

# 18702

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Email your photos, stories and community news to editor Joe Soprano at [jsoprano@civitasmedia.com](mailto:jsoprano@civitasmedia.com). Please include 18702 in the subject line of your email.

Submissions can also be mailed to: 18702, c/o Joe Soprano, 90 E. Market St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701.

# 18702

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An edition of the  
Times Leader

# Peggy Felton named youth adviser to state NAACP youth conference

HARRISBURG – Peggy A. Felton, youth adviser for the NAACP Wilkes-Barre Youth Council No. 28 AM, was one of three from the group elected to serve as officers at the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference Youth & College Division.

Felton was elected youth adviser. Azizima Alston will serve as secretary and Ania Austion will serve as treasurer.

Felton, a full-paid Silver Life member of the NAACP, served for 22 years as a NAACP Wil-

kes-Barre executive committee member.

Highlights of Felton's work at the NAACP include:

- Serving as youth adviser for the NAACP Wilkes-Barre Youth Council No. 28AM since it received its charter in July 2015
- Served as Freedom Fund Chair and received President's Award after serving five consecutive years
- Served as Membership Chair for several years

- Recipient of Constance Koziel Award, Wyoming Valley Peace & Justice Center

- Served as President of the former Negro Women's Community Civic League in Wilkes-Barre

- Served as a member of Mizpah Charlotte Scott No. 104, O.E.S., P.H.A.

- In 2002, help organize and participated in first ever NAACP Wilkes-Barre Branch No. 2306 History Tour. A three day/two night tour to Colonial

Williamsburg, Va. Which consisted of 15 high school youths of diverse backgrounds

- In 2007, help organize and participated in NAACP Wilkes-Barre Branch No. 2306 one day tour of the National Great Blacks Wax Museum in Baltimore, Md.

- In 2014, help organize and participated in NAACP Wilkes-Barre Branch No. 2306 White House and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Tour

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

*To submit your club or society meeting notice, email [jsoprano@civitasmedia.com](mailto:jsoprano@civitasmedia.com) with the name of your organization, time, date and exact location of the meeting with full address. The Times Leader reserves the right to edit all submissions for style, content and space.*

**PA Quilters Guild**, will hold its monthly meeting at 6:30 p.m. May 7 in the community room of the John Heinz Rehab Center on Mundy Street in Wilkes-Barre. A brief business meeting will be held followed by refreshments and "show and tell." Modern quilt designer Rachel Rossi will present a trunk show that evening. New members and guests are welcome.

**Wyoming Valley Mushroom Club**, will meet at 7 p.m. May 10 at the Advanced Technology Center on the Nanticoke Campus of Luzerne County Community College. The building is in the lower campus area. Meeting room is ATC 209 B, which is found by entering the main doorway and bearing left past the office space. Non-members are welcome to attend up to two meetings before deciding whether to join the club.

**Wyoming Valley Woman's Club**, will sponsor a trip to see "Nunsense" at the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse in New Jersey on Aug. 8. The trip costs \$90, which includes bus seat, ticket to the show and lunch. For information or to make a reservation, call Linda Cholewa at 570-379-3667 or Suanne Moses at 570-822-4976.

## Kiwanis donates to autism support classrooms



The Wilkes-Barre Kiwanis Club recently visited and donated a variety of classroom supplies to Daniel J. Flood Elementary School's autism support classrooms in recognition of Autism Awareness Month in April. Pictured are: First row: Cinderella, service/therapy dog. Second row, from left: Chloe (age 8), Lizabella (age 6), Nicholas (age 7), Tremayne (age 6) and Michael (age 6). Third row: Sarah Reedy, teacher; William Harris, Kiwanis member; Cheryl Sobeski-Reedy, Esq. Kiwanis project chair; Marlena Nockley, Principal; and Mara Vitali, guidance. Not in photo: Neil A. Young, Kiwanis.

# Spring craft fair brings crowd to church

By Ralph Nardone  
For Times Leader

WILKES-BARRE — Spring has finally arrived, so what better time for a spring craft fair?

Patrons had the chance to pore over a wide assortment of unique craftwork and take advantage of good deals Saturday at First Assembly of God church.

The fundraiser helps First Assembly continue outreach missions and other community activities throughout the year.

The Stanton Street church's women's ministry organized the event.

"Our craft fairs are our fundraisers and have been very successful," said Robin Burrige, a lead member of the women's ministry also known as WOW, or Women of Worth. This year, WOW decided to do a spring craft fair in addition to one

## MORE INFO

Anyone who would like to know more about the church and its activities can call 570-829-0989

in the fall. The women also invited some new vendors to participate.

Some of the highlights included crafters who made hymnal angels, handmade jewelry, bird-houses, canvas art, soy candles, lollipops, floral centerpieces, purses, and crocheted items and wreaths. A gluten-free baker provided some tasty treats, and other vendors offered the latest products from Pampered Chef, Scentsy, Paparazzi Jewelry, Usborne books and Norwex.

Burrige thanked the many visitors for their patronage and the volunteers who made sure everything ran smoothly.

"This is truly a group-effort event," said Burrige. "We want to thank the church members who have given of their time to help in assisting us for the day in parking and security, and the ladies who help with baking, set-up, cleanup and selling of refreshments."

WOW members also handed out information on their group.

"We have a ministry team who meet every three months to plan out events or activities for the ladies. Our team consists of Wendy Ferrara, Mabelle Smith, Grace Stegura and Colleen Swanson," Burrige said. Each member contributes to a list of "awesome activities" held throughout the year.

"We welcome other ladies to attend our functions," she added.

More photos | Page 4



Sean McKeag wphotos | Times Leader  
Emmalee Casey, 13, and Makynna Casey, 10, both of Wilkes-Barre, shop.



Homemade handbags and many other unique items were available to purchase at the First Assembly of God craft fair Saturday on Stanton Street in Wilkes-Barre.

