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Wednesday, August 5, 2026

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Volume 45
Number 9

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Club investing in next generation of sportsmen

Youth Field Day slated for Aug. 8

By Andy Stine
astine@altoonamirror.com

The Old Town Sportsmen's Association in Clearfield will be holding a Youth Field Day from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 8 at their location on 317 Mann Road in Clearfield.

The association, which offers rimfire shoots, trap shoots, steel shoots, member activities and various community events throughout the year is also making it a point to get youth involved.

"Youth programs are

one of the most important things we do as an association," said Dan Stilson, OTSA youth coordinator.

While the group has done youth field days in the past, this year's event is a follow-up to four other events throughout the year in archery basics, bird day (birdhouse building and hawk demo), being ready on the water (reel casting and water safety), and rimfire ready (safety and rimfire shooting).

During the Aug. 8 field day, participants will rotate through different stations — archery, BB gun, rimfire, shotgun, reel casting, wilderness response, trapping: skills,



— Courtesy photo

The Old Town Sportsmen's Association in Clearfield will be holding a Youth Field Day on Aug. 8 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at their location on 317 Mann Road in Clearfield.

history and conservation, and pheasants forever: bird dogs and conservation.

Stilson said the club has been encouraged by the participation and the positive feedback from the youth and their parents.

"Families seem to appreciate that the events are hands-on, welcoming to beginner friendly kids, and focus on learning in a safe environment," Stilson said. "Seeing kids leave excited to come back is the best measure of success for us."

The club is introducing young people to outdoor skills, conservation and responsible firearm safety in these events. They also are hoping to create positive experiences kids can share with their families.

"We believe the future of hunting, fishing, shooting sports and conservation depends on giving the next generation opportunities to learn from experienced mentors," Stilson said.

"If we want these traditions to continue, we have to invest in today's youth. Our goal isn't just to teach

outdoor skills for a day. It's to help young people build confidence, develop respect for the outdoors, and create memories that encourage them to come back for years to come. Whether a child grows up to become a hunter, an angler, a competitive shooter, or simply someone who enjoys spending time outdoors, we're helping build a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors and conservation."

Every participant in the youth field day will be provided breakfast, lunch, goodie bags and prizes,

and it will all be at no cost. The club is holding pre-registration on their website at oldtownclearfield.com or on their Facebook page.

An adult needs to stay at the event with their children, but an adult may bring more than one child.

"We're continuing to expand our youth programming because we believe introducing young people to the outdoors is one of the best investments we can make in our community and in the future of outdoor recreation," Stilson said.



— Courtesy photo

The Rimfire Station gives participants the opportunity to learn safe firearm handling, develop marksmanship fundamentals and build confidence under the guidance of experienced instructors.

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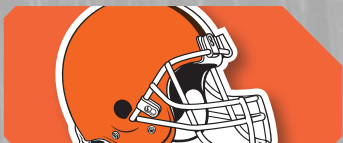
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VS. FALCONS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., SEPT. 13 1 P.M. FOX			
AT PATRIOTS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., SEPT. 20 1 P.M. CBS			
VS. BENGALS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., SEPT. 27 1 P.M. CBS			
AT BROWNS	Steelers	Opponent	
THU., OCT. 1 8:15 P.M. AMAZON PRIME VIDEO			
VS. COLTS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., OCT. 11 1 P.M. CBS			
AT BUCS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., OCT. 18 1 P.M. CBS			
VS. SAINTS	PARIS, FRANCE	Steelers	Opponent
SUN., OCT. 25 9:30 A.M. NFL			
VS. BROWNS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., NOV. 1 1 P.M. CBS			
BYE WEEK			
AT BENGALS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., NOV. 15 8:20 P.M. NBC			
AT EAGLES	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., NOV. 22 4:25 P.M. CBS			
VS. BRONCOS	Steelers	Opponent	
FRI., NOV. 27 3 P.M. AMAZON PRIME VIDEO			
VS. TEXANS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., DEC. 6 8:20 P.M. NBC			
AT JAGUARS	Steelers	Opponent	
MON., DEC. 14 8:15 P.M. ESPN			
VS. RAVENS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., DEC. 20 1 P.M. CBS			
VS. PANTHERS	Steelers	Opponent	
TBD — FLEX GAME			
AT TITANS	Steelers	Opponent	
SUN., JAN. 3, 2027 1 P.M. CBS			
AT RAVENS	Steelers	Opponent	
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2026



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Game 2: Steelers	Patriots	Game 11: Steelers	Broncos
Game 3: Steelers	Bengals	Game 12: Steelers	Texans
Game 4: Steelers	Browns	Game 13: Steelers	Jaguars
Game 5: Steelers	Colts	Game 14: Steelers	Ravens
Game 6: Steelers	Buccaneers	Game 15: Steelers	Panthers
Game 7: Steelers	Saints	Game 16: Steelers	Titans
Game 8: Steelers	Browns	Game 17: Steelers	Ravens
Game 9: Steelers	Bengals		

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PUBLIC 2-DAY ESTATE AUCTION

Friday, August 7, 2026 - 9 AM - Tools & Related Items
Saturday, August 8, 2026 (College Twp., Centre Co.)
Real Estate: 12 Noon - Contents: 9 AM - www.rgilliganauctions.com

Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner will conduct a Public 2-Day Estate Auction located at 1428 Houserville Rd. State College, PA. 16801. Check our website for photos.

SELLING FRIDAY: More than we can probably do in one day Friday. Basically a continuation of everything you would find at the (5) auctions we did at Duck's Sheet Metal Shop last year including: Honda EB5000 portable gas generator, pallets of electric motors, portable air compressors, electric & battery operated hand tools, yard tools, (2) large full garages is of assorted hand tools including drag cords - combo wrenches - screwdrivers - hammers - etc.

SELLING SATURDAY: 2011 Buick Lacrosse CXL 3.6L V6 FWD 4-door sedan w/ approximately 31,200 miles (new inspection) VIN#1G4GCE1BF245349, 2003 GMC Sierra 4 x 4 5.3L V8 pickup truck w/ cap - & Western Midweight Ultra Finish 7 1/2" power angle plow (new inspection) VIN#1GTEK14T54Z137205, John Deere Gator CS, International Cub Cadet 149 hydrostatic garden tractor w/ rear rototiller attachment, John Deere SX75 9 hp riding tractor (no mowing deck). **FURNITURE:** Antique cherry dropleaf table, solid rock maple dinette set w/ (4) chairs, solid rock maple hutch, nice Mason & Sullivan 6 1/2' tall 3-wgt. grandfather's clock, antique blanket chest, floor model jewelry chest, pine 9-gun cabinet, 3-pc. bedroom suite, upholstered sofa & matching loveseat, oak sofa table, Fulton spinet piano w/ bench, oak coffee table w/ end stand, modern marvels stand, 1950s dinette table, GE Profile washer & dryer, Deepfreeze chest freezer, Gibson upright freezer, electric treadmill, vintage hair salon chair w/ hair dryer.

Antique George A. Clark 3-drawer spool cabinet, nice quilts, 3-wgt. German cuckoo clock, 15-gal. crock, other crocks, Griswold #4 lrg. logo skillet, Wagnerware #3 skillet, sad irons, nice White Mountain ice cream freezer, PSU Matchbox cars & trucks, Winross trucks, lots of 1990s basketball - baseball - & football playing cards, man's & ladies' wristwatches, brass bells, collection of pink depression, glass hens on nests, green depression table lamp, Fenton carnival glass basket & compote, Fenton table lamp, Fenton signed basket, green carnival glass "Blackberry" compote, Moon & Star red & yellow compote, Westmoreland glass, set of Rosenthal Germany china, Lenox vase, blue opalescent glassware, Corningware casseroles, (2) green Pyrex mixing bowls, set of Pfaltzgraff dishes, set of Corelle dishes, quart canning jars, bakeware & kitchen items.

Real Estate: very nice condition ranch-style vinyl-sided 3-bedroom home situated on a large approximate 0.63-acre double lot...No Internet, absentee, or phone bids will be accepted - no buyers' premiums. Terms of Real Estate: 10% down day of auction - balance due in 45 days. Terms of Contents: Cash or Check only by conclusion of auction. Food & Job Johnny Available day of auction - tents if needed. Auctioneers: Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner, #AU339-L & #AU3430-L & #AU5442-L.
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PLOWS & DISCS: 13 Salford 18' Mod 1200 disc coulters discs rear crumbler, Case IH 4 btm rollover plow, JD 637 18' rock disc "Rock Flex" disc hangers, IH chisel plow, Sunflower 4212 9 shank chisel plow front trash mulcher disc row, IH Case tiller, Brillion 6' 3 shank sub soiler, Brillion 12' float packer, Case IH4300 Vibra-Shank 24' cultivator 3sect folding, IH 4500 17' Vibra-Shank cultivator, Kuhn 12' power harrow, IH 6 Btm moldboard plow toggle resets, White 598 moldboard 6 btm plowspring resets, IH spring tooth harrow, S-Tine 12' homemade cultivator

SKID STEER: 05 Gehl 4840 5K hrs 66" bucket

GRAIN & HAY EQUIP: Brent-Underferth 572 grain cart, NH 575 baler w/ kicker & super sweep, 8 ton hay wagon, 7' rotary mower, JD HX20 Flex-Wing mower, BBI grain wgn, Unverferth Brent 572 bu grain wgn 14"X20' corner auger, bag elevator, 38' & 50' grain augers, 2 portable grain bins, (1) GT 580 grain dryer, (2) GT 545XL grain dryers propane fueled recirculating, (2) GT 570 grain dryers(parts only), Westfield 8"X61' hydr auger, Hutchinson 8"X36' hydr auger, 8"X18' electric drive utility auger, gravity wagon w/6"X14' auger.

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MISC: JD HX 20 bat wing mower, Snowco rotary grain cleaner, 6' Gandy hopper applicator box, 4X2X2 Greenlee toolbox, diamond plate tk toolbox, 3 2500 gal Poly tanks, Singer Ideal belt conveyor, chaff blower, Haines belt conveyor, 3pt ht 12' toolbar, flatbed wgn(running gear only) Haines rock picker, Jaeger diesel pump, ass't parts for grain drills-combines-safety light-PTO's-Tillage-some antiques. Extra wheels & tires, sm tools, equip parts, galvanized grain bin,

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LG. PUBLIC ESTATE AUCTION

FRIDAY AUGUST 14, 2026 @ 5:00 P.M.
DOUBLE K AUCTION HOUSE
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ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES: Cavalier Mid Century Modern Mahogany Bedroom Suite Consisting of: (Chest of Drawers, Night Stand, Dresser, Full Size Bed w/Good Mattress & Wall Mirror), Flat Front China Cabinet, Mahogany Slant Front Writing Desk, Chrome Legged Table, Victorian Style Ebonyed Small Table, Waterfall Sideboard, Pincherette Style Bird Ashtray, Buck 373 & Winchester Pocket Knives, Neptune & 1 Other Compass Set, Oil on Canvas Wall Pitcher, Nature Library Birds Book, American Legion Bronze School Award Medal, Wooden Fruit Bowl w/ Fruit, The Art of Walt Disney Book, (3) Porcelain Dolls in OB's, (2) Madam Alexander Dolls, Oneida Flatware in Presentation Box, Asstd. Ty Babies, Hurricane Lamp, Nautical Décor, Brother Oiler, Wooden Elephant Figurine, Adv. Tins & Boxes, Twirlit Paper Drill in OB, Porcelain Nativity Scene Figurines, Eastern European, Russian & U.S. Postcards, Rotactor Board, Microtomic Pencil Box, Lawrence Cutter Set, (1) Zippo & (3) Other Lighters, White Co. Belt Driven Dental Tool, Dental Tools & Picks, Lladro Caphir Made in Spain Girl Polishing Shoe Figurine, Lenox Pretty Figurine, Barbie & Skipper Dolls, Barbie & Skipper Accessories, Barbie Bed & Wardrobe, Barbie Clothing, NIB Chinese & French Lady Barbies, Few Children's Books, 90210 Dylan Figurine in OB, GI Joe M1 Garand Rifle, Sewing Machine Attach. & Patterns, New Art Wares Chalkware Colonial Figurines, Little Leather Library Book of Poems, Lego #1856 Duplo Play Set, Homer D. House Wild Flower Book, Climax Food Grinder, William Southerland Oil on Canvas Framed Painting, Louisville Slugger Bat, Catchers Mitt, Few Rock LP Records, Polaroid Swinger Camera, Jim Beam Decanters, (4) Occupied Japan Figurines, Hallmark Keepsake Ornaments, Tin of Buttons, 1800's Polish Scrapbook, WWII Newspaper Clippings, Polish Cards & Newspapers, Holly Hubby Sewing Machine, Betty Grable & Ballet Dancing Coloring Books, White Treadle Sewing Machine, Art Deco Floor Lamp, Dremel Pocket Size Machine Rotary Tool in OB, Fisher Price Carriage, Domed Top Framed Picture, Framed George Washington Bi-Century Print, Framed Carol Town Church Pastel, Art Deco Floor Lamp w/Uranium Glass Accents, 23" Resin Man w/Dog Statue, Framed Tropical Island Oil on Canvas, 3 Blade Slaw Cutter w/ Box, Brass Coated Eagle, High Chair, 1902 Polish Factory Workers Print, Happy-Time Runner Sled, 10 Gallon GWA Iowa Grain & Ware Housing Early 1900's Crock, Crown 15 Gal. Crock, Blazon Sno Wing, Coal Bucket & Shovel, Fisher Price Drum, Ring A Majics Kids Game, Red Plaid Woolrich Hunting Coat, Hawthorne Girls Bicycle.

