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Clearfield Veterans Powwow marks 25th annual celebration

By Andy Stine
astine@altoonamirror.com

The Clearfield Veterans Powwow, now in its 25th year, will be held Nov. 7-8 at the Expo II building at the Clearfield County Fairgrounds.

The two-day event is free and open to the public as a way to honor veterans around the Veterans Day holiday, which is observed annually on Nov. 11.

Linda Ross, a committee member, said the group started as a native drum singers group called The Mighty Creek. The group would visit the Clearfield Middle School and perform tribal dances for the eighth grade Pennsylvania history class.

“Our goal is to promote and educate the local community in the Native American culture, and mainly to honor our veterans,” Ross said.

The powwow is held every year on either the first or second week of November. Because they have visitors from all over the country, and even Canada, they usually choose a weekend where Penn State football is on the road so more hotel rooms are available.

The powwow, which is a Native American dance celebration, will start on Saturday morning with a scout and youth program at 10 a.m. A junior dance for those 16 years and younger will be held at 11:30 a.m.

There will be two grand entrances — at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The event wraps up Sunday with a crafts contest at 10 a.m. and another grand entry at 12:30 p.m. There will be vendors and exhibits on hand from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

“We encourage people to dance and enjoy the culture,” Ross said.

In the 1700s, Clearfield was a settlement for a tribe called Chinklacamoose. It makes plenty of sense to still hold a Native American celebration in the town today.

“There are a lot of Native Americans in the area,” Ross said. “It’s just not embraced as much as it should be.”

Ross said that the group’s dedication can be seen in the way that the Veterans Powwow has continued for 25 years.

“Some of us have been around since the get-go,” Ross said. “We believe and live what we’re trying to put out there. Many of our members are full-blooded Native Americans and many are veterans.”

“We came together because of an appreciation, and a love of the way of life. We want to incorporate that into the community.”

Ross noted that there is no drinking or smoking at the powwow, and only service dogs are allowed at the event.

The Expo II building is at 5615 Park Street in Clearfield.

More information about the group can be found on Facebook at Veterans Day Powwow in Clearfield, PA.



— Courtesy photo

The Clearfield Veterans Powwow will be held Nov. 7-8 at the Expo II building at the Clearfield County Fairgrounds.



