DNJ) to Recognize Washington Borough For Downtown Economic Development at Awards Ceremony



Downtown New Jersey (DNJ) will celebrate initiatives that have made a significant impact on downtown economic development in New Jersey during a luncheon awards ceremony at the 2023 New Jersey Downtown Conference on Thursday, October 19th at The Vogel in downtown Red Bank. Each year, Downtown New Jersey recognizes New Jersey's best downtown projects and programs completed within the last two years, as well as individuals dedicated to downtown revitalization. Downtown

Excellence awardees are considered exemplary models worthy of emulation. "With each passing year, we are more and more impressed by the dedication and creativity of downtown organizations and their partners in providing services, engaging new audiences, and promoting economic development," DNJ's Executive Director, Courtenay Mercer said. "We are privileged and honored to recognize these efforts at our annual Downtown Excellence Awards ceremony." Among this year's

award-winners is Washington Borough, highlighted for Veterans Park in the center of the Downtown. The WBID was named an Honorable Mention in the Built Project Excellence category. Veteran's Park was created to add dimension to downtown Washington Borough. Through extensive fundraising, the Washington Business Improvement District creatively turned a burned-out, vacant property into a gathering space, attracting new businesses and shoppers to the area. The space is used

DNJ continued on page



outbreak. Over the past few years, midge distribution has expanded to higher, warmer, drier latitudes in North America, resulting in previously unexposed wild deer and elk

populations are potentially being introduced to a novel pathogen. HD does not present a danger to people or their pets. Nonetheless, the Game Commission urges the public to remain

at a safe distance when observing wildlife and to not handle wildlife unless they are hunting, trapping, or otherwise authorized to do so. The public is encouraged to report cases of two or more dead deer found in the same area at the same time by calling the Game Commission at 1-833-PGC-WILD (1-833-742-9453). Members of the public can also use the Game Commission's Wildlife Health Survey tool at https://www.pgapps.pa.gov/WHS to report health issues involving wild birds or mammals.

BANGOR VS SOUTHERN LEHIGH FIELD HOCKEY



Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

DNJ

Continued from Page 1

2 for the seasonal farmer's market, preschool graduations, downtown dance parties, memorial gatherings, PRIDE events, and even open mic nights. The recent addition of a pavilion attracts further foot traffic, especially during the holiday, when the Borough Christmas Tree is placed in front of the pavilion, making for an excellent backdrop with holiday decorations and lighting on the pavilion posts and roofline. In addition, the pavilion is often used during daytime hours for shoppers to sit and enjoy conversation with friends under the shade. Most recently the park

was the site of the kickoff event to Northwest New Jersey's largest street and music festival, the Festival in the Borough. "We are thrilled and excited to be recognized by Downtown New Jersey," said Melanie Thiel, Executive Director of the Washington Business Improvement District, which initiated the Veterans Park project. "A lot of effort and time went into making sure that the intended vision for the park was completed and I am happy to say that we've gotten a lot of great use out of it already!" Built at no cost to the community, and drawing patrons to the business district, Washington Borough Mayor Ethel Country says Veterans Park is, "a wonderful addition to our downtown."

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Commissioner Latourette Congratulates Communities That Received \$22 Million In Federal Urban Forestry Funding As DEP Caps Climate Week

As trees become increasingly important in mitigating the effects of climate change, especially in urban areas, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette is congratulating New Jersey communities and partner organizations for obtaining U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service grant funds for urban and community forestry initiatives.

Text Description automatically generatedThe 10 New Jersey grants range from \$548,280 to Kearny, Hudson County, to increase shade and green spaces, to \$8 million to The Nature Conservancy for development of a long-term tree maintenance program in Newark to optimize tree health. Funding was made possible through the federal Inflation Reduction Act. For a USDA news release, visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/news/releases/usda-invests-1-billion-nearly-400-projects-expand-access-trees-and-green-spaces>. For a USDA video and state-by-state list of grant recipients visit, including New Jersey's recipients, visit: www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf/2023-grant-funding

Commissioner LaTourette Congratulates Communities that Received \$22 Million in Federal Urban Forestry Funding as DEP Caps Climate Week "I thank the USDA's Forest Service for providing these funds to New Jersey communities and organizations for the important work of planting trees to mitigate the impacts of climate change, which include increasing temperatures and other disproportionate impacts in our urban and overburdened communities," Commissioner LaTourette said. "Trees are important not only for the beauty they bring to

our neighborhoods, but for the often-underappreciated role they have in improving air quality and reducing temperatures, filtering water pollutants and mitigating stormwater runoff, and providing shelter and habitat for wildlife."

