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CAST stages Steve Martin's 'Picasso at The Lapin Agile'

By Andy Stine
astine@altoonamirror.com

Many people became fans of Steve Martin throughout his career, spanning all the way back to the 1970s with classics such as "The Jerk."

What many don't know is that Martin also became a writer for plays, including "Picasso at The Lapin Agile," which is being performed at the Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre.

The play, which is being directed by Robert Roxby, will be staged at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 21-22 and Aug. 27-29 and at 3 p.m. Aug. 23 at the CAST building in downtown Clearfield.

"It's something I think many people will enjoy," CAST Executive Director Mason Strouse said.

The Lapin Agile, which is French for Agile Rabbit, is a real-

life cafe in Paris where the play is set. In "Picasso at The Lapin Agile," famous artist Pablo Picasso and scientist Albert Einstein meet in the cafe to discuss art and science. Elvis Presley from the future also shows up at the cafe.

In other words, it's exactly the type of humor that fans of Martin grew accustomed to throughout his career.

"It's kind of this ridiculous, funny, almost slapstick style of show that's full of laughs and one-liners," Strouse said. "There's also witty discussion at the same time."

"You can think of his dry wit and humor, but he'll still make you bust out loud. We keep telling people there are legitimate LOL moments where you'll actually laugh out loud."

It was noted that "Picasso at the Lapin Agile" has some adult humor, "but nothing (children) would be shocked by," according to Strouse.

Earlier in the summer, the community theatre did a production of "Sunset Boulevard." In the play, camera operators were able to show live content throughout the living.

For example, while there were scenes occurring on stage, they were also able to shoot scenes live from the alley behind the CAST building. The audience was able to see the scenes on a screen in the theater.

There were also camera operators filming the show in different parts of the theater.

"That was cool that we could incorporate multimedia camer-

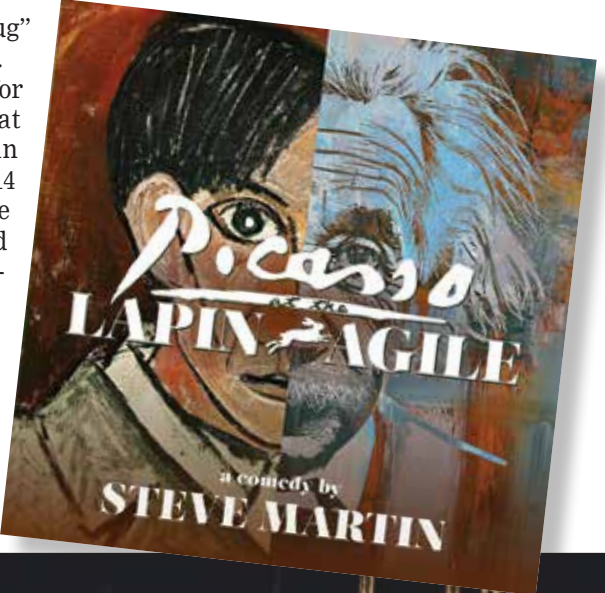
as and live feeds from different parts of the building," Strouse said. "We keep trying to do things that are new or different. There were points where they were on stage doing stuff, but the camera was maybe behind them so the audience could see themselves."

"It was something cool that hasn't been done at CAST before. I could see us maybe doing something like that again."

CAST has two more productions through the rest of 2026 — "The Woman In Black" in Octo-

ber, and "Bug"

in December. Tickets for "Picasso at The Lapin Agile" are \$14 and can be purchased at ClearfieldArts.org. CAST is located at 112 East Locust Street in downtown Clearfield.



— Courtesy photo

Rehearsals for CAST's production of "Picasso at The Lapin Agile" are underway. What happens when Picasso, Einstein and Elvis all cross paths in a Paris cafe? You'll have to see it to believe it.



— Courtesy photo by Cassandra Baumgardner

The Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre will present "Picasso at The Lapin Agile" at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 21-22 and Aug. 27-29 and at 3 p.m. Aug. 23 at the CAST building in downtown Clearfield. The cast includes: (from left) Tom Hibbert, Kelsi Bumbarger, Kyle Kelly, Leann Lawhead, Michael Rodriguez, Luke Haskins, Lisa Doty, Dave Laubacker. Laying down is Bennet Salter.

