



# Gazette 2.0

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Take a peek into the past  
with this fun photo montage  
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Volume 4, Issue 3

Thursday, February 6, 2020

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### MOON TOWNSHIP



Sketch by Avon Graf Architects, LLC

The original concept for the Miracle Field was put forth in early 2018. Originally slated to open in fall of 2019, opening has been pushed back to summer of 2020.

## Miracle Field delayed, early summer launch expected

BY JAMIE WIGGAN  
STAFF WRITER

Originally slated for a fall 2019 opening, a handicap-accessible baseball field under construction in Moon Park is now expected to open during early summer.

Updating township supervisors on the project's status during the board's Jan. 29 workshop meeting, Mike

Magulick, Miracle League of Moon Township president, said the first phase is close to completion despite recent construction delays.

"The goal is to [open] in June... dependent on the weather," Magulick said. "We're excited to get started."

The Miracle League concept —

SEE, MOON, PAGE 2

## Crafton council's Niemann under scrutiny by the public

BY ALEX TOPOR  
STAFF WRITER

Crafton Borough Councilman Roy Niemann was under fire during the citizen comment portion of the Jan. 27 council meeting.

Cody Sheets, of Promenade Street, addressed council concerning newly appointed Niemann. Sheets said Niemann has a "serious alcohol problem" and is concerned he cannot adequately serve the borough.

"This man has repeatedly come into my place of business, in this borough, in an intoxicated condition. He has been banned from involvement in CIT baseball and softball because of his drunken antics," Sheets said.

"This man clearly needs intervention for his personal problems and is certainly in no

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

condition to serve effectively on this council."

Sheets also claimed Niemann was sworn into his position with an active warrant for his arrest stemming from an incident in 2018.

"This is not a personal problem between Roy and I, nor is it an assassination on his character," Sheets said.

"I implore this council, as a citizen of Crafton, to unanimously vote to depose Roy Niemann from his position immediately and insert someone into this position that can actually help this community effectively."

In an interview with Council President Phillip

SEE, CRAFTON, PAGE 3

## Lawsuit filed against Montour Friends of the Performing Arts

BY JAMIE WIGGAN  
STAFF WRITER

The Montour School District has taken legal action against a parent organization for the return of approximately \$27,000, which the district claims as its rightful property after dismissing the group from its role in organizing annual musicals.

The organization in question, Montour Friends of the Performing Arts (MFPA), was

### MONTOUR

formed by parent volunteers to strengthen the high school theater program and has received financial support from the district in addition to its own fundraising efforts.

Since falling out of favor with the administration last fall, the MFPA board says it is willing to continue funding musical-related expenses but does not want to transfer its entire balance to the district.

"The MFPA is not comfortable with simply turning over the money to the district," the

SEE, MONTOUR, PAGE 4

## Sto-Rox appoints new director, denies teacher association's grievance

BY JAMIE WIGGAN  
STAFF WRITER

Sto-Rox directors filled a board vacancy and moved through a full slate of action items during the district's Jan. 30 legislative session.

### New appointment

The directors unanimously approved

### SCHOOL BOARD

Alice Cooper of Stowe to fill a board position vacated by former supervisor Cheri Zielinski when her term ended in December 2019. By joining the school board, Cooper said she hopes to help strengthen connections between students, parents and the community.



Alice Cooper

"What motivates me is to not only be a voice in the church for education, but a voice for education in the community," said Cooper, who cited her experience as the leader of a children's church program in support of her candidacy.

The directors called a vote immediately after interviewing Cooper for the position and expressed unified support for her appointment.

"I know Miss Cooper very well," said Director Ken Hohman.

"I know what a fine quality Christian

SEE, STO-ROX, PAGE 4



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# Carlynton budget shortfall requires cost cutting

BY JIM SPEZIALETTI

## SCHOOL BOARD

Carlynton officials will have until the end of June to figure out how to reduce an \$859,000 deficit in the 2020-21 budget.

Board members unanimously approved a \$30.7 million preliminary budget at their Jan. 28 meeting, which would have a slight millage increase. The final budget will be approved in June, giving district officials several months to review programs, curriculum and other practices to determine ways to reduce costs without sacrificing education.

The easy solution would be to use the fund balance to cover expenses, but board member David Roussos said directors need to take some steps to understand the limits of the remaining fund balance.

He suggests the board and administration agree on a minimum amount that needs to be maintained. The district's fund balance is projected to be at \$2,383,251 at the end of June 2020.

"My suggestion is to look beyond the current year. My concern is we are continuously reducing our fund balance," Roussos said. "I support this preliminary budget but with the understanding we will all strategically use the fund balance."

Certain factors have increased the fund balance the past two fiscal years. The first such increases since 2011-12.

Christopher Juzwick, director of fiscal affairs and budget, said several factors have resulted in a higher fund balance. Juzwick said last year the district made transportation changes that resulted in a savings. The previous school year, the district was awarded several grants.

Another key factor is how the district is managing the finances.

"We are not using the 'this is how we did it in the past' approach," said Juzwick, who applauds the work of all district employees

*Juzwick said last year the district made transportation changes that resulted in a savings. The previous school year, the district was awarded several grants.*

who reviewed all programs, software and materials to determine where each department could reduce costs.

During a finance committee meeting earlier this month, Juzwick said the cost for capital projects is a concern, although nothing is planned. On the positive side,

the district has little debt, he said.

Board member Marissa Mendoza would like to stay away from deficits.

"The reason why we are going so hard now is to prevent us from becoming those other districts that are millions and millions of dollars in debt," Mendoza said.

Expenses are expected to increase 3.7 percent for 2020-21. Salaries and benefits make up 71 percent of the expenditures. If the board approves a millage increase up to the state index allowed, the 0.7735 mill increase would bring the tax rate to 24.955 mills.

That tax hike would mean homeowners with assessed real estate at \$100,000 would pay an extra \$77 in property taxes for 2020-21.

Several finance meetings are planned as district officials look to pare down the deficit. Information about those meetings and the preliminary budget can be found on the Carlynton district website.

## Briefly...

### Senior Connect Cards

State Rep. Dan Deasy (D-27) will assist senior citizens with obtaining Port Authority ConnectCards in the Crafton Borough Community Center, 140 Bradford Ave. Deasy and his staff will be in the community center from 2 to 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 10, and from 3:30 to 5 p.m. on March 21. The ConnectCard is how bus riders will pay for bus fares in the near future.

### Grants awarded

State Rep. Dan Deasy announced Jan. 27 that the Montour and Sto-Rox school districts were among two of 477 schools chosen in the state of Pennsylvania to receive a PAsmart Targeted Grant. Each school was awarded \$35,000 to use toward expanding computer science programs within the districts as well as teacher training. Statewide, \$5.7 million in grants were allocated.

## Township officials discuss ways to aid parks

MOON, CONTINUED

using rubberized turf fields to accommodate wheelchairs and other assistive devices — was hatched in 1998 by a Georgia-based youth baseball association. Now there are more than 240 similar fields across the country, including locations in the South Hills and Cranberry Township.

Magulick's son, Luke, who suffers from a genetic disability affecting physical and cognitive functioning, provided the inspiration for the foundation which formed in 2017. Luke Magulick's mother, Christina Orr Magulick, also serves on the board.

Kicking off the inaugural league this summer will mark the completion of phase one.

Further plans are in play to develop a handicap-accessible playground and additional sports facilities during a later stage of construction. A firm timeline of future phases has not yet been released but Magulick said he hopes the playground will be completed sometime in 2021.

Magulick expects the facility to draw participants from neighboring communities across Allegheny and Beaver counties. Scholarships will be available to assist families who cannot afford the regular cost.

The supervisors and administration voiced solid support for the project.

"This is for the benefit of Moon Township... and we're proud of it," said Chairman David Bachman.

### Township foundation

Moon Township officials are considering forming a non-profit organization to support its public parks program.

According to Community Engagement Coordinator Amy Ottaviani, who pitched the idea to Moon's board of supervisors Jan. 29, the foundation would support the township's parks program by helping to fund specific capital projects.

"People understand that parks need more than just taxes, they need business

*The foundation will seek to raise funds through corporate sponsorships, public grants and donations from businesses and residents.*

partners," she said.

The foundation will seek to raise funds through corporate sponsorships, public grants and donations from businesses and residents.

It would also be structured to work in partnership with the township by filling three of its eight board positions with elected supervisors, Ottaviani said.

"We want this foundation [to operate] in a way that you want," she said.

Parks and Recreation Director Stacey Sommerfield was among the candidates Ottaviani proposed for a position on the board.

"[As a 501(c)3] this will open us up to more grants than are currently available to us," Sommerfield said.

Township supervisors indicated their support for the proposal and the list of suggested board members.

### Thorn Run

Concluding a more than \$9 million infrastructure upgrade project, the westbound ramp connecting Cherrington Parkway with Interstate-376 is scheduled to reopen in June.

The project, which began last spring,

has so far delivered major infrastructure upgrades and maintenance work to several sections of road feeding into the Thorn Run Interchange.

Construction on the new ramp has begun, and marks the final stage of the project, said Lynn Colosi, executive director of the Moon Transportation Authority (MTA). The ramp is expected to reopen in June.

The closure of the old ramp at the start of construction has resulted in a number of traffic issues, including reports of motorists turning onto the still-operating eastbound ramp in the face of oncoming traffic, said Colosi.

The Golden Triangle Construction Company, contracted for the job, is addressing the issue with additional signage.

The \$9.4 million project is being overseen by the MTA and has benefited from PennDOT funding.

