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PHOTOS:



North Warren Boys & Girls Basketball Games Pages 2 & 3

Seniors Page 5



Pen Argyl Girls Basketball Page 6

Colonial League Quarter Finals Page 7

Lady Green Knights Win Over Catasauqua in The Colonial League Quarter Finals



Pen Argyl took on Catasauqua in the Colonial League Quarter Finals on February 10th. Pen Argyl won 46 to 36. They advanced to play Notre Dame Green Pond on February 14th at Catasauqua in the semifinal. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

North Warren Takes on Veritas Christian Academy



North Warren took on Veritas Christian Academy on February 8th. North Warren was defeated, 41 to 36. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Free Job Training Program for Women Starts this Month



Project Self-Sufficiency announces that the next session of its popular employment skills training program, Higher Opportunities for Women (HOW), will launch February 20th. The 16-week HOW Program combines intensive computer skills training with classroom instruction and on-the-job experience. Curriculum prepares women who have been out of the work force or underemployed to seek entry-level office ad-

North Warren Wins Big Over Belvidere High School in Boys Basketball



North Warren went head to head with Belvidere High School on February 8th during their senior night game. North Warren won, 68 to 28. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Bangor Jr. Slater Wrestling Wins Valley Elementary League



Bangor Jr Slaters Wrestling team that won the Valley Elementary Wrestling League on Jan 28th. They beat Northampton in the semi-finals and Nazareth in the finals 46-45 to become the 2023-2024 champions. Courtesy Frank Comunale Jr.

Pen Argyl Takes On Slate Belt Rivals, Bangor, in Girls Basketball



Pen Argyl and Bangor went head to head in girls basketball on February 6th. Pen Argyl won, 55 to 21. Bangor and Pen Argyl boys basketball teams also played on February 6th. Bangor beat Pen Argyl, 62 to 37. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

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ministrative positions. Classes will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the agency's campus, located at 127 Mill Street in Newton. Open Houses about the Higher Opportunities for Women program will be held at 1:00 p.m., February 9th and 16th. Interested participants are invited to call 973-940-3500 or visit <https://www.projectsselfsufficiency.org/higher-opportunities-for-women> to enroll. Women who take part in the agency's HOW program can expect 80 hours of computer skills training, including instruction in Microsoft Word, Excel, and other applications. The HOW **JOB continued on pg 2**

JOB

Continued from page 1
 program also includes 40 hours of classroom instruction and 120 hours of an unpaid externship at a community employment site, which further prepares participants to successfully venture into the job market. Additional coursework focuses on workplace navigation, life skills training, resume preparation, and interviewing strategies. Since the HOW program's inception, more than 1,000 women have gained self-confidence and learned marketable skills which placed them on the path to economic self-sufficiency. Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency explains that the HOW program is more than just a job-skills pro-

gram. "The job market is constantly evolving, and the Higher Opportunities for Women program gives participants the skills and confidence they need for success." Project Self-Sufficiency is a community-based non-profit organization which specializes in services for low-income families in northwestern New Jersey. Programs offered at Project Self-Sufficiency include family literacy education, computer training and job placement services, assistance with parenting skills, childcare, counseling and advocacy, referrals, and help with emergency basic needs. To make a donation, or for more information about the programs and services offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, visit www.projectsselfsufficiency.org or call 973-940-3500.

NORTH WARREN (68) VS BELVIDERE (28) BOYS BASKETBALL SENIOR NIGHT



Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press
Senior Night Photos on page 5!

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NORTH WARREN (36) VS VERITAS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY (41) GIRLS BASKETBALL SENIOR NIGHT



Narcan Distribution Boxes Throughout Northampton County Now Available



County Executive Lamont G. McClure and the Northampton County Drug and Alcohol Division announced today that nine Northampton County locations will

have Narcan Distribution Boxes installed to allow community members to access Narcan, a lifesaving overdose reversing medication, for free.

This new effort to combat fentanyl in our community was announced at a press conference today that commemorated the County's Fake is Real campaign. These local distribution boxes will contain two free doses of Narcan nasal spray in each box and instructions on how to administer the spray in both English and Spanish. This life-saving intervention can rapidly restore breathing and give people a second chance at life.