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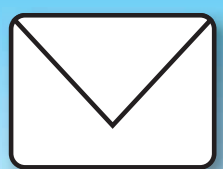
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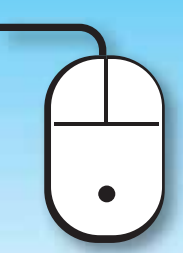
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Pyrex Nesting Bowl Set, Roman Warrior Cast Metal Figurine, Amish Themed S&P's, Cast Iron Amish Family Figurines, Miniature Horse & Wagon Figurines, Cast Iron Rooster Door Stop, Stained Glass Sun Catcher, Fireman's Convention Delegate Pins, Little Orphan Annie Playing Cards, 1965 Herbs & Spices & (1)Other Spice Rack, Set of 5 Pontiac Wire Spoke 15” Hub Caps, Mid Century White Wicker Hand Bag, Drawstring Fringed Bucket Hand Bag, Santa Blowmold, Child's Cardboard Lunch Box, Asstd. Vintage Clothes, 1958 Pennsylvania Furnace Calendar, (3)Jewelry Boxes W/Costume Jewelry, Asstd. Flats of Costume Jewelry, Radio Flyer Country Classic Wagon, Pressed Back Youth Chair, 4 Panel Asian Room Divider, Metal Dress Form, Merrie-Merrie Rotoview Christmas Tree, Flag Afghan, Blanket Chest, Fenton Butter Dish, (3)NASCAR Car Lighters, (9)Rock LP Records, Framed Pastel WWI Belgium Soldier Photo, Mr. Christmas Singing Reef, Christmas Popcorn Art, Few Shiny Brite Ornaments, 5 Gal. Pennzoil Can, Igloo Galvanized 5 Gal. Water Container, Trumpet, Lighted 3' Flat Back Santa, Angel Hair Christmas Tree Veil in OB, (Wagner #0 , O.P. & Co. #9, No Name Chicken Fryer & 1 Other Cast Iron Skillets), (Tele Games Video Game Center W/Console Controllers & Cords), Cast Iron Trivets, Sad Iron, 1800's Irvona PA Sawmill & Family Framed Photos, Lesney Matchbox Diecast Vehicles, Invicta Wristwatch, Geometric Woven Wool Coverlet, Rotary Dough Cookie Cutter, Child's Quilt, Small Ceramic Nome Set, Wooden Candle Box, Spice Cabinet, Machinist Chest, Haywood Wakefield Wicker Table Lamp, Green Shaded Bankers Desk lamp, Wall Mount Coffee Dispenser, Art Nouveau Style Slag Glass Table Lamp, D. F. Stauffer Cake & Biscuit Wooden Box, R&S Tubular Rivet Stud Co. Wooden Box, Glass Door Knobs, Blue Willow Double Handled Sugar Bowl, Porcelain Light Fixture, Cast Iron Coat Hooks, Hanging Brass Slag Glass Lantern, (2)Mexican Chimayo Table Runners, Slag Glass Table Lamp, Painted Slate, Iron Stone Covered Vegetable Dish, Children's Metal Pull Wagon, Incolay Stone Hunting Scene Valet Tray, Art Nouveau Amphora Edda Pottery Plate, Adjustable Desk Lamp, Toleware Floral Table Lamp, Dresden Plate Pattern Quilt, Oriental Mills Cinnamon Wooden Box, Brass Table Top Magnifying Glass on Adj. Stand, Remington Oil Can, Dresser Set, Pitcher & Bowl, (2)Blue Willow Meat Platters, Atomizer Perfume Bottle, (2)Wool Buggy Blankets, Hoosier Coffee Jar, (5)Pcs. Majolica Pottery Ware, Coffee Grinder, 1826 English 1 Pt. Mug, Cast Iron & Tin Match Safe, Flour Sifter, Glass/Metal Flask, Nash's Clock Face Glass Jar, Butter Churn, Glass Straw Dispenser, Nut Grinders, Stoneware Glazed Pitcher, (6)Peanut Butter Glasses, Tur Aid & Royal Crown Johnstown Soda Bottles, Rieck Milk Bottle, Blue Willow Ware Dishes, (2)Kraut Stompers, Asstd. Carved Canes & Walking Sticks, Framed P.R.R K.4.s. Locomotive 618/1000 Print, (2)Wall Mirrors, (2)Quilts, Knotted Hap, Patch Quilt, Dovetailed Blanket Chest W/Glove Box, Floor Desk Lamp, Brass Swan Planter, Sno-Master & Royal Racer Runner Sleds, 5 Gal. Emblem Motor Oil Can, Glass Oil Bottles, Bellwood PA Qt. 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Oil Can, Lander's Cast Iron Lard Press, Guy Dropper Carbide Lamp, Camp Stove, Kerosene Lamp W/Cast Iron Wall Hanger, Lg. 36 ½” Tall Brass Elephant, (Reproduction Cast Iron Horse Drawn Pumper Wagon & Beer Wagon), Reproduction Bowie Knife, .5 Cent 1930's Pepsi 5 Gal. Adv. Can, (3)Brass Torches, 7 Up Tin 4 Pack Soda Bottle Holder, Belt Drive Grinding Wheel, Just Rite Carbide Lamp, New Castle 5 Gal. Milk Can, Pot Belly Stove, Kerosene Can, Lg. Enterprise Store Coffee Grinder, Oak 4 Drawer File Cabinet.

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TOYS: Sodor Shipping Play Sets, (Thomas the Tank Engine Turntable Play Set & Ertl Ffarquhar Play Set), (8)Wizard of Oz Figurines in Ob's, (17)Holiday Barbie Dolls in OB, Child's Mini Tonka Moccasins, 1930 Aeroplane Children's Book, Mickey Mouse Club House in OB, DeWitt Clinton HO Train Set, Sky King Tricycle, Duper NES Super Scope, (5)Nintendo Games, Nintendo NES1 Game System, Placo Video Shooter.

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

Pets

Owners Tackle Pet Obesity

As pets increasingly share couches and snacks with their owners, veterinarians are sounding the alarm on rising rates of obesity in dogs and cats.

Extra pounds can shorten lifespans, contribute to diabetes, joint pain and heart disease, and limit quality of life. In response, pet fitness has become a growing sector, with gyms, training programs and at-home equipment helping animals slim down and stay active.

As more resources become available, from gyms to gadgets, owners have more options than ever to keep pets fit. Addressing weight management early not only prevents chronic illness but also ensures that animals enjoy active years filled with play, companionship and vitality.