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PUBLIC AUCTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11 @ 4:00 PM

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Joshua Strickland, HIS



AD BARGAIN
Crossword Puzzle
Solution on page 13

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13					14				15		
16					17				18		
19				20				21			
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49	50		51			52			53		
54		55				56				57	58
60					61				62		
63					64				65		
66					67				68		

CLUES ACROSS
1. Bleated
6. Snake-like fish
9. Database management system
13. Social evolution anthropologist Service
14. American rocker Grohl
15. Greek personification of compassion
16. Negatives
17. Rescued
18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
19. Assigns tasks
21. Popular type of cigar
22. Discounts
23. The whole quantity
24. New York Giants legend
25. Indicates before
28. Lentils
29. Extremely angry
31. Body part
33. "North Star State"
36. David __, US playwright
38. Lower and raise one's head
39. Private rendezvous
41. In a way, improved
44. A place to play
45. Astronomical period of 18 years
46. Automobile
48. Something you can take
49. A radio band
51. Jaws of a voracious animal
52. Short-billed rails
54. Chinese province
56. Shameless
60. Horizontal passage from the surface into a mine
61. Indian respectful titles
62. Fail to entertain
63. Dried-up
64. Central Utah city
65. Southern U.S.
66. German river
67. Necessary for breathing
68. Put into play

CLUES DOWN
1. Curved segment
2. Wings
3. Yellowish volatile liquid
4. Makes less severe
5. Debit note
6. Overhang
7. The nights before
8. Type of light
9. Lacking enthusiasm
10. Tattle
11. Some is "heavy"
12. One who is canonized
14. Indicates date and place of writing
17. "Peace" in Arabic
20. "Olaf" actor Josh
21. Fragmented rock
23. They __
25. Advanced degree
26. Backside
27. Influential architect and design couple
29. An act of undue intimacy
30. Words from which later words are derived
32. 10 meters
34. Neither
35. Fungal sacs
37. The law of God revealed to Moses
40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
42. A promise
43. Challenges
47. British Air Aces
49. Large bank
50. Served as an omen
52. Cavalry sword
53. Vaccine developer
55. Belgian WW2 resistance leader Jules
56. Italian Seaport
57. Hip joint
58. __ Clapton, musician
59. Insect repellent
61. Constrictor snake
65 "The First State" (abbr.)

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Paws & Claws

Is Pet Insurance Worth It?
Keeping pets happy and healthy is a priority for pet owners. Navigating companion animals' health issues is not always easy and can be expensive if something serious crops up. People may wonder if pet insurance is an effective way to defray some of the costs and achieve peace of mind?
Pet insurance is something that many rely on when they bring a new pet into a home. According to the North American Pet Health Insurance Association, there was a 12.7 percent increase in the total number of insured pets from 2023 to 2024. Here is a look at what pet insurance may cover and how to decide if it is right for you.

What is pet insurance?
Progressive Insurance says pet insurance can reimburse a person for eligible vet bills if a pet has an accident or gets sick. Most pet insurers limit plans to cats and dogs, but some may consider other pets or exotic animals. Pet insurance plans vary, but typically include the following:
• **Accident-and-illness:** These plans cover treatment for accidents and various illnesses, such as infections, arthritis, diabetes, and hereditary diseases.
• **Accident-only:** These plans only cover injuries sustained in accidents, including broken bones or consumption of foreign objects.

Wellness: Wellness plans reimburse owners for preventive and routine care, and usually are add-on options to other plans. They may offer reimbursement for flea and tick treatments or dental cleanings.
How does pet insurance work?
Once pet owners choose a company, they will pay a monthly premium. When the pet visits the vet, the pet insurance will cover some of the cost. This typically requires a person to pay the veterinarian out-of-pocket and then submit a claim for reimbursement afterwards. Some insurers will pay the vet directly. Coverage and cost are determined by the deductible, reimbursement rate and annual limit chosen.
What doesn't pet insurance cover?
Pet insurance typically does not cover preexisting conditions, pet pregnancies and non-vet related costs like grooming and boarding. Additional restrictions may apply depending on the policy.





A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO THE AD BARGAIN • WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2026

Estate planning brings peace

BY CHRISTINE BENZ
Morningstar

Contemplating your own death or disability isn't particularly pleasant, but estate planning can bring peace of mind for you and your family. Here are the key steps to take.

Step 1: Find a qualified attorney

Because your estate plan will likely need to be updated as the years go by, it makes sense to find an attorney who practices in the community where you live. Start by asking other financial professionals who you work with for recommendations. If you have a specific situation that is likely to affect your estate plan — for example, if you're a small-business owner or if you have a child with a disability — ask for referrals to attorneys well-versed in those areas. Conduct a basic informational interview with prospective attorneys (it should be free), and ask the following:

1. How long have you been practicing law?
2. How long have you been practicing this type of law?
3. How many estates have you settled?
4. What is the typical asset level for your clients?
5. Do you have experience with situations like mine? (Blended/divorced family, business owner, child with addiction issue, etc.)
6. How do you charge for your services? What is an estimate of the charges for my estate plan?
7. Do you have experience with tax planning? (Particularly important for large estates)

Remember to weigh the intangibles: Do you like this person, and would you be comfortable supplying them with personal information about your finances and family situation?

Step 2: Take stock of your assets

List your assets and their value: investment accounts, life insurance, your home, your share of any businesses you own. Gather current information about any debts outstanding. Your estate-planning attorney is likely to provide you with a worksheet for this.

Step 3: Identify key individuals

Who do you trust to ensure that your wishes are carried out in case of your death or incapacity? You'll need individuals to fill the following key roles. Note that the same individual can fulfill more than one role.

8. Executor: A person who gathers your assets and makes sure they are distributed as spelled out in your will. The executor must be detail-oriented and comfortable with numbers. The executor can be a family member or a professional (such as a bank trust officer).

9. Durable (or Financial) Power of Attorney: A document that grants an individual the legal authority to make financial decisions on your behalf if you can't.

See **Estate**/Page 9

Associated Press photos
People practice tai chi at a park near the Temple of Heaven on July 9 in Beijing, China.

Benefits from the basics

Tai chi practitioners seek balance and well-being

BY MARIA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ
The Associated Press

BEIJING — One arm raised and the other lowered, hundreds of people move every morning like birds spreading their wings at the heart of Beijing's Temple of Heaven. It's a movement in tai chi, a physical and philosophical practice developed more than 300 years ago that continues to resonate in China today. "The environment is great and the air is good too," said Ye Guirong, 64. "You can see we're surrounded by trees." Most practitioners are retirees in their 60s and beyond. Some exercise in groups while a speaker plays relaxing music in the background. Others move silently on their own. Ye first encountered tai chi in 2010. Recently retired, she took walks across the city and one day spotted the group she now leads. "I thought it looked good, so I started practicing," Ye said. Once a new member joins a group, its leader teaches the basic moves. The apprentice's progress is reviewed and corrected periodically until a new level is achieved. Among tai chi's basic movements are "White Crane Spreads Its Wings," in which one arm is raised while the other is lowered, and "Part the Wild Horse's Mane," a broad, fluid sequence in which the body weight shifts forward while the arms open gently in front of the chest. "The movements have been passed down from one instructor to another," Ye said.

See **Tai Chi**/Page 11



An elderly couple practice tai chi at a park near the Temple of Heaven.



A couple watch a woman practice tai chi with a sword.

Omaha man, 103, discovers golf passion late in life

Bob Walls, a 103-year-old golfer, tees off on the third hole at Steve Hogan Golf Course on July 24 in Omaha, Neb.



The Associated Press

BY ERIC OLSON
The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Bob Walls was getting set to tee off on the first hole at his home course last week when his partners interrupted his pre-shot routine. "Get back here, man," James King said. "We're playing blues today," Dawn Dozier added. Walls wasn't having it. "When you're over 100, you can hit from anywhere you want," he told them.

Then, with a silky smooth swing from the forward white tees, he thwacked the ball down the right side of the fairway just short of the green on the 180-yard hole. Not bad for a 103-year-old. Actually, pretty incredible. A record 6.3 million Americans 65 and older played golf in 2025, the National Golf Foundation reported this month. The NGF does not track the number of centenarians, but there undoubtedly are few, if any, who play as well and as often as Walls.

Walls is fit and trim and looks 30 years younger. He has survived a heart attack, has had multiple heart surgeries and overcame a transient ischemic attack (mini stroke). He credited good genes — both of his parents lived into their late 90s — for his longevity, along with staying active. The notion that he's a freak of nature doesn't register with him. "I don't feel 103. I don't act 103," he said. "To me it's no big deal."

See **Golf**/Page 8

Don't rush to claim your Social Security benefits

Dear Savvy Senior, I turn 62 early next year and plan to retire soon after. Most advice says I should wait to claim Social Security because my monthly benefit will be higher. But with all the recent news about Social Security's financial problems, I'm wondering if taking benefits early might be the safer choice. Is there ever a good reason to claim at 62? — **Ready to Retire Dear Ready,** You're definitely not alone in asking this. The latest Social Security Trustees Report projects the retirement trust fund could be depleted around 2032 if Congress doesn't act. If that happens, Social Security would still collect payroll taxes and pay benefits, but retirees could face an across-the-board cut of about 22 percent.


Jim Miller
Savvy Senior

Before you rush to file, keep things in perspective. Most experts still expect Congress to step in, as it has before, to strengthen Social Security. And even if lawmakers don't act, waiting would still produce a higher monthly benefit because any across-the-board benefit cut would apply to everyone. While claiming at 62 means collecting benefits sooner, it also permanently locks in a smaller check. That said, there are several situations where claiming Social Security at 62 can make good financial sense.

How claiming age affects your benefits
You can start Social Security at 62, but doing so permanently reduces your monthly benefit by about 30 percent compared with waiting until full retirement age (67 for those born in 1960 or later). Delaying until 70 increases your benefit by about 24 percent. For example, a \$2,000 monthly benefit at full retirement age would drop to about \$1,400 at 62, or rise to roughly \$2,480 if you wait until 70.

When claiming early makes sense
For some retirees, claiming at 62 is a practical move. If you've stopped working and need income for basic expenses, Social Security can provide a steady check right away. It

can also serve as a bridge if you retire early or lose a job in your early 60s while delaying withdrawals from retirement accounts or a pension. Some retirees also claim Social Security early to reduce withdrawals from their IRA or 401(k) during market downturns. The tradeoff is a permanently reduced lifetime benefit. For married couples, timing can be coordinated as part of a broader strategy. One spouse may claim early to bring in income while the other delays to boost their future or survivor benefit. Health is another big factor. Delaying only pays off if you live long enough to collect those higher monthly checks. The break-even point between claiming at 62 and full retirement age is around age 78 or 79.

If you're still working, be careful here too. Before full retirement age, earnings above Social Security's annual limit can temporarily reduce your benefit, and claiming early locks in that lower amount for life.

Why delaying helps
For many retirees, waiting means a larger guaranteed monthly benefit for life and often a higher lifetime payout if you live into your late 70s or beyond. It can also provide stronger protection against outliving savings. For couples, delaying the higher earner's benefit can increase the survivor benefit, which may help provide more financial security for a surviving spouse. Before deciding, it's smart to review your numbers. You can create a free

account at [SSA.gov/myaccount](https://ssa.gov/myaccount) to check your earnings record and estimate benefits at different ages. Tools like [OpenSocialSecurity.com](https://opensocialsecurity.com) or [MaximizeMySocialSecurity.com](https://maximizemysocialsecurity.com) (a paid tool with a \$49 fee) can also help you compare claiming strategies. There's no one-size-fits-all answer. For most people, waiting still makes the most sense. But if you need income, have health concerns or are coordinating benefits with a spouse, claiming at 62 may be the better choice. The key is to base your decision on your own circumstances – not fear about Social Security's future.