The Fake is Real campaign is funded from the proceeds that the County secured from litigation against opioid

manufacturers. Funding from the settlement allows the County to strengthen its response to the ongoing epidemic, raise awareness to prevent addiction, and offer services to treat it. This campaign puts the spotlight on the very real dangers of accidental overdose deaths related to fentanyl through our wide-reaching social media and billboard announcements. In 2023, Northampton County distributed 1,378 Narcan kits.

For more information on Northampton County's Fake is Real campaign, please visit fakeisreal.org.

Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press
Senior Night Photos on page 5!

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Hackettstown Hosts 15th Annual St. Patrick's Parade

The Hackettstown Business Improvement District (HBID) is hosting the 15th Annual St. Patrick's Parade, Sunday, March 10, 2024. This Irish-American tradition attracts more than 14,000 visitors—making this parade one of the biggest events in Hackettstown. Streets fill with enthusiasm as families, residents and visitors line up to celebrate and witness the festive parade. Preceding the parade, join us for the St. Patrick's Bar and Brew Crawl. This event is a fundraiser created to support the St. Patrick's Parade festivities. Celebrate at Marley's Gotham Grill, Grand Avenue Tavern, Man Skirt Brewing, and Czig Meister Brewing Company. Your kind donation gets you one sheet of tickets, which includes a coupon good for one beer at each location. Selections vary per location. Tickets can be purchased at the BID office at 219 Main St., and on our website, www.hackettstownbid.com. PRESALE TICKETS can be purchased for \$25 up to February 22, 2024. Tickets purchased after the 22nd, will be \$30.

Coupon sheets can be picked up by appointment in the BID office. Bar Crawl anytime between February 22nd and March 31st.

The Hackettstown BID is also selling festive shirts and sweatshirts to support the parade. These can also be preordered on the website.

We will kick off the Parade weekend with a Grand Marshal Reception to honor 2024 St.



Patrick's Parade Grand Marshal, Retired Hackettstown Police Lt. Darren Tynan. The reception dinner will be at David's Country Inn Ballroom on Thursday, March 7th, and will feature a live performance by Rory O'Moore School of Pipes and Drums and a dance performance by Slattery School of Irish Dance. Tickets are \$55, or \$500 for a table of 10, and are available on the Hackettstown BID website. All are Welcome!

The 15th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade will kick off at 3:30 pm with numerous participants including Irish dance groups, Irish bands, community groups, boy/girl scouts, bagpipes and drums, Centenary University and Hackettstown High School teams and clubs, lots of floats, various area fire departments and rescue squads, as well as hometown favorites Junior and Senior Colonial Musketeers and the Hackettstown Community Band.

The parade is pet-friendly, with a special pet Irish Costume Contest sponsored by Doggie Styleash. Judging will be held at Czig Meister Brewing, located at 106 Valentine St. starting at 3:30 pm sharp. Pets will then be invited to walk the parade after judging.

It's Time to Open Opportunities on Main Street, Emrick Says

House Republicans Launch Initiative For Entrepreneurs And Small Business

Recognizing governmental burdens should never deter Pennsylvanians from pursuing their own path to prosperity, House Republicans are pushing the Legislature to act on the "Main Street Entrepreneurship Initiative." The package of bills, led by House Commerce Committee Republican Chair Rep. Joe Emrick (R-Northampton), would make the dream of owning one's own business, and growing it here in Pennsylvania, more accessible for every person in the Commonwealth.

"Entrepreneurs and small business owners are the backbone of our communities," Emrick said. "They are the ones investing in our Main streets, hiring our friends and neighbors, and making our communities great places to live. We owe it to every Pennsylvanian to make it as simple as possible to chase their dream and grow their business."

According to a national study of new businesses and start-ups, Pennsylvania's rate of entrepreneurship is nearly 50% lower than the national average and has been stagnant below the national average for more than 25 years.

To address this growing concern, and in recognition of National Entrepreneurship Week, House Republicans are introducing the following legislation:

- Entrepreneurship Week Resolution (Emrick): Would recognize the week of Feb. 10-17, 2024, as "Entrepreneurship Week in Pennsylvania."
- Business Filing Fee Waiver (Rep. Joe D'Orsie,



and accounts needed to operate in Pennsylvania.