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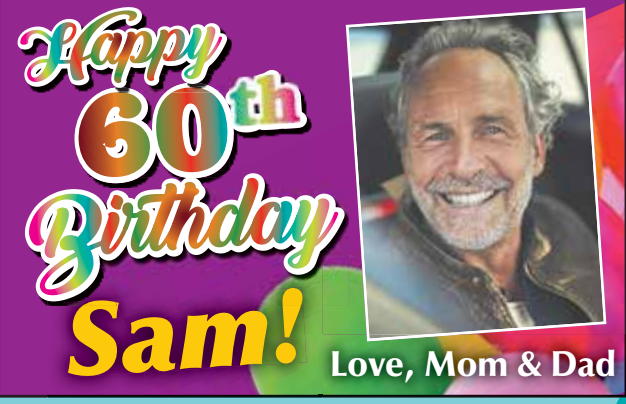
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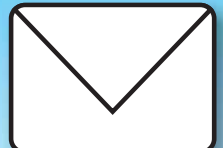
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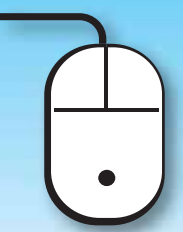
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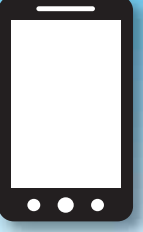
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RIFLES: Ruger M77 22-250 Cal. W/3x9 Leopold Scope, Mossberg Mod. 146B .22 Cal. W/Weaver D4 Scope, Ruger M77 30/06 Cal. W/3x9 Leopold Scope, Kleinguenther/VOERE Mod. K16 7mm Rem. Mag., Thompson Center 50 Cal. Inline W/Traditions 3x9 Scope, Glenfield Model 60 .22 Cal. W/ Weaver Marksman M1 Scope, Ruger M77 7mm Rem. Mag. Cal. W/Weaver V9-1 3x9 Scope, Rem. Mod. 141 Gamemaster 35 Rem. Cal. Broken Stock, Rem. Model 760 30-06 Cal. W/Mauser 4x40 Scope, Savage Mod. 10 ML-II 50 Cal. Inline W/Simmons 3x9 Scope, Win. Mod. 270 .22 Cal. W/3x9 Bushnell, Ruger M77 Mark II 308 Cal. W/Simmons 3x9 Scope, Glenfield Mod. 25 .22 Cal. W/Tasco 4X Scope, Traditions 50 Cal. Left Hand Flintlock, Win. Mod. 94 30 WCF Pre 64, Henry Classic .22 Cal. Lever Action W/Octagon Barrel, Rem. Mod. 581 .22 Cal., B.P.I. 45 Cal. Inline, S & W M&P FPC 9mm Cal. W/Bag, Tool Kit & Sling, J. C. Higgins Mod. 30 .22 Cal., Marlin Mod. 25 .22 Cal. W/Bushnell 4X Scope, Daisy Mod. 1894 B.B. Gun, WWI Mod. 98 German Mauser, Ruger 1022 .22 Cal. W/Crossfire 4x12 Scope & 5 Clips, German Mauser Action & Barrel Only .257 Ackley Cal., Mauser Action & Barrel Only in 45-70 Caliber, Marlin Mod. 781 .22 Cal. W/Tasco Scope, Rem. Mod. 788 22-250 Cal. W/Tasco 4x12x40 Scope, Rem. 760 Gamemaster 30-06 W/Monta Carlo Stock W/Bushnell 3x9 Banner Scope, **NIB** Marlin Mod. 917V .17 HMR Cal. W/Marlin 3x9 Scope, Thompson Center 50 Cal. Flintlock, Rem. Mod. 700 25-06 Cal. W/Tasco 4x16, Rem. Mod. 721 30-06 Cal. W/Weaver KV Scope, Savage Mod. 93R17 .17 HMR Cal. Never Been Fired, J.C. Higgins Mod. 103 .22 Cal. W/Sears 4x Scope, Sears Mod. 5 .22 Cal. W/Bushnell 4x20 Scope, Win. Pre 64 Mod. 94 .32 WS Cal., Crossman Optimus Mod. C01K77X .177 Cal. W/Tasco 3x9 Scope, **NIB** Ruger Mod, AR-556 .556 NATO Cal., Win. Mod. M70 XTR .223 Cal. W/Redfield 3x9 Scope, Springfield Armory Sporterized Mod. 1903 30-06 Cal. W/ Redfield Receiver Peep Sight, Marlin Mod. 1893 38-55 Cal., J.C. Higgins/Marlin Mod. 44DLM 22 Mag. W/3x9 Redfield Scope, Rem. Mod. 700 .270 Cal. W/Leupold 3x9 Scope, Belgium H. Piper .32 Cal. Single Shot Rifle, H&R Pioneer Mod. 765 .22 Cal., Hamilton #27 .22 Cal. Rifle, Daisy Mod. 880 .177 Pellet/B.B. Gun, Daisy Red Ryder B.B. Gun, (2)Daisy Model 960 Toy Guns.

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HANDGUNS: Ruger P95 9mm Cal., Ruger Single Six Flattop 3 Screw Revolver W/2 Cylinders & Original Box, Ruger Blackhawk 357 Cal. Flattop 3 Screw Revolver W/Original Box, Regent .22 Cal. Revolver, Taurus .38 SPL Mod. 85 Revolver, Tanfoglio Mod. E15 .22 Cal. Revolver, Ruger New Model Blackhawk .357 Caliber Revolver W/Box, Kassnar Mod. R14 .22 Cal. Revolver, Ruger Single Six Flat Top .22 Cal. Revolver, Colt Python .357 Cal. Revolver, S & W Mod. 617-6 .22 Cal. Revolver, Ruger Mark IV .22 Cal. Pistol, S & W Mod. MP9 9mm Pistol, Colt Detective Special .32 Cal. Revolver, Colt Cobra .38 Special Revolver, Dan Wesson Mod. Mag. CTG .357 Cal. Revolver, German Luger Mod. Walther P38 W/Original Holster, P. Beretta Mod. 1934 9mm Cal. Pistol, WWII German P-08 Luger 9mm Cal. Pistol, H&R American 32 Cal. Revolver, Hopkins & Allen XL Blue Jacket #2 32 Cal. 1871 Patent Date, Hopkins & Allen XL Double Action .38 Cal. Center Fire Revolver 1886 Patent Date, Crossman Model 38T .22 Cal. Pistol.

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Sheetz
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ROARING SPRING

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GIANT #6587
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Sheetz
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
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68						69					70	

CLUES ACROSS

1. Midway between south and southeast
4. Fathers
9. Wine grape
14. Al Bundy's wife
15. Derived from ammonia
16. Venezuelan state
17. Interest rate
18. Experts
20. Vascular tissues
22. Smooth and glossy
23. Administrative region in S. Korea
24. One from Damascus
28. Special interest group
29. It cools your home
30. Oh, God!
31. Intestinal pouches
33. Men
37. Twelfth star in a constellation
38. Former CIA
39. Arrange in grades of size

41. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
42. "The Great Lakes State"
43. Having earlike appendages
44. Momentarily stop
46. Ancient kingdom
49. Of I
50. White clerical vestment
51. Songs to one's beloved
55. Charges
58. Computer application originator
59. A place to dock a boat
60. One guided by reason
64. Slang for cigarette
65. Sailboats
66. "Jerry Maguire" actor Zellweger
67. Screen type
68. Country legend Haggard
69. Puts together in time
70. When you anticipate arriving

CLUES DOWN

1. Involuntary muscular contraction
2. Eastern US transit agency
3. Leaves a place
4. Cease to participate
5. Current units
6. Cease to exist
7. General's assistant (abbr.)
8. Earth vibration
9. Very strong winds
10. For each one
11. A bog
12. The creation of beautiful or significant things
13. Affirmative
19. Pie __ mode
21. Nonclerical
24. Indonesian island
25. Educational environment
26. Namibian peoples
27. Bring out or develop

31. Moves into a place of thought
32. Out of the way
34. Loads a ship
35. Beloved Hollywood alien
36. Distinguishes
40. The ancient Egyptian sun god
41. Secondary or explanatory title
45. Relating to a wing
47. One who gives a speech
48. In the middle
52. Loop with a running knot
53. Airborne (abbr.)
54. Sweet persons
56. Put into play
57. Small cattle breed
59. Millisecond
60. Revolutions per minute
61. They __
62. Moon crater
63. A place to stay the night

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Paws & Claws

Types of bird feed for backyard feeders

Birding is a wildly popular hobby. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, about 45 million Americans are birders, while data from the popular bird observation and eBird indicates that submissions from Canadian birders increased by 34 percent in 2020.