*Congratulations  
Terry Stemrich  
Week 1 Winner of Guess the  
Landmark Contest*

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## IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD



Above, Ronald Knapp, of Nanticoke, sells homemade birdhouses. At left, Tina Jones, also known as the 'Lollipop Lady,' discusses her lollipop-making business.



Visitors shop at the First Assembly of God craft fair Saturday in Wilkes-Barre. The event is a fundraiser for the church. Sean McKeag photos | Times Leader



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# Planning a reunion

The GAR High School Class of 1958 recently held a planning meeting for its reunion at Patte's Sports Bar in Wilkes-Barre. The reunion will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 9 at Kelley's in Kingston.

Photos by  
Sean McKeag



Bob Evans, 77, of Wilkes-Barre, talks to people from his graduating class during a meeting to discuss the upcoming GAR Class of 1958 reunion at Patte's Sports Bar in Wilkes-Barre.



Sophie Pelak, 78, of Wilkes-Barre, has a conversation during the GAR Class of 1958 reunion meeting at Patte's Sports Bar in Wilkes-Barre.



Mary Ann Brogna, 77, of Pittston, reads off a list of names who graduated with her class in 1958. Sitting beside her is John Hosage, 77, of Mountain Top.



Bob Evans, center, talks with Mary Ann Brogna and John Hosage during a meeting to discuss the upcoming GAR Class of 1958 reunion.

## IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD



John Aciukewicz, executive director of Court Appointed Special Advocates of Luzerne County, is seen in CASA's Plains Township office. The agency is looking to recruit more advocates to serve children in the county's foster care system.

Aimee Dilger | 18702

# CASA volunteers needed for foster kids

By Roger DuPuis | 18702

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Luzerne County, which advocates for children in the county's foster care system, has a goal of adding 90 more volunteers by the end of 2020.

Even then, they would only be able to assign volunteer advocates to about 50 percent of the county's children in foster care. But that would be a major step up from today, when CASA's 24 advocates reach only about 10 percent of the county's 400-plus foster children.

Wilkes-Barre, including the 18702 neighborhood, is the area with the second biggest number of foster children, county officials say, behind only Hazleton.

Plains Township-based CASA has an information session for prospective volunteers planned for noon May 21 at its office, 667 S. River St.

We spoke with John Aciukewicz, CASA's executive director, about what the group does and why there is such a need for its services.

**Q:** What is CASA?

**A:** The mission is to recruit, select train and support volunteers from the community who then are appointed by a judge to advocate for

#### TO LEARN MORE

Visit [www.luzernecasa.org](http://www.luzernecasa.org) or call 570-855-2247.

the best interests of children suffering from abuse and neglect, and who have been placed in the foster care system. The goal is to ensure a safe, permanent home for these

children as quickly as possible.

**Q:** Why is this program needed?

**A:** There are 424 children on average in foster care in Luzerne County due to abuse or neglect. Currently we have 24 active advocates serving 41 children. The opioid crisis has only worsened things. More so than abuse, children are suffering from neglect because a parent or caregiver

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## CASA

From page 8

is struggling with substance abuse.

A: Recruiting and training must be a major task, right?

The curriculum itself is roughly 30 to 35 hours of training and then three to five hours of courtroom observation.

We strive to do two training classes per year, one in the spring and one in the fall. In the current class, we expect to 14 people to complete training on May 16, our largest class ever. That will help significantly in beginning to work more toward our goal of trying to provide a CASA for

every child in foster care. We're already recruiting for October's class.

Q: Who can volunteer?

A: You have to be at least 21, have your high school diploma or GED, pass all background checks, then undergo an online interview, an in-person interview and provide references.

Q: After training, what then?

A: When a CASA is appointed by the judge, they are appointed to one child or sibling group. The expectation is that they'll spend 10 to 12 hours per month in his or her role as volunteer for that child — and that could be from months to years. On average, a child is in foster care for about 19 months.

# Grant provides for free swim lessons at YMCA

The Greater Scranton YMCA and Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA were each awarded \$6,000 Swim Lessons Scholarship Grants from YMCA of the USA. These funds will allow 100 low-income from each Ys community to participate in a free session of swim lessons.

The Y recognizes swimming is a vital life skill for anyone and the earlier a child can learn how to swim, the better. Through participating in swim lessons at the Y. We build self-confidence, provide kids with the opportunity to have fun discovering what they can achieve and teach water safety skills that one day could save a life.

Children who are a part of the Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA's Food & Fun at the Park Program will benefit from the free swim lessons. Food & Fun at

the Park, a free program, offers children in grades K-12 with safe, fun activities, educational and social enrichment programs and healthy lunches and snacks from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Y and various park sites in Wilkes-Barre. Additionally, the Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA is also enrolling children in its Safe Around the Water Campaign (held in June).

For more information on the Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA's Aquatics Departments, visit [www.wbymca.org](http://www.wbymca.org).

For more information on the Food & Fun at the Park Program, contact Jennifer Brennan, Director of Education and Child Care Services, Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA, at [jennifer.brennan@wbymca.org](mailto:jennifer.brennan@wbymca.org) or call (570) 823-2191.



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## FREE THINGS TO DO FOR KIDS



The cast of Little Theater of Wilkes-Barre's youth theater program's recent production of 'Beauty and the Beast.'

Submitted photo

18702

# Little Theatre offering free summer workshop for kids

By Geri Gibbons  
For Times Leader

WILKES-BARRE – Fifty area youngsters will have a chance to participate in a youth theatre workshop this summer, sponsored by the Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre, culminating in a performance of “Seussical Jr.”

Consistent with the its mission and upcoming performance, the organization announced its upcoming workshop in rhyme.