The American Kennel Club says creating a fitness plan for dogs can help them avoid arthritis and prevent injuries. They say the first step in developing a plan is consulting with a veterinarian and making sure the goals you set are appropriate and safe for your pet's age and physical condition. It's especially important to limit strenuous exercise for puppies whose joints are still developing. They offer a series of exercises that you can do with your dog and

recommend getting involved in a local AKC FIT DOG program.

GYMS AND STRUCTURED PROGRAMS

Across the country, pet gyms have opened with programs designed to get animals moving in safe, controlled environments. Treadmills built for dogs allow for indoor runs regardless of weather, while swimming pools provide low-impact exercise that builds strength without stressing joints.

Agility courses are another popular option, with tunnels, jumps and weave poles that encourage pets to burn energy and develop coordination. Trainers at these facilities often create custom fitness plans.

AT-HOME TOOLS AND DAILY ROUTINES

Not every owner has access to a pet gym, but at-home tools make it easier to build activity into daily life. Compact treadmills, puzzle feeders and toys that reward movement with treats encourage pets to stay active indoors. Even simple changes — such as longer walks, games of fetch or stair climbs — can make a difference in maintaining a healthy weight.

Nutrition is a critical piece of the puzzle.

Measuring food, monitoring calorie intake and reducing table scraps help prevent weight gain. Many veterinarians recommend high-protein, low-calorie diets. Owners who track progress with apps or wearable devices designed for pets can monitor activity levels over time and adjust routines.

FIGHTING OBESITY TOGETHER

The rise in pet obesity mirrors trends among humans, making the problem one of lifestyle as much as diet. Families who commit to exercising with their pets often see benefits on both sides of the leash. Dogs may serve as motivation for owners to get outside and walk more often, while cats benefit from interactive play sessions also strengthen bonds with their people.

Pet food companies, veterinarians and shelters regularly promote fitness challenges and educational programs. The message is simple: Healthy habits help pets live longer, happier lives.

Designing Spaces for Pets

For many households, pets are as much a part of the home as any family member. That reality has influenced the way people design their living spaces.

From scratch-resistant flooring to durable furniture fabrics, homeowners are increasingly seeking ways to make houses both stylish and practical for four-legged residents. Builders, landscapers and interior designers are responding with products and services that balance comfort, safety and durability.



FLOORS BUILT TO LAST

Flooring is one of the first considerations for pet owners. Carpets can trap hair, odors and stains, making them less ideal for households with dogs or cats. Instead, many turn to options like vinyl plank, tile or sealed hardwood, which resist scratches and are easier to clean.

Area rugs made from washable materials have also gained popularity, allowing owners to protect floors without sacrificing design. Some companies market lines specifically tested against pet claws and spills, giving consumers peace of mind when choosing materials. The goal is to ensure that floors withstand daily traffic while maintaining their appearance for years.

FURNITURE AND DECOR CHOICES

Furniture makers are taking note of the demands of pet owners. Sofas and chairs are now available in

fabrics designed to resist stains, repel fur and stand up to claws. Microfiber, leather alternatives and performance fabrics are among the most requested materials. Slipcovers and machine-washable cushions add another layer of practicality. Decor choices can reflect a pet-friendly mindset. End tables with built-in crates or beds provide function while blending with living room style. Elevated feeding stations reduce mess and protect floors. Even window treatments are designed with pets in mind, with cordless blinds or shades that prevent accidents.

OUTDOOR SPACES AND LANDSCAPING

The yard has become another focal point for pet-friendly design. Homeowners are installing artificial turf resistant to digging and easy to rinse clean, while still providing a soft surface for play. Fencing solutions balance security with aesthetics, offering pets room to roam without compromising curb appeal.

Landscapers recommend non-toxic plants to ensure safety if pets chew on greenery. Shaded areas, water features and designated potty zones help create outdoor environments that are comfortable and safe. Some designs even include agility equipment or custom dog runs to encourage exercise. As the market grows, pet-friendly features are being integrated into new home construction and remodels, rather than added later. For families who consider pets part of daily life, these investments make homes more livable. The result is a space where comfort, safety and style work together for both people and their animals.

Gadgets Transform Pet Care

Technology is no longer just for people. From GPS collars to smart feeders, pet owners are increasingly turning to gadgets to keep their animals safe, healthy and entertained.

What started as niche products for early adopters has become a booming sector of the pet care industry.