Commissioner LaTourette offered his congratulations to cap Climate Week, which provides an opportunity for the public to learn about the impacts of climate change and actions that can be taken to mitigate its effects and become more resilient.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental



Protection's Forest Service oversees its own Urban and Community Forestry Program, which for many years has worked to make communities more livable by providing local governments with educational, technical, and financial assistance for the planting, care, and management of trees and forests. Proper management of the urban and community forestry resource yields environmental, economic, and social benefits vital to the well-being of the most densely populated and urbanized state in the nation.

The DEP's newly updated climate change website includes a more user-friendly homepage and a collection of interactive story maps titled Climate Change in New Jersey: Impacts and Effects, which provide up-to-date climate change research, build upon the findings of New Jersey's Scientific Report on Climate Change, and use a direct, easy-to-understand format that includes maps, photos, graphs, animations and more.

Gear Up for Respiratory Virus Season

(NAPSI)—Here's news to help you breathe easier: Although respiratory virus season is upon us, you can protect yourself and your loved ones. How? Make sure you're up to date on all of your vaccinations. Following vaccination, it takes time for your body to build protection against the flu, COVID-19 and RSV, so it's recommended that you get the vaccines you're eligible for as soon as possible to support your health and the health of your community.

Vaccinations help prevent the flu, COVID-19 and RSV

Getting a flu shot is the best way to protect yourself and your family from the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting vaccinated early in the fall, before flu season begins, ideally before the end of October. It's especially important to protect at-risk populations—adults 65 and older, those with certain immunocompromising or chronic medical conditions, infants or children under 5 and pregnant women—from severe illness.

The CDC also confirmed that you can receive any of the currently authorized COVID-19 and RSV vaccines at the same time as the flu vaccine. It's recommended that adults 60 or older get an RSV vaccination as they're at greater risk for serious complications from RSV because immune systems weaken with age. CVS Pharmacy is also now administering the updated COVID-19 vaccine, recently authorized by the FDA and recommended by the CDC.

Seniors have additional options when it comes to vaccinations

Seniors are at a greater risk of developing severe illnesses from flu, COVID-19 and RSV, and according to a CVS Health consumer survey, of those who indicated they plan to get vaccinated, seniors are the demographic most likely to do so (74% of seniors). CVS Pharmacy and MinuteClinic offer specific CDC-recommended offerings for seniors aged 65 and above, which include:

- Fluad: An adjuvanted influenza vaccine that helps the body elicit a better immune response.
- Fluzone HD: A high-dose vaccine that contains four times the antigen as the regular flu vaccine and is intended to create a stronger immune response for seniors.
- An RSV vaccine for adults 60 and older with greater risk for serious complications from RSV because immune systems weaken with age.

Common flu shot myths

- Myth: You should wait until flu season peaks to get the vaccine.
- Fact: It's best to be vaccinated before flu begins spreading in your community—ideally in September or October.
- Myth: The flu shot gives you the flu.
- Fact: Flu shots are made of either inactivated viruses or with proteins from the flu virus—so you can't get the flu from the vaccine.
- Myth: The flu is only spread by coughing and sneezing.
- Fact: Flu viruses are largely spread this way, but a person might also get the flu by touching a surface or object

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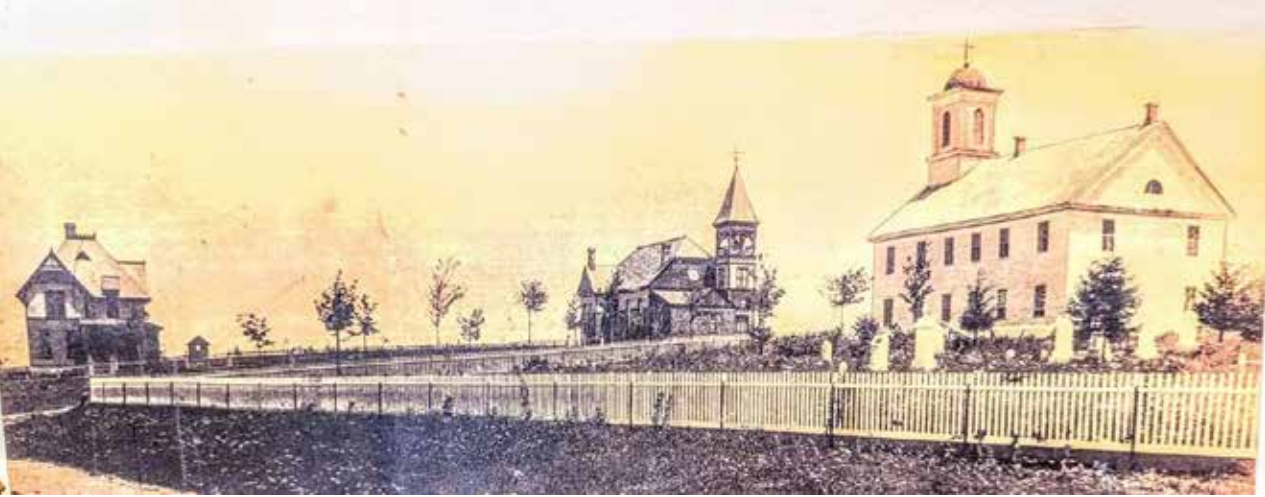
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A Country Church Sermon