Other MTA projects in the works include plans to build roads connecting University Boulevard with Rouser Road — via an extension of Port Vue Drive — and Stevenson Mill Road, by laying down a 1.5-mile stretch of roadway running roughly parallel to the interstate.

Connecting these roads will increase accessibility and open up new land parcels for development opportunities, said Colosi.

The combined cost of the two projects is close to \$15 million. Some funds have already been secured through state grants.

If the MTA continues to move ahead with these plans, Colosi said she expects a final design to be presented in 2021 with construction reaching completion in 2022-23.

Founded in 1986 to provide Moon with transportation infrastructure enhancements and economic development opportunities, the MTA is funded by an opt-in tax system that allows new businesses within a designated area to forgo county, school and municipal taxes and instead pay the combined amount to the authority over a 10-year period.

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# Councilman allegations, grant fund and more

CRAFTON, CONTINUED

Levasseur, Levasseur acted as a spokesperson for Niemann.

"We find the resident didn't show much compassion for Mr. Niemann. Mr. Niemann is diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder," Levasseur said.

"He has no felonies and just got a job with the Allegheny County Airport Authority. Instead of coming from a place of kindness, Mr. Sheets made a lot of inflammatory remarks."

According to Pennsylvania court records, Niemann was arrested for public drunkenness and similar misconduct on March 11, 2018, in Ingram Borough.

He pled guilty on Jan. 27, 2020, in front of Magisterial District Judge Jack Kobistek.

He also pled guilty to operating a vehicle without insurance in Crafton Borough in 2017.

Beyond Allegheny County, Niemann has had several incidents in Montgomery County. In Montgomery County he was charged with the following:

- Public drunkenness on Oct. 25, 2011.
- Public drunkenness on Aug. 25, 2011.
- Disorderly conduct on June 5, 2011.
- Public drunkenness on Oct. 10, 2005.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol, driving with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.10 percent or greater, careless driving

and driving at an unsafe speed on Jan. 22, 2000.

"Any legal issues in regards to Mr. Niemann are issues for himself, his doctors and the commonwealth of Pennsylvania to work through," Levasseur said.

"To make a circus at the meeting and humiliate a man with a disability is just despicable. The man didn't do anything to anyone."

In an interview with Sheets, he explained that he made council and the former borough manager aware of Niemann's legal issues during his campaign.

"I think council itself and certain members of council turned a blind eye to this and I think that's corruption at its finest. It is clearly wrong and they allowed it to happen anyway," Sheets said.

"This isn't something I want viewed as an assassination of anyone's character, but public figures need held accountable. Other voices need to be heard, not just mine. People should come to the meetings and be concerned about what's happening in their community."

"That's really what I want to stick out from this. We need to take control as a community to ensure things like this never happen again."

**In other news**, Interim-manager Russell McKibben delivered the manager's report, which includes updates on several grants and a thank you to council.

**The project will improve four intersections — North Linwood and Crennel avenues, Noble and Dinsmore avenues, Noble and Bradford avenues, Noble Avenue and East Steuben Street.**

"I want to thank council and the citizens of Crafton for the opportunity to serve as your interim borough manager," McKibben said. "I will give 110% for as long as I am employed."

The report also included an update on a Gaming Economic Development Fund grant. The grant is funded by the state, but administered by Allegheny County. The county recently assigned the borough a grant administrator for the grant.

The grant will improve the pool liner at Crafton Borough Swimming Pool and the fencing around public parks and. McKibben said there is no timeline yet for the projects.

Also in the report, the Green Light Go grant was awarded to M & B Services based out of Clarion with work to begin when the weather breaks.

Work should begin on handicapped

ramps first and then traffic poles.

"Regrettably, the construction company informed us the lead time of the traffic poles themselves is 30 weeks," McKibben said. "There's a good possibility this will stretch into the fall when the poles actually come in."

The project will improve four intersections — North Linwood and Crennel avenues, Noble and Dinsmore avenues, Noble and Bradford avenues, Noble Avenue and East Steuben Street.

Due to the delay in traffic poles, council approved a \$2,975 contract with Traffic Systems and Services for a replacement controller at the Noble and East Crafton intersection.

It is a five-way intersection and the controller currently in place is in bad shape, McKibben said.

The replacement controller should do the job until the fall when the permanent controller is installed.

Also, there was a recalculation for the 2020 minimum municipal obligation (MMO) from the borough. The MMO is a state-mandated minimum amount that a municipality must contribute to any pension plan established for its employees. The borough owes about \$30,000 for the 2020 obligation.

"This is no one's fault," McKibben said. "The obligation came in after the budget was passed."

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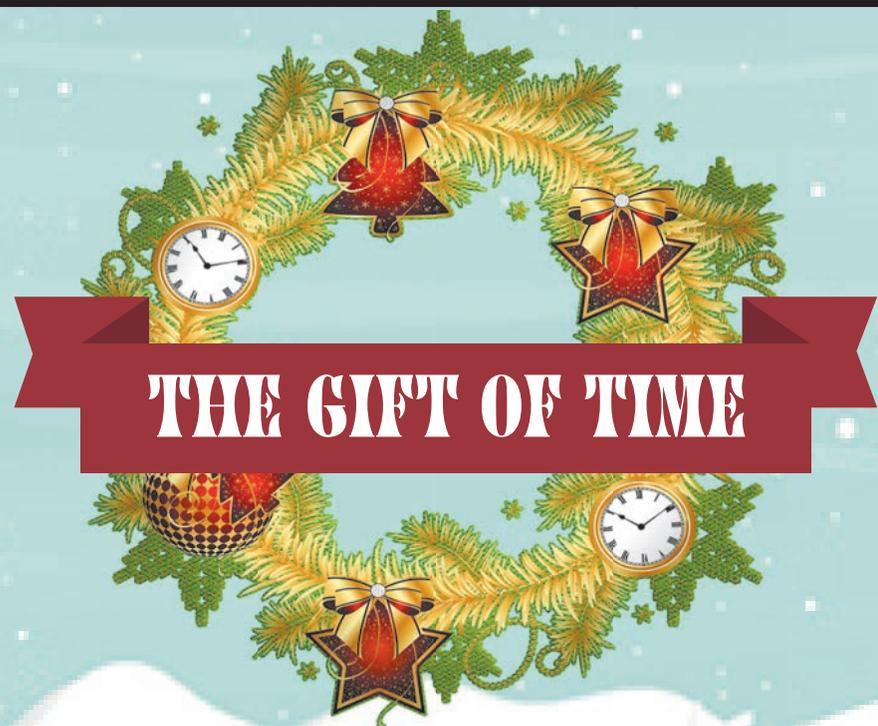
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# Montour files lawsuit recalling funds from performing arts group

## MONTOUR, CONTINUED

association wrote in a letter to the district's solicitor on Jan. 3. "...The MFPA is happy to continue their support of the high school theater program and is willing to pay invoices directly associated with the production this year."

The district is, however, pursuing the entire balance through a complaint filed in Allegheny County's common pleas court which argues it is legally entitled to the funds.

"It is clear from [its] bylaws that any funds the MFPA receives are primarily received from the District," the complaint states.

"Monies the District provides to MFPA are not given as donations to the organization itself."

"These funds are provided for the sole purpose of funding the High School Musical."

MFPA board members disagree.

Danielle Zwinkl, MFPA secretary, said

the organization was running on a surplus when the district began making annual contributions in 2017, all of which she said were specifically used to pay for licensing fees.

"Most if not all of the money that is in the account was not donated by the district," she said.

A statement included in the filing shows the MFPA held a balance of \$26,636.53 on Sept. 9. The district acknowledges making three \$7,000 contributions totaling \$21,000.

Zwinkl said the organization funded entire productions for several years prior to 2017 and had also paid for capital improvements benefitting the school with money raised independently.

The MFPA's partnership with the district began to unravel last summer when MFPA board members voiced concern with the production proposed by the directors — "Shrek" — during the planning stages of the 2020 musical.

The contracted directors, Brittany and

Josh Morgan, consequently resigned, sparking a parent-led petition calling for their reinstatement and blaming the MFPA for their resignation.

The petition was delivered to the school board Aug. 15, 2019.

A month later, Superintendent Christopher Stone wrote to the MFPA to say the district would no longer utilize the organization for hiring directors and organizing musicals.

The school board approved the formation of a new group for assisting the high school theater program, the Montour Theatre Production Boosters, during its Nov. 21 meeting.

Lisa Smarra, who headed the petition to reinstate the Morgans, serves on the five-member board as vice president of marketing.

Smarra said the MFPA was ultimately dismissed because the district administration found its practice of handling hiring matters directly to be in violation of Pennsylvania school code.

Consequently, the boosters organization is structured to be a purely assistive organization leaving personnel decisions to the district, she said.

Zwinkl said that fails to account for why the MFPA was dismissed because the middle school theater production group operat[es] in a similar, if not identical, manner," without the district intervening.

The district's pursuit came as a surprise to MFPA members, according to Zwinkl, who insisted their goal was always to serve the students and the school.

Depending on the outcome of the litigation, the MFPA intends to fund this year's musical and use any remaining funds to buy new theatre equipment for the school and support non-profit Alina's Light, which offers performing arts scholarships to Montour students, Zwinkl said.

"At the end of the day we want this money to support the arts at Montour."

Montour's district administration declined to comment for this story, citing pending litigation policy.

# Co-ed track & field program, donations accepted for new equipment

## STO-ROX, CONTINUED

woman we have here in front of us, who also has a master's degree."

### Grievance denied

A grievance filed by the teacher's union urging the district administration to address cases of student violence and disrespect toward teachers was formally denied by the board.