“It’s time! It’s time! Do you know how to rhyme? Can you be where it’s at, with the Cat in the Hat, and be in our show? Don’t be too slow cause sign-ups are coming real soon, dontcha know!,” a news release read.

“Our Act Out Theatre

## Online

For details, go to [www.facebook.com/LittleTheatreWB](http://www.facebook.com/LittleTheatreWB)

Group is a workshop-based youth group helping build the skills and confidence of you performers ages 4 through high school,” said Dan Pittman, “We are gearing up four our tuition-free annual summer review and July summer series shows for youth audiences on Saturday mornings.”

To organizers, the workshop is much more than simply imparting acting skills to young people.

“There is nothing more enjoyable than watching your child cultivate a

lifelong appreciation of the arts, and it is widely accepted that students involved in theatre arts programs perform better in school,” the news release states.

Through this workshop, in addition to learning the basics of theatre education, the students will learn to read for content, work collaboratively toward a common goal, understand basic music and dance concepts, and interpret conversational and social clues all within the construct of the show.

LTWB is proud to open our workshops to everyone regardless of ability or experience, giving a wide range of levels with whom children can interact.



Submitted photo

The Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre's youth theater program performed a production of 'Young Frankenstein' last fall.

Challenges will be offered based upon the child's abilities and experience on an individual basis. Auditions for the show are part of the

learning process within the workshop and will be held once it begins.

Sign-ups for the workshop will go live online Saturday on a first-come,

first-served basis. No prior theatrical experience is necessary.

The workshop's performances are scheduled for July 27, 28 and 29.



Sean McKeag | Times Leader

Mahmmod Mustafa, of Wilkes-Barre, sings while dressed in traditional Syrian clothing during the grand opening of Tazza Middle Eastern restaurant in Wilkes-Barre.

# Doctor, refugee bring taste of Mideast to WB

By **Kulsoom Khan**  
For Times Leader

WILKES-BARRE — It's no secret that pizza and pierogies dominate the local food scene. However, as the area's ethnic diversity has increased over the past several years, food choices have as well.

Tazza Shawarma Grill, located at 10 W. Northampton St. in the heart of downtown, is a perfect example of that. The recently opened eatery offers a wide variety of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisine — most notably Shawarma

(roasted meat) and gyros.

Besides Shawarma, Tazza, which means “fresh” in Arabic, also serves up other traditional dishes that are popular in the Middle East such as Tabbou-

leh, Baba Ganoush, falafel and Kenafeh, a cheese pastry that is dipped in a sweet syrup and topped with chopped pistachios.

“It's all made from scratch,” said Dr. Ibrahim Almeky proudly.

Almeky, who resides in Shavertown, and friend Mohammad Allouz, of



Ahmad Alrafae, 32, of Wilkes-Barre, center, plays an instrument while others dance in traditional Syrian clothing to mark the grand opening of Tazza restaurant in Wilkes-Barre on Saturday. Tazza means ‘fresh’ in Arabic. The eatery is located at 10 W. Northampton St.

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Lucille Loyack, Linda Blandina and Helen Salavantis prepare take-out orders of during the first day of the Greek Food Festival at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Wilkes-Barre.

Aimee Dilger | 18702

# Greek food fest draws crowds

By Mary Therese Biebel  
18702

WILKES-BARRE — Every spring and fall volunteers at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church on East Ross Street, across the street from the Wilkes-Barre Post Office, prepare tray after tray of ethnic appetizers, entrees and pastries.

Food festivals are the church's main fund-raiser, Tom Iliadis, of Shavertown,

president of church council, explained as he helped prepare gyros in the kitchen.

In addition to savory strips of beef wrapped in warm pita bread, the gyros contained whatever combination of lettuce, onions, tomatoes and tzatziki (cucumber) sauce the customer wanted.

Longtime church member George Panagakos, busily adding sliced onions and dollops of tzatziki to the sandwiches,

said ever since he closed his candy shop in Nanticoke five years he has more time to spend volunteering — which makes him happy.

Another enthusiastic volunteer, Ed Stelmack, of Hanover Township, sat down to a plate of orzo pasta, gyro meat and salad after delivering orders to a nearby office building and GAR High School (the church will deliver orders of \$30 or more, within a 2-mile radius.)

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Greek Food Festival

**Where:** Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 32 East Ross St., Wilkes-Barre

**When:** 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. today

**Menu:** Appetizers, entrees and pastries

**Info:** [greekfoodfestivals.webs.com](http://greekfoodfestivals.webs.com) or 570-823-4805

"I don't cook but I'll chop things up, go out for soda, clean up the parking lot, whatever they need," he said

cheerfully, explaining he joined the church years ago when he

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# Food

From page 10

married his wife, festival organizer Christine Stelmack.

With Mediterranean images appearing on a screen and folk melodies playing softly in the background, Ed Stelmack said the local event is almost like an actual visit to Greece.

"It's just a beautiful, gorgeous country. I really love it," he said, reminiscing about walking "some of those trails that have been there for thousands of years," watching streets "shut down" at noon so everyone can take a mid-day break, and even helping a group of archaeologists uncover a section of tile near Delphi.

The food festival concludes today. Orders may be placed through [greek-foodfestivals.webs.com](http://greek-foodfestivals.webs.com), by phone at 570-823-4805 or in person at the church.

Reach Mary Therese Biebel at 570-991-6109 or on Twitter @BiebelMT



Niki Panagakos boxes up sweets for a customer at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church's Greek Food Festival, where pastries include baklava and a variety of cookies, many flavored with walnuts and spices.

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## IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

### BIRTHDAYS



### Brennan Michael Patterson

Brennan Michael Patterson, son of Michael and Megan Patterson, Wilkes-Barre, is celebrating his fifth birthday, today May 6. Brennan is the grandson of Jay and Valerie Delaney, Wilkes-Barre and Red and Nancy Patterson, Avoca. He is the great grandson of Jay and Dorothy Delaney, Pittston.

