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CLEAN FLOORS & MORE, LLC

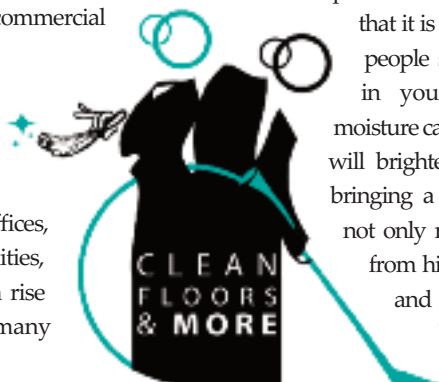
At Clean Floors & More, our focus on family, community, and quality makes us the janitorial service of choice in the area. As an all-inclusive janitorial company, we bring the best in nightly cleaning services, commercial carpet cleaning, and a variety of floor cleaning services to our broad range of clientele including general offices, assisted living facilities, schools, hotels, high rise apartments, and many more.

Our trained representatives will help you welcome spring with a deep cleaning that will make your business shine and give everyone who visits an amazing first impression. We pride ourselves on our ability to couple your

nightly cleaning with a floor care program to keep your building and floors shining all year round.

We know that carpet is the best flooring option for many workplaces and that it is one of the first things people see when they come in your door. Our low-moisture carpet cleaning method will brighten your business by bringing a deep clean that will not only remove winter grime from high traffic entry areas and other carpeted areas, but leave every area dry before your business is ready

to open the next morning. Our low moisture equipment is self-contained with no clumsy hoses, so we are the perfect choice for your multi-level senior facility or high-rise apartment building.



When vinyl composite tile (VCT) is your flooring of choice, spring means a deep clean where our professionals strip and refinish your floors, and give your floors a brilliant shine to welcome the warm weather months and every visitor to your door. Traditional vinyl flooring and laminate also take a beating over the winter, and we pride ourselves on giving these flooring choices a bright look for spring.

At Clean Floors & More, our business is to support you doing business in a welcoming, healthy, and productive workplace, with professionals ready to help with all your cleaning and floor cleaning needs.

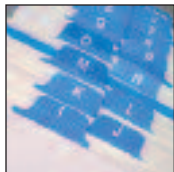
Clean Floors & More is a commercial cleaning service offering cleaning and disinfecting services for businesses of all types and sizes. For additional information, please call 484.599.2751 or email: cleanfloorsandmore@aol.com; and visit:

www.cleanfloorsandmore.net



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Cover Story: Patriot Pest Solutions is a veteran-owned, pet-friendly, community-driven local business with a Certified Entomologist on staff offering commercial and residential customers environmentally-friendly pest control services with a 100% satisfaction guarantee.



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Browse the Marketplace to grow your business, network, and keep your money local.



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Business Spotlight: Sottosanti Lawn Care – Where Service Is Always In Season!

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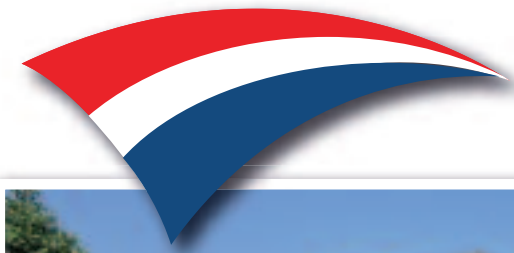


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LOCALLY OWNED PATRIOT PEST SOLUTIONS

*Providing Expert Pest Control and
Wildlife Management Services*



By Kathy Hunt

The signs of springtime are all around us. Look out your window and you'll spy a cluster of red-and-black boxelder bugs clinging to the sill. Walk out your front door and into a roiling swarm of gnats. When an army of red ants commandeers your kitchen counter or a family of groundhogs claims your shed as their summer home, you know it's time to call the licensed, insured professionals at Patriot Pest Solutions LLC. Headquartered at 414 West Main Street in Trappe, the locally owned, small business has been resolving insect and wildlife problems for residential and commercial customers in Southeastern Pennsylvania for over a decade.



Left to Right: Lynda Smiley – office manager, James Harrison, and Denice Harrison

PHOTOS BY STYLISH IMAGES



James is an associate certified entomologist and a member of the National Pest Management Association.

Experienced Extermination Experts

Patriot Pest Solutions began 11 years ago in the Royersford home of James and Denice Harrison. The couple decided to name their venture "Patriot" in recognition of James', his brother's and his father's military service. James and his brother served in the United States Army. His father was in the U.S. Navy. The Harrisons take defending both their country and people's properties seriously. Their business slogan says it all — "Eliminating pests is our patriotic duty."