It's not uncommon for birding enthusiasts to travel great distances to see beautiful birds in serene settings. But individuals also can entice beautiful birds to come to them. Bird feeders beckon birds to millions of backyards every day, making them an ideal addition to properties owned by people with an affinity for avians. After choosing a bird feeder, novices may not know which food to fill it with. This breakdown, courtesy of the National Wildlife Federation", can help anyone find the right food for their feeders.

- **Nectar:** Individuals who want to attract hummingbirds can do so with nectar, which the NWF describes as colored sugar water. Nectar must be placed into a hummingbird feeder and also might attract orioles to the backyard.
- **Black-oil sunflower:** The NWF notes that black-oil sunflower is the most popular bird seed. Black-oil sunflower attracts an array of birds, including blue jays, cardinals, chickadees, and sparrows. Novices may like that black-oil sunflower seed can even be found at many grocery stores, which can appeal to individuals who live in remote locations without specialty bird stores nearby.
- **Mixes:** Seed mixes also can be found at grocery stores and appeal to a variety of birds. Individuals who want to keep their feeders close to their decks or patios may want to look for mixes described as Ono-mess. The NWF indicates that these mixes have been de-hulled, which means there won't be as big a pile of unwanted seeds beneath the feeder. That tends to be the case with regular mixes that birds pick through as they choose which seeds they want and discard the others, often dropping them to the ground beneath the feeder. The NWF reports that mixes tend to attract ground-feeding birds, such as doves and sparrows.
- **Suet:** Suet is sought after in winter by bird lovers who want to help birds stay healthy and strong during times of year when food sources are scarce. Suet requires a suet feeder, which is unlike most bird feeders. Suet comes in squares and isn't in seed form, though seeds are typically mixed in to the gelatinous cake. Despite its appearance, which can seem like a square block of fat, suet is an excellent source of protein for birds in winter.

• **Thistle or nyjer:** The NWF notes that goldfinches love this small, high-quality seed. Because thistle or nyjer is something of a specialty seed, birders who want to put it out will need to purchase a finch feeder.

Birding has millions of devotees across the globe. Knowing what to feed birds can be a great way for birding enthusiasts to attract these beautiful creatures to their own backyards.

TF232712



100 Years Ago This Month: Historical events

The month of August has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in August 1926.

- A thrown dagger narrowly misses the head of Spanish dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera on August 1 in Barcelona. A 34-year-old anarchist is arrested for the failed assassination attempt.
- The French passenger ship S.S. Lotus strikes the Turkish freighter S.S. Bozkourt on August 2. Eight passengers drown, and the captain of the Lotus is eventually charged with liability for the deaths by Turkish authorities.
- On August 3, the Mount Batur volcano on the island of Bali erupts for the first time since 1917. The village of Karang Anyar is destroyed during the eruption, but all residents safely evacuate.
- Shortly before noon on August 3, the first traffic lights in London come into operation at Piccadilly Circus.
- Sultan bin Zayed Khalifa Al Nahyan is killed by his half-brother, Saqr bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on August 4. Four years prior to his death, Sultan bin Zayed had teamed up with Saqr bin Zayed to kill their brother, Emir Hamdan bin Zeyed, and seize the throne of Abu Dhabi.
- Magician and escape artist Harry Houdini survives being sealed in a coffin and lowered into a swimming pool at a New York City hotel on August 5. Houdini, who would die from peritonitis less than three months after the stunt, used controlled breathing to remain conscious within the coffin

for one hour and 31 minutes.

- The first British Grand Prix is held at the Brooklands motor racing circuit near Surrey, England, on August 7. Frenchman Louis Wagner wins the inaugural race.
- A hurricane strikes Nova Scotia on August 10. Two fishing boats capsize during the storm, claiming the lives of 48 individuals.
- Richard Reese Whittemore, the leader of a group of bank robbers active in the mid-Atlantic and eastern United States in the mid-1920s, is hanged on August 13. Whittemore's wife, Margaret, also was arrested but was never convicted for her role in the robberies.
- Father Luis Bátiz Sainz is arrested by Mexican government agents in the state of Zacatecas on August 14. The arrest is part of a government-orchestrated purge of Roman Catholic clerics, and Bátiz is executed by firing squad the next day.
- A coffin brought from Norway arrives in London on August 16. The coffin is believed to con-

tain the remains of British Army officer and colonial administrator Field Marshal Herbert Kitchener, but the coroner finds the coffin contains only tar upon opening it in the presence of police. The stunt is later deemed a hoax.

- Marshal Józef Piłsudski conducts a purge of the Polish military on August 21. The purge is conducted to remove any potential challenges to Piłsudski's authority.
- A bloodless coup overthrows Greek dictator Theodoros Pangalos on August 22. The coup is led by General Georgios Kondylis, who places Pangalos on the naval destroyer Pergamos.
- Popular Italian film actor Rudolph Valentino dies in New York on August 23. Valentino, just 31 at the time of his death, underwent emergency surgery for a ruptured appendix eight days prior to his death but was stricken with a case of then-untreatable pleuritis while convalescing on August 21.
- Forty-four coal miners are killed after an explosion at a Clearfield Bituminous Coal Corporation mine in Clymer, Pennsyl-

vania, on August 26.

- Dutch Levensen of the Cleveland Indians starts and wins both games of a doubleheader against the Boston Red Sox on August 28. Levensen is the last pitcher in Major League Baseball to start and win each game of a twin bill. Levensen, who won just 21 games over the course of his six-

year career, also is the last pitcher to throw two nine-inning complete games on the same day.

- The last voting rights of Italians are removed when the Fascist government abolishes the popular elections of municipal officials on August 30.



PUZZLE SOLUTION

S	S	E		D	A	D	A	S		G	A	M	A	Y	
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Obituaries

M. Arlene Fleck

M. Arlene Fleck, 91, of Philipsburg, PA and formerly of West Decatur died on Thursday, August 6, 2026 at Heritage Ridge Senior Living at Windy Hill in Philipsburg, PA.