### CLASS REUNION NOTICES

#### Coughlin High School

**Class of 1959**, will hold its 60th reunion on Oct. 12 at Genetti Hotel & Conference Center.

**Class of 1968**, will gather for their 50th reunion on July 27 at Appletree Terrace, Newberry Estates, Dallas. Register with Facebook: Coughlin High School Class of 1968, or contact Beth Roche Ward at Betterocky@aol.com or 803-708-2979.

**Class of 1972**, will hold a class reunion at the Polish American Veterans, 2 S. Oak St., Plains Township, on June 9 from 6 to 11 p.m. Cost is \$20 per person and includes beer, wine, buffet meal, and DJ. Pre-reunion activity is a Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders baseball game, Friday, June 8, game time 6:35 p.m. Cost \$11 per person — limited number of tickets available from Mike Teller. Post-reunion activity is a farewell breakfast at Dukey's Cafe, Sunday, June 10th, 11:00 a.m. For more details, please visit Coughlin High School Class of 1972 Facebook group or contact Eileen (Brislin) Wellner at eileenw72@gmail.com or Mike Teller at michaelteller12@yahoo.com.

**Class of 1974**, will hold a 62nd Social Security Celebration from 4 to 8 p.m. Sept. 15 at THree Guys in Edwardsville. The cost is \$20 per person and includes pizza, wings, stromboli, soda and coffee. A DJ will entertain. Cash bar will be available. Send checks payable to CHS class of 1974 to Mollie Riley, 7 Elm St., Edwardsville, PA, 18704.

**Class of 1988**, will hold a 30th reunion celebration on July 14 at the Apple Tree Terrace, Newberry Estates, Dallas. Dress is casual. Full details and ticket information will be publicized

when available. For information visit the class Facebook page @Coughlin1988 or email contact information to coughlin1988@comcast.net. The planning committee is holding its next meeting at 7 p.m. March 26 at Coal City Tavern in Luzerne. Any local class members are welcome.

#### GAR Memorial High School

**Class of 1958**, Call Bob Evans at 570-823-3030 with information on the following classmates: Ella Anderson, Elioizabeth Armbruster Fenusian, Jean Crawford Ruggere, Loraine Daniels Lukas, Flo Gallgher Bischaf, Henry Harris, Richard Hutnick, Marlene Masi Eckert, David Meier, Patsy Nagle Riscoff, Beverly Pavilonis, JoAnn Petchuk, Thomas Pilcavage, Helen Ptashinski Lucas, Marion Simpson Calakos, Edith Sutton, Joe Schmidt and Romayne Umphred.

#### Meyers High School

**Class of 1961**, will hold its monthly luncheon at III Guys Restaurant, 51 S. Wyoming Ave., Kingston, at 1 p.m. May 15. 570-763-5242

**Class of 1962**, will meet for lunch at Leggio's, Route 315, Wilkes-Barre, on the third Saturday of each month from now until at least October.

**Class of 1973**, classmates are encouraged to save the date of Sept. 8 from 4 to 8 p.m. at III Guys restaurant in Edwardsville.

**Class of 1988**, will meet from 6 to 9 p.m. Aug. 18 in the back room of Rodano's, 53 Public Square, Wilkes-Barre. Additional information to follow. Info: EL Meyers Class of 1988 Facebook page



IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

# Six receive First Holy Communion



The six children receiving First Holy Communion surround Fr. Richard Cirba at the altar.



St. Aloysius Church, in addition to having First Holy Communion, held May Crowning. Dylan Hughes offers a crown of flowers for Julia May to place on the statue of the Virgin Mary.



Relatives rise to shoot photos.

Photos by  
Tony Callaio | For 18702

## IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD



Six children received First Holy Communion at St. Robert Bellarmine Parish at St. Aloysius Church in Wilkes-Barre on Sunday 6. First row, left to right: Gianna Capone, Julia May, Ava DeMark, Olivia Youngblood. Second row: Jane Gill (CCD teacher), Dylan Hughes, Patrick Merrick, Dawn Sullin (CCD coordinator). Back row: Will McCarroll, Michael Zarola, Fr. Richard Cirba, Anthony Zorola and Nico DeMark.



Fr. Richard Cirba talks to the 2018 First Holy Communion class prior to receiving the Eucharist.



Gianna Capone gazes upon the statue of the Virgin Mary after it was crowned with flowers.



Olivia Youngblood processes up the aisle.

## IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

# Wilkes-Barre man named outstanding adult learner

The Center for Adult and Continuing Education at Misericordia University recently named Marcus Grudzinski of Wilkes-Barre as the university's 2018 Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year.

Grudzinski was one of five students recognized by the Luzerne County Council on Adult Higher Education for overcoming obstacles and demonstrating perseverance, innovation and extraordinary dedication to reach their educational goals.

Grudzinski, 28, is pursuing a double major in Government, Law and National Security, and history. He maintains a grade point average of 3.51 at Misericordia and plans to continue his education in law school after receiving his bachelor's degree at the spring commencement ceremony on Saturday. He currently is completing an internship with Judge Richard Hughes, the president judge of Luzerne County.

As a worker at Mohegan Sun Pocono in 2014, Grudzinski was featured in an episode of the television series, "Undercover Boss." His story of needing to work while helping support his family caught the attention of Mohegan Tribal Chairman Bruce "Two Dogs" Bozsum during filming of the show. Grudzinski's family home was flooded and destroyed by Hurricane Lee in 2011. Upon seeing Grudzinski's dedication to his job and



The Center for Adult and Continuing Education at Misericordia University named Marcus Grudzinski, Wilkes-Barre, as the Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year. Members of the Misericordia University community who participated in the awards dinner included, from left, Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D., president; Grudzinski; Allan W. Austin, Ph.D., professor of history, and David Rehm, Ph.D., vice president of Academic Affairs.

efforts to better himself with education, Bozsum awarded him \$45,000 to pay on the mortgage of a new house.