The grievance, presented by Sto-Rox Education Association President Ben Engelhard during an education committee meeting Nov. 7, stated more than 18 teachers and support staff had been injured by students in the first months of the 2019 school year and charged the administration with failing to take appropriate action.

Directors voted to deny the grievance without commenting. At the time it was

filed, Board President Samantha Levitzki-Wright called the grievance "premature" and "misguided."

Engelhard, who attended the Jan. 30 meeting at the administration's request, declined to comment on the denial and indicated he intended to continue talks with the board and administration before taking further action.

### Track program

First proposed in December by Athletic Director Mike Spisak, the board agreed to establish a co-ed track and field program in the spring.

Spisak proposed the program as an additional athletic option that wouldn't strain the district financially.

Initial concerns held by some supervisors that the new program would draw students away from existing programs, including

baseball and softball, did not resurface when the motion was passed Jan. 30 with the full board's support.

### Donations

A \$16,240 donation in honor of Sto-Rox's late gym teacher Chris Grady was accepted by the board to fund new equipment for the physical education and special education departments.

Grady's young sons, Drew and Trent, died of a rare genetic disease shortly before his death.

Their years-long medical struggle and decline drew regional attention, and their deaths affected many in the Sto-Rox community who were rooting for the young boys.

Grady was employed by Sto-Rox at the time of his death in 2018.

The donation was given by surviving

members of his family.

The board also accepted cash donations from local business owner Jimmy Lind (\$1,000) and local eatery Doughboys Pizza (\$500) in support of the boys' basketball team.

A \$900 donation from local non-profit Rebound For Ryan was accepted to fund reading contest prizes and books on black history.

### Bus monitor

The board approved a new monitor and a slew of new bus and van drivers to operate the district's bussing system.

Parental concern over the lack of support staff on-board school buses has been voiced during a number of recent board meetings. The positions often take time to fill because of a thorough vetting process, according to supervisors.



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# Opinion

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## Change is constant, making it good takes effort

BY EDITORIAL BOARD

It's easy to start reminiscing about the past and think about, "the better times."

A time where family seemed more important than anything else and small family-owned businesses thrived.

When kids were forced to play outside and socialize with others as opposed to staying inside with their noses buried in a computer or phone.

All of the neighbors knew each other and helped each other out in times of need.

For those that this sounds familiar, you probably feel a deep sense of nostalgia for the good old days. If you're not familiar, the thought still sounds nice, doesn't it?

But, was it really better back then? It's a loaded question.

All throughout history, cities and empires have risen and fallen.

### EDITORIAL

It's the nature of history.

Once great livable cities becoming crime-ridden and almost uninhabitable. On the flip side, there are towns that were once unknown countrysides expanding and growing into great towns to live and raise kids.

Look at McKees Rocks and Stowe for example. Once thriving towns with sprawling businesses and a place of opportunities. Now both are peppered with condemned houses, high crime and transient residency.

That's not to say that these towns don't have any positive attributes. They're likely on the upswing, and there are a lot of people dedicated to making sure the towns grow and thrive to their full potentials.

*Once great livable cities becoming crime-ridden and almost uninhabitable. On the flip side, there are towns that were once unknown countrysides expanding and growing into great towns to live and raise kids.*

Yet, there's a lot of work ahead before either return to their former glory.

Truth be told, you can find these

differences anywhere you go. It's simply to do with changing times, the push and pull of an ever-changing world.

It's also a change in mentality.

We live in a self-driven social media world where people's heads are stuck in their phones. No longer are the days where you are walking around your neighborhood, expected to say hello to the neighbors you pass.

There are a lot of good things about the 21st Century. We can talk to people halfway across the world. Resources are at our disposal. Medicine has made amazing strides.

We've come a long way as a whole.

It's like the weather and the changing seasons. Bitter winter might permeate your environment right now but eventually, it will stabilize and the sun will shine again.

## It's that easy: Put the community first, you're in charge

BY EDITORIAL BOARD

When Sen. Fontana blasted the fractious relations of McKees Rocks' three primary stakeholders last May, it seemed the possibility they would slide into new depths of squabbling and mud-hurling had been ruled off the table. The so-called partnership could slowly improve or spectacularly implode.

As it often seems to do, reality defied conventional wisdom.

The fragile layer of sandstone holding up the pool of quicksand in which the once-merry trio dragged each other into fractured under their clamoring movements.

The rock is gone and they've slid further down, hands gripping throats as they try to prop themselves up at the expense of the other. It could be a long drop until we hit the next layer.

The image is flawed by failing to account for the marriage of convenience temporarily uniting the borough and developer (possibly not unlike Stalin and the allies), and the efforts of a sensible few who really want to put this ugly episode behind them for the good of the community.

On the whole, though, it works pretty well.

The warring ways of the McKees Rocks borough, McKees Rocks Community Development Corporation (CDC) and

### EDITORIAL

Trinity Commercial Development have provided a framework for viewing every issue at play in the community.

As a non-profit (well, sort of – we're still working on it) news foundation with a mission of reporting the truth, we've found ourselves hanging dangerously over the pool of quicksand. Or maybe that's wishful thinking, and we're already ankle-deep?

Now, any issue we report on is filtered through this framework, that's branded into the eyes of every engaged citizen. It's not their fault.

It's not ours either. Our goal of raising civic engagement by providing informative, politically-neutral news is being quashed by the madness.

When we report on borough meetings (now essentially school-yard fights conducted mostly by senior citizens) our coverage is being interpreted in terms of CDC (dis)loyalty.

Rather than being anti-borough for exposing their folly, we're somehow pro-CDC. We're not anti-borough either, we're just reporting what happens. The news.

When we reported on Sean Gibson's questionable dismissal from the November business agenda somehow this displayed our loyalty to the CDC, despite them having

no involvement in the project.

When we reported on proposed pay-raises for borough staff, it was seen as support for the CDC rather than a watchdog service for our taxpaying readers. What's the link here? The examples abound.

Antics at January's borough meeting also highlighted the intensity of this strange preoccupation.

In what appeared to be a coordinated smear campaign, a combination of residents and officials took aim at the CDC, airing out a laundry list of grievances. We took the time to look into the accusations only to find the majority of them entirely unsubstantiated.

What was the point of it all anyway? Few of the claims had any bearing on current borough business even if they were true.

At the risk of further aggravating the situation (as Sen. Fontana's letter seemed to do — again, not his fault) here's one last call for our community to pull together. Great things can still happen, here's how.

Borough officials need to recognize they can't do anything to help bring the town back without outside resources and funding.

They should recognize how fortunate they are for the opportunity to partner with two organizations willing to give their expertise and resources to the town's improvement.

Brownfields don't turn into flourishing business destinations without the assistance of heavy-hitters like these.

The CDC needs to acknowledge its powerlessness outside of a positive relationship with borough officials. It has no authority of its own to pass laws, approve developments, or secure grants which require municipal participation. At its best, it can be a bridge between the borough, its residents and Harrisburg.

It can provide visionary support along with the expertise needed to make things happen.

Trinity needs to acknowledge without the support of the CDC and the borough it would not own the large parcels of land which represent the majority of the town's untapped potential. It was given support under terms that it would redevelop the land in a way that brings maximum benefit to the community, not maximum money to its coffers. It should honor those terms as redevelopment efforts continue.

This can all be summed up as: everybody should do their job and put the community first. Makes it sound easy doesn't it?

We'll try to take our own advice. Please call us out when it looks like we're pushing an agenda.

But please don't apply a political framework to issues where it doesn't fit.

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# Blighted properties: A problem we must face together

Since taking office, I have spent significant time traveling around the district to meet with people about development.

There are thirteen different communities in the 45th District and they all have beautiful neighborhoods and growing commercial areas. Unfortunately, several have abandoned or neglected properties that can severely impact otherwise nice areas.

Too often, these properties attract rodents, animals, vandals, and criminals. They can also be places that attract children and teens, interested in exploring these structures. They are eyesores and hazards.

Many municipal leaders and elected officials have told me that they are contacted by residents who seek help to demolish these properties. The desire is to see the owners take action to clean up, repair, and/or remove the structures.

Sometimes, though, there are no living owners, or the owners are incapacitated or

## HARRISBURG UPDATE



BY REP. ANITA KULIK

without the funds to take action.

Legalities can also come into play. The government cannot just come in and "take" someone's property. Local ordinances and state laws exist that allow action to be taken, but those actions are not always viable ones.

If there is no living owner, or if the owner is destitute, fines will not provide a solution. Sometimes the absentee owners

*Local ordinances and state laws exist that allow action to be taken, but those actions are not always viable ones.*

are residents from out of state or are corporations that may be difficult to trace.

Municipalities can pursue avenues like a Sheriff's Sale for delinquent taxes, but these processes are expensive and often take a great deal of time.

The work that may be required forces the municipalities to spend tax dollars for legal fees and costs, monies that are needed in the community.

State and Federal officials have worked with local municipalities to deal with blighted properties. A hurdle that must be overcome is the cost of pursuing legal

avenues, and then the cost of demolishing or taking corrective action on a property once it has been acquired or been formally condemned.

I have introduced several measures to deal with blighted properties.

Recently, I re-introduced a bill that will allow the Commonwealth Financing Authority to issue a bond to create a grant program to provide assistance to local municipalities.

I served as a township commissioner for thirteen years, and am aware of the budget constraints faced by many of our local governments. The grant program would provide funds for the demolition of blighted properties.

It would provide a source of funding to eradicate the blight, return the property to the tax rolls, and rehabilitate neighborhoods.