Send your questions or comments to questions@savvysenior.org, or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.

GOLF: Walls taught sport by former PGA pro Steve Hogan



The Associated Press
Bob Walls, a 103-year-old golfer, selects a club on the third hole on July 24 at Steve Hogan Golf Course in Omaha, Neb.

(Continued from Page 7)
Born in St. Marys, Kansas, in 1923, Walls moved to Omaha in 1947 after he served in World War II. He spent most of his working years owning and operating a janitorial service. He retired at 74 and, with friends' encouragement, took up golf. Steve Hogan, who was Nebraska's first Black PGA professional, taught Walls how to play at what was then Miller Park. The two became close friends, and Walls honors Hogan's memory by volunteering seven days a week at the course, which was renamed Steve Hogan Golf Course after his death in 2008. Walls spends five or six hours riding around in his open-top cart with a bucket of seed-and-sand mix on the passenger side. He fills

divots and repairs ball marks, picks up trash and fishes other golfers' errant shots out of the lagoon with his ball retriever. Always strapped on the back of the cart is his golf bag, because he never knows when the mood will strike to stop and play a hole or maybe work on his game. Outside the clubhouse are a couple of training devices Walls made to help young players get a feel for the golf swing arc. He has worked with kids in the First Tee program and gives lessons to adults for \$50 per hour. The course holds an annual tournament, the Bob Walls Invitational, to raise money for equipment for neighborhood kids. When he gets home from the course each day, he often gets on his iPad and watches hours of training videos.

"When I visited him for his 101st birthday, I wasn't even in the door and the first thing he said to me was that he was breaking down his whole game, changing this, changing that," Dozier said. "He's always working on his game." Walls has still got plenty of game. He regularly shoots in the low 30s on the par-3 Hogan course. In fact, the other day he shot 31 to win a match against course manager Mike Rice. "The first time I beat him — and I haven't beaten him very often — I had to have a hole-in-one to do it," Rice said. "Who'd ever thought a 103-year-old gentleman could knock a ball 180 yards consistently every day and have enough energy and strength to do it?" Walls spends the fall and winter in Phoenix and

is on a course or practice range every day there, too. "Golf is the first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning," he said. He fusses over his stance, swing plane and the direction his shoulders are pointing at his finish. Recently, he's been working on getting more consistent with his lob wedge so he doesn't have to rely so much on his sand wedge. "He's going to hit right down the middle and the next shot is going to be on the green," King said. "He's not going to do anything to hurt himself. Sweet and easy. That's what I love about his game. And he practices, too. Every day he hits a few balls, and I know he does because I'm down here most every day. I love playing with him. I think he's one of kind."



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Soothe your texting thumb pain

NEW YORK (AP) — Do your hands hurt when you use your phone? All that texting and scrolling might be stressing out your fingers.

The term texting thumb can describe a wide range of phone-related pains caused by tired-out tendons and achy joints — like general stiffness, throbbing near the knuckle and a clicking sensation when bending the thumb. If left untreated, repetitive typing and swiping can lead to more serious issues like carpal tunnel and arthritis.

People have pecked away at devices for decades with warnings about overuse injuries — think BlackBerry thumb. Today’s smartphones have gotten larger and heavier, and the way we use them has also shifted: Beyond talking and texting, it’s common to doomscroll for hours, pay medical bills and even watch full-length movies and TV shows.

“Mobile devices are here to stay. So rather than saying ‘you can’t be on your device,’ we really just need to learn and think about ways to make the devices compatible with modern life,” said Dr. Maureen O’Shaughnessy with the University of Kentucky HealthCare Hand Center.



Metro

Is your thumb or wrist sore after a long phone scrolling session? Constant use can exacerbate arthritis and other ailments.

Locking wrists and elbows in the same position for hours can lead to soreness in places like the base of the thumb or wrist. Holding phones upright for long periods can also tire other fingers.

O’Shaughnessy said people tend to realize the painful effects when they’re not on their device as much, such as being on vacation. That is when phone-related irritation or dull aches go away.

The simplest way to ease this pain is to go touch grass — that is, limit phone time or take short breaks in between scrolling spurts. But that’s easier said than done. If a detox feels difficult, try to mix up postures, switch hands to type and use the index or

other fingers.

Built-in accessibility features can also minimize thumb overuse. Try sending messages using the voice-to-text feature and enlarge the text size so you don’t have to hold the phone so close.

There are also circle and ring-shaped grip accessories that attach to the back of the phone and more evenly distribute the weight across the hand. They can also double as a stand to prop up your phone to watch videos and TV.

If your hands are throbbing after a long day of screen time, stretch them out daily. Flex the wrist by tilting your palm toward and away from you, pulling and pushing down with the other hand. O’Shaughnessy also recommended flexing

each of the fingers and making small circles with your thumbs.

For pain at the base of the thumb, you can place your hand on a flat surface and pull the thumb away from the other fingers, holding that for about 30 seconds.

If the aches, numbing or tingling persist even after limiting screen time and using remedies like ibuprofen or ice, see a doctor to see if it could be something more serious.

Constant phone use can exacerbate thumb arthritis or cause De Quervain’s tenosynovitis — sharp pain or swelling at the base of the thumb and wrist. It can also lead to carpal tunnel, caused by a pinched nerve. Trigger thumb, a painful catching in the thumb when you bend it, is caused by an inflamed tendon.

It’s easy to get trapped in an endless cycle of scrolling and swiping. Taking a quick, intentional break to adjust posture can still make a difference.

“Our hands were not designed to use phones all day long,” said Dr. Eugene Tsai, a surgeon at Cedars-Sinai Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine. “In order for us to use the phones, we have to be kind to our hands.”

ESTATE: Destroy your old documents

(Continued from Page 7)

This person must understand your wishes about your financial affairs. They should also be detail-oriented and adept with financial matters.

10. Power of Attorney for Healthcare: A document that specifies whom you entrust with making healthcare decisions on your behalf if you can’t. Ideally, this person lives reasonably close and understands your general wishes about healthcare.

11. Guardian: A person who is willing and financially able to look after and/or raise your minor children if you and your

partner die. You want your child’s guardian to share your values and views on parenting.

Step 4: Know the key documents you need

At a minimum, ask your attorney to draft:

12. Last Will and Testament: Tells everyone how you would like your assets distributed after you’re gone.

13. Living Will: Tells your loved ones and healthcare providers how you would like to be cared for if you become terminally ill. It usually includes your wishes on the use of life-support equipment.

14. Healthcare Power of Attorney: Gives an individual the power to make healthcare decisions on your behalf.

15. Durable (Financial) Power of Attorney

Step 5: Manage your documents

Once your estate-planning documents are drafted, destroy any older versions. Keep the current ones in a secure place and tell the executor where they are.

Provide copies to your executor, agents for powers of attorney, and the guardian for your children, and discuss your wishes with them.

Step 6: Plan to keep your plan current

One of the biggest estate-planning pitfalls is drafting a plan but not keeping it up to date. Plan to notify your estate-planning attorney, and possibly revise your documents, in these situations:

16. A change in marital or family status (marriage, divorce, birth, adoption)

17. A major change in assets (sale or purchase)

18. A major change in financial status

19. The death or ill health of a beneficiary

20. The death or ill health of the executor, power of attorney, or guardian.





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BY GEORGE THOMAS KATTOUF
For the Mirror

A medical diagnosis can be the end of a fitness journey. Most seniors have experienced setbacks due to physical issues. If you have avoided an injury or a chronic disease, then you are an exception. Thankfully, as a seasoned adult, you can deal with obstacles such as this. Imagine having to deal with such adversity at a much younger age. What path would you take? Perhaps you would be so devastated that fitness and athletics would be the last thing on your mind. No one would fault a youngster for taking the easier path to avoid the pain of training.

As a high school student, Steve Winterstein did not choose the easier path when diagnosed with a very painful and debilitating autoimmune condition.

"I had a condition, ankylosing spondylitis. It is a form of arthritis, and I have had it since I was a young teen," Winterstein said. "My sophomore year in high school I was receiving homebound instruction. The teachers would come to my house and provide instruction and assignments. The arthritis was bad enough that I had trouble walking across the room, and eventually they gave me a diagnosis of juvenile arthritis, which was wrong, but at least the medication had a positive impact. I received a good treatment plan and it changed everything for me. I got most of my abilities back and I could do most anything that I wanted to do." Winterstein went back to traditional classes and wrestled for Huntingdon Senior High School in the 98-pound weight class.

Following graduation, Winterstein attended Clarion University for one year. His father, who had purchased supermarkets in Bellwood, Tyrone and Hollidaysburg, asked him to take a year off from his collegiate pursuits to help in the family businesses. He did not return to college and continued to support those enterprises as he pursued other interests.

"In 1983, I opened my first gym, Physically Fit, in Bellwood. I saw the opportunity to be able to sell equipment and started doing that in 1989," Winterstein said. "In the late '90s, Cybex, one of the companies that we repped for, came out with a requirement. They wanted all their dealers to have a personal training certification, and so their recommendation was National Academy of Sports Medicine. I took the course with them, and passed the two-day exam." Winterstein developed a passion for personal training from this experience.

In 1989, Winterstein opened Natural Gains in a self-described hole in the wall across from the Greenwood Fire Hall. He sold exercise equipment from this location and also provided personal training.

Winterstein became a martial artist as part of his fitness quest.

"I started training Pai Lum Kung Fu in Altoona," Winterstein said. "They didn't have enough business here or couldn't get somebody to run the school. I don't know the particulars of it, but they left the area. I had to look for somebody else to instruct me. I started training Wado-ryu under Dave Salyards and Doug Hoover and eventually opened my own school." He eventually earned a third-degree black belt.

Winterstein instructed students until 2000 when he decided to close the martial arts school located in Bellwood.

"I always said I would never teach for the money, and I found the only reason I was continuing was for the money, so I thought 'I'm done,'" he explained.

Winterstein opened Natural Gains as a facility to provide personal training and eventually equipment sales.

THE FITNESS TRACK



Courtesy photos

Steve Winterstein (blue shirt), who overcame ankylosing spondylitis, a form of arthritis, from his youth, is the owner of Round 2 in Greenwood, where he meets with clients on their different workouts.

From the time he was introduced to resistance training as a high school wrestler, Winterstein has made fitness part of his daily routine. These days, the 69-year-old does not attempt the heavy lifts that once were a part of his program.

"My goal is to train every day. I train two body parts a day. I work my chest and back day one, shoulders and legs day two, arms day three, abs and core day four, and then repeat the process all over again. Age will make you change what you do. I perform a lot more dumbbell work now. On the rare occasion when I decide I'm going to use a bar, I usually pay the price for that decision," Winterstein said.

His everyday training philosophy does not waiver during vacations.

"I get up at 4 a.m. every day. It is just how my body clock works. When we go on cruises almost every ship has a nice size walking track. I'm out there at 5:15 a.m. walking for two and a half to three miles. Then we head to the gym, which opens at 6 on a ship," Winterstein said. He has made walking an integral part of his daily routine whether on land or at sea.

Winterstein has devoted himself to staying fit and sharing his knowledge with others as a personal trainer. He currently guides clients at his business, Round 2 in Greenwood, where he meets with clients very early in the morning.

"I have been training with Steve since 2018. He provides a variety of different workouts to challenge you. There's always a variety and it's always something different. He has a unique way of incorporating free weights, exercise bands and different machines. He also includes cardio in the sessions," said Brian Ianuzzi who meets with Winterstein at 6:30 a.m. weekly.

Kelly Mertiff has been training with Winterstein since 2009. Her rationale for such dedication is beyond the physical aspects of training.

"He motivates me to keep up with my goals and always works with me to make sure that I show up and dedicate myself. He's always there to listen and provides positive feedback," Mertiff said.

Winterstein is civic-minded and has served on the school board of the Bellwood School District. He is also a township supervisor for Antis Township. His contributions to community are not for personal accolades.

"I was on the school board for six years, two years as a regular school board member, two years as the vice president, and two years as the president.



That is the most thankless job. Even being a sports official is not as bad of a job as being a school board member," Winterstein explained.

He can compare a school board position to that of a sports official, because he has officiated local football, softball, and baseball games for 54 years.

The 98-pound high school wrestler is now about 100 pounds heavier. Winterstein is cognizant of his appearance as a personal trainer.

"I never wanted to be the Michelin Man, and that has been a motivator my entire life. As a trainer, you must look the part," Winterstein said. He follows a keto diet, when necessary, to keep his weight in check.

The kid who could have been thrown in the towel due to his diagnosis has positively impacted on his own health and that of so many others he has trained.

"I am a firm believer that exercise is what has allowed me to be able to do so much at a more advanced age. One thing that really does help arthritis is movement," Winterstein said.