The company supports residential and commercial clients in Montgomery, Berks, Chester, Delaware, Bucks, and Philadelphia counties. Its staff of 12 consists of co-owners James, who is an associate certified entomologist (ACE), and Denice, six licensed technicians, three customer service representatives, and a business developer. It is one of only a handful of extermination companies in Pennsylvania to have an associate certified entomologist on staff.

In addition to James' status as an ACE, Patriot Pest is a member of the National

Pest Management Association (NPMA), which provides continuing education and addresses the technical, governmental, educational, business, and networking needs of its members. The company is also listed as a National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) certified wildlife professional. Through NWCOA, its technicians maintain the knowledge and techniques of safe, humane wildlife management. Additionally, Patriot Pest is part of the Pennsylvania Trapper's Association, which advocates for the humane trapping of wildlife. Its technicians are licensed through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

With credentials as strong as these, you know that, when consulting Patriot Pest Solutions, you can expect well-informed and effective resolutions to your wildlife headaches. After all, you are working with trained experts in the field of pest control. What you may not

anticipate is the personable and respectful manner with which Patriot Pest Solutions treats all of its customers.

"I can't tell you how many calls we get from potential clients who call Patriot because they are unhappy with the large pest control companies," Denice Harrison said. "They don't want their call to get sent to a distant call center, they want to talk to someone they know."

The Value of a Small, Locally Owned Business

As Denice noted, customers appreciate the personal touch that small businesses provide. Generally, those who own and/or work at small businesses take the time to get to know their customers and make them feel valued. They bring not only worthwhile goods and services but also character and a sense of community to the neighborhoods that they serve. Yet, in spite of their

contributions, many struggle to stay afloat.

"So many businesses were not able to survive the pandemic and it is going to create a shift in small businesses," Denice noted. "No one wants to see the end of privately owned companies. If the pandemic wasn't enough, now we have rising costs that are causing small companies to reorganize their business plans in order to survive the cost of fuel. As owners, it is normal to reassess plans every year, but these few years have kept us on our toes," she said.

Countless financial and news organizations have written about the importance of supporting small, locally owned businesses. These enterprises create jobs, offer enhanced customer service, and have a greater connection and investment in their communities than nationally or globally owned, big-box stores. A small business owner goes into his neighborhood-based shop or office and interacts with the surrounding community each day. This businessperson listens to customers' hopes and concerns and shares in their triumphs and tragedies. In all likelihood, the owner of a national retail chain will never interact with, much less see, the residents of the towns and cities in which their establishment operates.

When people chose to shop at and work with a local business, they help not only that business but also the local purveyors with whom that business owner deals. They enter into a symbiotic relationship where everyone wins. According to a 2021 article from the financial advising company The Motley Fool, a community with a thriving local business scene can experience an increase in home values and prospective home buyers. Now, that's a win-win!

(Continued on page 8)



COVER STORY

(Continued from page 7)

As a small business, Patriot Pest Solutions makes every effort to be convenient, responsive, and accessible. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM and on Saturday from 8 AM to 12 PM. Customers are encouraged to call 610.489.5136 or email: info@patriotpestsolutions.net.

Resolving an Array of Wildlife Complaints

Whether you have raccoons raiding your garbage can or mice scurrying behind your walls, the certified professionals at Patriot Pest can humanely remove them. A licensed technician will come to your home or business, assess the situation, suggest remediation efforts, and outline steps to prevent future issues.

"Every pest control company takes care of mice," Denice said. "What most don't do are wildlife, like snakes, groundhogs and skunks. A lot of pest control companies will refer their wildlife calls to us. We work hand-in-hand with locally owned companies to take care of their wildlife. That's something that makes us unique."



Patriot Pest Solutions' technicians are state-licensed and specially trained in humane squirrel trapping, removal and exclusion services.

Among the wildlife that Patriot Pest skillfully extracts are squirrels, bats, raccoons, groundhogs, birds, foxes, opossums, skunks, moles, voles, rats, snakes, and, of course, mice. It also removes owls, crows, seagulls, pigeons, doves, and woodpeckers and points out ways to deter the return of all these creatures.

When it comes to insects, Patriot's technicians are adept at rooting out these pesky invaders. Denice noted that some arthropod pests are seasonal. You can expect ants when spring rains push them

out of the ground. Boxelder bugs, those black, elongated, oval-shaped insects with reddish stripes, plague people in the fall when the insects move inside to hibernate and, then again, in the spring when they reemerge to congregate outdoors.

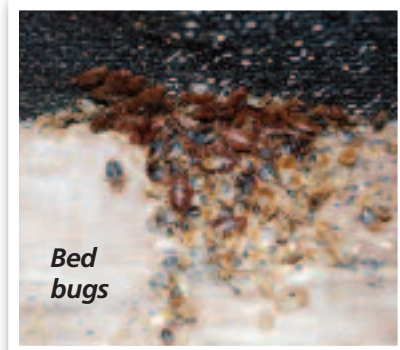
The dusky red, black and white spotted planthoppers known as spotted lanternflies emerge as nymphs in spring. By July they're adults, the size of a quarter, and feasting on the sap of a myriad of plants and trees.