I believe that this will help increase property values, create jobs, and help with development.



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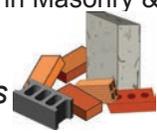
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# A recovered life is a beautiful thing, but a tough road

I host a life recovery meeting called Unshackled on Thursday evenings at the Good News Place in McKees Rocks.

“Life recovery,” for the uninitiated, is a blanket catch-all phrase for the processes - usually 12-step programs - to help folks get their life back on track after habits or vices became addictions.

Most of these programs have a lot in common, and ours isn't unique.

Ours is different from many in that we use a specific verse from the bible - 2 Corinthians 5:17 - as our core principle: “If anyone is in Christ Jesus, they are a new creation in Christ, the old is gone, the new has arrived.”

We don't argue with the notion that folks coming out of addiction have to be vigilant, change the “people, places, and things” that made up their life of addiction, and take the journey one day at a time, celebrating each day's victories and pushing through tough

## GAINS & GLEANINGS



BY J. HOGAN

days knowing that just getting through today without giving in to their addiction is in itself a victory.

We do believe folks who've truly put their problem behind them, as new creations in Christ, don't have to spend the rest of their lives identifying themselves by their life's worst moments.

They can identify the way God sees them... as redeemed, made whole, rescued.

Many folks I know gave up on my friend Brett. His mess made it easy to do. In the throws of his addiction - his job gone, his marriage in tatters, his young children terrified of him and the upheaval in their home - Brett attempted suicide by plunging a chef's knife into his own chest.

While he was hospitalized, Brett's wife told me it might have been better if he'd succeeded in his effort to kill himself. That wasn't a wish, just an exasperated declaration of a harried woman whose life had come unglued due to the fallout from drugs.

Brett recovered. Not just from the collapsed lung and blood loss, but from the addiction, too.

He's approaching 30 years clean, and he and his wife own their own graphic design business.

Their marriage recovered, too. It wasn't easy, as trust comes in small increments

after such a massive calamity, but it's better today than ever.

Not every addict makes it, in fact, many don't, as I well know. I've checked up on friends who've fallen off the radar only to find their obituary.

Other folks do make it, and that's something to celebrate because it's tough.

Lots of folks were burned, many friends and family members gave up, and getting up off the mat is terrifying.

Many of life's molehills look like mountains to someone whose employment record, credit rating, and circle of friends have been left in tatters.

When someone's life is redeemed and rebuilt in the aftermath of all that... it's a beautiful thing.

Rev. James Hogan is a native of Stowe Township and serves as pastor of Faithbridge Community Church in McKees Rocks

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# Is being first really more important than credibility?

Whenever an athlete or celebrity dies suddenly and tragically, I'm always intrigued with how the media covers the event.

The recent helicopter crash that claimed the life of sports icon Kobe Bryant along with his beautiful daughter and seven other beautiful souls serves as a somber reminder that one, life is fragile and fleeting and two, the news media still has a long way to go to regain the trust of its readers and viewers.

From the slips of the tongue to the rush to be first in breaking the story, this tragedy illustrates that no matter how professional one tries to be when covering an unfolding event, mistakes are made and credibility is destroyed.

Now, some errors are seemingly forgivable.

Others are just downright callous or stupid, but when a story of this magnitude breaks, it becomes incumbent on each member of the media to be as precise as possible in their reporting. Or, at the very least, don't report anything until you have your facts straight.

In this line of work, facts equals credibility and credibility equals trust. Your readers and viewers rely on you to bring them information in the best manner possible.

Any news organization pines to get a story out first and none are better than TMZ. That being said, very few people will equate TMZ with sympathy.

## DIVERSIONS WITH DAVE



BY DAVID FICARRI

Reporting a story first is a good thing, reporting it before the families get notified, not so much.

Now, in their defense and in the era of social media, I'm not sure an outlet can always wait until that occurs. It comes across rather heartless and callous, but when it's a story of this magnitude, I don't believe there is a true blueprint.

When reporting on any story, accuracy is the most crucial element.

The stories were predictably wild and all over the place. One can understand that in a breaking story, sometimes the urgency and magnitude of the situation gets in the way of facts.

However, there is zero excuse to report what ABC did and say with certainty that Bryant and all four of his daughters were aboard.

Until that information is confirmed by the authorities, no organization should be so reckless with their reporting. At that moment, you're not doing anyone a service except feeding your own ego.

*The eyes of the world are always watching and when these big stories break, how you respond in those situations goes a long way in revealing how credible you actually are.*

Which brings us to the BBC. In their report, they "mistakenly" had footage of Lebron James in their story about Kobe. Now, on its face, this may not seem like a big deal in the grand scheme of things and you can decide for yourself how important it is.

My take is that for a worldwide network to make a mistake like this in a report where you had time to actually prepare your story, then you NEED to get your facts straight. It's that simple.

Anything below that is just terrible reporting.

The next example is the one that became its own story and when that happens it's never good for the reporter or news organization. Now, I've never done live

TV and can only imagine the possibilities to error.

You've probably seen or heard the clip from MSNBC's Alison Morris. As she's describing Kobe's impact, she called his team the Los Angeles "Nakers".

Many other people heard it as something vastly different and very racist. Now, if you've heard the clip, I'll let you decide what you think she said, but as you can imagine, this story has taken on a life of its own.

That's the worst possible scenario for any news organization.

Whatever she said or was heard to say, she and MSNBC have plenty of damage control they need to do because of her "mistake".

Once again, trust and credibility are paramount.

When taken individually, these instances all serve as a constant reminder of the pitfalls of reporting and media.

Collectively however, they show that the media often does a terrible job of reporting when a significant news story breaks.

These are all well-educated, well-seasoned organizations and reporters and they should expect the highest standards from themselves.

The eyes of the world are always watching and when these big stories break, how you respond in those situations goes a long way in revealing how credible you actually are.

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“White Swan Park, because my dad used to take me there all the time and I loved it.”

—Amy Mancini,  
Robinson

“The Primadonna, in McKees Rocks. Because of the excellent food and customer service.”

—Melisa McNabb,  
Robinson

“Hills Department Store. I miss the slushies, soft pretzels and butter popcorn.”

—Garrett Houser,  
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—Pete Schepis,  
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# Features

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## Local dry cleaner shares how she educates others on human trafficking

BY ALEX TOPOR  
STAFF WRITER

### ADVOCACY

Advocate and McKees Rocks dry cleaner Nicole Cermak was first exposed to the frightening world of human trafficking in 2015 when she was volunteering at a children's shelter and was shocked to learn several girls there were being screened for sexual abuse.

"That was the first time I was like sex trafficking? But these girls don't look like they are hurt right now," Cermak said. "That's when I started to really look into the whole issue."

Human trafficking is where a person is forced into either labor or sex acts.

"Victims of human trafficking typically are very vulnerable and aren't aware what is happening," Cermak said. "People prey on their vulnerabilities to make money or benefit in some way."

Children aged 12-16 are most at risk for human trafficking with those most vulnerable to the industry being homeless and runaway youth, LGBTQ+ individuals and children in foster care.

They can be sold by anyone, such as an older sibling, neighbor or fellow church member, said Cermak.

By preying on vulnerabilities, the children are coerced into sexual acts or acts of labor without realizing the situation they are in. Once the trafficked person realizes what is happening, they are usually met with violence and threats.

In addition to working full-time with her husband and owner Jim at Quality

Dry Cleaners in McKees Rocks, Cermak volunteers at Rooted Outreach, an organization aiming to bring awareness to human trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation.

The group provides free education so citizens can identify signs of human trafficking and know how to report it.

"Human trafficking is here in our own backyard. I began advocating for victims of it in the Pittsburgh area because this is my home and place of exposure to human trafficking," said Cermak.

"People think of the movie 'Taken' where someone from Eastern Europe takes a person, but that is not the case. What is happening here in the United States is people are being taken advantage of from a business point of view. If someone wanted to sell guns or drugs there is a need to replenish it. But if you look at sex or labor trafficking, they can use that same person over and over again."

Cermak and Rooted Outreach work with the general public and community through groups such as Lions Club or Rotary meetings.

They also hold events to focus on the healthcare community and agencies that deal with drug addiction or the foster system.

"We also want to work with schools, but that has proven difficult. So, we are looking into having community events without a specific organization attached so anyone



can come," Cermak said.

"There are times after an event where we will get a lot of crossed arms and stern looks. I have been told I terrify people and that is not happening here."

Cermak said the public needs to realize that human trafficking is out there and a real issue.

"The first thing people need to do is to be aware. They need to be aware firstly of what is human trafficking and then who is working to fight it in their communities so they can network with them," Cermak said.

Cermak also said law enforcement is overwhelmed and needs to have more eyes and ears on the streets.

"The FBI Pittsburgh office covers much of Western Pennsylvania and the entire state of West Virginia. The office usually investigates all human trafficking cases as well as cases in the battle against the opioid

crisis," Cermak said. "Many of the victims of human trafficking are under the influence of drugs so it makes the FBI's job harder to uncover the truth of who is a victim or a criminal."

In addition to working full-time and volunteering her time as a childcare advocate and at Rooted Outreach, Cermak recently began acting as a public speaker on the issue.

She is passionate about helping others and will continue to do so in an effort to help every last child in the Pittsburgh area.

"I know the names of people that have been trafficked in Pittsburgh. They are individuals, humans and souls," Cermak said.

"These experiences will stick with them for a lifetime and it will be even worse if their communities don't acknowledge what is happening to them. We know human trafficking is happening."