KEEPING TRACK OF PETS

Pet owners worried about a dog slipping the leash or a cat that roams outdoors now have high-tech ways to monitor them. GPS-enabled collars and tags allow people to track an animal's movements on a smartphone app. Many products feature virtual fence alerts, sending an alarm if the pet wanders outside a designated area.

For owners of escape-prone pets, the reassurance is worth the cost of the monthly subscriptions. According to Fact MR, recovery rates for pets with GPS-enabled collars is greater than 80% and they project the market will grow from \$353.4 million in 2025 to \$1.1 billion by 2035.

Beyond location tracking, some collars now measure activity levels, sleep patterns and even heart rate. The data helps owners and veterinarians spot potential health issues before they become serious.

FEEDING AND MONITORING FROM AFAR

Automatic feeders have long been a staple for busy households, but today's smart feeders go a step further. Owners can dispense meals on a schedule or with the touch of an app, ensuring their pet never misses dinner. Some models include cameras and microphones, allowing people to watch and talk to their pets while away from home.

There are even high-tech models that identify which pet is eating from the bowl or pair with a pet's existing microchip so each pet receives its own specified food and amount. This is especially useful for multi-pet households where at least one pet has a medical condition or needs weight management.

Smart water fountains help monitor how much each pet is drinking and whether they are staying properly hydrated, an issue that especially applies to cats. The fountains alert owners about changes in drinking habits so they can detect diseases early.

Pet cameras have also surged in popularity. Compact devices sit on a counter or shelf, streaming live video to a smartphone. Owners can check in during lunch breaks, calm an anxious dog with their voice or even toss a treat with the push of a button. For animals prone to separation anxiety, the connection can be comforting.



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AD BARGAIN Crossword Puzzle Solution on page 7

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CLUES ACROSS

1. El Dorado High School
5. A sculpture representing a human or animal
11. A type of return
14. Tie the knot again
15. Washington city
18. Hairlike structures
19. Mark used over a vowel
21. Explosive
23. Popular 500 car race
24. Pile up
28. Currency
29. Commercial
30. A minute amount (Scottish)
32. Mass of fish eggs
33. Baseball stat
35. Licensed accountant
36. Japanese classical theater
39. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
41. Blood group
42. Assist in wrongdoing
44. Language of Cameroon
46. Grayish-white
47. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
49. Microorganism
52. Strong social customs
56. Calm and dependable
58. Congressman
60. Force
62. As a result of this document
63. A main branch of Islam

CLUES DOWN

1. Make a mistake
2. American DJ Rick
3. Fictional Asimov planet
4. Coughed out
5. Singing to one's lover
6. Scotland's longest river
7. One of the six noble gases
8. Body art
9. Two-toed sloth
10. Electronic counter-countermeasures
12. A foolish person
13. Of the wind
16. Mansion
17. Sound
20. English river
22. Business symbol
25. Exclamation of surprise
26. Pouch
27. Individually
29. Satisfaction
31. The bill in a restaurant
34. Japanese delicacy
36. Port in southern Japan
37. Double-reed instruments
38. Center
40. "The Mount Rushmore State"
43. Soldier
45. Indicates position
48. Beauty treatment: __-pedi
50. Nonsense (slang)
51. Republic of Ireland
53. Ballplayers' tools
54. American state
55. Clusters of a fern frond
57. Patriotic women's group
58. A person's brother or sister
59. Breed of sheep
61. Of I

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Even the most experienced hunter might suffer a stumble or two. Recognizing your mistakes and learning from them is the important part. It's how we all become better hunters. Here's a look at some of the most common errors made while on a hunt:

TIMING
Avoid choosing the wrong hunting times. Many focus on early mornings and evenings, to the exclusion of midday hunts. However, a significant number of mature deer are harvested between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
Don't delay your shot. You should take a clear shot at the first opportunity as a buck comes within range. You're more likely to miss by allowing the deer to approach too closely. Research indicates that approximately 80 percent of missed shots are aimed too high.

LOCATION
Avoid hunting prime locations too early. Reserve your best spots for optimal conditions to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on them prematurely. Avoid following the crowd and don't overlook smaller public parcels. Larger areas typically attract the most hunters, and mature bucks are quick to evade them. If you own or lease hunting land, exercise caution when agreeing to allow friends to hunt on your property. This can quickly lead to deer overpressure.
Don't share too much information. When you encounter that big buck, it's often best to maintain discretion regarding your location and methods. Telling others about your discovery could result in others bagging the deer in your spot before you have the chance to return. Consider alternative food sources. Mature bucks can be quite cunning. They tend to be more cautious around commonly sought food sources during prime hunting hours. Instead, consider focusing your efforts near areas rich in honeysuckle, greenbriar and blackberry.