Grudzinski says he realized he needed to apply himself and further his education after experiencing hardship in 2011. He earned an Associate in Applied Science degree in criminal justice from Luzerne County Community College in 2013 and was chosen as the Criminal Justice Student of the Year. He matriculated to

Misericordia in 2015 and qualified for a Presidential Scholarship.

Allan W. Austin, Ph.D., professor of history at Misericordia University, presented the Outstanding Adult Learner award to Grudzinski at the Council on Adult Higher Education dinner. Among those in attendance were Misericordia University President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D., and Vice President of Academic Affairs David Rehm, Ph.D.

In his remarks, Dr. Austin described Grudzinski as an extraordinary adult learner whose participation in class raises the level of discussion.

"Marcus is the student I want in every class," said Dr. Austin. "He is serious about preparation; he is a leader among his peers; he asks hard questions of the material and of me, and he always wants to get better, no matter how 'constructive' my criticism is."

Grudzinski participated

in a service-learning class in 2017 taught by Dr. Austin that required students to travel to Philadelphia to do research in Quaker archives and present their results to members of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Nobel Peace Prize-winning Quaker organization. "Despite the challenge of travel and time commitments, Marcus displayed all of his best qualities and produced a fascinating study of Quaker activism

against the Vietnam War. His project reminded me of just how lucky I have been to have had Marcus as a student in my class."

Grudzinski is a member of numerous honor societies, including Phi Theta Kappa, requiring a 3.5 GPA to qualify; Sigma Kappa Delta English honor society; Psi Beta psychology honor society, and Alpha Sigma Lambda adult learners honor society.

# Meyers makes national list of 'standout high schools'

By Mark Guydish

mguydish@timesleader.com

WILKES-BARRE — Administration and school board members in Wilkes-Barre Area have heard recurring complaints of low test scores and shoddy academic performances at the district's schools, including frequent quotes from lists that put it on the academic slag heap of the state's 500 public school districts. But they may have been handed a counter claim Tuesday: Meyers High School made the "Niche Standout High Schools" list for 2018.

Based in Pittsburgh, Niche bills itself online as "a unique blend of data scientists, engi-



neers, parents and 'yinzers' who are passionate about helping you discover the schools and neighborhoods that are right for you."

For the record, "Yinzer" is a variation on "Yinz," a

self-identifier used by some Pittsburgh residents proud of their blue collar roots. "Yinz," in turn, is generally considered a version of "yunz," itself a contraction of the contraction "you-uns," for "you ones." The coalcracker equivalent would be "youse," as in "youse guys crack me up."

Anyway, the niche "Standout" rankings start by limiting scrutiny to public high school's with at least 50 percent of students identified as economically disadvantaged. Those schools must also score an overall "Niche Grade" of B or higher — a separate "report card" letter grade devised using factors including test results, survey results, teacher salary and

absenteeism, and clubs and activities, to name a few.

In naming "standout high schools," Niche uses U.S. Department of Education data, which is often several years old. In this case, most of the data is from 2014-16.

A school's overall "standout" score derives from eight factors: SAT/ACT scores, Niche scores for the colleges a high school's students are most interested in attending (or enroll in), the graduation rate for 12th-grade students who are economically disadvantaged or from racial minorities, state reading and math test results for economically disadvantaged students, racial diversity in the student body,

and the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged.

The goal is to highlight "public schools that are making a difference in their community," the website says. Focusing on minority and economically disadvantaged students makes sense for that goal; statistically those two groups don't do as well in standardized tests.

In Pennsylvania, 24 high schools made the standout list. Meyers ranked 15th among those. No other Luzerne County schools were on the list.

Reach Mark Guydish at 570-991-6112 or on Twitter @TLMarkGuydish

## Taste

From page 9

Kingston, started making plans to open the business more than a year ago. Allouz moved to the area in 2015 with his parents, three brothers, and his sister from Jordan. The family left its native Syria in 2012 to escape that country's ongoing civil war.

Almeky helped the Allouzes resettle when they first arrived, offering advice and guidance on how to adjust to life in the United States. He has a family practice and urgent care clinic in Kingston, which he started after immigrating to the area 40 years ago from Egypt. Even though Almeky has never run a restaurant before, he enjoys cooking and wants to share Middle Eastern values and culture with the community through food.

"It (food) breaks barriers," he said. "The more you get exposed to the people and culture, the more you realize that as a human, it is

good to integrate culture."

Allouz also grew up with a passion for cooking, which is still a family-bonding experience in his home. He admits his father first expressed his wish for him to become a doctor, but then later encouraged him to follow his heart.

"This is my dream," Allouz said about owning his own restaurant. "I'm very, very happy."

Even though he came to the United States as a refugee only three years ago with limited resources and English skills, Allouz is glad that he has managed not only to find work, but has also opened a business doing something he loves.

"My dream is to not stop here," Allouz said while taking a break from working in the kitchen. He would like to open more restaurants in the future. Almeky also said there is a possibility of expanding the business to other parts of Luzerne County if Tazza does indeed prove to be a success.



Cook Rabie Kashkoush, 24, of Scranton, originally from Daraa, Syria, makes gyros during the grand opening of Tazza restaurant in Wilkes-Barre.

Sean McKeag | Times Leader

## IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

# Wilkes-Barre man develops personal security device

By Joe Soprano  
18702

WILKES-BARRE – Fending off a potential mugger?

There's an app for that, or at least a device thanks to a Wilkes-Barre man.

Nick Marino is part of team that has developed Attack Alert, a smartwatch of sorts with a focus on personal safety.

"Eighteen months ago I had an idea for an effective safety device," Marino said.