Other organizations Cermak and Rooted Outreach work with are Beverly's Birthday's, The Asservo Project, Living in Liberty, Blackburn Center and Pittsburgh Action Against Rape.

The organizations primarily operate in Allegheny, Butler and Westmoreland counties, but work in the surrounding counties as well.

"We have these different organizations with a piece of how this all works, but really we need to work together to be most effective," Cermak said.

To learn more about Irwin-based Rooted Outreach, [rootedoutreach.org](http://rootedoutreach.org).

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# FOR kicks off Black History Month with “Sea Change” art exhibit

BY JAMIE WIGGAN  
STAFF WRITER

A collection of paintings unveiled Jan. 24 by Focus on Renewal’s Gina Beavers speak of new life after nearly 10 years of loss, and marks the first of several events celebrating local African American art.

## McKEES ROCKS

“Sea Change” — Beavers’ exhibit — invokes Shakespeare’s imagery of a drowned man’s decaying bones eventually giving life to coral and pearls.

In Beavers’ case, fighting for peace of mind through the loss of her job, home and father has finally yielded her own impressions of new life since relocating to Pittsburgh in 2018.

“When you lose a lot you have to regain your footing,” she said.

Beavers’ 12 paintings all feature human forms against natural backdrops. Her striking use of color drew remarks from



Gina Beavers from Focus on Renewal.



Local African American art was put on display Jan. 24 at the Father Ryans Arts Center in McKees Rocks.

a number of those who came to see the exhibit.

“I love the boldness of the color and the strength of the women,” said Willie Dawson, who runs Focus on Renewal’s African American Celebration of the Arts (AACOA) program. “[Beavers] has a very warm palate... and uses earth tones that are central to nature.”

Beavers said her work reflects an attitude of “trying to find the best in the worst,” which she attributes to her father’s example.

“I can’t really paint sadness,” she said.

Sadness may have held down Beavers’ paintbrush for a period, but her new works — all painted since moving back to Pittsburgh — mark the conclusion of her sea change.

“I used to do a lot of art openings in Massachusetts.... This is my first in Pittsburgh. It’s a really big deal for me.”

*Sea Change will remain on display at the Father Ryan Arts Center, 420 Chartiers Ave., McKees Rocks until Feb. 7. Details of further AACOA programing for Black History Month are available at forstorox.org.*



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# Local sports

## OLSH boys basketball earns 8th consecutive win

BY ALEX TOPOR  
STAFF WRITER

With a commanding 85-59 victory over the Serra Catholic Eagles (10-9), the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (18-1) boys basketball team earned its 8th consecutive win in a non-region matchup on Jan. 31, at OLSH High School.

The Chargers dominated out of the gate and did not trail after the Eagles' first basket. After the first quarter, OLSH held a 24-16 lead.

Early in the second quarter, the Eagles went on a run to cut into the deficit, clawing back to within three points (24-21), before

the Chargers stole back the momentum and all but put the game away by halftime. The Chargers would outscore the Eagles 21-6 throughout the rest of the quarter.

With only three seconds left in the half, senior Matthew Rees dunked the ball in front of a boisterous OLSH student section.

"The kids certainly feed off the students' energy," OLSH head coach Mike Rodriguez said. "They love playing at home in front of this crowd."

Starting the 3rd quarter with a 45-27 lead, OLSH kept up its high-intensity defense in the second half and kept scoring at a high rate. The high-pressure defense led

to numerous Serra Catholic turnovers and easy baskets for the Chargers.

After a Serra Catholic turnover early in the fourth quarter, their head coach Justin Walther slammed a basketball on the ground, resulting in a technical foul on Walther. OLSH made both free throws and scored a layup after its possession after the tech.

"We believe we have very quick guards and we like our guards to pressure the basketball. That's what our defense is built on," Rodriguez said. "We preach getting to the ball and getting out on shooters quickly."

OLSH continued to pile on to its lead throughout the rest of the game, securing a convincing 85-59 win.

Leading the Chargers in points was Jake DiMichele with 29. Rees contributed 25 points and Dante Spadafora scored 13.

"For most of the season, it's been Dante and Jake. They've been our two main scorers throughout the season," Rodriguez said. "Rees has been solid all year but has really blossomed over the last five games. He has become our legitimate third-leading scoring because of his effort. We have three guys playing at a really high level right now."

## WPIAL football alignments released for 2020-21 season

The WPIAL has released the football alignment for the 2020 - 21 season. Conference placement for teams in the Gazette 2.0 coverage area are as follows:

### Carlynton and Sto-Rox

2A Section 4

Brentwood, Seton LaSalle, South Side Beaver and Western Beaver

### Cornell and OLSH

Section 3

Burgettstown, Fort Cherry, Northgate, Rochester and Shenango, Union

### Montour

4A Section 1

Aliquippa, Beaver, Blackhawk, Chartiers Valley and New Castle

### Moon

5A Section 1

Bethel Park, Peters Twp., South Fayette, Upper St. Clair and West Allegheny

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Presston brickhouse, 1982.



The former Mann's Hotel in McKees Rocks was built in 1803.

# Take a trip down Memory Lane



Former Sto-Rox school board member Ross Ficarra at the 1976 Bicentennial Parade in McKees Rocks.

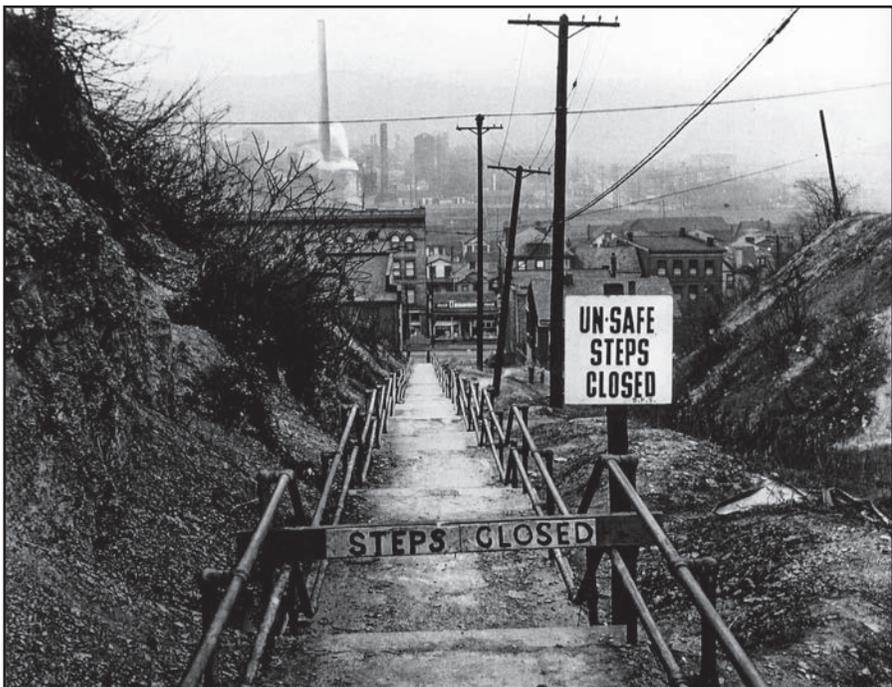
**AROUND TOWN**



*Photos by  
Lynne Deliman*



St. John the Baptist ladies pinch pierogies in the McKees Rocks Bottoms.



The Norwood steps to Island Avenue.

For more photos: [gazette20.com](http://gazette20.com)

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**McKees Rocks, PA**

## -Spotlight-

# Football official, Sto-Rox grad reflects on school years

**Name:** Dean Lauria

**Position:** Football official and 2020 Sto-Rox Hall of Famer

### STO-ROX

*Dean Lauria is graduated from Sto-Rox in 1980. Lauria is set to become a part of the Sto-Rox Hall of Fame this upcoming March. Today Lauria plays piano with Nicky Mo and the Mamalukes, a band that performs throughout the region.*

**G2.0:** At what age did you realize you were good at football?

**Lauria:** I remember playing football with my brothers at age six, and I have the photos to prove it! I never thought I was good, and I really don't know what my potential would have been because I wasn't big enough to play at the college level. I was however very thankful for the years I had in high school playing and then later as a Division 1 football official.

**G2.0:** What was your greatest attribute as a player?

**Lauria:** I was a 5 foot, 5 inch 150-pound guard and middle guard, so it was definitely speed. Back when I played we were allowed to block low, but not anymore. In those days you could be small, fast and be a very dangerous guard.

**G2.0:** What was the most difficult part of your training regimen?

**Lauria:** It's funny, back when I played it

was keeping weight on, and now years later in officiating it's keeping the weight off.

**G2.0:** Where did you play in college?

**Lauria:** I did not play college ball. I took it as far as I could in high school. I was thankful to be named All-Conference and MVP, but I was not big enough to move to the next level.

**G2.0:** What do you enjoy most about football?

**Lauria:** High school football is the best. It's the time of your life, and it's so pure because you are playing for your town, your school, your family and friends. Especially in our town, with so many great players, and we Sto-Rox have a program. We have players that played college at the highest levels and moved on to the NFL. We should all be proud of that. I love my teammates and coaches like my brothers.

**G2.0:** Where did you start officiating football?

**Lauria:** In 1993, my two older brothers Jim and Denny went into officiating and then they pulled me on to their crew. I've been a football official now for 27 years. I started working in high school and then at the D2 level in the PSAC, and was lucky to move up to small D1 (NEC and Ivy League.)

**G2.0:** As a football official have you worked any playoff games?

**Lauria:** I have worked with playoffs and conference championships in college and

high school.