The changes he sees in his clients are substantial.

"The biggest benefit is how they feel about themselves. They feel healthy and they function better. Once we get to age 50-plus, we start to think everything is downhill and it really doesn't have to be," Winterstein said.

George Thomas Kattouf of Altoona is the developer of the website AgelessTimeless.com. He has been instructing martial arts for over four decades in the Altoona Area at the Academy of Martial Arts and encourages seniors to stay fit through martial arts training. If you or someone you know in Blair County is age 50 or older and would be a good candidate for the Fitness Track, email Kattouf at george@agelesstimeless.com. Tune in to the YouTube channel AgelessTimeless to learn more.



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TAI CHI: Several different styles, each with their own form

(Continued from Page 7)
Newcomers keep joining

Ye's tai chi group, Cypress Grove, has around 30 people and recently welcomed its newest practitioner.

Zu Hong, 59, learned a 24-movement routine in about a month. Ye said she's ready to take on the second set.

"I thought tai chi looked very beautiful," Zu said. "I wanted to exercise, so I came here to the Temple of Heaven."

Founded in the 15th century by a Ming dynasty emperor, the site is a complex of religious buildings symbolizing the relationship between heaven and earth.

Its most iconic building is the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests. It served as the ceremonial site where emperors acted as intermediaries between humans and heaven, offering sacrifices and prayers for good harvests.

Today it serves primarily as a tourist attraction and its surrounding gardens remain open to the public.

Ancient ideas endure

Tai chi carries two meanings in China. It refers both to the martial art, or Taijiquan, and to the philosophical ideas behind it, or Taiji.

One of its key concepts is qi, or vital energy, which is understood as a life breath



Chen Haitao, right, the 12th generation inheritor of Chen-style tai chi watches his student performs tai chi at a class in Beijing.

that flows through the body.

In traditional Chinese medicine, health depends on qi circulating through a network of pathways known as meridians, which are believed to connect the body's organs, limbs and other parts. Acupuncture and other traditional treatments aim to regulate that flow.

"Practices like tai chi and qigong are all about activating, regulating or improving the flow of qi in the body," said James Miller, a professor of Humanities at Duke Kunshan University in China's Jiangsu province. "That's something very key to Daoism (Taoism), but it's also part of the broader Chinese conception of the body and of the world."

Beyond the human body, qi is also believed to exist in nature. Mountains and rivers are understood to be animated by its flow.

"This is also why it's traditional to establish temples on mountains," Miller said. "They're understood not just as beautiful or remote places, but because they're closer to nature."

An ancient practice lives on

There are several styles of tai chi, each with its own forms.

Ye's group gathers every morning at 7:40 a.m. to



People practice tai chi at a park near the Temple of Heaven in Beijing.

practice Yang-style for about an hour and a half. The group rotates through different sets. Some consist of 24, 42 or 48 movements, while others incorporate swords or fans.

"Through exercising, everyone's health has improved," Ye said. "Our spirits are especially good."

Chen-style is widely recognized as the oldest form of tai chi. It was developed in the 17th century by Chen Wangting, a military commander who later in life changed paths to embrace spirituality.

"He practiced Daoist (Taoist) methods of self-cultivation including meditation," said Tai Chi master Chen Haitao. "Then one day he experienced a sudden awakening: the meridi-

ans throughout his body all opened, his mind became enlightened, and wisdom suddenly emerged."

Chen Wangting's experience was life-changing, said Chen Haitao. Dreaming of sharing the sensation with others, he found in movement the means to do so.

Both the martial art and the philosophy behind tai chi are meant to work together, Chen said. The movements provide the method while the philosophy gives them meaning.

"One of the great benefits of Taijiquan is that it is suitable for everyone," Chen said. "As long as you learn the basic principles correctly and maintain proper alignment, whoever practices it will benefit from it."

Senior safe driving class set

Motorists age 55 or older who want to sharpen their driving skills while also getting a discount on auto insurance are encouraged to sign up for Seniors for Safe Driving class to be held from 5 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12, at Rep. Jim Rigby/Solomon Fall Hall, Johnstown.

The Seniors for Safe Driving program is beneficial for older drivers to gain a better knowledge of how to adjust their driving techniques and habits to compensate for many of the challenges facing older motorists.

The program is open to drivers aged 55 and older. There is no on-the-road driving required and no exam will be given. At the completion of the class, drivers will be eligible to receive a minimum 5% discount on their auto insurance premiums.

Individuals interested in attending the class may register online at www.SeniorsForSafeDriving.com or call 1-800-559-4880. The cost for the class is \$16.

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DuBois man loses latest appeal in court

By Phil Ray
pray@altoomamirror.com

A DuBois man, Joseph George Sabatose, who has been on a roller coaster ride through the court system for the past decade, has lost his latest appeal to Pennsylvania Superior Court in which he claimed he was denied credit for time served in prison involving two criminal cases filed in Clearfield County.

Sabatose, 61, was charged in 2016 with criminal trespass that occurred on Dec. 20, 2015, and was initially sentenced by Judge Paul E. Cherry to a term of 90 days to one year in prison.

A second charge, theft by deception, was added in 2022. His sentence on that charge was initially 30 days to one year.

But, Sabatose's situation became more complicated because of his many parole and probation violations.

Those violations resulted in several resentencing hearings.

For instance, he was resentenced on the criminal trespass charge to 146 days to one year, and then again to 120 days to one year, both to be followed by periods of probation.

In February 2022, he was charged with theft by deception which drew an additional prison sentence of 30 days to one year, to be followed by three years of probation.

On Aug. 28, 2023, he was again resentenced on the criminal trespass charge to one to five years and resentenced to six months to five years, to be served concurrently, on the theft charge.

On Jan. 17, 2024, a Clearfield County Pub-

lic Defender challenged, on Sabatose's behalf, the revocation sentences, contending they were illegal because he did not receive credit for all the time he already served in prison.

Judge Cherry held a hearing on Feb. 27, 2024, concerning the alleged improper sentences imposed in August, but the judge concluded he gave Sabatose the credit for which he was entitled.

That time was reflected on a state commitment form.

Sabatose, acting as his own attorney, filed a petition contending that neither his attorney nor the judge in his case advised him of his right to appeal the decision denying a correction in the amount of time he had already served behind bars.

That petition was denied and he then took his case to the Pennsylvania Superior Court.

The Superior Court panel that included Judges Victor P. Stabile, Alice B. Dubow and Correale F. Stevens, in reviewing the case, determined that the appeal stemmed from the Aug. 28, 2023, decision in which Judge Cherry

resentenced Sabatose to a combined jail term of one year to five years for violating probation sentences on both offenses.

The review determined that Sabatose by law had until Sept. 27, 2024, to appeal the Aug. 28 sentence.

But the appeals court determined Sabatose's post-conviction appeal to that sentence was not filed until Nov. 20, 2024, and therefore, was on its face, untimely.

There are exceptions to the court's timeliness rules.

A petitioner can claim that there was government interference that caused a late filing of a petition.

Or, the appeals court explained, facts that supported the filing of a petition were unknown until recently, thus causing a late filing.

The third exception is a new right recognized by the Supreme Court of the United States or the Supreme of Pennsylvania.

Sabatose argued that his late filing was due to a "breakdown" of court procedure (because he was not informed of his right to appeal), and therefore his right to

appeal should be reinstated.

The opinion written by Stevens rejected Sabatose's contention, pointing out he presented the appeals court with "no coherent argument."

To support its decision, the Superior Court cited a 2014 Supreme Court case in which the state's highest court

explained that it is not up to appellate court judges to prepare arguments for any party.

"Indeed, we are neither obliged, nor even particularly equipped, to develop an argument for a party.

"To do so places the court in conflicting roles of advocate and neutral arbiter.

"The Court is left to guess at the actual complaint that is intended by the party."

The Superior Court opinion concluded that it affirmed Judge Cherry's dismissal of Schwab's contention that Sabatose's sentence issued on Aug. 28, 2023, was illegal.

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Obituaries

Michael R. “Mick” Kozak

Michael R. “Mick” Kozak, 82, of Camp Hill, PA, formerly of Osceola Mills, PA, died on Wednesday, July 29, 2026 at UPMC West Shore Hospital in Mechanicsburg, PA.

Born on May 20, 1944, in Philipsburg, PA, Michael was the son of the late Mike Kozak & Sue (Kohut) Kozak. He married Doris Ann (Kantoski) Kozak in the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church on February 18, 1984. Doris Ann survives at home. Michael was a member of the St. Matthews Catholic Church in Tyrone, PA and also a member of the St. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Philipsburg, PA. He was a member of the 3rd degree K of C Council 2250 and a member of the 4th degree of Council 952. Michael was a member of the American Legion and a member of the Osceola Mills Honor Guard for 54 years. He was a member of AFSCME Union Local 13 and was the president of this for 17 years. Michael was an Army Veteran of the Vietnam War Era. Michael retired from PenDOT as a Civil Engineer after 33 years. He was also a retired caretaker for the Catholic Cemeteries in Osceola Mills, PA. He was a 1962 graduate from the P.O. High School and had graduated from the Williamsport Community College. In addition to his parents, Michael was preceded in death by his twin sisters, Betty Ann Mencer and Mary Catherine Swasing. In addition to his wife, Michael is survived by four sons, Michael R. Kozak Jr. (Nicole) of Hughesville, PA, Daniel J. Kozak (Jenny) of Montoursville, PA, Douglas J. Kozak (Lauren) of York, PA, and David J. “Humm” Kozak (Kimberly) of Mechanicsburg, PA; a daughter, Michele R. Gula (William) of Bluffton, SC, eight grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Funeral Mass was celebrated with Rev. Father Michael Pleva, celebrant, at the St. Matthew Catholic Church. Interment: the Immaculate Conception Catholic Cemetery in Osceola Mills, PA. Military Honors were accorded at the cemetery by the Osceola Mills Honor Guard.

Judith Ann “Judy” Jordan

Judith Ann “Judy” Jordan, 72, of Curwensville, passed away Thursday, July 23, 2026, on the Clearfield Curwensville Hwy., as a result of being hit by a drunk driver.

Born January 10, 1954, in Niagara Falls, NY, the daughter of Raymond Bruner and Emma (Peoples) Marlette. She married the love of her life, Rodney Lee Jordan on August 22, 1974. Judy's two notorious jobs were as a housewife and a retired postal driver. She enjoyed quilting and reading but mostly spending time with her grandchildren and great grandchildren. Judy is survived by her son, Raymond “Ray” Jordan (Angela) of Grampian, six grandchildren: Ricky, Sarah, Vivian, Ethan, Brooke and Hunter Jordan, two great grandchildren: Robert Stryker Rahier (4 years) and Weston Holenback (1 year), two sisters: Carol Puccio and Vicky Byrd and numerous cousins and family members. She is also survived by her childhood friend, Fran Hitchinson. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Rodney Lee Jordan, who passed away April 13, 2022, two sons: Ricky and Randy Jordan whom she tragically lost and three sisters: Linda Fenton, Cindy Stroud and Susan Puccio. Despite all the tragedies in Judy's life she tried to keep a positive attitude and stayed focused on the family and friends she had and cherished every minute with them. Judy will be dearly missed by many. A Celebration of Life will be announced at a later date. Interment: Bradford Cemetery.

Mary Jane Kline

Mary Jane Kline, 82, of Shiloh, passed away on Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at her home.

Born January 27, 1944 in Clearfield, she was the daughter of the late Ralph and Virginia (Reasinger) Snyder. She was raised from an early age by her aunt and uncle, Braden and Marion Hummell, along with their children, Paul, Sue, Linda, Jeff, Tina, and Teresa. Mrs. Kline attended Clearfield Area Schools. She had a love for babies and children, and she enjoyed working in different childcare centers. She is survived by her husband, Lowell L. ‘Joe’ Kline, whom she wed on December 26, 1962. She was an awesome wife of 63 years including 17 years as a military wife. She raised two wonderful girls, Sherry Gray and husband Kevin, and Tonya Petri and husband Bradley. Mrs. Kline is also survived by five grandchildren, Joey Gray and wife Elissa, Mark Gray and wife Andrea, Emily Elliott and husband Josh, Tana Petri and Gretchen Petri; 11 great grandchildren, Solomon Gray, Samuel Gray, Zippora Gray, Payge Gray, Samsyn Gray, Tristan Gray, Madelyn Elliott, Liam Elliott, Natalie Elliott, Emma Petri and Grayson Petri; a sister, Barbara Milligan; three brothers, John Snyder and wife Rebecca, Dennis Snyder and wife Jennifer, and Jerry Snyder and wife Nancy; a two sisters-in-law, Deanna Snyder and Jane Oldknow. She was preceded in death by her parents; her aunt and uncle who raised her; three brothers, Tom Snyder, Robert Snyder, and Richard Oldknow; and a sister, Shelby Wilson. A funeral service was held at Bennett and Houser Funeral Home. Burial: Shiloh Cemetery.