Born on December 5, 1934 in Philipsburg, PA, she was the daughter of the late Arthur & Nora (Kephart) Kizer. She married Charles W. Fleck on October 10, 1953 in West Decatur, PA; he preceded her hin death on November 11, 1989. Arlene was a member of First Baptist Church in Philipsburg, PA. She was employed as a Presser for Charles Navasky & Co. in Philipsburg, PA. In addition to her husband and parents, Arlene was preceded in death by eight sisters, including an infant sister Mabel, Helen Rodkey, Edna Rodkey, Florence Winters, Avonelle Marshal, Alice Marien, Vida Reams and Lillian Miscavish; and three brothers, Clark Kizer, Russell Kizer and Leroy Kizer. She is survived by a daughter, Cynthia E. Weaver & her husband Ron of Mifflinburg, PA; a son Scott W. Fleck & his wife Monica of Long Neck, DE; a brother Randall Kizer & his wife Darlene of Florida; six grandchildren, Tyson Lidgett, Candice Waxler, Heather Kuchy, Jared Loughhead, Briana Danielson and Jeremiah Fleck; eight great-grandchildren; and one great-great-granddaughter. The funeral service was held at First Baptist Church in Philipsburg, PA. Pastor Ted Seibert, officiant. Burial: Philipsburg Cemetery, in Philipsburg, PA.

Mary J. Surkovich

Mary J. Surkovich, 95, passed away peacefully on August 3, 2026, at the home of her daughter, Carol, surrounded by the love of her family.

Born on October 23, 1930, in Whiteside, Pennsylvania, Mary was the daughter of Anthony and Mary (Orlowski) Waslosky. Mary attended the Woodward School District and was employed by the former Sylvania Products. On June 27, 1953, she married the love of her life, Vincent Surkovich, at the former St. Barbara Roman Catholic Church in Houtzdale. The couple celebrated with an outdoor reception at her parents' home, where her father lovingly built a dance floor especially for the occasion. A devoted member of Christ the King Catholic Church, Mary was active in the Altar Rosary Society and the Jednota Society. She retired from the Moshannon Valley School District in 1994. Mary found joy in life's simple pleasures. She was an exceptional cook and baker, well known for her blue-ribbon Polish sauerkraut buns and homemade pierogies. She also enjoyed quilting, gardening, puzzles, birdwatching, and reading. An animal lover, Mary especially cherished her cats, Ziggy and Molly. Above all else, her greatest happiness came from spending time with her family. Mary was preceded in death by her husband, Vincent Surkovich; their son, David Paul Surkovich; her parents; her son-in-law, Dennis Luzier; four brothers, John, Andrew, Michael, and James "Ziggy" Waslosky; four sisters, Sophie Waslosky, Catherine (Waslosky) Vancas, Ann (Waslosky) Drochak, and infant sister Eva Waslosky. She is survived by her three children, Carol Luzier of West Decatur, James Surkovich and his wife, Sherrie, of Clearfield, and Nancy Surkovich of Downingtown; and her sister, Lucy (Waslosky) Syktich of DuBois. She is also survived by her granddaughter, Allison (Jack) Kephart; her great-granddaughter, Adelyn Holt; and numerous nieces and nephews. Mary was blessed by the kindness, compassion, and dedicated care of many wonderful caregivers, including Sandy, Tracy, Angie, and Lacey. Her family is deeply grateful for the comfort and support they provided. Mary's legacy lives on through the many roles she embraced with grace, strength, and unconditional love: devoted daughter, cherished sister, beloved wife, treasured aunt, extraordinary mother, proud grandmother and "G". Her warmth, humor, generosity, and unwavering love for her family and friends will be remembered always. A rosary was said by the Christ the King Altar Rosary Society. A viewing was at the funeral, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at Christ the King Church in Houtzdale, PA. Interment: Sacred Heart Cemetery, Brisbin

Joseph T. Vanneman

Joseph T. Vanneman , 83, of Gallitzin, passed away July 25, 2026 at Maybrook Hills, Altoona.

Born on February 4, 1943 in Penn's Grove New Jersey, son of the late Simon Vanneman and Lillian (Brumhammer) Sutphin. Preceded in death by his brothers William "Bill" Vanneman and Carl "Bunk" Sutphin and brother in law John Franchetti. Survived by his loving wife of 55 years Maria (Deyulis) Vanneman, sister in law Debra Franchetti and nephew William (Lynn) Vanneman as well as numerous nieces and nephews, cousins and friends. Joseph was a Navy Veteran who served as a police officer for Penn's Grove, New Jersey, prior to joining the Delaware River and Bay Authority where he retired after over 30 years of service. He had a passion for horses and trained them on his small horse farm in New Jersey. Joe also loved his many dogs who preceded him in death, Pierre, Shane, Sheeba, Brutus, Angel, and Woody. A private gathering was held for the family at the Gibbons-Houser Funeral Home Inc., 301 Church Str. Gallitzin Pennsylvania. A graveside service was held at Lawnside Cemetery, Woodstown, New Jersey

Vickie Shomo

Vickie Shomo, 53, of Coalport, died Friday, August 7, 2026, at UPMC Altoona.

She was born May 5, 1973, in Philipsburg, a daughter of Larry D. Shomo and the late Catherine L. Sanches. Surviving is a son Christopher M. Shomo of Coalport, her father of Dysart and a sister Stephanie R. McCready and her fiance' Brian Seidel of Altoona. Vickie attended Grace Bible Church, Hollidaysburg. She was a1991 graduate of Glendale High School and had been employed as a Certified Nurses' Assistant, most recently at Family Services, Altoona. A Memorial Service will be planned and announced at a later date.

John Abbott Burns

John Abbott Burns, 74, of Beccaria, died Wednesday, August 5, 2026, in Fernwood, at the home of his niece Shannan Townley.

He was born October 22, 1951, in Philipsburg, a son of the late Nathan R. and Nellie M. (Hale) Burns, Sr. Surviving are four siblings: Mary (David) Fuseck of Brook Park, OH., Charles B. (Joann) Burns of Beccaria, Samuel M. (Suzanne) Burns of Utahville and Craig Burns of Bellwood. Also surviving is his fur buddy, his cat Tipper and several nieces and nephews. John was also preceded in death by five brothers Nathan, Jr., Marvin, Daniel, Oris and Harry and two sisters Gertrude Eaken and Sheila Sipes. He had attended Bellwood-Antis High School and had been employed as an interior and exterior building painter. A graveside funeral service was held at the Logan Valley Cemetery, Bellwood, with Pastor Wayne Schaffer officiating.