**G2.0:** I understand you officiate college football games as well. How many years and at what level?

**Lauria:** I have been an official for 27 years, 15 of the 27 in college and 10 of those years in the NEC and Ivy League.

**G2.0:** What's the most difficult part of being a football official?

**Lauria:** It's funny, people that come to games at all levels mid-level through college and pros, love to rank on the officials; but what they don't understand is that we are required to take tests every week. We have to study a required amount of film. We work spring games, summer leagues, arena leagues, in fall, of course, it's almost year-round.

We have to make weight, go to clinics, travel great distances. It can be a grind sometimes, and it's not for everyone. You don't do it for the money, because you only make good money in the top D1 conferences and the NFL.

You do it because you love the game, and the best thing is working on the field with the players. I often tell folks in a kidding manner, "put on the stripes and step on the field" try it...it's not easy.

**G2.0:** You perform in a rock band with

some Sto-Rox alumni. How long have you been performing? What is the name of the band?

**Lauria:** Yes, I was a music major and I've played in various bands since I was 18 years old. For the last eight years, I have been playing piano in Nick Morrison's band. Nick is a 1978 Sto-Rox grad and has recorded a couple of albums. The name of the band is: "Nicky Mo and the Mamalukes" we play all over the city, come check us out.

**G2.0:** Tell us about your favorite moment as an athlete.

**Lauria:** Well I never won a championship, but it's the life lessons you learn on the football field. It really is a blueprint for life. My senior year we had a losing season. I learned more about myself on that team, then the winning teams I was on. I love seeing my old teammates and coaches. When you played in the WPIAL, you have a bond with every player that played. When I travel to work college games in other states, I would talk to coaches and players that played in the WPIAL, and we are all connected...Western PA football connects all of us.

**G2.0:** What comes next for you?

**Lauria:** You work, keep moving forward, enjoy your family and friends, try to be a good human and help others, try to stay strong, oh yes and riding my Harley more.

— *Sportswriter Ken Hohman contributed to this Spotlight interview.*



Lauria

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# Police Reports



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The police reports are published as they are received. All people listed below are innocent until proven guilty.

## CRAFTON

1/25 Juvenile. Police were dispatched for a shoplifter inside the Dollar General. The caller stated the female was opening packages and concealing items on her person. She was detained and the items were found concealed in her fanny pack. She offered to pay for the stolen items. She was taken to the manager's office before someone arrived at the scene and took custody of her. They were both advised that she is no longer permitted inside the store and if she returned she could be arrested or cited for trespassing. Dollar General will file civilly.

1/25 Vincent Buccina, age 57, from Pittsburgh. Police were dispatched to the Giant Eagle for a detained male shoplifter without ID. The loss prevention officer advised that the actor had a shopping cart with groceries in it. He proceeded to go behind the Pepsi cooler and placed the items into plastic Giant Eagle bags and walked past all points of sale. He was stopped and escorted to the manager's office. Buccina was escorted from the store and signed the paperwork trespassing him from the property. The loss prevention officer will file civilly.

## KENNEDY

1/29 Male arrested at Giant Eagle. **Charge:** Retail theft

## McKEES ROCKS

1/12 Ryan Andrews, age 28, from Pittsburgh. While on patrol, the officer ran the plate on a vehicle. It came back cancelled due to no insurance. The officer pulled the actor over and asked him for his information. When the actor handed the officer his info a strong odor of marijuana was detected coming from the car. The actor told the officer he had some weed in the center console. It was confiscated and a summons was issued. A check with the insurance company came back valid.

**Charge:** CSDDCA - possession of a small amount of marijuana for personal use

1/12 Michael Garner, age 36, from Robinson. While on patrol the officer watched as the actor came across the McKees Rocks bridge at 1:46 a.m. without his headlights on. The officer pulled him over. When the officer approached the vehicle he could smell alcohol coming from the driver. The actor failed a field test and was transported to the hospital for a blood draw. Once he got there he refused and was taken to the police station where he was held for someone to pick him up. He was charged. **Charge:** DUI

1/12 Freeman Holeman, Jr., age 32, from Pittsburgh. While on patrol an officer observed a vehicle pull off with its plate light not working. He pulled the vehicle over and when he approached he could smell marijuana coming from the vehicle. He asked the actor if there was anything in the car that he needed to be aware of and he said no. The officer ran the drivers information, which came back clean with a revoked license to carry permit. The office questioned Holeman again and he responded, "I have a gun in the glove box." He was then taken into custody and charged as such. Once at the station he was searched again and the officer located a bag of marijuana. He was then transported to ACJ. **Charge:** Firearms act - carrying firearms without a license

1/13 Kenneth Scott, age 23, from McKees Rocks. The officer was on patrol when he observed the actor go through a stop sign. The vehicle was pulled over and when the officer went to speak with the driver he could smell the odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle. The actor said that he had nothing on him. He was being detained and the vehicle was searched. A vacuum bag filled with marijuana shake was found under the driver's seat. A pill was located under the radio. He also had a large sum of money in his possession.

He will receive a summons in the mail. **Charge:** CSDDCA - possession of counterfeit substance - marijuana

1/14 David Bell, age 24, from Pittsburgh. While patrolling Catherine Street the officer ran the plate on the actors car. It came back as having an expired registration. The vehicle was pulled over and an odor of marijuana was emitting from the vehicle. The actor was searched and he had nothing on him. Bell was asked again if he had anything in the vehicle and he said he had some weed. The vehicle was searched and a medium size bag was found located under the passenger's seat. He too had a large sum of money on him. He will receive a summons in the mail. **Charge:** CSDDCA - possession of a small amount of marijuana for personal use

1/15 Cera Moore, age 37, homeless. While on patrol the officer pulled a vehicle over for failure to use his turn signals. The actor was a passenger. The driver and passenger were cleared and the driver was issued a verbal warning. Later at the station another officer was looking up the information and saw the name came up as a different name than was given to the officer earlier. A picture of Moore appeared; she had two outstanding warrants. The officer went to the home where she was currently staying and picked her up for providing false ID to an officer and two warrants. The sheriff's office transported her to ACJ. **Charge:** False identity to law enforcement

1/15 Darrell Jones, age 32, from Penn Hills. Police were called to Pop & Beer for Less. The actor came to the store and ordered two packs of cigarettes. The cashier was ringing them up when he grabbed them and ran out of the store. The officer viewed the video footage and recognized the actor and place a warrant for his arrest. He has had 13 prior retail thefts. **Charge:** Retail theft - take merchandise

1/16 Autumn Dott, age 27, from McKees Rocks. Police received a call to respond to the Thompson Avenue area for a car stuck on the railroad tracks. The actor was out of the car at the time of arrival. She told the officer she made a wrong turn and drove at 100 yards on the tracks. She did fair when taking the field sobriety test. She was taken

to the hospital for a blood draw and then to the police station where she waited for her mother to pick her up. She was sent a summons via mail. **Charge:** DUI

1/17 Brennen Porter, age 28, from Pittsburgh. While patrolling Catherine Street the officer observed a vehicle make a left hand turn without utilizing their turn signal. A traffic stop was made and as the officer approached the vehicle an odor of marijuana could be smelled emanating from it. The officer asked the actor and passenger to step out. The vehicle was searched with approval and a baggie of marijuana was located in the glove box. The actor will be receiving a summons in the mail. **Charge:** CSDDCA - possession of a small amount of marijuana for personal use

1/18 Gray Reichard, age 41, from McKees Rocks. The police were called to Rite Aid for a theft in progress. When the officer arrived they were directed to the actor. He had merchandise stuffed in his pants and pockets. He also had three prior theft charges and was then transported to ACJ. **Charge:** Retail theft - take merchandise

## STOWE

1/19 Rufus Smith, age 30, from Pittsburgh. The actor was charged after officers responded to a domestic disturbance on Pleasant Ridge Road. **Charge:** Simple assault and harassment

1/22 Michael Hurka, age 55, from Stowe. The actor was charged after officers received an assault report from Broadway Avenue. **Charge:** Aggravated assault, simple assault and harassment

1/22 Quentin Vaughn Smith, age 21, from Stowe. The actor was charged after officers responded to the area of Highland Avenue and Juvet Street for a report of shots fired. **Charge:** Firearms not to be carried without a license and carrying a loaded weapon

1/23 A juvenile male was charged after officers responded to Dohrman Street for a shots fired call. **Charge:** Aggravated assault, recklessly endangering another person and harassment



**Neighborhood Stand-up Comedy Showcase**

**Friday, February 14 at 8 p.m.**

Parkway Theater, 644 Broadway Avenue, McKees Rocks

Come see Pittsburgh's best local comedians including Trevor Austin, Addy Petschke-Haas, Joey Purse, Scott Hudson, Andreas O'Rourke and Tim Ross. Also performing will be LA based comedian Kevin Budkey as well as special guests that have been featured on ABC, NBC, and Hulu.

Tickets can be found at [Stayhappyfamily.com](http://Stayhappyfamily.com). They will cost \$10 online or \$15 at the door. If you didn't have plans for Valentine's day before, you do now! This is going to be a sold out event so make sure to buy your tickets early. We hope to see you there!