The watch, which is currently selling for \$79.95 at [attackalert.com](http://attackalert.com), emits a 120 decibel siren when a button is pressed.

The idea is that the unexpected shrill will startle a potential attacker, giving the victim time to flee.

"It was just an idea that came to mind," Marino said.

The siren isn't the only safety feature of the watch.

The watch also features LED lights that blink the universal code for SOS when the alarm is activated and a strobe light for disorientating potential attackers. It also can be used as a flashlight.

"Law enforcement officers tell me that criminals don't like noise or lights," Marino said. "Be seen, be heard, be recognized, (law enforcement officers say).

Because the device is a watch and fastens to the user's wrist, Marino said it has advantages over other personal safety devices, such as mace or pepper spray.

"The nice thing is it cannot be knocked out of your hand," Marino said. "And the person attacking you doesn't know what it is."

The surprise factor is big part of the devices effectiveness, according

to Marino. The siren and flashing lights could be enough to startle an attacker just long enough to allow the victim to flee.

Marino was also proud of the overall look of the device, which does resemble the popular Apple iWatch. He referred to the watch several times as stylish.

And, yes, it does tell time.

Initial reaction to the watch has been positive, Marino said.

"We did a Take Back the Night event at Misericordia with great results," he said.

The device is rechargeable and comes with a 30-day money-back guarantee and a limited 1-year warranty.

Marino, 64, lives in Wilkes-Barre with his wife, Sandy. He has a son, Alex.



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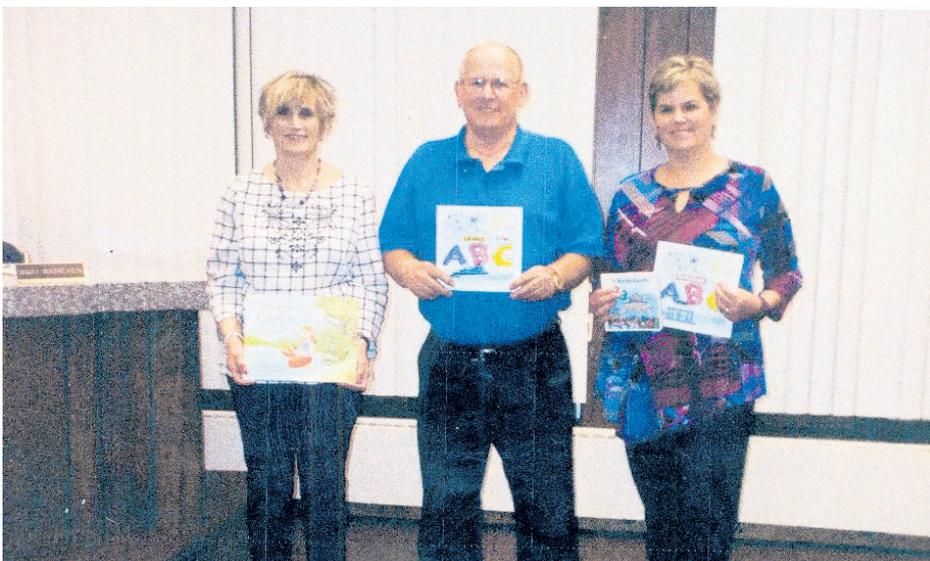
IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

# Shawnee Fort Chapter of DAR raising funds for Butler House



Shawnee Fort Chapter DAR members are raising money for the Zebulon Butler House on South River Street in Wilkes-Barre. The house was recently saved from demolition and is now owned by the Wilkes-Barre Preservation Society. The money is being raised in conjunction with TGI Friday's on Wednesday, May 23. Patrons must have a TGI Friday's flyer to participate in the fundraiser. Flyers are good for the entire business day. Fifteen percent of every dining receipt will go to the restoration and preservation of the Zebulon Butler House. For more information about Shawnee Fort Chapter or to obtain a flyer for this event, please contact Kathleen Smith at smithkdar2001@hotmail.com or 570-704-9809. Those interested may also visit the event listing on the public Shawnee Fort Chapter NSDAR facebook page. Pictured are Tony Brooks, director and curator of the Wilkes-Barre Preservation Society and members of Shawnee Fort Chapter DAR

## Donation will provide books for playgroup



Wilkes-Barre Township Mayor Carl Kuren would like to thank Valerie Delany and Karen Daywood, daughters of the late Joseph Sakadusky for making a monetary donation for the purchase of books to be given to the Wilkes-Barre Township Playgroup in honor of their parents. Pictured are Kuren with Delany and Daywood.

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IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

# Wilkes-Barre Academy Science Olympiad team finishes fifth



Wilkes-Barre Academy's Science Olympiad team participated in the Northeast Regional Science Olympiad held at Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus. The students competed in a broad scope of rigorous science-based events to place the team fifth overall. Typically, trophies are awarded only to the top four teams; however, the state tournament director was so impressed by the sportsmanship and team spirit of the Wilkes-Barre Academy team that he mailed a special trophy to the team. Pictured in the photo are members of the Wilkes-Barre Academy Science Olympiad State Competition team. First row, from left: Armaan Mansuri, Angelina Opachko, Amanda Zemet, Gopal Patel, Jennifer Zemet, Lauren Repella, Alexys Corbett, Caleb Cackowski. Second row: Tyler Vodzak, Abigail Whitby, Jenna Santuk, Hannah Fox, Kendra Santuk, Waqas Arain. Not pictured: Isabella Nardone

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# Holy Redeemer tops Northwest

Tiana Wren ripped a solo home run to break a 1-1 tie in the sixth inning and Taylor Josefowicz went back-to-back with another homer as the Royals pulled out a late victory, 4-2 over Northwest in softball on Monday.

Lynzie Skoronski had two hits for Redeemer and Morgan Bienkowski struck out seven in a complete-game four-hitter in the circle.