SAFETY
Always wear a safety harness. Safety is paramount when hunting, so secure yourself with a climbing belt when climbing up or down a tree. Falls from tree stands are a leading cause of injuries among hunters. While advancements in technology have led to the development of remarkable tools for hunting, an over-reliance on these gadgets can lead to complacency.
Remember that this equipment can aid and enhance your experience, but it's no substitute for essential hunting skills.



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Centre County’s Vonada named 2026 Pennsylvania State Granger of the Year

GRANTVILLE — for members of the armed The Pennsylvania State Grange has named Ruth Vonada of Spring Mills, Centre County, its 2026 Granger of the Year, recognizing her 54 years of membership, leadership and dedicated service to her community.

Vonada, president of Penns Valley Grange No. 158, was honored during the organization’s 154th Annual State Session, held October 15-18 in Grantville.

From preparing meals for Junior Grange campers to organizing charitable collections and sewing Christmas stockings

sets for Grangers across Pennsylvania.”

Vonada joined Logan Grange No. 109 in 1972 and has been a member of Penns Valley Grange since 2000, serving as its president since 2020. Her previous local leadership roles include secretary, lecturer and community service chairperson.

At the state level, she served on the Pennsylvania State Grange Executive Committee from 2020-24, including as chairperson from 2023-24. She has also served on committees supporting community service and Junior Grange programs and helped organize several state sessions, including serving as banquet chair in 2025.

camp kitchen. During the past year, she sewed more than 200 Christmas stockings for community service efforts. She has crocheted hundreds of squares for Hamburg Grange’s Warm Up America project, which assembles blankets for people in the community, and made hats for service projects.

At St. John’s Union Church, Vonada has served in leadership and educational roles, including council president, Sunday school teacher and superintendent. Her charitable work includes coordinating an annual 1,000-Can Challenge, collections of backpacks and school supplies, blanket projects and college care packages.

Vonada’s connection to the Grange is also a family tradition. In 2023, the Walters/Vonada family was recognized as a National Grange Legacy Family for five generations of membership, with Ruth and her siblings representing the third generation. She received her Golden Sheaf Award in 2022, marking

50 years of Grange membership.

Founded in 1873, the Pennsylvania State Grange is a grassroots organization dedicated to strengthening rural communities through community service, education, legislation and fellowship.



— Courtesy photo

Ruth Vonada receives the 2026 Granger of the Year from Pennsylvania State Grange President Matt Espenshade.

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Obituaries

Cora Elaine Owens

Trevor James “Tucker” Cornman, 29, of (Hudson) RD Philipsburg, died Wednesday, October 21, 2026, at his residence

Trevor was born on March 12, 1997, in Clearfield, a son of James and Kimberly (Vaughn) Cornman of (Hudson) RD Philipsburg. He attended the Philipsburg - Osceola Area High School. He was currently employed at the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Woodland; and as a truck driver for Wal-Mart. He attended the New Life Center, Philipsburg. He was also a member of the Snow Shoe Rails to Trails and the C.B.C. “Crazy Buggy Crew.” Trevor enjoyed rifle shooting, riding side by sides and motorcycles, working on his trucks and fishing. Trevor was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Mervin J. and Sandra M. (Gee) Vaughn; his paternal grandparents, Lenus C. and Jennie E. (Peters) Cornman; and an infant brother, James, Jr. He is survived by his parents, James and Kimberly; three sisters: Vicki D. Covert (George), of Curwensville, Darika R. Vieard (Dan), of Osceola Mills and Shayla J. Cornman, of DuBois; nieces and nephews: Abby and Emily Covert, Xander Vineyard, Carter, Carson and Levi Vieard; numerous other extended family members; and his beloved German Shepherd, Rex. Memorial contributions may be made in Trevor’s memory to the Beezer-Heath Funeral Home & Cremation Services, 719 E. Spruce Street, Philipsburg, Pa 16866. Online condolences and memories may be shared at www.beezerheathfh.com.

Selina K. Demchak

Selina K. Demchak, 79, of Ramey, PA died on Thursday, October 22, 2026 at her home.