- Spearheading Entrepreneurship Education (Rep. Marla Brown, R-Lawrence): Would establish a statewide program to fund entrepreneurship education at community colleges, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and colleges that provide technical training.
- Fair Protections for Entrepreneurs (Scheuren): Would modernize the bankruptcy exemption statute to provide fair protections for entrepreneurs' assets, including primary residences and other necessities of life. Entrepreneurs are one of Pennsylvania's greatest assets and their existence is vital to our state's ability to grow and evolve for the better. Therefore, I sincerely hope this legislative package will keep both in Pennsylvania and help to open even more doors to economic prosperity.
- Co-sponsorship memos for the forthcoming package of legislation are available here: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/Legis/CSM/showMemoPublic.cfm?chamber=H&SPick=20230&cosponId=42099>

R-York): Would waive the filing fees for first-time entrepreneurs during the business formation process through the Department of State.

- Stay in PA Business Grants and Loans Fee Waiver (Rep. Donna Scheuren, R-Montgomery): Would require businesses receiving grants and loans through the Commonwealth to maintain operations and employees within the Commonwealth.
- Commonwealth Procurement Possibilities for New Entrepreneurs (Rep. Mike Armanini, R-Clearfield/Elk): Would establish a "set-aside" within the existing program to target small and disadvantaged businesses established within the prior three years.
- New Business Ombudsman (Emrick): Would establish a start-up ombudsman within the One-Stop Shop Office within the Department of Community and Economic Development to assist startup businesses with securing the necessary documents

and accounts needed to operate in Pennsylvania.

- Spearheading Entrepreneurship Education (Rep. Marla Brown, R-Lawrence): Would establish a statewide program to fund entrepreneurship education at community colleges, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and colleges that provide technical training.
- Fair Protections for Entrepreneurs (Scheuren): Would modernize the bankruptcy exemption statute to provide fair protections for entrepreneurs' assets, including primary residences and other necessities of life.
- "For the vast majority of Pennsylvanians, the path to prosperity is found on Main Street, not Wall Street," added Emrick. "These are common sense steps to ensure job creators who want to improve opportunities here can do so, and not continue to cross state lines to places where it is easier to turn your ideas into businesses that can have a multi-generational impact."
- House Republicans have

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Alex Diego with his parents, Max and Eliza, and sisters Abby and Aja



Maximus Hambos with his parent, Sofie and Pete and his brother Andreas



Christian Otufale with his parents Joan and Christopher, and siblings, Crystal and Calvin



Luke Stefankiewicz with his parents, Aaron and Gretchen and sister, Sophie



Photo by Dale Young/
The Free Weekly Press

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Feb. 28.

Customers may submit a comment by e-filing through the PUC or sending a written comment at the address below. All comments should reference the docket number of the case: M-2023-

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PEN ARGYL (55) VS BANGOR (21) GIRLS BASKETBALL

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PEN ARGYL (46) VS CATASAUQUA (36) COLONIAL LEAGUE GIRLS BASKETBALL QUARTER FINALS



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Space, Fantasia, Inganamort Oppose Bills Allowing Distribution of Obscene Materials to Children

Senator Parker Space, Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia, and Assemblyman Michael Inganamort (all R-Sussex, Morris, Warren) today voiced their strong opposition to Senate Bill 2421 and Assembly Bill 3446.

The new legislation gives an "affirmative defense to a prosecution" for distributing obscene material to minors if the person distributing the obscene material is a teacher, teaching staff member, school librarian, or staff member of a public library performing their job duties.

"This bill is nothing more than big government mandating an ideological agenda into our schools," said Space, who is both a parent and grandparent, served for over 10 years in the Assembly before his election to the Senate last year. "We should respect parents and local school officials enough for them to decide what is appropriate when deciding what educational materials should be available to students.

Period." The bill includes eight new mandates that strip School Boards of their decision-making power in favor of the State government.

"First and foremost, this legislation is an affront to parents and taxpayers by usurping more control away from local education and giving it to faceless bureaucrats in Trenton," said Fantasia, a professional educator and mother of three adult children. "Provisions in the bill silence the public into submission and handcuff local school boards by the special legal protection afforded certain educators and librarians if they decide to keep obscene material on bookshelves."

Since the shutdowns of our public schools due to the pandemic, concerned parents have been advocating for more transparency and more oversight in what educational materials are being disseminated to their children. This has sparked statewide outrage at the severe in-



it," said Inganamort, a father of three. "Let's also remember that most teachers and librarians don't want to be put in this position in the first place. We'll strongly oppose this legislation to protect our kids, first and foremost, and to defend the integrity of the teaching profession, too."

appropriateness of some of the curriculum and material being used in our schools and libraries.