Matthew 18:21-35
Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison

until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Why shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”
“Neither Left Nor Right”
Michael Nelms, The Yellow Frame Church, September 17, 2023
On an early morning sanity-restoration walk along the Paulinskill trail, I was startled by the sight of a black bear emerging from the woods about seventy-five yards ahead of me. My brain activated its fear-processing circuitry via the small, almond-shaped amygdala, causing my heart to race and putting my body on alert, the ancient “fight or flight” mechanism we possess. The brain’s fear response is critical for survival. I stood

still, the bear paused then lumbered down the other side of the trail towards the river. I decided the way from where I had just come would be lovely to see again. On a more serious note, there was a killer on the loose, though thankfully he is now recaptured. He had killed twice, and a couple of weeks ago he escaped from a Pennsylvania prison not far from here. He was armed and dangerous. Fears were justified. Vigilance was needed. There is evil in this world. The priority of safety and survival is hardwired into us by millions of years evolution.
Millions of years. A mere two-thousand years ago we have these words of Jesus about forgiving, seventy times seven, about how God forgives us and therefore we should forgive one another, and that, tragically, is all many Christian leaders teach. And because this is all that is heard and taught, good and decent people at times end up putting up with more than they should. It is also how some liberal church leaders, those often disparagingly labeled “bleeding heart liberals” or “leftist liberals,” those who did not succeed at pastoring congregations so

they were promoted to the highest levels of the PC(USA) denomination and Presbytery leadership so they could then tell congregations how to do things, leaders who think every prisoner is someone like the innocent John in the movie The Green Mile, or an angel unaware, or even Christ in disguise. Such leaders see every poor person as a virtuous Jean Valjean of Les Misérables fame. They see every person with a developmental challenge as a noble, naive hardworking Forrest Gump, as though laziness, selfishness, greed, irresponsibility, and evil do not exist except in people who are economically prosperous and developmentally healthy. Such church leaders read and teach this scripture text without reference to what Jesus has just said beforehand, “Woe to those who cause people to stumble,” and how some will be “thrown into the fire of hell.” “Woe to those who cause children to stumble for it would be better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” Think about that tortuous image. For such Church leaders there are no “woes,” just welcomes. For such church leaders there is no fire, no hell: You’re okay and I’m okay, so let’s all just sit around the campfire singing “Kumbaya, My Lord.”
On the other hand, some Church conservatives, those often disparagingly called cold-hearted conservatives or right-wing nuts, look upon every prisoner as a Dr. Hannibal Lecter or a Charlie Manson and who look upon every Arab person as a likely terrorist.

While they hear Jesus’ words about forgiving seventy times seven there is a “but.” It’s like your spouse or partner saying, “I appreciate all you do, but...” and we know from years of couples counseling that the only thing really being communicated is what comes after that grammatical “but.” “I appreciate all you do, but if do not fix the garage door, I’m going to bash your head in with the frying pan while you sleep,” or something like that. For such people, they hear the parable of Jesus, yes, forgive as you have been forgiven, but I never killed anyone, so I do not have to forgive killers. All convicted killers should get the electric chair, no ifs, ands, or buts about it.”
Which of the following is worse? The inwardly self-loathing but outwardly pretentious mother whose veins course with passive-aggressiveness and who— drip by drip, day by day— subtly dominates and humiliates her children with a velvet glove and iron grip, until the spirit of the children is broken, crushed, murdered if you will. Or the woman who comes home and finds her husband of fifteen years in bed with another woman, and then Thelmas and Lousie style, shoots and kills them both. Who deserves prison more? The mother who causes her little ones to stumble through life emotionally damaged, or the murderous wife. Who deserves forgiveness, or at least greater leniency, more?