Carol J. Machiarola

Carol J. Machiarola, 83, of Hollidaysburg, passed away on July 28, 2026 at UPMC Altoona.

Born July 27, 1943 in Coupon, PA, daughter of Eugene and Alma (Booterbaugh) Seymore. She is preceded in death by her parents; husband, Tony “Oscar” Machiarola; son, Shawn Machiarola; siblings, Lorraine Marasco, Ronald Seymore, John Seymore, and Marilyn Seymore; and son-in-law, Gary Moschgat. She is survived by her daughters, Lori Moschgat and Kim (Joe) Mercer; and grandsons, Justin and Christopher Moschgat. Carol enjoyed painting ceramics, coloring, reading, and spending time with family. A funeral mass was held at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 159 Hickory St. Ashville, PA 16613. Interment: St. Joseph's Cemetery, Coupon.

Donna Beatrice McCracken

Donna Beatrice McCracken, 83, of Mahaffey, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, July 29, 2026.

Born March 7, 1943, at the Clearfield Hospital, she was the daughter of the late Robert and Ethel (Rowles) Price. Donna was an avid reader and loved her garden and canning. She enjoyed going to the casino and Clint Eastwood. Donna had a fondness for Charlie Brown and Snoopy, having an entire room filled with décor and memorabilia. When it was raining, you would find Donna on her porch so she could watch the raindrops. Donna loved her family. She was a very proud and loving Mother, Granny, and Great Granny. She also enjoyed her cat, Rufus. She will be missed greatly as she made it a point to spend as much time with her family, especially her grandchildren. She will be remembered for her sense of humor and was never afraid to flip the bird! She is survived by three children, Dorothy A. Howell and husband Roger, Judy Dixon and husband Trace, and David E. McCracken; four grandchildren, Taylor L. Dixon-Prokopakis and husband Tyler, Sam Dixon, Matthew Elensky and wife Abby, and Danny Elensky; three great grandchildren, Mya Jo Prokopakis, Aveline Elensky, and Miyah Elensky; a sister, Beverly Lanich; and numerous nieces and nephews. She was married to her loving husband David Wilson McCracken for 44 years, who preceded her in death on July 24, 2015. They met at the Clearfield Cheese Plant, where Donna had been employed. In addition to her husband and parents, Donna is preceded in death by her daughter, Tammy Sue (Price) Elensky; and eight siblings, Robert Price, Mary Wright, Ruth Hoover, Rosie Ward, Joan Hamilton, Jean Bloom, Betty Maines, and Dorothy Verdecchi. In honoring Donna's wishes, there will be no public services observed.

Chauncey L. Miller

Chauncey L. Miller, 84, of Bigler, passed away on Saturday, August 1, 2026 at Mountain Laurel Nursing and Rehabilitation, Clearfield.

Born September 27, 1941 in Philipsburg, he was the son of the late Rev. Lyle and Ruth (Harrier) Miller. Mr. Miller was employed for over 40 years on the railroad. He worked for Conrail, Penn Central, and retired from Norfolk Southern. He loved sports, from watching any sport to collecting baseball memorabilia. Mr. Miller was a member of the first Woodland Bigler Little League Baseball Team. He was an avid hunter and fisherman and loved attending local auctions. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Violet (Carter) Miller; two children, Betsy Solida of Clearfield, and Lonnie Miller and wife Melanie of Mahaffey; five grandchildren, Joshua Solida and wife Leah, Stephen Solida, Johnathan Miller and wife Griffin, Emily Zacherl and husband Elijah, and Adam Miller and companion Aly Chew; and a great grandson, Weston Miller. Mr. Miller is preceded in death by his parents; a daughter, Bonnie Miller; a son-in-law, Guy Solida; and a sister, Gala Ann Kephart. In honor of Mr. Miller's wishes, there will be no public services observed.

William “Bill” Belko

William “Bill” Belko, 83, of RD Philipsburg, died Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at his residence surrounded by his family.

Bill was born on May 17, 1943, at home in the Cold Stream area of Philipsburg; a son of the late John and Pauline (Lucas) Belko. He was a 1961 graduate of the Philipsburg – Osceola Area High School. Following high school, he enlisted in the US Air Force and served during the Vietnam War era. After his military service enlistment was completed, he returned to school and graduated from the Williamsport Area Community College. Bill was employed throughout his working career as a heavy equipment mechanic. He retired in 2003 with over 30 years of service with Beckwith Machinery of Clearfield. He was a 60 year member of the Clearfield American Legion, Post #6; a 55 year member of the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 66, Pittsburgh; and a Life Member of the Philipsburg B.P.O. Elks Lodge and Country Club, Lodge #1173. Among his favorite pastimes, Bill was a fantastic gardener, an excellent cook, loved working on crossword puzzles and he was an avid Steelers and Penn State Football fan. He was a longtime member of the Nittany Lion Club and season ticket holder. He enjoyed going to postseason bowl games; the most memorable being the 1987 Fiesta Bowl for the NCAA National Championship. On Sundays, you'd catch him listening to the “Sunday Morning Polka Party” with “The Big Moose”. Bill was married on June 5, 1976, at St. Agnes Catholic Church, Morrisdale, to the former Melissa A. Ollinger, who survives at home. He is also survived by a son, James “Jim” Belko and his wife, Amy (Rider), and their two children, Zoe and Ava, all of Warriors Mark; a sister, Betty Sicks, of Philipsburg; a brother, David Belko and his wife, Stephanie, of Nokomis, Florida; and numerous other extended family members. He was preceded in death by his parents; four sisters: Verna Walker, Pauline Belko, Mary Shedlock and Marge Lewis; five brothers: John, George, Edward, Andrew and Robert Belko; and an infant brother, George. A memorial service was held at the Beezer-Heath Funeral Home & Cremation Services, 719 E. Spruce Street, Philipsburg, with Rev. Melinda McNolly, officiating. An Elks Funeral Service was held at the funeral home. Military Honors were accorded by the Clearfield American Legion / VFW Honor Guard at the funeral home following the memorial service.

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

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2026

SOCIAL STATUS

Penn Cambria teacher racks up followers by sharing budget travel tips

By COLETTE COSTLOW
ccostlow@altounnamirror.com

Penn Cambria High School social studies teacher Jessica Burlingame never thought she'd travel the world, let alone teach others on the internet how to do it on a budget.

"You never know where life is going to take you," she said.

After launching her social media platform, @teachertravelsonpoints, Burlingame acquired over 50,000 Instagram followers and over 30,000 Facebook followers looking for tips and tricks about how to travel across the world on a tight budget.

Part of that success comes along with not caring what others think about you, she said, because having an internet presence places her in the spotlight.

"Don't let fear stop you," she said. "I started to live my life by thinking, 'What's the worst that could happen?'"

Growing up in Altoona, Burlingame dreamed of leaving central Pennsylvania to become a marine biologist, but realized in her late teenage years that she loved interacting with people instead.

Being a marine biologist can be a lonely career, she said, noting that at the time, she wasn't sure if she wanted to leave the area anymore.

"Marine biology wasn't going to work in central Pennsylvania," she said with a laugh.

With an interest in history and an ability to play soccer, she graduated from Altoona Area High School in 2005 alongside her high

school sweetheart — now husband — Chris Burlingame.

But she didn't take her first real trip until 2007, when she left for Africa while taking classes at Juniata College.

Jumping on a plane for the first time in her life, she said she learned a lot about herself on that trip, realizing that "you don't know what you don't know."

"Traveling not only teaches you about other cultures, but also patience and resilience," she said.

The next year, she joined Chris in Scotland twice while he studied at the University of St. Andrews. Together, they explored Greece for eight days and Italy for six days by staying in hostels to save money.

At the time, she told Chris that they would make sure to have enough money to enjoy themselves if they ever visited Europe again.

After graduating from Juniata College in 2009, Burlingame secured a position teaching social studies at Penn Cambria High School in 2011.

She and Chris eventually married and planned their honeymoon in Maui, Hawaii, staying at her uncle's timeshare residence.

"She fell in love with it," Chris said. "And part of her motivation was that she wanted to get back there, because there was no other way for us to get there."

The travel bug bit Burlingame, but she and her husband left Maui and returned to central Penn-

sylvania. Over the next 10 years, they took annual trips to nearby beaches, such as Myrtle Beach, while adding two children, Owen and Oliver, to their family.

As a family, they visited Seattle in 2022 to see Burlingame's uncle, and Chris noticed that Jessica's attention once again shifted to travel, especially after learning to use credit card points.

Not only did she want to learn everything about credit card points, but she wanted to teach others about it as well, Chris said.

Burlingame's younger brother, Noah Kline, said his sister's "jetsetter mindset isn't new."

"Since discovering what she is now doing, it's definitely helped her realize she has a lot more possibilities and places to go now," he said.

Taking off

Burlingame said she had no idea what she was doing when she first started posting on her social media platform, @teachertravelsonpoints, in fall 2024.

"I was throwing darts and hoping something would stick," she said.

In January 2026, she decided to take her game to the next level by enrolling in an online social media class. The course taught her the basics about posting content on a schedule and when to hit the record button.

Despite being taught by individuals younger than her, she said they knew how to effectively convey social media management tips, as their modules never took longer than 15 minutes.

"Social media is the future, and every student needs to be aware of that. Maybe they're not making it on social media, but they know how they're being marketed," she said.

Meanwhile, her family took more trips using credit card points and budget hacks, documenting their experiences online with photos and videos.

Chris remembers when Jessica's account cracked 3,000 Instagram followers after visiting Seattle again this winter, starting her viral social media presence.

"It was like one thing hit, and it started to roll," he said.

One factor that helped with her platform was focusing more on family rather than credit cards, Chris said, adding that the subtle change made a big difference.

Over the next few months, Burlingame continued to document family trips to places such as Maui, the Bahamas, Florida, California and Washington, mentioning that she and her sons love snorkeling.

Burlingame's account is no stranger to likes and comments. She already has a few videos with over 10,000 likes on Instagram or over 1,000 comments on Facebook.

While her content reaches audiences from around the world, it also reaches her neighbor, Randi Hovan, who credits Burlingame for helping her travel the world.

Burlingame helped Hovan score an affordable hotel room — with the help of credit card points — in Indianapolis for a Taylor Swift concert. Since then, Hovan's family has used credit card points for trips to the Bahamas, Hawaii, Disneyland and Disney World.

It's not surprising that Burlingame has found internet success with her travel tips and tricks, Hovan said.

"I am definitely impressed with the amount of success she has had, but I'm not shocked because I know how much time and work she has put into growing her brand," she said.

Likewise, Kline wasn't surprised by Burlingame's success.



Content creator Jessica Burlingame, sons, Oliver and Owen and husband, Chris get close to SpongeBob.

Courtesy photos

She's been putting in a lot of work behind the scenes, he said.

Creating more content

Burlingame's platform is only getting started.

As of Thursday, she became a credit card affiliate, which helps more people sign up for credit cards through her referrals and blog.

She also scored a sponsorship with Nickelodeon, so her family was able to stay four nights at Nickelodeon Hotels and Resorts in Punta Cana while she recorded content for her accounts.

Many people believe her credit score is low or that she's living beyond her means, she said. Dismissing these conclusions, she said her credit score is currently at 800, and her family saves money when they can by driving regular cars and packing peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in their suitcases.

"It's a great system for us," she said.

While she continues to add content on her socials, she also makes time for her family in central Pennsylvania, such as coaching Owen's classic soccer team.

Chris believes his wife's social media presence gives

her a space to refocus her energy while she continues to teach at Penn Cambria and coach Owen's soccer team.

Creating content gives her a daily challenge where she thinks about what others would be interested in seeing, he said.

Looking at her account's success, she doesn't know if she would have been able to have a social media presence 10 years ago due to nerves and what-ifs.

She remembered expressing her doubts about starting a social media career to her friend's daughter, who was in her early 20s at the time. That young woman asked Burlingame why she cared what other people thought, and that stuck.

"If someone thinks it's cringy, that's on them," Burlingame said. "As long as I'm comfortable and helping other people."

Bringing her real-life experiences into the classroom, she encourages her students to be open-minded as well, especially when opportunities present themselves.

"Don't be afraid to open that next door," she tells her students.