Born on January 14, 1947 in Philipsburg, PA she was the daughter of the late James W. & Loretta A. (Powers) Voyzey. She married Norman A. “Bowser” Demchak on November 26, 1966 in Sandy Ridge, PA; he preceded her in death on April 9, 2012. Selina was of the Christian Faith. She was a Retired Bus Driver for Area Transportation Authority and a 1964 graduate of Philipsburg-Osceola High School. In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by her mother-in-law and father-in-law, Nina & Andrew “Jumbo” Demchak. Selina is survived by two daughters, Lori L. Demchak & her companion Rich Larson of Curwensville, PA and Sue Ann Harris & her husband Rich of Houtzdale, PA; a son, James A. Demchak of Philipsburg, PA a sister, Donna Winters & her husband Gerald of Philipsburg, PA; six grandchildren, Ryan Demchak, Kayla Ray & her husband Corey, Ashley Bloom & her husband Cory, Sara Dufrenne & her husband Richard, Molly Demchak, and Laura Pierce & her husband Mark; and nine great-grandchildren. At Selina’s request, there will be no funeral service or visitation. Arrangements are under the direction of Heath Funeral Home and Cremation Services, LLC in Osceola Mills, PA. Memorial contributions may be made to Clearfield County SPCA, 275 21st St., Clearfield, PA 16830. To sign the online guestbook, go to www.heathfuneral.com.

Theresa M Stiver

Theresa M. Stiver, 60, of Madera, passed away on Tuesday, October 20, 2026 at UPMC Altoona Hospital.

She was born June 14, 1966 in Coalport to the late Joseph and Betty Ann (Cutler) Litzinger. Theresa worked as a Registered Nurse for many years. She is survived by loving husband, William Stiver of Madera; a son, Christopher Litzinger of State College; and two sisters, Veronica (Dean) Herbst and Tanya (Michael) Stiver. Condolences may be made at kruise-spewock.com.

Penny M. Wilson

Penny M. Wilson, a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and friend, passed away on Wednesday October 21, 2026 after a long and courageous battle with COPD.

She was born October 19, 1935 in Glen Hope to the late Irvin and Myrtle (McGarvey) Born on August 21, 1957, Penny was the daughter of the late Charles and Sally (Weaver) Laird of State College. She was a 1975 graduate of State College Area High School. Penny worked for the Village Inn Pizza Parlor as a Food Service Manager for nine years. Penny met W. Scott Wilson, and the two were married. They celebrated their marriage with a honeymoon in Niagara Falls and went on to share 41 wonderful years together, building a life centered around their family. Penny devoted 15 years to being a homemaker and stay-at-home mother, lovingly raising her four children. She later worked at Walmart for another 15 years until her illness forced her into early retirement. Penny was an avid NASCAR fan and especially enjoyed cheering for Tony Stewart and Kyle Busch. She also loved watching both college and professional football. An excellent cook, Penny took great pride in preparing large holiday dinners for her family. Her home was always welcoming, and some of her happiest times were spent surrounded by the people she loved. Penny was preceded in death by her parents, Charles and Sally Laird; her sister, Karen Laird; and her grandson, Hayden Crawford. She is survived by her loving husband, W. Scott Wilson; her siblings, Jack Laird (Judy) of Pleasant Gap, Wendy Laird, Sheri Greenleaf (Steve) of State College, and Lisa Reish (Mike) of Port Matilda; and her children, Stephanie Crystal Dreibelbis (Steve) of Centre Hall, Spencer Troy Wilson (Amber) of Grassflat, Preston Scott Wilson (Ashley) of Hollidaysburg, and Nathan Tyler Wilson (Cassie) of Philipsburg. Penny is also survived by her beloved grandchildren Cameron, Rachel, Wyatt, Colton, Easton, Rylan, and Mason, as well as numerous nieces and nephews. Penny was deeply loved by her family and friends and will be greatly missed by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing her. Her love for her family, welcoming nature, and the many memories she created with those closest to her will live on in their hearts. In accordance with Penny’s wishes, a private service will be held at the convenience of the family. Scott would like to extend his deepest gratitude to the staff of 365 Hospice and to his daughter-in-law, Amber, for the exceptional and compassionate care, kindness, and support they provided to Penny throughout her illness. Heath Funeral Home & Cremation Services, LLC, Osceola Mills, PA is in charge of arrangements. TO SIGN THE ONLINE GUESTBOOK – GO TO: www.heathfuneral.com

Richard “Nock” Duane McNelly

Mr. McNelly, 85, Vero Beach, FL. and formerly of Blandburg, died Wednesday October 21, 2026 at Select Specialty Hospital, Johnstown.