Madeline Jean McMillen

Madeline Jean McMillen, 83, Coalport, passed away August 6, 2026 at home surrounded by family.

Born July 5, 1943 in Braddock, PA, daughter of Steve and Josephine (Behanic) Evcic. She is preceded in death by her parents; brothers, John and Richard Evcic; brother-in-law, Roger Kruis; and companion, Robert "Bob" Mooney. She is survived by daughter, Lailani (Kirk) McCully; grandchildren, Heather (Justin) Anderson, Dustin (Brittany) Dotts, Nicole (Robert) Bateman, and Heather McCully; great grandchildren, Paige, Lilly, and Wyatt Anderson, Heidi and Bentley Dotts, and Lincoln, Jackson, and Emerson Bateman; sister, Carole Kruis; niece and godchild, Teresa Kruis; and extended family, Lisa Mooney Gresh, and Bobby and Rich Mooney and families. She was employed as a bartender at Bar 53 and was referred to as "Mean Jean." She retired from Walmart Supercenter Clearfield as a Customer Service Manager. Jean was a member of St. Basil Catholic Church, Women of the Moose, and Coalport VFW. She enjoyed spending time with family, trips with friends, crossword puzzles, reading, and game shows. A funeral service was held at Gabbons-Penksa Funeral Home, Ashville. Interment: Beaver Valley Cemetery.

IN MEMORIAM

Obituaries Courtesy of: Heath's Funeral Home; Bennett & Houser Funeral Home, Inc; Kruise-Spewock Funeral & Cremation Services, Inc; McQuown Funeral; Gibbons Funeral Homes Beezer-Heath Funeral Home & Cremation Services

Altoona Mirrorplus!

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2026

Region proves a draw for railroad historian, author

By COLETTE COSTLOW
ccostlow@altoonamirror.com

West Chester resident Beth Anne Keates remembers watching CSX train cars with her brothers in the backseat of her family’s car during vacations from Lansdowne to Ocean City.

“We would have fun counting the number of boxcars,” she said, mentioning the railroad’s significant evolution during the 1970s and 1980s.

In addition to her family’s combined interest in trains and history, Keates was on track to becoming a railroad historian and writer herself, documenting the country’s train history in six books so far.

She also gives presentations and volunteers at railroad museums in the commonwealth, including the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, where her books are available for purchase.

Still buzzing about the Union Pacific’s Big Boy steam locomotive tour, Keates said the massive turnout at the Rose Yard and the Horseshoe Curve reflects the area’s strong railroad culture.

“To see it running on tracks it never ran on before ... was an incredible opportunity we didn’t want to miss,” she said.

Growing up in Lansdowne, Keates frequently took the trolley to Media Providence Friends School, something that also inspired her appreciation for railroad transportation.

She met her future husband, Brian, in high school. They graduated in 1986 and were wed that December.

While Brian’s commitment to the Air Force resulted in their relocation to Turkey, Keates completed her associate’s degree in Middle Eastern studies and certification in Turkish Studies at the University of Maryland’s European division.

From there, Keates completed her junior year at the University of Maine when they moved up north. When they

finally returned to Pennsylvania, she completed her bachelor’s degree in history and business at Penn State University at Brandywine.

The couple lived in Darby for about 10 years in a home only about a mile from their hometown. Keates recalled the familiar sound of CSX trains traveling past their previous residence.

“We could see it (the train) from the back window,” she said.

Also a railfan, Brian remembered how neat it was to hear the trains traveling throughout the night along the Baltimore to Philadelphia route.

“When we first bought the house, we were like, ‘What did we do?’” he said with a laugh, although they quickly acclimated to the noise over time.

Working in the business insurance claims department for State Farm, Keates said their interest in railroads ignited once again after she and Brian moved to West Chester in the early 2000s and gave birth to their two sons, Jacob and Andrew.

Turning interests into careers

Andrew remembers traveling to local railroads and museums during his youth, which contributed to his current interest in trains today, running Steel and Steam Productions on YouTube.

Jacob currently works for J.C. McHugh Locomotives, blending his love for trains with his work.

“It was always fun for me and my brother to do, and it was a big part of my childhood,” Andrew said.

As a family, they also traveled to Altoona to observe the trains and their history. Meanwhile, Keates, who frequently participates in train shows, donated lost artifacts from the Pennsylvania railroad system to the Railroaders’ Memorial Museum. Eventually becoming a volunteer at the museum and the Horseshoe Curve, she said she’s happy to return some parts of history to the museum.

Keates kept her ties to her community as well, being a member of the Daughters of the Revolution, Lansdowne chapter, and a volunteer at the West Chester Railroad Heritage Association.

She started writing about trains only 10 years ago.

Keates remembers meeting Erie resident Kenneth C. Springirth at a train show, who would later become the co-author of all six of her books.

“We’ve been friends ever since,” Springirth said. “It’s a natural thing when you have people with the same interests.”

Distance didn’t keep the writers from collaborating in person, frequently meeting halfway to swap manuscripts in Altoona, Gallitzin or Cresson.

And train watch, of course.

Because Keates’ family is made up of railfans, they usually embark on journeys to both Cambria and Blair counties, staying at the Gallitzin Tunnel Inn.

Brian, who also takes photos featured in Keates’ books, said they have a great time staying at the bed and breakfast, mentioning that it’s relaxing to watch trains.

Keates and Springirth eventually published their first book, “Union Pacific Railroad Heritage,” in November 2022, about chasing the Big Boy steam locomotive for 50 miles from Nebraska to Utah.

Since then, the railfan duo has co-written five more books, with many featuring Altoona’s railroad history. Her books are currently available at the Railroaders’ Memorial Museum.

Their next book, “Reading & Northern Railroad Heritage,” is available for preorder at <https://www.through-time.com/collections/beth-anne-keates/products/reading-northern>

Big history

Keates spent a huge part of her summer chasing the Union Pacific Big Boy 4010 steam locomotive throughout Pennsylvania, snagging interviews with engineer Ed Dickens.

Considering the locomotive resides in Wyoming, she never expected it to travel this far east. So when news broke that the train was coming to Pennsylvania, her family made plans so they wouldn’t miss it.