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

The Burlingame file

Name: Jessica (Kline) Burlingame

Age: 39

Hometown: Altoona

Education: Altoona Area High School, 2005; bachelor's degree in history at Juniata College, 2009; master's degree in education at Wilkes University, 2016

Family: Husband, Christopher; sons, Owen, 10, and Oliver, 7

Social media accounts: Instagram, Threads, Facebook, TikTok: @teachertravelsonpoints; blog: <https://teachertravelsonpoints.com/>



Courtesy photos

Penn Cambria teacher and content creator Jessica Burlingame is pictured with her husband, Chris, and two sons, Oliver (left) and Owen (right) in Maui.

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Mirror Moms

Little tumblers

Parents, instructors see no
downside to youth gymnastics

Mirror photo
by Patrick Waksmunski
Instructor and coach
Jenna Bilek helps
Reagan Mazzara, 4, of
Altoona on the vault.

INSIDE

Kids face certain milestones ahead of kindergarten
A peachy good time; Envelope bookmarks



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Kids face many hurdles before they’re kindergarten-ready

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Putting the visibility in disability

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Courtesy photos

An instructor at Rail City All-Stars, Duncansville, works with some youth gymnasts.



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SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

CHILD CARE

Doing your own homework helps them do theirs

Getting a head start before school starts is always the right way to go. Here are some ways to make sure your children are ready for their studies:

Reading with your children will teach them to be observant and to develop their vocabulary and general knowledge. But can they see properly? Can they distinguish details, contrasts, and colors? An optometrist will be able to answer all these questions.

Perhaps your son seems to daydream all the time or is easily distracted by ambient noises.

Or maybe your daughter has difficulty in distinguishing between different sounds when you talk to her. If your children give you the impression that they don't want to listen or are unmotivated, it may be because they have difficulty hearing. An audiologist will be able to identify any problems.

Fall is a good time for your children to have a complete oral checkup at the dentist's. You can also ask for advice adapted to their needs, concerning both oral hygiene and diet. With healthy teeth they'll discover the power of a beautiful smile.

Research has proven that good posture will prevent children from becoming overtired and will help to improve academic results. A visit to a chiropractor will not only result in some sound advice but also some valuable preventive measures.

A child's growing period is crucial in his or her development. An annual visit to your children's healthcare specialists before school begins in the fall will allow you to benefit from some valuable advice. It will also be an opportunity to detect any incipient problems.



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SPEECH SPOTLIGHT

Vocal overuse leads to voice issues

Campfire smoke hangs low in the humid evening air. Squeals of laughter and the sounds of splashing water drift from the community pool to my patio. This is a relaxing summer soundtrack and occurs daily in my neighborhood. But one time, mixed in between kids yelling “Marco! Polo!” several voices rang out louder than the rest. From my backyard, I heard children screaming playfully. They screamed repeatedly for hours. Even though the voices sounded clear and happy, I worried that their repetitive screaming could be damaging their voice boxes. If they screamed like this every day for three whole months, they could potentially suffer vocal health problems.

Warm weather encourages people to go outside where they often speak louder. Socializing in the fresh air is healthy for



Jennifer D. Diamond

kids and adults alike, but vocal overuse, like excessive screaming, can lead to problems in the voice box, also known as the larynx. According to the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, vocal overuse is defined by behaviors such as talking/singing too much, talking/singing too loudly or coughing and throat clearing too often, which then cause an irritated larynx.

Vocal cords inside the larynx vibrate to produce sound during speech, humming, and singing. When healthy, the cords vibrate smoothly, giving the voice a clear tone. When vocal cords are unhealthy, the sound becomes raspy or hoarse, and the result can be “losing your voice,” a condition known as laryngitis. Vocal overuse is one common cause of laryngitis. Repetitive screaming is one example, but vocal overuse can also happen to cheerleaders, coaches, singers, teachers or anyone who talks a lot every day.

Recognizing vocal cord strain is difficult when we’re busy. We may not realize the damage we’re doing until laryngitis occurs.

It’s even more difficult to explain to children the importance of taking proper care of their voices.

As a speech therapist in the schools, I gave a brief demonstration to teach children the effects of persistent screaming on their vocal cords. I told the students to clap their hands loudly until they felt a sting in their palms. I pointed out that they wouldn’t keep clapping their hands to the point of injury. Vocal overuse behaviors can cause similar responses in the tissues inside the larynx, potentially leading to chronic laryngitis, or worse, the development of nodules, polyps, and cysts (tiny, callus-like bumps on the vocal cords). Some vocal cord lesions require surgery, while other types can heal through voice therapy techniques provided by a speech/language therapist under the guidance of an ear-nose-and-throat doctor.

Keeping the larynx healthy involves good hydration and rest from activities like prolonged talking, shouting or singing. Avoid speaking and do not whisper when laryngitis occurs to prevent further tissue

damage. Remind children to drink lots of water, have them take breaks from noisy outdoor activities, and make sure they receive proper treatment for conditions leading to chronic cough or throat clearing, like allergies or reflux.

Contact your child’s pediatrician if laryngitis lasts more than a day, or if hoarseness happens often. Most voice specialists require a referral before scheduling an appointment, so getting your child to their doctor is the first step. Should the physician identify a voice disorder, speech/language therapy is a helpful option.

By improving the overall health of the larynx, we can keep the vocal cords vibrating smoothly, clearly and without strain so our voices can remain strong throughout our lifetimes.

Jennifer D. Diamond, MS/CCC-SLP, is a speech therapist/reading specialist turned award-winning author. Diamond lives with her husband, two college-aged kids, and their rescue pup in the northeast corner of Cambria County.

THE BOOKWORM SEZ

Some nice reads to celebrate America’s 250th birthday

Remember last year? You probably do — at least bits of it. Last year was a long time ago, wasn’t it? So now imagine how long 250 years is, because that’s how old America is, so read these great books about America’s 250th year.

Not too long ago, a lost book by Dr. Seuss was discovered! It’s a never-before published story called “Sing the 50 United States!” (Random House, \$19.99) and it’s not just a book.

Here, kids will learn about all the states in a catchy rhyme that begs to be sung to a tune of your own making (or borrow one you love!) Learn about the states, then take the books’ dust jacket off, and there’s a map of America that you can hang on your wall. Test yourself. Quiz



Terri Schlichenmeyer

others. Enjoy this colorful, fun book for kids ages 3 and up.

Our country didn’t just happen, it was a struggle to create, one that many people fought for. In “Honor Flight: Celebrating America’s Veterans” by Jeff Gottesfeld, illustrated by Matt Tavares (Candlewick Press, \$18.99), kids will learn about some of the courageous men and women who served in our armed forces.

They were called different things — WAVE, WAC, Jarhead — but names don’t matter. What they did for America and the world does, and this book explains why, and why we should never forget our veterans. It’s great for any kid with a veteran in the family, and adults will like it, too — especially if they’ve ever partaken of an Honor Flight.

On that same note, “We Are Mighty: 12 Ordinary Americans Who Did the Next Needed Thing” by Sharon McMahon, illustrated by Susanna Chapman (Knopf, \$19.99) will also thrill kids who need to know how America was created.



a treat. It’s a quick-to-read book with few words, lots of inspiration, and the size is great for little hands. Kids will love the colorful illustrations, too.

Older kids shouldn’t feel left out, and “250 Facts About America” by J.D. Forester (Grosset & Dunlap, \$7.99) is perfect for them. It’s a book full of this and that, Q&As, quotations, quizzes, and places for kids to take notes on what they

For the littlest American, those ages 3 to 5, “Love from America” by Sarah Jospitre, illustrated by Amandine Thomas (Grosset & Dunlap, \$9.99) will be

spot this summer. Hint: get it for that family trip you’ll be taking. It’s just right for kids ages 8 to 12.

And finally, if you missed it last summer, look for “Fireworks” by Matthew Burgess, illustrations by Catia Chien (Clarion Books, \$19.99). It’s a book that brings the excitement and color of fireworks to the page, and it’s perfect for kids ages 4 to 8 who want to remember the booms for a while.

If these aren’t enough for your child, then head to your favorite library or bookstore and ask them to point you in the direction of picture books, trivia books, and chapter books for kids of any age. These are the kinds of books your child will want to have yearround.

An avid reader, Terri Schlichenmeyer writes from Wisconsin. When she’s not reviewing books for 160-plus newspapers, she’s writing her own. Now available online and in stores is “The Book of Facts and Trivia: American History.”

PUTTING THE VISIBILITY IN DISABILITY

The power of the little word Y-E-T

As a hopeless optimist, I tend to see the glass as half full. Pollyanna is a kindred spirit of mine, and the trite phrase “where there’s a will, there’s a way” is my battle call. I love a good challenge.

My wheelchair might balk at the cobblestone-lined streets in Quebec City and Montreal, but it’s just a lesson learned for the person in its seat: next trip to a similar location requires thicker wheels and a possible motor. It hasn’t happened yet, but I’m going to make it happen, no matter what. Can you see the picture of me, coffee mug saluting the camera, an Alaskan mountain as my background? Check back here in 2028, or maybe sooner, and you’ll see an off-roading



Julie
Conner

wheelchair and an ear-to-ear smile. For the present, let’s get back to Canada and the first cruise I embarked on in late June.

Holland America touts itself as one of the “best facilities for guests with disabilities,” and on the ship, that was 100% true! The door to my stateroom had a push-to-open button, as did the bathroom, and there was a built-in shower bench with an abundance of room to transfer. Elevators were plentiful, public spaces were wheel friendly, and there were wheelchair spots in their theater, plus a lower section at all the bars. Every pool also had an accessible lift.

Leaving the ship in Portland, Maine; Halifax and Sydney, Nova Scotia; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; and Quebec City was an easy trip on a gangway with many helpful crew members. The only disappointment I faced was the lack of accessible shore excursions offered by Holland America. These were either sold out or non-existent. But in my “where

there’s a will” mindset, my husband and I made different accessible plans of our own.

We enjoyed the areas around the ports and saw amazing seaside towns with terrific museums. On Prince Edward Island, we rented a car, and my accessible, do-it-yourself way generated gorgeous pictures of the red dirt coastal cliffs, and a visit to where L.M. Montgomery wrote Anne of Green Gables. Bucket list checks acquired.

I’m noticing more people traveling in wheelchairs or scooters, slipping into dedicated quiet rooms, and hiking at their own pace and abilities. We’re seeing the world and participating in it — it’s as inspiring as it is hopeful.

In my reality, “I can’t do that, it’s impossible” becomes “I can’t do that...yet.”

In 2003, I sat on my porch and dreamed up stories in my head. Primary Lateral Sclerosis had landed me in a wheelchair, and stolen my ability to use my hands in three years. The computer’s keyboard

was unattainable. But in 2004, I received a HeadMouse camera and an onscreen keyboard that began my writing journey.

What was a “yet” became a reality in a year. Y-E-T is such a powerful little word, filled with hope and scrappy determination. We can all adopt this attitude, whatever our disability. There are more stories of people thriving and succeeding with disabilities than ever before. With technological advances and cures right around our future’s corner, I expect these triumphant testimonies to multiply.

I may not be able to do something here and now, but that doesn’t mean it’s off the table. Not yet anyway.

With decades of experience rocking a wheelchair, Julie Conner puts a unique spin on accessibility. She lives in Indiana, Pa., with her husband and two very curious cats. Visit her website at <https://www.julieconner-author.com/>.

WINNING ISN'T EVERYTHING

We all need some time for leisure and recreation

When you hear the words recreation and parks, many think about your neighborhood parks, or leisure programs, others, it may be an experience you had as a child, and others, it’s a television show. Whatever your thoughts may be, I think it’s safe to say that for most it’s about having fun, and socializing with others in a community setting. As a recreation and parks professional, it’s sometimes easy to take for granted the everyday values and benefits quality recreation and parks programs and facilities have in our community. Our parks can create an escape from the hustle and bustle of that work life, which we all need to maintain a healthy physical and mental approach to our daily lives. If we didn’t have some sort of recreation or leisure time in our lives, I am not sure we could



Mike
Hofer

function very well as humans living in today’s society. I thought it would be fun to develop a “Top Ten” list of reasons why recreation and parks are important for you and our lifestyle throughout our community.

1. Provides inexpensive opportunities: Our neighborhood parks and playgrounds are free, and many are located within a five-to-10-minute drive for much of our community.

2. It’s healthy: When kids are at the park, they do the healthiest thing kids can do play. It’s not just healthy for kids however, the adults can also take advantage of walking trails and other opportunities our parks provide. We can provide opportunities for all ages and abilities.

3. Social Interaction: Parks and programs provide us with the opportunities to meet and interact with people. Today, social media, internet, and video games add fuel to the lack of social interaction, and that is something that should not be overlooked. Unfortunately, social interaction is going the way of the dinosaurs,

and we simply can’t allow that trend to continue with our youth.

4. Supporting local recreation department: Our local parks and recreation department works hard for you. When you participate in these programs and spend time at our facilities, we appreciate that. Recreation and park professionals work for the community, to ensure that parks and programs are the best they can be for you and your family.