Brenna Babcock scored a run in the first inning to give Northwest a 1-0 lead that held up until the fifth and scored the other run for the Rangers in the bottom of the sixth.

## Hanover Area 8, GAR 1

Sarah Tuzinski and Kasidy Slusser combined on a one-hitter with 16 strikeouts as Hanover Area defeated GAR.

Tuzinski struck out six of the nine batters she faced over three innings. Slusser came on to strike out 10 over four innings.

Emilee Bobos and Alessia Mangan each had two RBI and a double to pace the Hawk-eyes' offense. Lindsey Mendygral was 3-for-4.

Skyler Elmy had GAR's only hit.

## Monday Baseball

### Pittston Area 7, Coughlin 1

Riley Brody had two hits and drove home three runs and Hunter Ralston shut down the Crusaders on three hits over his fivescoreless innings.

Cole Cherkas and Dylan Spurlin both had two hits, scored a run and drove one in during the victory and Kevin Krawczyk scored twice for Pittston Area.

Tanner Smith drove in Ben Yozwiak in the bottom of the seventh for Coughlin's lone run.

## Track and Field

### Berwick 109, GAR 14

Christian Hernandez was the loan winner for the Grenadiers as Berwick clinched the Wyoming Valley Conference boys track and field championship.

## Saturday

### Boys Lacrosse

### Delaware Valley 14, Coughlin 3

Shane Roche scored five goals and added a pair of assists to lead the Warriors.



GAR first baseman Sarah Youkoski, right, catches a quick throw from the catcher as Hanover Area's Lindsey Mendygral gets back safely.

Bill Tarutis | For 18702

## HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCHEDULE

### Saturday, May 12 H.S. SOFTBALL

Meyers at Lake-Lehman, 11 a.m.

### Monday, May 14 H.S. BASEBALL

(4:15 p.m.)  
MMI Prep at Holy Redeemer, 4:15 p.m.  
Meyers at GAR, 4:15 p.m.  
Coughlin at Wyoming Valley West, 4:15 p.m.  
H.S. SOFTBALL

Crestwood at Coughlin, 4:15 p.m.  
Holy Redeemer at Meyers, 4:15 p.m.  
Wyoming Seminary at GAR, 4:15 p.m.

# Celebrating the superhero qualities of moms

Mother's Day is a tradition of celebrating, honoring and expressing our love for mom.

As a society, we place a high value on our mom's at Mother's Day. According to the National Retail Federation, Mother's Day is one of the top three consumer spending holidays of the year with more than \$23 billion expected this year. We spend an average \$180 for mom on jewelry, clothes, gifts of experience and flowers.

So why do we make such a big deal out of Mother's Day? Well, because moms are a bit like a superhero. She's our nurturer, provides for us financially, she's our housekeeper, our cook, our personal chauffeur, our shoulder to cry on, our relationship coach, our career adviser, our homework tutor, our disciplinarian and our biggest fan.

As the founder of an organization that supports and advocates for mom's – particularly single moms – and as a single mom myself, I know how important Mother's Day is, and I know how difficult it can be too.

Mother's Day is special and single moms especially are working hard each day to embody values and be examples for their children to have a more stable and better quality of life.

So to all you mom's, single or not, I honor



**Donna Nelson**

18702  
Columnist

you this Mother's Day with much gratitude and appreciation for all the ways you serve to make our families and community a better place.

I like to keep things real too. Not everyone feels the passion to celebrate and honor their mom on Mother's Day. In my own experience and that of some moms I've gotten to know through my work and community, we don't all feel like showering our mom with flowers and warm embraces on Mother's Day.

I had been one of those for many years because I was traumatized by negative experiences with my mom. So for those who find Mother's Day a bit emotionally triggering or not so warm and fuzzy, I understand. And I want to offer you a way of seeing things a bit different to hopefully see the superhero qualities of your mom. I don't want this to come off like it could be a "Dear Abby" column of "How to deal with a difficult mom relationship on Mother's Day," or a "Ms. Manners" column on "How to be polite to your mother when you don't want to put on the

fake face."

While tradition says Mother's Day is a time to honor and celebrate our love for our mom, there were many years I didn't see the positive life lessons and values from my mom. My parents divorced when I was 4. We moved a lot after that, and my mom remarried and divorced a couple more times before I graduated high school. Those early years were chaotic at times, and I saw my mother struggle in relationships. I saw her struggle financially. I saw her struggle to make the right decisions as a parent, and I saw her struggle emotionally.

While growing up I didn't have the deep awareness and self-understanding about all this as I do today – and honestly, through grace, forgiveness, and my own healing, I can see many beautiful lessons in our shared struggles. Because when moms struggle, we all struggle with her.

I also saw her relentless pursuit of never giving up. One of the most appreciative lessons I have embodied from my mom is her resourcefulness – always finding a new way to make things happen.

She worked many jobs to make ends meet from working in factories to waitressing, and she always had at least one or two side gigs trying to make a buck and

build a better future. I remember when we were really young she was an Amway rep, and tried numerous other direct sales efforts along the way taking us along to all the meetings and events.

Later, when we were in high school, we had moved again and she had fields of fruit and vegetables that we farmed and sold on weekends at farmers markets. Believe me, my mom knew what hard work was and she's never been afraid of it, and never been afraid to try something new.

Growing up with a mom who was tough, persistent, entrepreneurial, resourceful, cared about community, helped others and had a strong faith are all qualities I'm proud of her for and today I celebrate her for.

I believe moms do the best they can with what they have and what they know. I wish I knew 20 years ago what I know now about parenting, myself and my son. I would have been a much better mom.

So if you are blessed to have a mom that was there for you in all the ways you needed her,

be sure to let her hear that this Mother's Day – even if only in spirit.

And if your mom fell short for you, look to her strengths and best values and notice how those have been imprinted in your life as I did with my mom.

All moms have superhero qualities.