When the train rolled through Blair County, she volunteered at the Railroaders’ Memorial Museum and the Horseshoe Curve that week.

“The atmosphere of the railfans was so exuberant,” she said. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for some folks.”

She also mentioned that Altoona must embrace its railroad culture, using the turnout from the Big Boy event as a perfect example.

“Altoona hasn’t seen that many people at once in a long time; the incredible impression an engine this size leaves with everyone that sees it,” she said.

And the Big Boy steam locomotive is only part of the area’s extensive train history, something Keates wished more



Railroad historian Beth Anne Keates gives a presentation on the evolution of rails at the Elkins Park Train Station.

people took the time to understand.

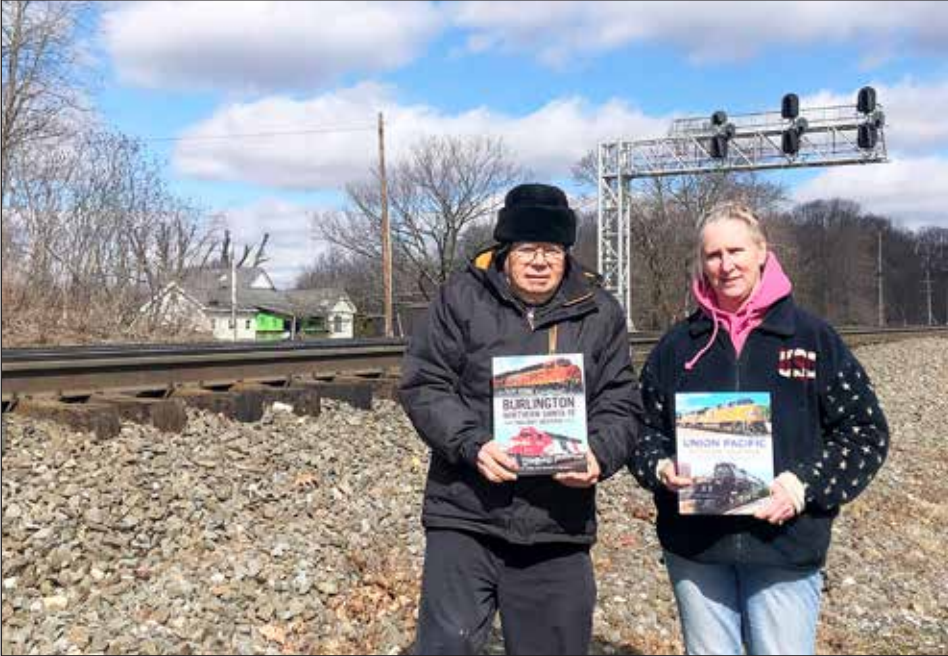
The average person doesn’t realize how much work went into creating the railroad systems, she said. Her books can teach people about the unknown history.

With a long career in railroad history ahead, her family members and supporters expressed their faith in Keates’ mission.

“She understands how to put a book together,” Springirth said, adding that Keates’ family sup-

ports her in her train endeavors. “She’s doing great work,” Brian said. “She’s got a bright future ahead of her.”

Mirror Staff Writer
Colette Costlow is at 814-946-7414.



Kenneth C. Springirth and Beth Anne Keates hold two of their books at the Creson railroad tracks.

The Keates file

Name: Beth Anne Keates

Age: 59

Hometown: Lansdowne

Education: Media Providence Friends School (1986) and a bachelor’s degree in history and business from Penn State Brandywine (1990)

Family: Husband, Brian; sons, Jacob, 25, and Andrew, 23

Hobbies: Railfan, gardening

Pets: Liberty, 13, Siberian Husky



Brian and Beth Anne Keates stand in front of the Union Pacific Big Boy steam locomotive on June 15 at Steam Town National Park.

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A photograph of a female doctor with dark hair and freckles, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a stethoscope, sitting at a desk. She is holding a tablet and pointing at the screen with her right hand. An elderly woman with short white hair, wearing a light green top, is leaning in from the left, looking at the tablet. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office or clinic setting with a window showing a building outside. On the desk, there is a small black container with pens and a white box.

Health & Wellness

YOUR HEALTH | ENERGY BALANCE

Why Blood Sugar Matters

Blood sugar, or glucose, is often discussed in the context of diabetes, but it plays a central role in everyone's health.

Glucose is the body's primary source of energy, fueling the brain, muscles and organs. When levels rise and fall in a balanced way, the body runs smoothly. When they swing too high or drop too low, it can affect energy, mood and long-term well-being.

Understanding how blood sugar works can help people make everyday choices that support steady energy and overall health.

THE RISE AND FALL OF GLUCOSE

After eating, carbohydrates are broken down into glucose, which enters the bloodstream. The hormone insulin helps move that glucose into cells, where it's used for energy or stored for later use.

Problems can arise when this system becomes imbalanced. Rapid spikes — often caused by highly refined carbohydrates or sugary foods — can lead to a quick burst of energy followed by a crash. Over time, frequent spikes may contribute to insulin resistance, a condition in which the body becomes less responsive to insulin.

EVERYDAY EFFECTS

Fluctuating blood sugar can show up in subtle ways. Midday fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability or strong cravings for sweets may all be linked to unstable glucose levels.

Maintaining steadier levels can support more consistent energy, clearer thinking and better appetite control. It can play a role in weight



management, as balanced blood sugar helps regulate hunger and reduces the likelihood of overeating.

BUILDING BETTER BALANCE

Simple habits can help keep blood sugar on a more even track. Pairing carbohydrates with protein, healthy fats or fiber slows digestion and helps prevent sharp spikes. For example, adding nuts to fruit or choosing whole grains instead of refined ones can make a difference.

Regular meals and snacks, rather than long gaps without food, can help maintain stability. Physical activity plays a role as well, as muscles use glucose for energy, helping lower levels naturally.

LONG-TERM HEALTH

Over time, consistently balanced blood sugar supports overall metabolic health. It may reduce the risk of developing conditions such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, while also supporting sustained energy levels.

Sleep and stress management are part of the picture, too. Poor sleep and chronic stress can affect how the body regulates glucose, making balance more difficult to maintain.

Blood sugar management isn't about strict rules or eliminating entire food groups. It's about

understanding how different choices affect the body and making adjustments that feel sustainable.