"There is no place for obscene, sexually-explicit material in classrooms, no matter who is distributing

S2421 and A3446 have been referred to the respective Education Committees in the Senate and General Assembly. Although no further legislative action has been taken to date, the legislators expressed their vigilance in keeping on top of this issue to fight for the interests of parents and their community.

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House Republicans Establish Opportunity Task Force to Guide AI Legislative Policy

AI Task Force to educate and extend networking opportunities on cybersecurity and privacy issues

As the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) technology becomes an increasingly prominent issue in Harrisburg, House Republican leaders have created an Artificial Intelligence Opportunity Task Force to monitor and guide the growth of these technologies. Appointees are Reps. Jason Ortity (Allegheny/Washington), Valerie Gaydos (R-Allegheny), Robert Leadbeter (R-Columbia), Alec Ryncavage (R-Luzerne) and Stephanie Scialabba (R-Butler).

The use of AI technologies can be beneficial, but it brings a new set of societal challenges. The task force will work to ensure the proper steps

are taken to ensure AI technologies bring a useful contribution to society.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues in this endeavor,” Ortity said. “Use of AI is increasing, and we need to make sure it is used properly. I’m fully supportive of technology and advancement, but we need to have standards, especially when those involved in AI are asking for government parameters.”

“As the co-chair of the Cyber Security Caucus, I understand the importance as well as the potential of AI,” said Gaydos. “By automating routine tasks, analyzing data

and improving decision-making, AI can help increase productivity, reduce costs, and improve the quality of services in government, health care, education and more. I look forward to taking part in this task force to work on ensuring AI is used most thoughtfully.”

“With the ever-growing cybersecurity attacks from the communist party of China, it is important that rural and agricultural communities stay vigilant against threats to our way of life,” said Leadbeter. “As part of this task force, I will stay focused on restoring fiscal responsibility, defending our gun rights and first responders, stan-

ding up for life, combating human trafficking, expanding school choice and protecting our agricultural and small business communities.”

“While there is a societal component to how families interact with AI technology, we also need to talk about how Pennsylvania is uniquely positioned to be a leader in AI technology development – especially when we consider our universities are producing students entering the workforce, the rich natural gas production in our state for energy consumption and in using our land for economic development,” said Ryncavage. “My role on this task force

will be about successfully steering Pennsylvania through the potential pitfalls of AI while using the technology to make Pennsylvania a leader.”

“Artificial intelligence can improve our lives but because of its limitless capabilities, it must not go unchecked,” said Scialabba. “As AI continues to advance and become more commonplace in our daily lives, we must keep careful watch to ensure it does not do more harm than good. Using AI does not give us the luxury to go on autopilot. In fact, it’s something that requires more work to watch.”

The AI Task Force will engage with experts and

stakeholders to inform future legislative policy decisions and provide insights on developing and using AI in a trustworthy and responsible manner.

“Artificial Intelligence is the cutting edge of technology and is already impacting the work of state government and civilian life,” said House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster). “I am thankful this dedicated group of members agreed to be a part of this critical task force that will evaluate AI policy proposals for our caucus so we can have a fully informed path forward when dealing with this new technological frontier.”

PA House Republicans Focus on Getting Government Out of the Way of Business Creation During Entrepreneurship Week,

In recognition of National Entrepreneurship Week, House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) said the Pennsylvania House Republican Caucus will be focusing its efforts on getting government out of the way of business creation with a newly unveiled Main Street Entrepreneurship Initiative legislative package.

“At the heart of The Keystone Commitment is the need to create a thriving economy by making it easier to do business in Pennsylvania and making it easier to get a job here. We must also invite opportunity through competition if we want to put this Commonwealth on a

sound economic footing,” Cutler said.

“Right now, government is standing in the way of those who want to create businesses of their own in Pennsylvania and tie their futures to that of the success of this Commonwealth,” Cutler added. “House Republicans are putting forward the Main Street Entrepreneurship Initiative to begin to fulfill the promise of The Keystone Commitment and stand with entrepreneurs, whose drive and innovation will continue to power this Commonwealth.”

The forthcoming package of bills will include legislation to:

Establish a set-aside wit-

hin the Commonwealth’s procurement process for entrepreneurs.

Waive business filing fees to provide relief for first-time entrepreneurs.