5. Parks have economic benefits: Park and recreation areas are economic engines that improve the quality of life and make communities livable and desirable for businesses and homeowners. Having a new park in your neighborhood will increase the value of your property and typically push crime out of your neighborhood.

6. Provides green space: As we develop housing communities and industry it’s extremely important to keep the green space we have open and free. Ample green space for a variety of recreation activities is critical for future generations

to enjoy.

7. It’s a stress reliever: Parks reduce stress and enhance a sense of wellness. Everyone must eliminate stress to ensure a long healthy lifestyle.

8. Organization: We do all the work for you. Just sign up, show up and have fun. That’s what separates local parks and recreation departments from others. It’s our job.

9. Reduce Crime: Parks provide a positive outlet for our youth. Keep the kids busy and away from criminal activities.

10. Family Bonding: Spending time together as a family is something you cannot put a price on. This is the most important rule of all.

Mike Hofer serves as the executive director of the Central Blair Recreation Commission, 2101 5th Avenue, Altoona. The CBRPC is supported by tax dollars from the City of Altoona, Logan Township and the Altoona Area School District as well as program registration fees and special events. For more information, call 814-949-2231 or visit www.cbrcparks.org.

MEALS & MORE



A peachy good time

Late July and early August is a great transition time. It's still summer, but we know fall is on the horizon with back-to-school sales, along with gardens and orchards completing production for the season with a few last hurrahs. The weather is great for outdoor activities including picnics and the start of tailgating season.

Peaches are a delightful fruit, especially this time of year. A delicious temptation, their soft yellow flesh still has a bit of a bite and offers the choice of eating peeled or unpeeled. The sticky, messy goodness of the juice flowing down your arm as you eat a perfectly ripe specimen is an ideal representation of summer joy.

There are basically two types of peaches. One is the freestone, in which the flesh is removed freely from the pit. The other is the clingstone, or cling peach, in which the meat of the peach clings to the hard center pit. Most peaches have yellow flesh, while some do have white, and even fewer with red.

A member of the rose family, the peach was first grown in China where it was considered a sign of longevity. Chinese brides often carry peach blossoms in reference to the symbolism of immortality and unity. Explorers and traders helped to spread



peaches from China to Persia and Europe, then on to the Americas.

Peaches were first planted in St. Augustine, Florida, by Spanish explorers and then introduced to Georgia in the latter 16th century by Franciscan monks. The French brought peaches to Louisiana, and the English responsible for peaches in the Northeast.

Thomas Jefferson seems to have had a fascination with peaches. In just one of

his orchards at Monticello, he had more than 35 varieties of peach trees planted, and due to their strong growth and ornamental appearance, Jefferson had nearly 900 peach trees planted as living fences between fields. He enjoyed the fruit fresh, dried, in desserts, and made a type of peach cider called mobby.

Other peach-based beverages include peach nectar, brandy, schnapps and bellinis. In addition to desserts, peaches are often used in jam and preserves, barbeque sauces, soup, smoothies and as an additional ingredient in salads.

Despite my preference for a simple peach eaten straight out of hand, I am enthralled with this peach salsa recipe that I am sharing. It is delicious atop tortilla chips or crackers, served over grilled pork or chicken, in a taco or burrito and as part of a rice bowl.

It's easy enough for the kids to help prepare, with supervision when using a knife. The heat can be adjusted by using less or more jalapeno for your family's preference. It's flavorful, packed with nutrients, and doesn't require much time in the kitchen. I love this salsa so much that I can eat a bowl of it without any other accompaniment. I hope you and your family enjoy it, too.

Peach Salsa

- 3 Roma tomatoes, diced
- 1 whole jalapeno, finely diced (seeds and membranes removed)
- 3 large green onions, diced
- 1/2 bell pepper, diced (red or yellow recommended)
- 1-1/2 lb. fresh peaches (4-5), cut into large dice
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 tsp. brown sugar or coconut palm sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1/8 tsp. chili powder
- 2 T. chopped cilantro or parsley

Directions

1. Dice the tomatoes, jalapeno, onions and bell pepper and place in large bowl.
2. Cut peaches with or without peeling (I prefer leaving the peel on) and place in same bowl.
3. Over the top squeeze in lime juice, and sprinkle the sugar, salt, pepper, and chili powder. Stir gently to mix well.
4. Add in chopped cilantro or parsley and stir again. Ready to serve. Can be kept refrigerated up to two days.



Mirror photo
by Patrick Waksmunski

Instructor Aaylia Detrich (left) helps Reagan Mazzara, 4, of Altoona on the vault, while Ava Shaw helps Nadia Shaw, 7, of Altoona at the Blair Regional YMCA.

Kids learn important skills in gymnastics

BY MARY HALEY
For Mirror Moms

If you enroll your children in gymnastics, they may reap benefits beyond getting a good workout.

Area gymnastics teachers say children who take gymnastics classes not only get more physically fit, they gain other advantages including learning social skills such as how to interact well with others and how to meet challenges in a disciplined way.

Tonya Romanowicz, the gymnastics instructor and head coach at Blair Regional YMCA,

1111 Hewit St., Hollidaysburg, has taught classes for more than three decades and has coached for 46 years. She competed in college while attending the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She started gymnastics at the age of 12 after learning some moves from her friends.

Romanowicz said students learn important skills such as how to be on time and how to set goals and achieve them through self-discipline.

"To me, it's a great sport to make you a well-rounded, time-efficient person in life," she said.

Gymnastics also provides a total body workout that helps students master other sports. Many students also study dancing or are cheerleaders.

"It's a good base for any physical activity," she said. "The strengthening aspects can carry you through a lifetime."

Other gymnastics instructors agreed that students develop many kinds of skills when they take classes.

Tracy Salvino, owner of Centre Elite Gymnastics, Inc., 2222-1 E. College Ave., State College, opened her business 15 years ago.

She recently moved to a new location in a large, 18,000-square-foot facility.

She said gymnastics teaches children life lessons such as how to interact with other children outside of school.

"I don't see a down side to it," she said.

Salvino agreed that gymnastics helps children develop in other sports.

"Tumbling is a part of dance nowadays so gymnastics is beneficial for that, it's very aligned with dance," she said.

Some children start lessons at a

young age, about 2 to 3 years old or younger.

"It's never too early to start," said Salvino, who has had students as young as 10 months old.

Some will continue taking classes for many years while others will turn to different types of sports, usually about 12 years old.

"It's the base of all sports," Salvino said. "It teaches body awareness and coordination. ... It builds upper and lower body strength and strengthens your core."

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Courtesy photos

Several young gymnasts work hard during practice at Rail City All-Stars in Duncansville.

Continued from Page 7

The motivation for taking classes varies with each child, with some who just want to have fun to those aiming for a dedicated stint in gymnastics including going to competitions.

“Some kids just want to do cartwheels and tumbling,” Salvino said.

Another gymnastics studio owner, Camie Bickel, also said very young children can benefit from classes. Bickel opened Rail City All-Stars (Athletics), 1401 Third Ave., Duncansville, 23 years ago and said starting classes at an early age helps children develop a variety of skills.

“They’re not learning back handsprings, they’re learning how to move their bodies, follow directions, take turns and become comfortable in a structured environment,” she said.

She echoed the other instructors’ views that children who take gymnastics classes gain far-reaching benefits.

“We want children to leave our gym believing in themselves a little more than they did when they walked in,” she said.

Classes at the facilities range from beginner to advanced, with all offering students the opportunity to compete if they choose. Very young children, up to about 3 years old, take classes with a parent or guardian to help them. Classes for older students

teach skills like tumbling or floor exercises and working with equipment such as the balance beam, uneven parallel bars and the vault table, a piece of equipment revised for safety from the vault horse.

The studios offer students the chance to compete at various levels but competition isn’t for everyone.

“Some kids come here and just want to do gymnastics, they don’t want to compete,” said Romanowicz.

Most of the students at the studios — about 75% — are girls although the facilities also offer classes for boys. The number of participants usually varies from summer to the school year.

About 170 take a range of classes at the Blair Y in the summer, which increases to more than 230 when school starts. Centre Elite Gymnastics has about 600 students annually, while Rail City All-Stars Athletics had about 230 students last year.

“Over the years we’ve grown into much more than a cheer gym,” Bickel said. “We offer recreational gymnastics, tumbling, dance, Ninja, preschool gymnastics classes, tiny tots parent & me classes, recreational cheer, and competitive All Star cheerleading, along with camps and clinics throughout the year.”

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Continued from Page 8

Classes at the Blair Y include a Tiny Tot class for children ages 2 to 3 and Kinder Gymnastics for ages 4 to 5, which is the most popular. Other classes are Progressive classes for 6- to 7-year-olds that include floor or tumbling work, vault, beam and uneven bars. For ages 8 to 18, there's the Intermediate Gymnastics class which also has floor work in addition to practice on the equipment. There's also a Tumbling Gymnastics class for children ages 7 to 18 who want to practice tumbling skills only, such as doing handsprings and cartwheels.

There's a similar lineup of classes at Centre Elite Gymnastics, with a Terrific Two class for 2-year-olds, Toddlertime class for 10 months to 3 years old, a preschool class for children from 3 to 4 years old, to advanced gymnastics classes for students ages 12 and older.

The goal of these classes is to make sure each child has a worthwhile experience.

"Not every child will become a competitive athlete, and that's perfectly okay," Bickel said. "If they leave with confidence and memories they'll carry with them, then we've done our job."



Instructor Aayliah Detrich (left) helps Reagan Mazzara, 4, of Altoona on the vault at Blair Regional YMCA.

Mirror photo by Patrick Waksmundski

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FAMILY CRAFTS

Envelope bookmarks can be simple or complex

BY MELANIE RAMSEY

For Mirror Moms

Paper envelopes are very useful. They come in many sizes and colors. People use them to hold things; usually cards or letters, but also flower seeds, stickers, stamps and important papers. A box of greeting cards or birthday cards comes with a matching number of envelopes. You can buy a box of all-purpose envelopes anywhere office supplies are sold. Let's use some envelopes to make a very simple bookmark craft that can be as basic or fancy as you wish!

What You Will Need:

- A flat work surface like a table or desk, with good light so you can see what you are doing

- Paper envelopes (they come in many sizes and colors)

- Scissors

- Colored pencils, crayons, or markers

- Optional: A friend or family member to craft with you!

What You Will Do:

This is the simplest craft that can be done with an envelope, but all ages can find a way to make it their own. Envelopes have four corners that are well glued and nicely pointed. Those corners are perfect for making bookmarks.

Instead of tucking a rectangle of paper between the pages of a book, you will be sliding the cut-off triangular corner of an envelope over the corner of a page to mark your spot. That triangular shape might inspire you to think of some new and extra creative ideas!

1. Start by sealing your envelope. Most envelopes

have a triangular or rectangular flap with a strip of dry glue along the edge. You lick the glue and then press the flap shut. Don't want to lick the glue? You can dip your finger or a piece of paper towel in water instead. Some envelopes, instead of glue, have a fancy tear-and-stick adhesive that works like a sticker.