Donna Nelson is a Holistic Empowerment Coach & Lifestyle Strategist, and Founder of Adopt-a-Single-Mom Project. Her column appears weekly in 18702.

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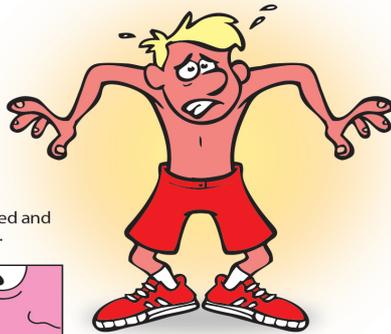
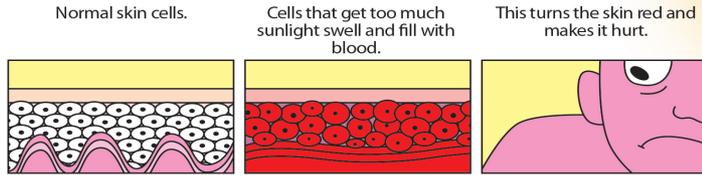
# PAK KID'S PAGE

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## SUNBURNS!

**OUCH!** Hot fun in the summertime can be painful! Too much fun in the sun can burn your skin.

### How does the sun burn skin?



Find: • banana • watermelon • moon • dolphin • car  
• bat • bowling ball • crocodile • ice cream • octopus

### To burn or not to burn?

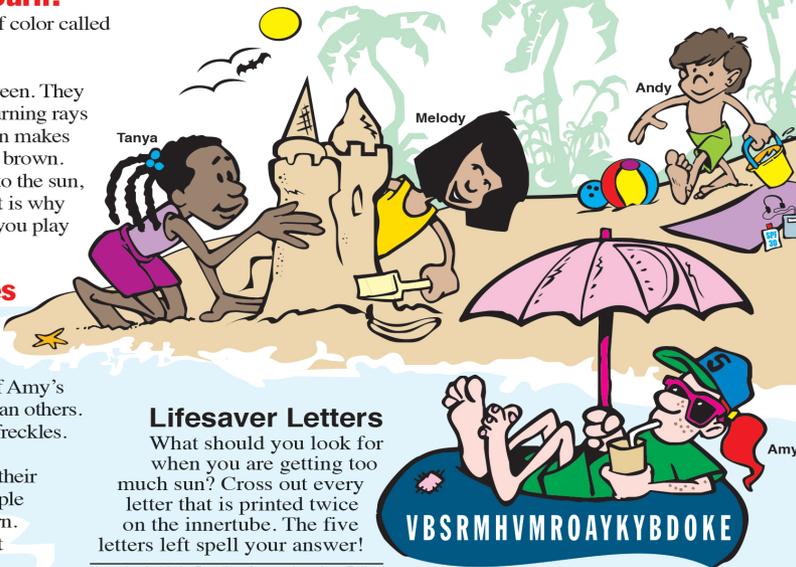
Everybody has tiny grains of color called **melanin** in their skin.

Melanin grains are like a screen. They protect the body from the burning rays of sunlight. Everybody's skin makes melanin. Melanin grains are brown. When your skin is exposed to the sun, it makes more melanin. That is why your skin gets darker when you play in the sunshine.

### Different skin types

Tanya has a lot of melanin in her skin. Andy and Melody have a little. Amy has very little. Some parts of Amy's body make more melanin than others. These dark spots are called freckles.

Everybody needs to protect their skin from the sun. Even people with lots of melanin will burn. Their skin won't burn as fast as Amy's, but it will burn.



### Lifesaver Letters

What should you look for when you are getting too much sun? Cross out every letter that is printed twice on the innertube. The five letters left spell your answer!

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple directions; identify common sight words.

V B S R M H V M R O A Y K Y B D O K E

### Which two bottles of sunscreen are exactly the same?



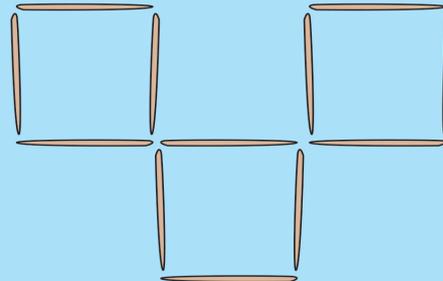
### Extra! Extra! How Hot Are You?

How many words can you find in today's newspaper that mean the same as **HOT**? Score yourself:  
1-3: Pretty Cool  
4-6: Hot Stuff!  
7+: Steamin' Hot!

Standards Link: Language Arts: Identify synonyms in reading.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

Using 12 toothpicks, try this puzzle. Lay out the toothpicks as shown below. Can you make **four** squares by moving only **three** toothpicks?



Standards Link: Math: Problem Solving; make a model to solve a puzzle.

### Kid Scoop Word Search

BURN  
LIFESAVER  
SKIN  
MELANIN  
SUNSHINE  
DARKER  
BEACH  
BODY  
COOL  
SPOTS  
HOT  
RAYS  
BROWN  
TINY  
HURT

Find the words by looking up, down, backwards, forwards, sideways and diagonally.

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

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

### FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

#### Sun Safety Scavenger Hunt

In today's newspaper, find pictures of:

- Something to protect you from the sun.
- Something to cool you on a hot day.
- Something you do on a sunny day.

Standards Link: Health: Practice safe behaviors during recreation.

### Write On!

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Is a free press important? Why or why not? Tell us your opinion.

### Kid Scoop Together: SAFE FUN IN THE SUN

Think about important summer safety tips for kids (bike safety, pool safety, sun safety, etc.)

Select one of the tips. Then list three steps to help kids follow this safety tip. Write the tip and then illustrate it in the boxes below.

#### SAFETY TIP:

#### STEP 1

#### STEP 2

#### STEP 3