Create a new business ombudsman in the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Require businesses that receive grants and loans from the Commonwealth to commit to staying in the Commonwealth.

Establish a statewide program for entrepreneurship education among high school students.

Modernize our bankruptcy exemption statute to provide fair protections for entrepreneurs’ assets.

“Government mandates and impediments continue to be barriers to entrepreneurial growth and development,” Cutler said. “The Main Street Entrepreneurship Initiative we are announcing today places a renewed focus on getting government out of the way so Pennsylvanians can live their dreams through earning a living and creating a business by being great at what they are good at.”

View the cosponsorship memos for the forthcoming package of legislation here: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/Legis/CSM/showMemoPublic.cfm?chamber=H&SPick=20230&cosponId=42099>

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NJ DEP Seeks Partners To Help Youth From Overburdened Communities Become Tomorrow's Environmental Leaders

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is seeking to partner with up to five community-based organizations for the fourth year of its successful Youth Inclusion Initiative to help young people in overburdened communities get involved in environmental protection and support a more diverse workforce, Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette announced today.

Up to \$100,000 is available to applicants who partner with the DEP to provide outreach, recruitment, supervisory support, professional job training, community building and exposure to post-program employment opportunities for youth from overburdened communities.

Youth Inclusion InitiativeInterested organizations, formally referred to as Community Host Organizations, can find the DEP's request for proposal document by visiting dep.nj.gov/yii/rfp/.

Proposals are due by 5 p.m. on March 21.

"DEP's award-winning Youth Inclusion Initiative offers a transformational six-week experience for youth from communities with limited open space to learn the necessary skills that will launch their journey toward becoming future champions for the environment," said Commissioner LaTourette. "The solicitation announced today invites community-based organizations to partner

with DEP to support these young people to become part of a community dedicated to protecting public health and the environment we share."

The six-week summer program lets participants, ages 16 to 20, gain hands-on experience to develop skills in areas such as water monitoring, wildfire response, conservation investigation and forest management. The youth will also learn about career opportunities in environmental protection, conservation and stewardship. The program will run from July 8 to August 16 and participants will receive a stipend for attending.

During the program, three days each week are crafted to demonstrate the various DEP program areas through interactive activities such as touring facilities, fishing and engaging with wildlife education programs, conducting stream assessments, and identifying invasive plant species. The program also includes professional development days at the end of the week which include guest speakers and resume and cover letter writing sessions.

Youth Inclusion InitiativeA new addition to the program this year are community project days. Partner organizations will guide youth participants as they complete a group community project focused on improving the environment. Examples of projects include creating



rain gardens and painting storm water drains. Up to \$5,000 will be allotted for each community-based project.

"Our collaboration with the community host organizations is centered around making a difference in these young people's lives by offering an experience that boosts their confidence and interest in pursuing a career protecting the environment," said Elizabeth Dragon, Assistant Commissioner of Community Investment and Economic Revitalization.

The Youth Inclusion Initiative has allowed the DEP to partner with multiple community-based organizations including the Ironbound Community Corporation in Newark, Groundwork Elizabeth, Rutgers University-Camden, The Work Group in Camden and Neighborhood Improvement Association in Trenton.

"NJDEP's Youth Inclusion Initiative should be a national model for advancing equity and environmental justice within underrepresented communities. Every day, the outreach and support displayed by DEP staff was tangible, heartwarming, and truly inspiring. As a 2023 community host organization, we are deeply grateful for the program's commitment to expose and educate our youth to the vital work of environmental justice and stewardship," said Octavia Gurley, Neighborhood Improvement Association's Director of Community Development.

"The Elizabeth youth that participated in the NJDEP Youth Inclusion program come from diverse urban backgrounds and gained experiences that will live with them forever. They spoke to

staff from a variety of departments of the DEP at dozens of locations and saw the value of the work of the DEP. They left the program aware of the potential for them to one day become part of the agency. A summer experience can change a life," said Jonathan Phillips, Executive Director of Groundwork Elizabeth.

Organizations interested in partnering with the DEP this year will be evaluated on their plan to support the youth during the program and their ability to highlight career opportunities through the identification of pathways such as additional education, credentials or other steps in line with the youths' interests.

There is no maximum number of young people who can participate in the program, but applicants should carefully plan their budget to ensure their pro-

posal reflects a reasonable management and administration strategy for their proposed number of participants. The DEP recommends up to 10 youth participants per organization.