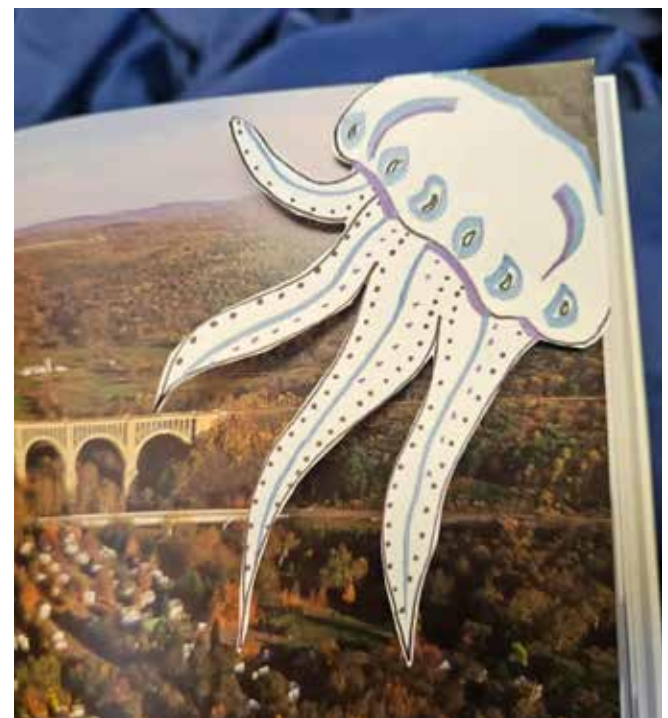
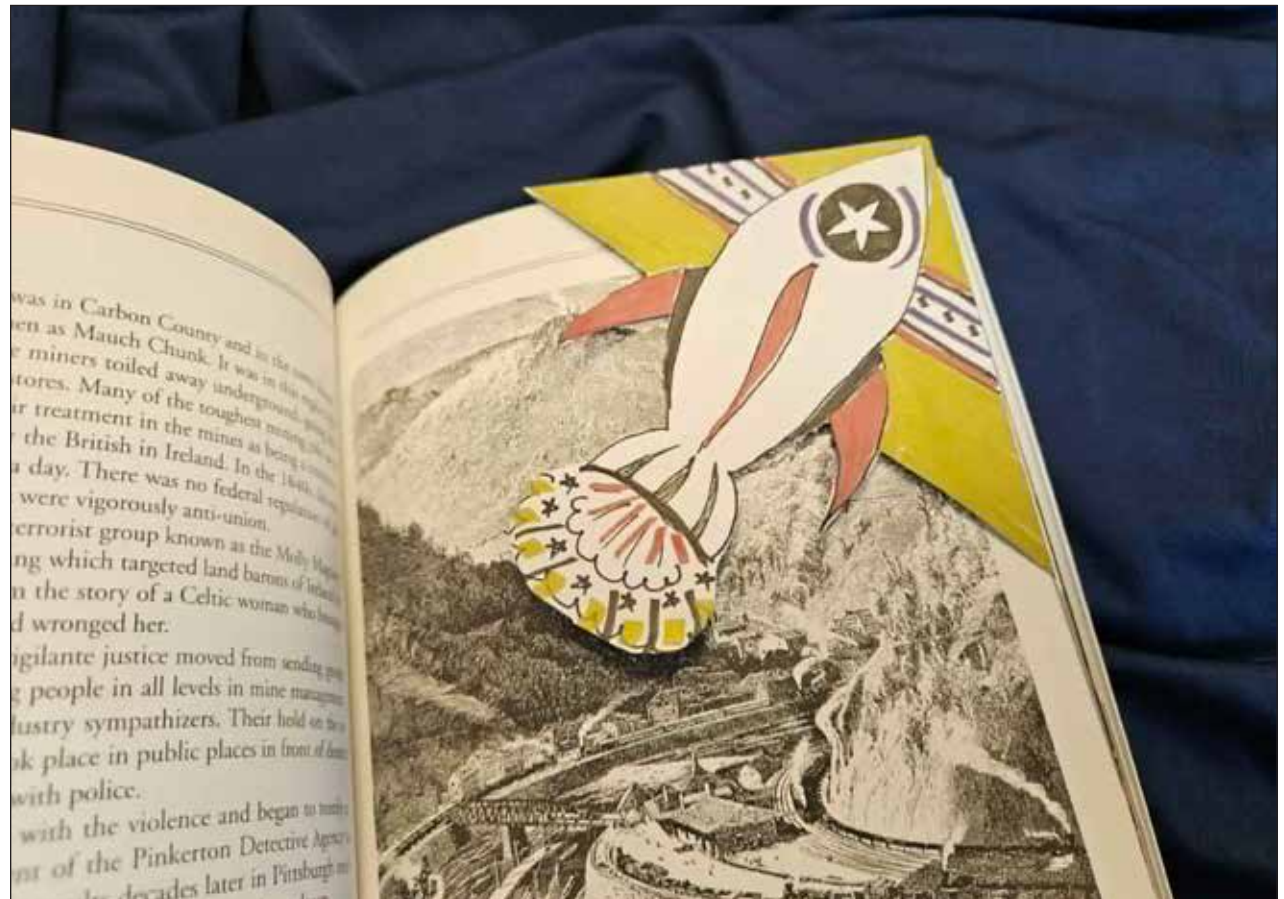
Closing and sealing your envelope is important because you want strong corners. The corners will be stronger if the envelope's flap is glued shut. Since each envelope has four corners, you can make four bookmarks per envelope.

2. Cut off one of the corners of your envelope, and decide on your pattern or design for your bookmark. Many people like to make their bookmark look like an animal's head. If you add teeth to the long end of the triangle, your bookmark will look like it is chomping on the corner of the page. Once your design is completed, it's ready to use or to give as a gift.

3. Advanced technique: Draw your pattern on — and beyond — the corner of the envelope BEFORE you cut it off. Then, cut around those extra details and include them in the shape of the bookmark. The main part of the bookmark is still a triangle, but now some details extend past its longest side. Examples: a jellyfish with trailing tentacles, a cat with a long tail, a rocket with a puff of sparks, a flower with a stem and leaves.

Above all, have fun!

Melanie Ramsey loves libraries, music and making fun times happen as director of Community Relations and Events for Hollidaysburg Borough.





Milestone checkpoint

Kids face many hurdles before they're kindergarten-ready

BY MARY HALEY

For Mirror Moms

Parents can have a tough time trying to determine if their child is ready for kindergarten.

But local experts said there are certain milestones to look for in a child's development that can make that decision easier.

According to two representatives from Child Advocates of Blair County (CABC), each school district in Pennsylvania establishes its own policy on what age children may be enrolled

in kindergarten.

Bobbi Albright, CABC Pre-K Counts Manager, and Erica Peterson, Planning and Development Specialist, Blair County Head Start, which is overseen by CABC, said parents should check with their local school district to determine the age parameters for kindergarten. Pennsylvania doesn't require children to attend kindergarten but many do because it provides a base for future development in school, they said.

"For example, in the Spring

Cove School District in Blair County, children must be (5) years old by September 1 to enroll in kindergarten," they said in an email interview.

One of the best tests to see if your child is ready for kindergarten is whether the child is able to be separated from parents for several hours. Many school districts suggest children also have specific skills such as the ability to count to 20 and recognize their first and last name.

However, it's important for families to understand that children

are not expected to have mastered all of these skills before starting kindergarten.

"These are examples of skills that many districts encourage, not a checklist that every child must complete," they said.

A child's ability to do self-help tasks can be more important than mastering certain academic details. Children should know such things as how to use the bathroom by themselves, tie their shoes and clean up after themselves.

"Reading together every day

is another great way to prepare for kindergarten," they said. "It helps children develop language and early literacy skills, increases their attention span, and fosters a lifelong love of books and learning."

Area kindergarten teachers agreed that parents should focus on whether their child can function independently when determining a child's readiness for kindergarten.

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Courtesy photo

Children in kindergarten of Altoona Area School District participate in class activities.

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Shana Smith, one of six kindergarten teachers at Tyrone Area Elementary School, and the other teachers suggest parents look for other milestones when determining kindergarten readiness. They advised that children should be able to play well with others, including being able to take turns and resolve small conflicts with other children. They also recommended that children be able to take directions from adults they're not accustomed to and they should be able to control their emotions.

“Talk about what are some safe and appropriate ways to express big feelings and how to cope with them,” they said in an email interview.

Parents should play games with their children to prepare them for kindergarten.

"This practices a lot of skills like turn taking, one to one correspondence, and following directions,"

they said.

Another local kindergarten teacher listed other things to look out for when trying to decide on whether a child is ready for kindergarten.

Megan Friel, who teaches kindergarten at Logan Elementary School in the Altoona Area School District, agreed that less tangible abilities are more important than specific academic objectives..

“As a kindergarten teacher, I look less at the academic-side of things and more at their heart and independence,” she said. “Are they curious, able to express their basic needs, and ready to try doing simple things on their own? If your little one can share with friends, sit for a short story, and speak up when they need help, they are ready to thrive in the classroom.”

The educators said that although attending preschool before kindergarten isn't mandatory it can be helpful.

"For many children, preschool is

their first experience in a structured learning environment,” the CABC instructors said. “They learn how to follow classroom routines, listen to teachers, take turns, solve problems with peers, share materials, and build friendships. These social skills are just as important as academic skills because they help children feel confident and prepared to learn.”

Friel agreed that preschool can prepare a child for kindergarten in several ways.

"It helps them get used to the rhythm of a school day: sitting at a rug for storytime, taking turns, and learning that trusted adults outside their family are there to keep them safe and loved," she said. "When kids have had that practice, the transition to kindergarten can feel much less overwhelming because the environment already feels quite familiar to them."



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Continued on Page 13



Courtesy photo

Children in kindergarten of Altoona Area School District participate in class activities.

Continued from Page 12

Enrolling a child in preschool and kindergarten can set the stage for a lifelong successful experience as a student.

“It gives them a safe space to practice sharing, following classroom routines, and building the stamina needed for a full school day,” Friel said. “Jumping straight into first grade without that experience would be challenging - all while trying to keep up with faster-paced academics.”

CABC operates several preschool classrooms in area elementary schools. Attending preschool helps children become familiar with school settings.

“They often learn the building routines, meet school staff, and become comfortable in the setting, which can make the transition to kindergarten much smoother,” the

CABC educators said.

Other ways parents can help prepare a child for preschool and kindergarten include teaching the child how to color and cut with scissors. It helps if children know how to do daily tasks such as eating by themselves and knowing how to open lunch containers and packages..

“What you do at home every day - reading bedtime stories, talking through feelings, practicing zipping a jacket, playing at the park, and simply showering them with love - is the absolute best preparation for school,” Friel said. “Whether your little one has attended a structured program for years or has been cozy at home with you, our job as teachers is to meet every child exactly where they are on day one and help them bloom.”

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Courtesy photo

Kindergarten students at Altoona Area School District post with their teachers in front of a fire engine from the Greenwood Fire Department.

SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

DENTAL HEALTH

Annual dental checkups and cleanings: essential appointments

Did you know that toddlers should see the dentist around their first birthday, or possibly even earlier? In fact, as soon as their first teeth appear, it's essential to have them examined by a professional. That said, regardless of your age, regular dental checkups and cleanings play a key role in protecting your health and well-being. Here's a reminder of the reasons to book your annual dental appointment.

DETECT PROBLEMS EARLY

Many oral health issues, including cavities, gum infections, abscesses and even oral cancers, can develop without pain or obvious symptoms. During a routine exam, your dentist can quickly spot early warning signs and intervene before the situation worsens.

PREVENT TARTAR BUILDUP

Even if you have excellent brushing and flossing habits, some plaque will still harden into tartar over time. Only dental professionals with specialized tools can remove tartar safely and



effectively. This helps lower the risk of gum disease and other complications.

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Dental visits offer more than just cleaning. Your hygienist and dentist can provide advice tailored to your lifestyle, diet, preferences and overall health.

Depending on your oral health, your dentist may recommend visits every six or nine months. Always trust your dentist's expertise!

Teaching your child about the importance of good dental hygiene made easy

Your child's oral health is closely linked to their overall health and quality of life. Dental problems can lower your child's self-esteem, lead to language delays, interfere with chewing and impact their growth. Here are some tried-and-tested methods to increase your child's awareness about dental hygiene:

- Make brushing a habit. Involve your child in brushing their teeth as early as possible. This will help them understand that it's not a task, but a habit that benefits their health. Let them choose an age-appropriate toothbrush and toothpaste to make the experience more enjoyable. You can also set a good example by brushing your teeth at the same time.
- Read books on the subject. Read your child a few stories about teeth brushing to help them learn some brushing techniques. By relating to a storybook

character, your child will be more likely to understand the importance of taking good care of their mouth.

- Make brushing fun. Technology and games can make teeth brushing more fun for your child. Depending on their age, you can turn brushing into an exciting activity by setting achievable goals and rewarding their successes to encourage their sense of responsibility. Some apps and electric toothbrushes can also guide your child through brushing in a fun way.

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EDUCATION ANYWHERE IN PA

The Power of Online Learning

The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School (PA Cyber) offers students in grades K-12 a traditional public education in an alternative format. Families look beyond their local school district for a range of reasons, and sometimes it's necessary to try a new school experience. Perfecting online public education since 2000, PA Cyber has demonstrated that learning online is an effective long-term solution for many students.

The flexibility of cyber education and class format options appeal to many, allowing more time for family, work, volunteering, athletic and arts training, and other interests. Every new student receives all the technology, support materials, and internet connectivity they need to succeed academically. As a public school, PA Cyber falls under the same funding as your local school district, so your child can attend at no additional cost.

Students can choose from hundreds of in-person events each year.

PA Cyber's nine regional offices provide in-person enrichment activities for all age groups year-round. These statewide locations are bustling with student activity, from school dances and career exploration to game nights and STEM workshops. Families also gather off-site for field trips to explore historical landmarks, museums, and much more. Field trips give parents opportunities to meet with other parents who are educating their children in the same way and for similar reasons, further strengthening the school community.

Enrollment is open for the 2026–2027 school year. Discover if PA Cyber may be a good fit for your child by visiting pacyber.org or call 724-643-1180.

The Learning Never Stops.

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