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YOUR HEALTH | AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Fingernails and Your Health

Fingernails do more than protect the tips of your fingers; they can offer subtle clues about what’s happening inside the body.

Changes in color, texture or strength are often harmless, but sometimes they point to underlying issues worth a closer look. Learning to notice these signs can help you decide when a change is simply cosmetic and when it may be time to check in with a healthcare provider.

READING THE SURFACE

Ridges are one of the most common nail features. Vertical ridges that run from cuticle to tip often appear with age and are usually not a cause for concern. Horizontal ridges, sometimes called Beau’s lines, can signal that the body has experienced stress from illness, injury or significant changes in nutrition.

Texture matters, too. Nails that become unusually brittle or split easily may be reacting to frequent exposure to water, harsh chemicals or dry air. In some cases, they can be linked to nutritional gaps, such as low levels of certain vitamins or minerals.

COLOR CHANGES TO WATCH

Healthy nails are typically a pale pink with a consistent tone. Changes in color can have a variety of causes.

Yellowing may occur with aging, nail polish use or fungal infections. White spots are often the result of minor trauma to the nail and usually grow out over time. A bluish tint can suggest reduced oxygen levels in the blood, while very pale nails may be associated with



fatigue or shortness of breath — are worth discussing with a medical professional.

Keeping nails clean, moisturized and protected can support their health, but observation is just as important. Paying attention to small changes can provide early insights into the body’s needs.

Sometimes, the earliest signals are right at your fingertips, quiet indicators that it may be time to look a little closer.

conditions like anemia.

Dark streaks or lines under the nail should be evaluated, especially if they appear suddenly or change over time.

SHAPE AND GROWTH

The shape of the nail can also provide information. Nails that become spoon-shaped, curving upward at the edges, may be linked to iron deficiency. Clubbing — where the nails thicken and curve downward around the fingertips — can be associated with certain lung or heart conditions.

Growth rate is another indicator. Nails typically grow at a steady pace, so noticeable slowing or changes in growth patterns may reflect shifts in overall health.

WHEN TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Not every change signals a problem, and many nail variations are temporary. However, persistent changes, pain or changes accompanied by other symptoms — such as



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Environmental Toxins at Home

Most people think of pollution as something out there, but many exposures happen much closer to home.

Everyday items — from cleaning products and food packaging to indoor air — can contain substances that affect health over time. The goal isn't to eliminate every risk, which isn't realistic, but to understand common sources and make practical choices that reduce unnecessary exposure.

WHAT'S IN THE CUPBOARD

Household cleaners, air fresheners and some personal care products can release volatile organic compounds

(VOCs), which may irritate the eyes and lungs or trigger headaches in sensitive individuals. Labels like natural or green aren't always standardized, so it helps to look for clear ingredient lists or third-party certifications.

Simple swaps can make a difference. Using fragrance-free products, limiting aerosol sprays and opting for basic ingredients, such as diluted vinegar or baking soda for certain tasks, can reduce chemical load without sacrificing effectiveness.

PLASTICS AND FOOD CONTACT

Plastics are widely used for convenience, but some can leach chemicals into food and beverages, especially when heated. Compounds such as BPA and certain phthalates

have been studied for their potential effects on hormones, leading many manufacturers to offer alternatives.

Choosing glass, stainless steel or ceramic containers for hot foods and drinks can help limit exposure. Avoid microwaving in plastic and discard worn or scratched containers to further reduce risk. Don't microwave with cling wraps. Instead cover with paper towels or wax paper.

THE AIR YOU BREATHE

Dust, pet dander, mold and outdoor pollutants that enter the home can all affect respiratory health. Poor ventilation can allow these particles to accumulate.

Regularly opening windows, using exhaust fans and maintaining heating



and cooling systems can improve air circulation.

High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters may also help reduce airborne particles in some settings. WebMD recommends vacuuming twice a week to keep dust under control.

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The Lymphatic System

Beneath the surface of the body lies a quiet, intricate system that rarely gets attention but plays a vital role in keeping us well.

THE LYMPHATIC SYSTEM

Beneath the surface of the body lies a quiet, intricate system that rarely gets attention but plays a vital role in keeping us well.

The lymphatic system is a network of vessels, nodes and organs that helps maintain fluid balance, supports immune function and assists in clearing waste from the body. Though it works behind the scenes, its impact is far-reaching.