Once awarded, the partner organizations and a DEP program coordinator will work from April to June to finalize the program logistics and develop itineraries that tailor the experience to the interests of each group. They will also be required to employ a site supervisor to accompany the youth for the entirety of the program. Mandatory training will be provided to DEP employees and each organization's site supervisor.

Interested organizations can send their questions about the program to Priya.Ratanpara@dep.nj.gov through Feb. 19. The answers to any questions received by DEP about the 2024 Youth Inclusion Initiative request for proposal document will be posted at dep.nj.gov/yii/rfp/.

Recognized with the Environmental Council of the States Innovation Award in 2022, the program advances key elements of the Council on the Green Economy, which serves to develop a blueprint for expanding the green economy and building a diverse, inclusive workforce to support Governor Murphy's clean energy and climate goals.

For more information about the 2024 Youth Inclusion Initiative, visit dep.nj.gov/yii/.

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Hello, fellow readers,
Do you recall Valentine's Day traditions as a kid having to bring cards to school? It was an assignment. An obligation. One for each classmate. Cards came in assortment packs and while the sayings were mostly about friendliness, which isn't a bad thing, connotations of romance were sometimes there. How awkward it felt.
Valentine card assortments for kids haven't changed much, based on a collection I came

across the other day.
"You're a Bear-y nice Valentine (a bear holding a heart).
"I dig you" (a skunk holding a heart).
As an adult, Valentine's Day's melancholy remains because it's commercially driven, though the history as a day honoring the early saint named Valentinus is fascinating. Credit goes to English poet Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th century for shifting the association of Saint Valentine's Day to romantic love, a connotation that spread across countries and religions.

I remember incoming flowers when working in an office eons ago amongst other twenty-something-year-olds. It became a competition almost.

Receivers proudly displayed their bounty on their desks, as if touting that their somebody loved them more than another's somebody based on their bouquet's magnitude. But you can't take it out on the flowers, primarily bouquets



of roses or arrangements of assorted flowers along with roses.

Then there's one red rose, the iconic symbol of "I love you" – the same meaning as a bouquet of red. So, you may save your dough, and spring for a single red rose rather than a dozen.

Dark pink or peach means appreciation, Light pink- admiration, yellow – friendship, orange – desire, lavender – enchantment, white – "I am worthy of you." White and red together – "We belong together."

Then there's the tradition of giving chocolates, far more enticing not being a rose person. I find roses hard to grow, attracting a plethora of diseases and insects.

I have two rose bushes from the previous owners. Each spring, I marvel over their shiny, maroon new growth and consider tackling the upcoming pests.



Rose Meanings: Red = I Love You, Yellow = Admiration, White = "I am worthy of you," Lavender = Enchantment, Peach and Dark Pink = Appreciation

The idea quickly fades when aphids and Black Spot fungus take over.

Even Knock-out roses, introduced as "care-free," are often riddled with Rose Rosette caused by a virus spread by dust-sized mites. Never mind the Japanese beetles that chomp the heck out of them in summer. But you can't take it out on the roses. And many clients and dear friends have a green thumb for roses.

So maybe it's just me. And I love their beauty and fragrance, as you may recall from the story about the Beauty and Beast of Roses (archived on AskMaryStone.com).

Legend has it the Aztecs considered chocolate an aphrodisiac. Chocolate is indeed proven to elevate moods, much like falling in love. I wonder if the types of chocolates have a meaning. Perhaps white chocolate means "I am wor-

thy of you," too. Though dark chocolate, especially with nuts, is the most worthy of my indulgence. Especially with a red wine chaser. Smile.

Rather than cut flowers, why not give the gift of growth and abundance that lasts, such as seeds for a vegetable or flower garden? But please don't skip the chocolates, dear.

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Northampton County Sheriff's Dep. Warn of Phone Scam

The Northampton County Sheriff's Department has received multiple reports about a male caller identifying as a Northampton County sheriff deputy who has been contacting county residents regarding repayment of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans.

The caller then gives instructions for repaying this loan at secure public kiosks that accept Bitcoin, or they will be arrested immediately due to their non-compliance.

The public should be aware that this is a scam. The Northampton County Sheriff's Department does



not call residents and solicit money.

Please report any suspi-

cious solicitations to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office at 1-800-

441-2555 or email them to scams@attorneygeneral.gov.

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