Jenette McCurdy is thirty-one years old. She began her acting career at the age of eight, and from 2005-2015 she was a child star on Nickelodeon television shows such as iCarly. Her New York Times bestselling memoir entitled, “I’m Glad My Mom Died,” is at times hilarious and at other times equal parts gut-wrenching and heart-breaking. She describes her mother as obsessed with her daughter becoming a Hollywood star, a mother with velvet gloves and an iron grip, though there are cringe-inducing scenes when the velvet gloves are tossed aside. The memoir is ultimately about Jenette, having been raised in a very religious, Christian environment, sorting through what it means to forgive someone

who never asked for forgiveness, someone who never saw that anything they did was wrong. Notice in the Gospel the question is, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive?” Notice there is nothing in this about the other person asking for forgiveness. The other person is not repenting. It is all about the offended person and his or her responsibility.
Experiments using MRIs have shown scientists that a particular region of the brain that deals with nuance, ambiguity, detecting of errors, and resolving conflicts is larger in those who are politically liberal compared to political conservatives, while the amygdala, the part of the brain focused on threats and fear is larger in political conservatives than those of their colleagues “across the aisle.” (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/conservative-and-liberal-brains-might-have-some-real-differences/>) If only someone in first century Palestine had thought to do an MRI of Jesus’ brain, we could more definitively decide whether to follow the bleeding-heart liberal Jesus of some of our denominational leaders, or the “sinners in the hands of an angry God,” enlarged amygdala Jesus. The Christian message about forgiveness from the left is often some banal form of “forgive and forget,” or “let bygones be bygones.” And the Christian message about forgiveness from the right is “forgive others if they repent and change, and if they don’t, they can go straight to hell.” This latter statement is the more “Biblical,” but it is the anger and attitude that often accompanies it that betrays the speaker’s own hellish state of existence.
So maybe there is a third way. Perhaps neither left nor right is correct. Jenette McCurdy had to learn that even though her mother never asked for forgiveness, failing to forgive was hurting herself. As the Asian Buddha, who was and is as much a foreigner to us Americans as the Jewish Jesus often is, said the following, “Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.” So, yes, forgive infinitely as

Article Continued on page 5

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A Country Church Sermon Continued

God has forgiven us, and such forgiveness frees us: it frees us, however, to move away from people who are evil, selfish, greedy, irresponsible, hurtful, frees us to pursue the company of better people, better things, better places. As a child, like all children, Jeanette McCurdy was in no position to put distance between herself and her mother, but later as a young adult she was able to do this, yet because of her Christian roots with its message of

“forgive and forget,” “let bygones be bygones,” she felt intense guilt about doing so while also feeling an intense need to run away, a civil war, a red state versus blue state inside her own head and heart. This parable is not saying keep forgiving the person who is hurting you and stay there so they can hurt you again in the false hope that forgiving them will change them, because it will not. Forgiving them will change you, not them.

This parable is saying, forgive them, hope they change, but accept you cannot change them, and move on with your life.

Now some on the right will say, “What about traditional family values: you can’t just ignore your mother, and you certainly should not write a book entitled, I’m Glad My Mom Died.” To this I would say, Jesus did not teach family values. Recall the story of Jesus in a house with his disciples, and someone

came in and said, “Jesus, your mother and your brothers are outside looking for you. And Jesus said, ‘Who are my mother and my brothers? My mother and brothers are they who do the will of my Father in heaven.’” Jesus did not teach family values: he taught kingdom of heaven values.

Those on the left might cheer at this and say, “Yes, it’s not about ‘traditional family values’”. But here’s my final poke at those

on the left: Jesus also did not teach, “Listen to your heart.” Jesus did not teach, “Be true to yourself.” Jesus never said, “Your self-fulfillment is what matters.” Jesus never taught, “You are beautiful and perfect just as you are.” He did, however, teach, “Take up your cross and follow me.”

Sometimes the heaviest cross to take up is the cross that allows, as we lift it, our justified anger to slip down and away like water off a duck’s back. It is a really heavy cross to lift because holding on to that anger feels secure and familiar and oddly comfort-

ing, an invisible friend after so many years. Lifting that cross, however, is the first step to moving away from those who may indeed be on the way to hell, and unless we take up the cross and move in a different direction, our fate will be no different. Neither left nor right, but the way of the cross. May we heed the words of the old hymn, “Come, Christians, follow where the Master trod, our King victorious, Christ the Son of God. Lift high the cross, lift high the cross.”