He was born March 8, 1941, in Bellwood, a son of the late Harold M. and Neva D. (Dolan) McNelly. On June 4, 1966, in Blandburg, he married Joyce A. Corrado who died January 12, 1992. Two sons, Duane R. (Jennifer) McNelly of Las Vegas, NV. and Gary L. (Lisa) McNelly of Vero Beach, FL., a granddaughter Jocelyn Castillo and a brother Gary D. McNelly of Middletown survive. Nock had been a coalminer at Barnes and Tucker Mine 20 in Barnesboro and then a truckdriver for Raibold Trucking in Altoona. He served in the United States Army as a Private First Class and was a member of the Reade Twp. Military Organization. Family will have a private viewing and burial at Logan Valley Cemetery at their convenience. Arrangements by McQuown Funeral Home, Glasgow.

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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Altoona Mirror *plus!*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2026

GACTC chief looking to build relationships for center

Zernick took over director role in 2025

By WALT FRANK
wfrank@altoonamirror.com

Nicole Zernick said she didn't see herself becoming a teacher let alone the executive director of the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center. Zernick was recently recognized by Pennsylvania Business Central as one of the top women CEOs and leaders for 2026.

"It's an honor and tribute that should go to the individuals I work with, you cannot be successful without a good team. It's always humbling to be recognized among a lot of great women. I think the only way you get this is to make sure you surround yourself with great employees," Zernick said.

After graduating from Portage High School in 1997, Zernick went on to Saint Francis University where she received a bachelor's degree in marketing and management in 2001.

"I then realized that sales was not for me. When I was in high school one of my teachers told me I would be a great teacher. I had no interest in starting out in education. Wherever your path takes you, you build upon your skill set and make connections," Zernick said.

She received a master's degree in education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2003.

Zernick started her career as a business education teacher at Richland High School. She then got married and moved to Belle Vernon, and became a business education teacher at Bethel Park High School. While there she became certified for cooperative education. Her position combined business and education.

In 2007, Zernick moved back to the area to be closer to family and took a job in the Altoona Area School District as a business education teacher.

In 2013, she took a position at the GACTC and over her tenure she has served as continuing education coordinator, CTE coordinator and assistant executive director before being named executive director on July 1, 2025.

"When I became coop coordinator that opened up my eyes to see students learn career paths and see business and education working together," Zernick said.

The promotion to executive director was something Zernick said she never imagined.

"I loved being in the classroom, this gave me a more global perspective and helped grow leaders and help more of our students. I always wanted to learn something new and explore new opportunities, that was something I was interested in," Zernick said.

Seeing the success of students is what she enjoys most about her job.

"I enjoy seeing students come in ninth or tenth grade and develop the passion and be successful, see what they learn here and how it translates to their careers and put that into action," Zernick said.

Zernick said she believes she is best known for the amount of care and passion she brings to the position.

"I am not afraid to think outside of the box, building connections with businesses and other CTC leaders to build on relationships to build more opportunities for our students," Zernick said.

She said her parents, John and Renee Bednarski, and her peers have been her role models over the years.

As far as awards, her contributions earned her the Blair County Cham-

ber's Judith A. Rossi Educator of the Year Award in 2021 and the Middle States Association's Susan K. Nicklas Outstanding Volunteer Award in 2022.

Zernick serves on the Blair County Chamber Board of Directors, Chamber Foundation Board, as a Chamber ambassador and on the Middle States Association CESS Committee and Penn Highlands Blair Center Advisory Council.

Those in the community said Zernick has been a key player at the GACTC.

"She has had a very positive impact, she has done a real turnaround at the school. They (staff) like Nicole and know she is someone they can go to with a problem and that she will find the solution to the problem. She has just brought a great change to the CTC," said Kathy Burch, GACTC board president.

"She is very involved in getting the community to understand the goals of vo-tech education and the workplace."

Danielle Mehalick, GACTC business manager, said Zernick is a strong, selfless leader who is deeply passionate about education and creating opportunities for our students.

"Nicole has made a meaningful and lasting impact by connecting our students, school, local businesses, and community in ways that create real opportunities. Through her leadership and our Office of Work Based Learning, cooperative education continues to expand, providing students with valuable real-world experiences while giving local businesses a platform to invest in their future workforce," Mehalick said.