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## Estate Notices

### ESTATE NOTICE

Letters of Testamentary on the Estate of: **Sheree Marie Shaffer a/k/a Sheree M. Shaffer**, late of Robinson Township, PA No. 021907542, Adam C. Shaffer and Justin C. Shaffer, Executors, wish their address to not be published. Notice is hereby given to all persons indebted to said estate to make immediate payment, and to those having claims against the same to present them to: **Joseph M. Kulik, Esquire**, 127 Lorish Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136. (1-28-3)

### ESTATE NOTICE

Letters of Testamentary on the Estate of: **Dolores**

**A. Boronsky**, late of Kennedy Township, PA No. 022000346, Marcia B. Ruane, Executrix, wish their address to not be published. Notice is hereby given to all persons indebted to said estate to make immediate payment, and to those having claims against the same to present them to: **Joseph M. Kulik, Esquire**, 127 Lorish Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136. (1-28-3)

## Legal Notices

d/b a▲INC.▲ESTATE▲LLP▲DI

### LEGAL NOTICE

#### McKEES ROCKS PUBLIC MEETING

The Council of McKees Rocks Borough will hold a public meeting on the 11th day of February

2020, at 7:00 pm at the McKees Rocks Municipal Building 340 Bell Avenue McKees Rocks, PA 15136 to consider adoption of an Ordinance as titled and summarized as below:

*AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF MCKEES ROCKS AUTHORIZING INTERIM ASSESSMENTS OF ANY PROPERTY, IMPROVEMENTS OR SUBJECTS OF TAXATION WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN OMITTED OR ANY NEW PROPERTY, IMPROVEMENTS OR SUBJECTS OF TAXATIONS WHICH MAY HAVE COME INTO BEING SINCE THE LAST ASSESSMENT.*

A copy of the proposed Ordinance may be examined at the borough office during normal business hours.

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Cash Market, Citgo

### CRAFTON/ INGRAM:

Giant Eagle, Rite Aid, Dollar Bank

### KENNEDY TOWNSHIP:

Rite Aid, Beer & Pop 4 Less, 7-11, Ohio Valley Hospital/ Professional Building, True Value Hardware, Giant Eagle

### McKEES ROCKS:

Rite Aid, 7-11, Carol Ann's

### MOON

Rite Aid, Pop & Beer 4 Less, Giant Eagle

### ROBINSON:

TJ's Deli Market, BP, GetGo

### STOWE

TOWNSHIP: Blue Eagle, Anytime Market, Personality Hair Center, Broadway Brunch

### WESTEND/ PITTSBURGH:

Dan Deasy's Office

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# FUN

8



# GAMES

## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



## MAGIC MAZE

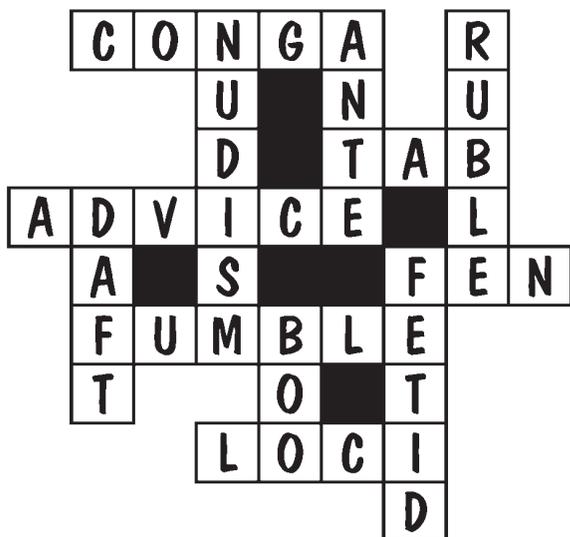
WORDS TYPED WITH ONLY THE MIDDLE AND INDEX FINGERS

X E V R O L I F C Z W T Q F N  
 K I G F C Z W D N D U B R E T  
 P M J U H E C Y E E U Z R N X  
 U S Q N F M C E L R H E E C J  
 G E C Z X I D V E U D C T E T  
 R P N L U N R H N N E N T V J  
 H E C J I I C T U R D A U I Y  
 W V T R P M R H N N L U B H K  
 K I G E B U T C H E R C R E B  
 Z X W U E M E V I T C E F E D  
 S R P O M L J I G E D B A B Y

Answers to previous weeks puzzles



answer



Hitori

answer

5	2	4	3	6	1
4	3	1	5	6	2
5	3	4	1	1	1
1	5	2	2	3	4
1	4	2	6	3	3
1	6	2	1	5	3

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally

- Beehive
- Butcher
- Butter
- Centrifuge
- Cherub
- Defective
- Endure
- Fence
- Hundred
- Indeed
- Kitchen
- Minimum
- Recent
- Thunder
- Untrue

# Rotator cuff tears, causes, care and treatment

BY GEORGE HESS

Rotator cuff tears are extremely common, especially as we grow older. Up to 30% of the population over the age of 60 have at least a partial rotator cuff tear. In fact, they are so common that many people disregard or are unaware of the symptoms and don't even realize they have one.

Frequently we hear about rotator cuff tears in connection with baseball players, rowers, swimmers and other athletes.

But did you know that this condition is also common in people who perform repetitive overhead motions or lifting, such as painters or carpenters?

The risk of a torn rotator cuff also increases with age, because we just start to wear out. If you have been experiencing shoulder pain, you may have a rotator cuff tear. Your shoulder pain may be caused by trauma, an injury, repetitive motions or it may be simply a result of aging.

What is the rotator cuff?

First, it helps to understand just what the rotator cuff is. It consists of a group of four tendons and muscles in the shoulder. These muscles and tendons connect the upper arm to the shoulder-blade. The tendons provide stability to the shoulder and the muscles allow the shoulder to rotate. Damage to your rotator cuff can cause limited range of motion, weakness and pain.

There are two main causes of rotator cuff tears — injury or degeneration.

If you fall and injure your shoulder, or

## HEALTH

try to break your fall with your arm, or lift a heavy object with a jerking motion, you may have a sudden, or acute tear.

Rotator cuff degeneration occurs when the muscles and tendons wear down over time.

Repetitive stress from sports, a job (especially one that requires lifting your arms over your head), or even certain routine chores can cause overuse tears. In addition, as we age, the blood supply to the rotator cuff decreases. Therefore, the body is less able to repair tendon damage naturally.

Bone spurs are another effect of aging which leads to shoulder impingement and gradually weakens the tendons.

### Common symptoms

Common symptoms of rotator cuff tears include:

1. Pain in the shoulder and arm. The pain is commonly located over the outside of the shoulder and upper arm.

2. Tenderness and weakness in the shoulder.

3. You may have trouble moving your shoulder, particularly when you are lifting your arm above your head or holding your arm directly out from your body.

4. Some people find it difficult to go to sleep on the affected shoulder, or pain may awaken them throughout the night.

5. People who have a rotator cuff tear

**While rotator cuff tears are common, there are steps you can take to reduce the risk or to keep a previously injured shoulder pain-free and functional.**

may have difficulty combing their hair, getting dressed, or doing other activities that require reaching behind their back.

6. Another warning sign is snapping and crackling sounds when moving the shoulder.

### Reducing your risk

While rotator cuff tears are common, there are steps you can take to reduce the risk or to keep a previously injured shoulder pain-free and functional.

Warming up before any vigorous activity is essential. Your warm up should include stretching your arms and shoulders. When exercising, use small, controlled movements. Using less resistance with more repetitions will help strengthen the shoulder muscles and reduce the risk of injury.

Resting your shoulders before and during a workout or other vigorous activity can relieve stress on the rotator cuff. If you have had a rotator cuff injury, frequent stretches as well as massages and cold and hot compresses can relieve mild pain and inflammation.

The goal of treatment is to reduce pain and restore strength and function to the shoulder.

Treatment for rotator cuff tears can be either surgical or nonsurgical, depending on a number of factors. These include the nature and severity of the tear, the functional damage and the individual's regular activity level.

Depending on the nature and severity of your rotator cuff tear, treatment may include medication, corticosteroid injections, rest or physical therapy.

Many patients work with a physical therapist to restore strength and motion. A physical therapist can design an individualized treatment plan of exercises, stretches and techniques improve your mobility without putting too much stress on injured muscles and tendons.

If you think you may have a rotator cuff tear, don't ignore the problem — seek help.

*Yours in good health,*

*George Hess*

*George Hess is founder of Hess Physical Therapy in Crafton, McKees Rocks and Allison Park. George's special interests are in orthopedic and manual therapy care.*



**Edward J. Krug & Associates...**  
...is pleased to announce that experienced trial attorney William Rodgers III has joined the firm.