By Michael Nelms, Yellow Frame Presbyterian Church Fredon NJ

PA Republicans Marcell, Tomlinson Sponsor Legislation to Post Suicide Crisis Line in State Parks



Reps. Kristin Marcell (R-Richboro) and KC Tomlinson (R-Bensalem) have co-sponsored legislation to require the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to prominently post information about suicide awareness and the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in all state parks and forests throughout the Commonwealth.

“With 164 suicides tragically occurring at Pennsylvania state parks and forests since

2010, we hope more awareness can help save lives,” Marcell said. “If there is even a small chance this action will result in a person choosing not to end his or her life, it is clearly a step worth taking.”

There have been several suicides and attempted suicides in local parks in Bucks County, including 21-year-old Lindsey Piccone, who ended her life in Tyler State Park in 2016.

“We have come a long way in developing re-


sources to assist those who are contemplating suicide,” Tomlinson said. “Studies show that when people think twice about suicide by receiving a text or a call or seeing a sign, the chances of them changing their mind increase. In honor of Lindsey, we need to show people that hope and help are available.”

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline has been rolled out nationwide as an easy to remember and easy to dial hotline that connects individu-

als thinking about suicide, or who need emotional support, with a skilled, trained crisis worker. This service is available 24/7 and is free to call.

House Bill 1705 would require the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to prominently post information about this crisis line and suicide awareness in all state parks and forests throughout the Commonwealth.

Marcell and Tomlinson both look forward to working with their colleagues in a bipartisan way to pass this vital and potentially lifesaving legislation.



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Marking Climate Week, Dep, TCNJ and Sustainable Jersey Announce Award Of \$4.55 Million In Trees For Schools Grants

Marking Climate Week, Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn M. LaTourette, Sustainable Jersey and The College of New Jersey today announced the award of \$4.55 million in grants to fund the planting of trees at 34 public schools, colleges, and universities in the state.

NJ Climate Week 2023 Funded by Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) auction proceeds, the Trees for Schools grant program will help mitigate climate change through the planting of more than 3,000 trees across the state, many in overburdened communities and those experiencing elevated temperatures due to insufficient numbers of trees and an excess of paved areas.

The program is a joint effort of the DEP, Sustainable Jersey and The College of New Jersey and is among a number of initiatives the DEP has announced in conjunction with Climate Week. Climate Week provides the public with an opportunity to understand the impacts climate change is having on our planet and the steps we must take now to become more resilient.

Marking Climate Week, DEP, TCNJ and Sustainable Jersey Announce Award of \$4.55 Million in Trees for Schools Grants

“These grants are an important step to help mitigate the impacts of climate change and are an investment in healthier schools and communities,” Commissioner LaTourette said. “Trees store carbon and reduce greenhouse gases and energy use, thereby mitigating the impacts of climate change and strengthening the resilience of our communities. Equally important, the planting of these trees will inspire our young people to become tomorrow’s leaders in the fight against climate change.”

“Congratulations to the schools, colleges, and universities that received a Trees for Schools grant. Planting and caring for trees help our students learn about ecosystems and the valuable role trees play,” said Randall Solomon, director of Sustainable Jersey. “We look forward to working with the grant recipients to expand their campus tree canopy while allowing students this important connection.”

Seventy-five percent of grant project sites are located in an overburdened community, which surpasses the program’s goal of allocating 40 percent of the grant funding for applicants located in overburdened communities. Moreover, many of the trees will be planted in urban communities where excessive paving and deficient tree cover results in higher temperatures, a condition known as the heat-island effect.

Grants range from \$12,000 to \$250,000 and will fund costs associated with planning, site preparation, trees, planting, watering, monitoring, and related expenses over a three-year period.