Gwen Fisher, site administrator for PA Career Link Blair and Bedford counties, said Zernick is one of those people who makes partnership feel easy.

"She is genuine, thoughtful and remarkably good at bringing people together without needing to be the loudest voice in the room. She listens, she follows through, and she seems to have a real instinct for recognizing where people and organizations can help one another," Fisher said.

Fisher said GACTC is evolving under Zernick's leadership, and the community can feel it.

"She bridges boardrooms and community needs seamlessly, always ensuring that progress translates into positive changes for our region."

Linda Stotler, Blair County Chamber of Commerce marketing communications manager



Mirror photo by Patrick Waksmunski

Nicole Zernick, executive director of the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center since 2025, was recently named one of the top women CEOs and leaders in the state by Pennsylvania Business Central.

"She has helped strengthen the bridge between education and the working world and for PA CareerLink, she has been an exceptional partner. She understands that schools, employers, workforce organizations and the community are not separate pieces; they are part of the same ecosystem. She has helped make GACTC an increasingly important part of that connection. Perhaps her greatest impact is the sense of forward motion she has created. There is an energy around GACTC, a feeling that it is growing, reaching outward and becoming even more connected to the community it serves," she said.

Ron Darbeau, chancellor and dean at Penn State Altoona said Zernick has played a key role in the education community.

"Through meaningful collaboration, she fosters a culture of trust, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Nicole's ability to build strong partnerships and champion student-centered initiatives has elevated opportunities for career and technical education. Her commitment, creativity, and strategic vision continue to drive organizational growth in the career and technical space as well as a lasting community impact," Darbeau said.

"Nicole demonstrates novel, visionary, aspirational, successful and highly collaborative leadership at the Greater Altoona Career and Technical Center. She brings a refreshingly forward-thinking perspective that embraces innovation, strengthens educational programs, and prepares students for success in an evolving workforce."

Others also speak highly of Zernick.

"What sets Nicole apart is her ability to stay mission-driven without ever losing the human touch. She bridges boardrooms and community needs seamlessly, always

ensuring that progress translates into positive changes for our region," said Linda Stotler, Blair County Chamber of Commerce marketing communications manager.

"Career and Technical Education is extremely valuable to the future of our labor force in Blair County, and Nicole has long been a great advocate. Her leadership of the GACTC is sure to be another step forward in teaching our workforce the skills needed for what's next," said Matt Stuckey, president of Stuckey Automotive.

Meanwhile, Zernick hopes to be around the GACTC for years to come.

"I would love the opportunity to stay here until I retire. From the first week I was here, it felt like home. I hope to have the opportunity to lead the GACTC," Zernick said.

Mirror Staff Writer Walt Frank is at 814-946-7467.

The Zernick file

Name: Nichole Zernick

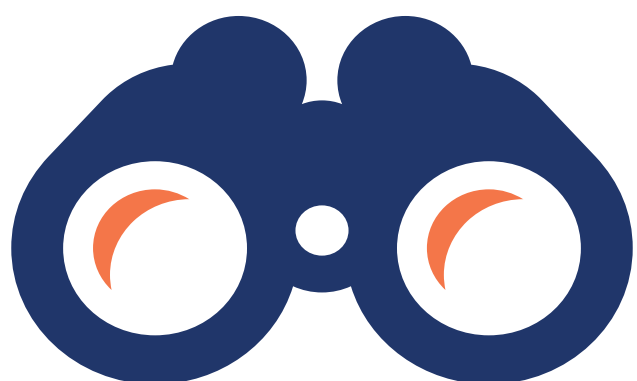
Age: 47

Position: Executive director of Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center

Education: 1997 graduate of Portage High School; 2001 graduate of Saint Francis University with a bachelor's degree in marketing and management; 2003 graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a master's degree in education.

Family: Son, Jakob Zernick; daughter, Kaitlyn Zernick

Quote: "Relationships are always important, it is not what you say but how you make them (students) feel. I want them to feel this place is a safe place and continue to grow and make relationships that will enable them to continue to grow."



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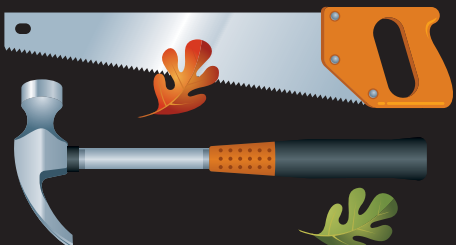
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