William Rodgers III

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[www.tomfridaysmarket.com](http://www.tomfridaysmarket.com)

**Tom Friday's Market**  
Since 1955

- US Choice Whole Strip Loins Cut & Wrapped for Free, 10# avg. **\$5.99 lb.**
- Fridays Homemade Italian Meatballs **\$3.99 lb.**
- Certified Angus Whole Beef Fillets Cut to Order **\$13.99 lb.**
- Beef Skirt Steak **\$5.99 lb.**
- Beef Tri Tip **\$7.99 lb.**
- Fridays Ground Beef Burgers 12 pack **\$9.99 pack**
- Pork Tenderloins **\$3.99 lb.**
- Stuffed Pork Pinwheels **\$3.49 lb.**
- Homemade City Chicken On a Stick **\$3.49 lb.**
- Veal Cutlets **\$13.99 lb.**
- Veal Osso Bocco **\$9.99**
- Breaded Codtails **\$5.99 lb.**
- Sea Scallops **\$10.99 lb.**
- Surf + Turf, 10" Seasoned Skewers of Beef & Shrimp Kabobs **\$3.99 ea.**
- Chicken Cutlets **\$3.49 lb.**
- Large Roasters **\$1.89 lb.**
- Frozen Party Wings **\$2.39 lb.**
- Cheese Sale: Horseradish, Onion or Garlic, Your Choice **\$4.99 lb.**
- Presliced Sandwich Pepperoni, **\$3.99 lb.**
- Smiths Olive or Pickle Loaf **\$3.99 lb.**
- Fresh Daily Italian Hoagies on a Mancini Bun **\$3.99 ea.**
- Homemade Fresh Egg or Ham Salad **\$3.99 lb.**
- Canned Corned Beef **\$5.99 lb.**
- Thuringer **\$6.99 lb.**
- Lebanon Bologna **\$5.99 lb.**

Don't forget your date! Feb. 14th Surf & Turf: Large Lobster Tail & 8 oz. Strip Steaks **\$19.99 pack**

**Certified Angus Bone In Chuck Roast**  
**\$3.99 lb. any size cut**

**10# Bag Fresh All Natural Chicken Drumsticks**  
**\$7.90 lb. per 10 lb. bag**

**10# Bag Friday's Fresh All Natural Lean Ground Beef**  
**\$29.90 lb.** 10# bag or \$3.69 lb. for less

**Friday's Homemade All Natural Tiny Link Breakfast Sausage**  
**\$2.49 lb.** no preservatives

**Bone In Lean & Meaty Country Style Spare Ribs**  
**\$1.89 lb.**

# GO FIGURE!

by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	x		+		23
-		+		+	
	x		+		20
x		x		÷	
	+		x		14
27		25		17	

1 2 3 4 5 7 8 9 9

**DIFFICULTY:** ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

★★★ GO FIGURE!

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## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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## SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

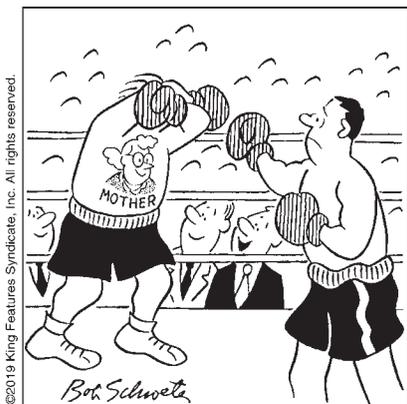
Solid  
**NEEDS**

Novelty  
**FILTER**

Soft  
**LEGENT**

Flood  
**TRENTOR**

**TODAY'S WORD**



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"It's going to be tough getting through his \_\_\_\_\_!"

## STICKELERS [sic]

by Terry Stickels

One of the following words is misspelled. Which one?

- 1) repertoire
- 2) cemetery
- 3) sergeant
- 4) perserverance
- 5) harass

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## Answers to previous weeks puzzles

### Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

7	1	9	8	2	5	6	4	3
4	2	8	7	6	3	9	1	5
5	3	6	4	1	9	7	8	2
1	6	7	5	8	4	2	3	9
9	4	3	2	7	1	8	5	6
2	8	5	3	9	6	1	7	4
3	7	1	9	4	2	5	6	8
6	5	2	1	3	8	4	9	7
8	9	4	6	5	7	3	2	1

### Super Crossword

Answers

M	A	S	T	S		B	R	I	D	E		M	I	C	R		S	H	U	T			
E	R	W	I	N		R	E	A	R	S		A	T	O	E		T	U	N	E			
D	E	A	N	O		F	A	D	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	S		E	R	I	C		
A	N	T	E			U	N	O			B	I	L	L	O	F		H	E	A	L	T	H
L	A	S	S	O	E	D					B	E	E				O	L	D				
						G	L	O	B	A	L		D	U	K	E	O	F	Y	O	R	K	
O	I	L	I	E	R		I	T	E			S	O	R	T			A	A	A			
G	R	A	C	E	O	F	G	O	D			C	M	O	N		I	C	H	A	T		
D	O	P	E			D	I	A	N			J	A	C	K	O	F	C	L	U	B	S	
E	N	I	D	S			C	I	A	R	A	N					L	A	X				
N	Y	S				P	E	A	R	L	O	F	W	I	S	D	O	M		T	A	B	
						B	I	B				P	A	E	L	L	A		E	B	O	N	Y
P	A	T	O	F		B	U	T	T	E	R		L	I	N	T		E	X	I	T		
A	L	O	O	F			G	H	I	A			N	I	C	K	O	F	T	I	M	E	
R	I	B					P	L	U	S			E	N	E		N	I	E	C	E	S	
R	A	Y	O	F		L	I	G	H	T			W	I	D	E	N	S					
						B	F	A				G	I	A			N	E	T	G	A	I	N
J	O	Y	O	F		C	O	O	K	I	N			E	T	A		O	M	N	I		
E	S	A	I			E	V	E	O	F		D	E	S	T	R	U	C	T	I	O	N	
E	L	M	S			B	A	I	L			I	R	A	T	E		D	O	N	N	E	
P	O	S	T			O	L	L	A			E	S	T	E	E		S	N	E	E	R	

# If you have a heart, consider giving a heart

## HEALTH

**Kidney disease is estimated to affect 26 million Americans, yet a majority don't even know that they have it.**

but these maladies may impact you or your loved ones in the future.

According to [organdonor.gov](http://organdonor.gov), two out of three people on the waiting list for transplants are over the age of 50. Almost 2,000 children and teens are also on the list.

When just one person signs up to be an organ donor, they could save up to eight lives and over a hundred others could benefit through tissue donation.

Folks can even be living organ donors. Kidneys and livers - live donors donate a portion of their liver to someone in need - are the most commonly donated organs. Blood and plasma donations are simple and able to give dozens of time over the course of a donor's life - and truly life-saving for many individuals.

Organ donation is a great chance to give the gift of life. For more information, go to [americantransplantfoundation.org](http://americantransplantfoundation.org).

Renewing your driver's license is a run-of-the-mill experience. You get your picture taken and look over some information to either accept or decline. One of those decisions is checking off whether or not to be an organ donor.

That means, if you die prematurely or experience brain death and any of your organs are still functional, you are giving consent to healthcare professionals to take your healthy organs to use for transplants in unhealthy patients.

For most, it's a split-second decision. Yes or no. There may be very little thought put into it.

But that split-second decision can save the lives of many.

Feb. 14 is National Donor Day, dedicated to educating the public on what it means to be an organ, eye, blood donor and more.

Organ donation saves many lives.

There are over 100,000 people in the United States on the organ transplant list, according to the American Transplant Foundation.

Kidney disease is estimated to affect 26 million Americans, yet a majority don't even know that they have it.

Liver and kidney disease kill more than 120,000 people per year.

An average of twenty people die every single day because there aren't enough organs available for transplant. There is a new name added to the donor list every ten minutes.

These statistics may not affect you today,



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**412.331.3555**



# LAFF - A - DAY



“Sorry, lady, we can’t help you find a husband unless you lose one first.”

## Wishing Well®

3	4	8	4	7	2	4	6	2	5	3	2	5
F	K	B	N	P	N	O	A	E	P	L	W	R
6	5	3	7	5	8	2	3	5	2	4	5	4
W	O	O	R	B	L	G	W	L	O	W	E	L
5	6	7	3	6	5	7	3	2	8	2	5	6
M	O	A	E	N	A	I	R	A	U	L	L	D
4	6	8	2	5	6	5	6	7	8	7	8	3
E	E	E	S	L	R	E	F	S	S	E	K	S
7	2	5	3	8	4	5	4	2	6	5	4	5
C	S	V	A	I	D	I	G	E	U	A	E	T
7	8	4	8	2	3	4	7	6	7	3	4	7
O	E	G	S	T	R	I	W	L	O	R	V	R
5	6	5	3	6	4	6	3	4	7	3	7	7
E	D	D	I	A	E	Y	V	N	K	E	E	R

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It’s a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

# CryptoQuote

**AXYDLBAAXR**

is **LONGFELLOW**

One letter stands for another. In this sample, **A** is used for the three L's, **X** for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

ON REJ HAR YWS HYXV Y KYH  
 YCYAH HE LVV MED OH DEAXL,  
 HMV NOALH HMOWP REJ MYBV  
 EW REJA MYWSL OL Y WEW-  
 DEAXOWP KYH. — SEJPFYL YSYUL

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# Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	4		8				7	
6			4	3		5		
		2			1			3
8			7			2	3	
		9			6	8		
	7			9				6
2			5				1	
	3	4			7	9		
	1			8				5

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
 ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!



Delivering to McKees Rocks, Stowe, Kennedy, Ingram, Neville Island, limited areas in Crafton & Sheraden. Now delivering to limited areas in Bellevue & Brighton Heights!

Please turn your porch light on for delivery!  
Drivers do not carry more than \$20.



## Lunch Specials, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

1 Pepperoni Roll and 20oz Drink **\$5.79**

2 Bambino 1 top each and 20oz drink **\$6.49**

Any Half Hoagie, Fries and 20oz Drink **\$7.99**

8 Traditional wings and 20oz Drink **\$7.99**

Small Pizza with 2 toppings and 20oz Drink **\$7.99**

Any salad and 20oz Drink **\$8.49**

Small Stromboli and 20oz Drink **\$8.49**

Spaghetti & meatballs, half Garlic Bread & 20oz Drink **\$8.49**

Cheese Ravioli and 20oz Drink **\$8.49**

Beef Ravioli and 20oz Drink **\$8.49**

**-COUPON-**

**MEDIUM 1 TOPPING PIZZA,  
ANY HALF HOAGIE AND BREADSTICK**

**\$18.99**



**-COUPON-**

**CHAMP PIZZA WITH 1 TOPPING, 2  
CHOCOLATE COOKIES AND ONE 2LTR SODA**

**\$20.20**



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