Grant awards are as follows:

Atlantic County: Gallop Township Public Schools, \$110,893

Bergen County: Bergen Community College, \$250,000; Bergenfield Public Schools, \$12,346; Carlstadt-East Rutherford Regional School District, \$37,675; Closter Public Schools, \$47,940; Garfield Public School District, \$86,042; River Edge Public Schools, \$137,558

Camden County: Audubon Public School District, \$106,100; Camden County College, \$167,550; Cherry Hill Public Schools, \$250,000; Collingswood Board of Education, \$71,225; Rutgers University – Camden, \$72,139

Essex County: Belleville Board of Education, \$249,639; Bloomfield Township School District, \$250,000; East Orange Public Schools, \$227,477; New Jersey Institute of Technology, \$188,554; Philip’s Academy Charter School, \$149,682; Rutgers University – Newark, \$100,291; South Orange-Maplewood School District, \$25,342



Gloucester County: Clayton Public School District, \$21,643; Rowan University, \$168,707; Westville School District, \$12,569

Hudson County: Hudson County Community College, \$217,400; Jersey City Public Schools, \$249,752

Mercer County: Paul Robeson Charter School, \$158,011

Middlesex County: Dunellen Public Schools, \$68,164; Edison Township Board of Education, \$54,021; Rutgers Gardens, \$249,385; Rutgers University - New Brunswick, \$161,706

Monmouth County: Long Branch Board of Education, \$109,700;

Manasquan Public School District, \$99,690

Passaic County: Bloomingdale School District, \$71,800; Paterson Public Schools, \$250,000

Somerset County: Somerville Board of Education, \$119,946

The K-12 grant recipients have an additional opportunity for student engagement with these projects to support the New Jersey Climate Change Education Student Learning Standards. Through continued support and advocacy for climate change initiatives by Governor Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy, New Jersey became the first state to incorporate climate change education in content areas.

Earlier this week, the Murphy Administration announced the release of the Summary of Climate Change in New Jersey, an important resource developed by the DEP to help teachers throughout the state understand and incorporate climate science into their lessons.

plans. The Trees for Schools program is funded through New Jersey’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a multi-state, market-based program that establishes a regional cap on carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel power plants. Proceeds from cap auctions are used to fund programs that benefit the environment.

This grant program aligns with the priorities set forth in New Jersey’s RGGI Strategic Funding Plan, which supports the state’s commitment to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions, transition to clean energy, and improve environmental conditions in communities that have been disproportionately burdened by pollution.

The Trees for Schools grant recipients will now work with the project team to develop their tree project design and will participate in tree-planting workshops. The tree plantings are scheduled for spring 2024.

The DEP’s newly updated climate change website includes a more user-friendly homepage and a collection of interactive story maps titled Climate Change in New Jersey: Impacts and Effects, which provide up-to-date climate change research, build upon the findings of the 2020 NJ Scientific Report on Climate Change, and use

a direct, easy-to-understand format that includes maps, photos, graphs, animations and more.

The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) is a highly selective institution that is consistently recognized as one of the top comprehensive colleges in the nation. Founded in 1855 as the New Jersey State Normal School, TCNJ maintains the seventh highest four-year graduation rate among all public colleges and universities. The Sustainability Institute at TCNJ administers Sustainable Jersey.

Sustainable Jersey is a non-profit organization that provides tools, training and financial incentives to support communities as they pursue sustainability programs. Sustainable Jersey participants (municipalities and schools) have successfully implemented and documented more than 23,467 sustainability actions. Sustainable Jersey has provided more than \$7.4 million in grants to municipalities, school districts and schools for community-based projects that create healthy and sustainable communities in New Jersey. Sustainable Jersey is a certification program for municipalities and Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a certification program for public schools. For information from Sustainable Jersey, contact Kristy Ranieri, (973) 762-1510.

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Even Good Dogs Have Bad Days

(NAPSI)—If you are or care for a dog owner, here’s a statistic you do not want to be part of: More than 5,300 Postal Service employees were attacked by dogs while delivering the mail last year.

To keep its workers safe, the USPS offers dog owners advice during the annual National Dog Bite Awareness Week, Sunday, June 4, through Saturday, June 10. This year’s theme is “Even good dogs have bad days.”

Pet Owners Can Help Support Safe Mail Delivery

Many attacks reported by letter carriers came from dogs whose owners regularly stated, “My dog won’t bite.” Dog bites are preventable and one bite is one too many.

Dogs are generally protective of their turf and dog owners have an important responsibility to control them to ensure safe mail delivery.

When a letter carrier comes to your home, keep dogs:

- Inside the house or behind a fence;
- Away from the door or in another room;
- On a leash.

Pet owners also should remind children not to take mail directly from a letter carrier as the dog may view the carrier as a threat to the child.

Inform Yourself, See the Mail Before It Arrives

Fortunately, dog owners can anticipate when their carrier will arrive. By using Informed Delivery, a free USPS service at informedelivery.usps.com, you can digitally preview incoming mail and packages from a computer, tablet or mobile device.