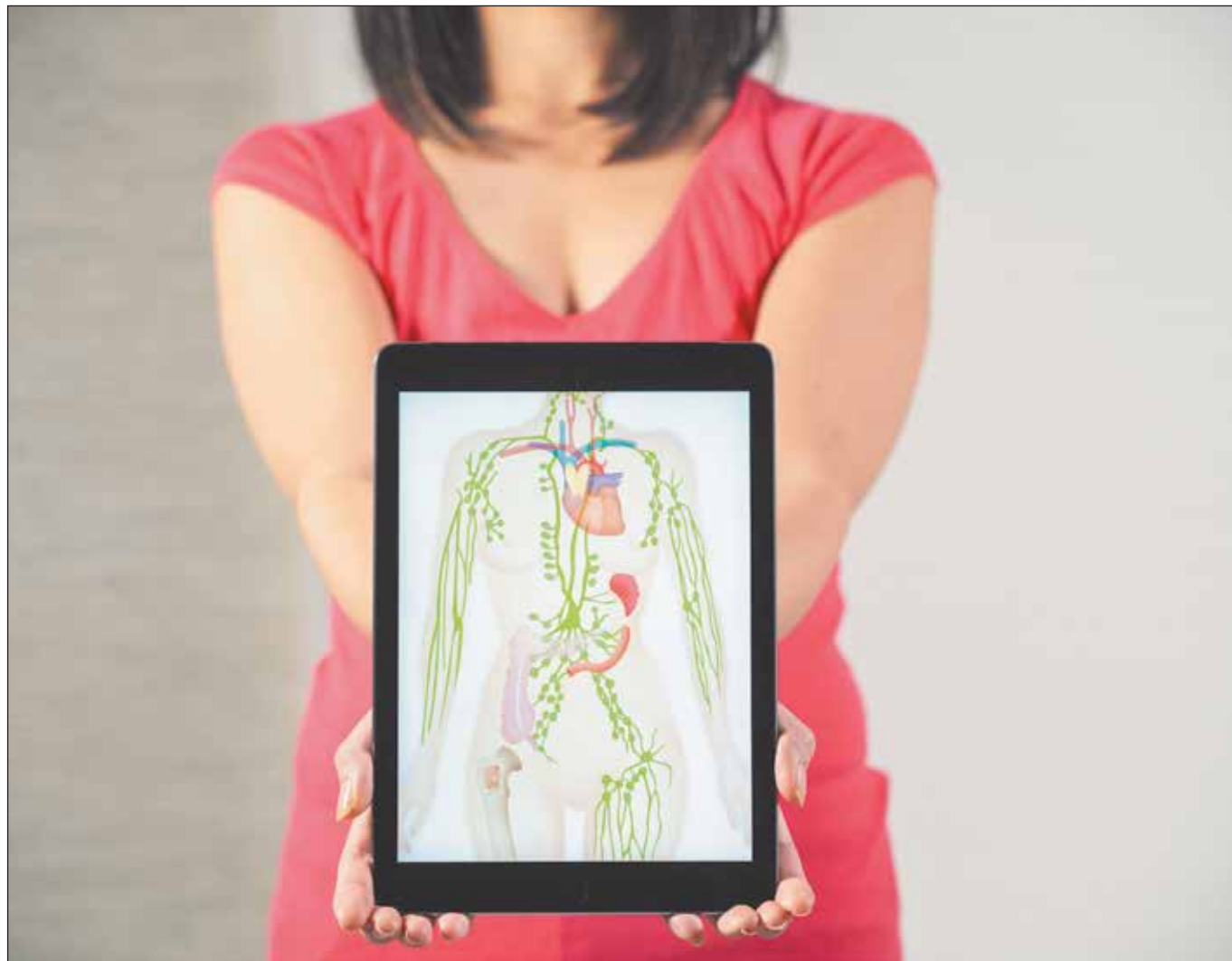
Unlike the circulatory system, which is powered by the heart, the lymphatic system relies on movement — muscle contractions, breathing and daily activity — to keep fluid flowing. This fluid, called lymph, carries white blood cells, proteins and waste products through the body, acting as both a transport system and a filter.

A KEY PLAYER IN IMMUNITY

One of the lymphatic system's primary roles is defense. Lymph nodes, found throughout the body, act as checkpoints where harmful substances such as bacteria and viruses are identified and filtered out. These nodes contain immune cells that respond to threats, helping the body mount an effective defense. That's why lymph nodes may swell during illness. They're actively working to fight infection.

SUPPORTING FLUID BALANCE

The lymphatic system helps regulate fluid levels. It collects excess fluid that leaks from blood vessels into surrounding tissues and returns it to the bloodstream.



Without this process, swelling and fluid buildup could occur. This balancing act is essential for maintaining healthy tissues and overall circulation.

CLEARING WASTE

In addition to immune support, the lymphatic system helps remove cellular waste and byproducts. While the term “detoxification” is often associated with diets or cleanses, the body already has built-in systems — including the lymphatic system, liver and kidneys — that handle this process naturally.

The lymphatic network plays a

supporting role by transporting waste materials to areas where they can be processed and eliminated.

KEEPING THINGS MOVING

Because the lymphatic system doesn't have a central pump, movement is essential. Regular physical activity, such as walking, stretching or gentle exercise, helps stimulate lymph flow. Deep breathing can also assist, as changes in pressure within the body encourage movement of lymph fluid.

Hydration plays a role as well, helping maintain the fluid balance

needed for efficient circulation.

A SYSTEM WORTH NOTICING

While it may not get the same attention as other body systems, the lymphatic system is an important part of overall health. Supporting it doesn't require complicated routines; just consistent habits like staying active, drinking enough water and maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

By understanding how this hidden network works, individuals can better appreciate the body's built-in ability to protect, regulate and maintain itself.

YOUR HEALTH | LIGHTEN UP

Healthy Skin from Within

Skincare often focuses on what goes on the outside — cleansers, serums and sunscreens — but the condition of the skin is shaped just as much by what happens within the body.

Nutrition, hydration, hormones and environmental factors all play a role in how skin looks, feels and functions. Taking an inside-out approach can help support a clearer, more resilient complexion over time.

FUELING SKIN WITH NUTRITION

The skin depends on a steady supply of nutrients to maintain its structure and repair itself. Vitamins such as A, C and E, along with minerals like zinc, contribute to collagen production, cell turnover and protection from environmental stress.

Foods rich in antioxidants, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and whole grains, help defend against damage caused by free radicals. Healthy fats, including those found in fish, seeds and certain oils, support the skin's natural barrier, helping it retain moisture.

The Columbia Skin Clinic recommends prioritizing a Mediterranean diet if you're pursuing radiant skin. They also cite studies that suggest excessive dairy intake, especially skim milk, can trigger acne in some people. The best foods, according to the clinic? Fatty fish such as salmon or sardines, berries, dark leafy greens, nuts, seeds and orange and red produce (carrots, bell peppers,



THE ROLE OF HYDRATION

Water is essential for maintaining skin elasticity and overall function. When the body is well-hydrated, skin tends to appear more supple and less prone to dryness.

Hydration doesn't come only from drinking water. Foods with high water content, such as cucumbers, melons and leafy greens, contribute. While hydration alone won't eliminate all skin concerns, it supports the body's ability to maintain balance.

HORMONES AND SKIN CHANGES

Hormonal shifts can influence oil production, sensitivity and the appearance of conditions like acne or dryness. Changes related to stress, aging or life stages can all affect the skin's behavior.

Managing stress through regular exercise, sleep and relaxation techniques can help moderate some of these effects. When concerns persist, consult a healthcare provider who can provide guidance tailored to individual needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

External factors such as sun exposure, pollution and climate conditions can have a significant

effect on skin health. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation, in particular, contributes to premature aging and increases the risk of skin damage.

Daily sun protection, including

the use of sunscreen and protective clothing, is one of the most effective ways to safeguard the skin. Gentle cleansing routines can help remove pollutants that accumulate throughout the day.

A BALANCED APPROACH

Healthy skin is the result of multiple factors working together. While topical products can support and enhance the skin's appearance, they are most effective when paired with habits that promote overall health.

By focusing on nutrition, hydration, hormonal balance and environmental awareness, individuals can support their skin from the inside out, creating a foundation that helps it look and function at its best.

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