How to Avoid Dog Bites: Letter carriers are trained to observe an area where they know dogs may be present. They are taught to be alert for potentially dangerous conditions and to respect a dog’s territory.

You can protect yourself and your family if you behave like letter carriers, who are trained to:

- Not startle a dog;
- Keep their eyes on any dog;
- Never assume a dog will not bite;
- Make some noise or rattle a fence to alert a dog if entering a yard;
- Never attempt to pet or feed a dog; and
- Place their foot against an outward swinging door to prevent a dog from escaping.

If a dog attacks, stand your ground and protect your body by placing something between you and the dog—such as a mail satchel—and use dog repellent, if necessary.

Even though postal officials ask customers to control their dogs, bites still happen and may result in injuries to carriers and costly medical expenses for dog owners.

How Else Carriers Protect Themselves

Carriers have tools to alert them to dogs on their routes. A dog alert feature on carriers’ handheld scanners can remind them of a possible dog hazard, and dog warning cards may be used during mail sorting to alert carriers to routes where a dog may interfere with delivery.

Lastly, when a carrier feels unsafe, mail service could be halted—



not only for the dog owner, but for the entire neighborhood. When mail service is stopped, mail must be picked up at the Post Office. Ser-

vice will not be restored until the aggressive dog is properly restrained.

Understanding The USPS - The United States Postal Service is an independent federal establishment, mandated to be self-financing and to serve every American community through the affordable, dependable, and secure delivery of mail and packages to nearly 165 million addresses six and often seven days a week. The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products, and services to fund its operations.

For further information, visit usps.com and facts.usps.com.

Automatic Voter Registration Should Require Legislation, Cutler Says

With Gov. Josh Shapiro announcing Tuesday his administration will be implementing an automatic voter registration system in Pennsylvania, House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) said that new system should be created through legislation, not executive guidance.

“The problem here is not necessarily the end, but the means. The governor is following the sad and misguided precedent set by his predecessor that recognizes our election laws need updating and modernized but then disenfranchises the General Assembly from exercising its constitutional prerogative to make laws,” Cutler said. “This unilateral action on the eve of what is likely to be a hotly contested and close election will cause many Pennsylvania voters to continue to question the security and results of our system.”

Cutler also noted the irony of automatically registering people to vote when they obtain a state-issued identification, but then not requiring them to show that identification when they proceed to vote.

“Voter identification is a widely supported proposal that makes more sense than ever with this move toward automatic voter registration. If the Commonwealth is automatically registering people to vote when they obtain identification, they should then be required to provide that identification when they vote,” Cutler said.

In addition, Cutler pointed out questions remain about how automatic voter registration will work practically in terms of determining voter eligibility and the additional burdens it will place on an already stressed bureaucracy.

“Just because someone is eligible for a state-issued identification card does not mean they are eligible to vote. With legislative proposals that would provide driver’s licenses to illegal immigrants and the ability to vote taken away from those who commit serious crimes, there has been no information provided to us about how automatic voter registration will remain nimble in the face of change and workable in the determination of eligibility,” Cutler stated. “Even more concerning is that the burden of determining eligibility could further stress an executive branch that continues to fall short of Pennsylvania’s expectation of top-notch customer service. It is remaining questions like these that underscore the need to have major policy changes like this vetted through the legislative process instead of hasty unilateral executive action.”

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Hints for Home Owners: How to Prepare for a Power Outage

It's unfortunate but, according to the U.S. Energy Information Association's most recent reports, on average, electricity customers experience seven to eight hours of power interruptions a year—but there are ways to prepare.

Power outages can be caused by severe weather such as hurricanes, tornadoes and heavy rain, snow and ice storms. In addition, an estimated 70 percent of the United States' transmission lines are more than 25 years old. An aging infrastructure contributes to intermittent power episodes and increased energy costs.

With the rise of power outages, many homeowners are looking for alternatives to traditional utility power to ensure they have uninterrupted access to essential technology. Phones are important to check in on family members and friends. Heat and air conditioning are imperative for safety and comfort. Refrigerators and freezers must function so food doesn't spoil. And, for some, home medical equipment is vital.

Two products that can help deliver peace of mind, along with energy resiliency and efficiency, are home standby generators and battery storage systems.

Standby Generators - Standby generators are a seamless option that kick in automatically when there's a power outage. They are permanently installed outside a home and are fueled by liquid propane or natural gas.



Briggs & Stratton Energy Solutions offers a full range of PowerProtect™ standby generators to meet a variety of homeowner needs. The Briggs & Stratton® 12kW model is an upright unit with ultra compact footprint and works well for small and mid-sized homes. The extremely powerful 26kW can get an entire

house through an outage. The company also offers 17kW and 20kW units that can handle the energy requirements of mid-sized to large homes.

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Since standby generators require professional installation, it's best to add a unit before storm season hits.

Battery Storage Systems- In addition to standby generators, Briggs & Stratton Energy Solutions provides residential SimpliPHI® batteries that can capture energy generated by solar panels, wind turbines, generators or the grid. Homeowners can choose between the continuous, unlimited runtime capacity of a generator or the silent, immediate temporary backup power of a battery storage system.

Home batteries are extremely versatile and can be used for both short- and long-term energy needs.

In the short term, they can provide backup power when the grid goes down. In the long term, they can reduce energy costs.

Homeowners can save money by using stored power from their batteries throughout the day or during the evening when many electric companies charge more. In some cases, homeowners can sell their extra power back to the utility for credit on their bill or to eliminate a monthly charge altogether.

Better yet, when paired with solar or other energy-generating systems, battery storage can help homeowners go completely off the grid and become energy independent.

Home battery storage systems continue to come down in price and now qualify for a 30% tax credit as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. Additionally, many states have incentives to make battery storage more affordable.

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For more information on home standby generators and battery storage,

Project Self-Sufficiency Offers Free, Virtual Bankruptcy Seminar

Project Self-Sufficiency will host a free, virtual Bankruptcy seminar featuring attorney Steve McNally, Thursday, September 28th, 5:30 p.m. Participants will discuss the process of filing for bankruptcy, as well as the options available to those facing overwhelming credit card debt, foreclosure, or asset repossession with an attorney. The free legal education seminar is a program of the Journey Family Success Center at Project Self-Sufficiency. The presentation is free and open to the public; interested participants must call Project Self-Sufficiency, 973-940-3500, to obtain log-in information.



Project Self-Sufficiency will host a free, virtual Bankruptcy seminar featuring attorney Steve McNally.

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Hello, fellow readers,
I always enjoy hiking along the Appalachian

Trail with a longtime friend from Boonton, NJ. While meandering the rocky terrain peppered with hemlock and Spruce, Barbara asked why some trees remain evergreen and others don't. Good question. Let's ask the trees.

During the growing season, leaves and needles photosynthesize to make food for the plant. Come fall, as daylight shortens, it signals plants to hunker down for winter. Deciduous trees cut off their leaves' link to water and minerals and drop off after only one growing season. Evergreen foliage, despite its name, doesn't



live forever. During the fall, older needles die and fall off as well. Pine trees hold their needles for two to five years or more, depending on the species. Spruces generally hold onto their needles for five to seven years. Hence, every autumn, some evergreen needles fall. However, the process often goes

unnoticed because only the innermost needles are affected, except for Eastern White Pine (Pinus strobus), which are not shy about disrobing. They hold their needles for only two years and have an open structure and less growth at the tip of their branches to hide the needles as they undress.

Forester Peter Wohlleben writes in The Hidden Life of Trees why certain species live in certain areas, explaining a tree "can conquer enormous geographic range. And that's basically what Spruce has done.... Spruces store essential oils in their needle and bark, which act like antifreeze. And that's why they don't need to jettison their green finery" in winter.

"As soon as the weath-

er warms up in the spring, they can start photosynthesizing. Not a day is lost..."

Unlike deciduous trees, of course, that need to grow new leaves before they can start their job of photosynthesizing

Hence, evergreens survive even in frigid regions of Siberia and Canada with very short growing seasons; not only that, they have fascinating "defense mechanisms" to protect them from snow and winds.

Spruce trunks are usually straight, which keeps them in balance even with heavy loads of snow when branches gradually angle down until they are layered one on top of another "like tiles on a roof. Arranged like this, they mutually support each other," Peter Wohlleben explains.

Folks worry more about evergreen trees toppling in high winds with snow loads. Understandably so, given winters when we've endured nor'easter's one-two-three punch. The thing is, spruces grow slowly for sure-footedness, "and statistically speaking, the danger of being blown over doesn't increase significantly until the trees are more than eighty feet tall," per Peter Wohlleben.

So, the question isn't why some trees remain evergreen. It's how. And "how" is the miracle of Nature's resilience and ability to adapt, flourish, and provide respite for others. We have much to learn from trees.

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