"Spotted lanternflies are slowly moving out of the area," Denice said. "They will continue to be an issue this year, but it really depends on the county in which you live. For lanternflies we come out in the spring and fall and do a systemic treatment that is harmless to the trees but not to the spotted lanternflies.

The treatment varies slightly. In the fall we treat the bark. In the spring we do an injection treatment. Our goal is to save the trees and we have a method to do this, to stop them from killing trees. Everyone's gripe the past few years has been lanternflies. Before that, it was stink bugs, which have now dissipated. Everything has ebbs and flows," she said.

As for the billions of cicadas predicted to hatch last summer after 17 years of being underground, the company received very few calls about the red-eyed, orange-veined, and translucent-winged insect. "It never really became the issue that they had predicted," she said.

Patriot Pest's technicians dispatch a wide range of insects, including fleas, termites, ticks, cockroaches, and the aforementioned ants, lanternflies, and stink bugs. They also tackle the toughest of all infestations, that of bed bugs.



With Patriot Pest Solutions, customers have the choice of either conventional chemicals or heat treatments to eliminate these invasive and prolific blood suckers. Denice observed that bed bug calls have dipped over the past two years and credited this decline to the drastic reduction in travel caused by the coronavirus pandemic. There has not been an uptick in the number of bed bug complaints, yet.

Employing Low Toxicity Tools to Keep Insects at Bay

Patriot Pest Solutions utilizes an array of low odor, low toxicity tools to eradicate insects. These include baits and traps placed around a property's interior and exterior. To ensure the safety of pets, technicians use only a minute amount of bait in tamper-proof containers and situate them in hard-to-reach locations. Should a cat or dog manage to access and eat the bait, the animal would not be in serious danger. According to Denice, the worst side effect that the animal could experience is an upset stomach.

Another extermination tool that has a little to no impact on humans and their furry companions is TAP® (Thermal Acoustic Pest Control) blown insulation.



Chris Gentile – Bed Bug and Spotted Lantern Fly Specialist



Lynda Smiley – office manager (seated) has been with Patriot Pest Solutions for 7 years. Caryn Dennis (left) has been with the company since 2018.

Registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), TAP® is made from ground up newspaper treated with boric acid. The cellulose fiber insulation is fire-retardant, thermally superior, and sound deadening, and it possesses permanent pest control properties. Note that, unless consumed or inhaled in large quantities, boric acid is acceptable for use around humans and animals. However, for insects such as ants, cockroaches, silverfish, stinkbugs, and termites, the chemical compound is fatal.

Patriot Pest Solutions technicians use TAP® to cap off or replace existing insulation. In the latter scenario, the technicians will remove and dispose of the old insulation, disinfect and repair the targeted area, and then blow in Energy Star-approved, UL-classified TAP®. By employing this environmentally sound product, Patriot Pest protects its customers from bothersome insects, keeps them cool in the summer and warm in the winter, and saves them money on energy bills.

Keeping Customers Safe and Pest-Free

While the pandemic may have thwarted most aspects of everyday life, it didn't stop the work of Patriot Pest Solutions. "We're essential workers and, as a result, we never shut down," Denise said. "Nursing homes and restaurants can't have rodents and roaches in their kitchens. We can't have homes and businesses unsafe and uninhabitable because of pests."

Patriot Pest Solutions understands that, when it comes to Covid-19, customers may no longer feel as comfortable having someone whom they don't know enter their homes. "In year two of the pandemic, we do have customers who require or request that we only send vaccinated technicians, which we are happy to honor. We must be sure that people feel comfortable with them there," Denise said.

When dealing with insect infestations in commercial or residential properties, customers can count on seeing a Patriot

Pest Solutions technician more than once. As the company notes on its website, one extermination visit produces a temporary fix to a longer-term problem. Once the treatment has worn off, the insects will return. To combat repeated or extended onslaughts, Patriot Pest Solutions offers personalized protection plans adapted to fit both the property and the pest.

The company has also devised two pest control service plans. *Home Pest Protection* provides three scheduled calls to your property. On the initial visit, a technician will evaluate the interior of your residence or commercial space to ensure that all of your pest maintenance needs are being addressed. The next two visits focus on keeping pests out of your home or building. Should bugs make their way inside before your next scheduled appointment, a technician will come out and perform a free, emergency treatment to rid you of these intruders.

The second service plan, *Home Pest Protection Plus*, includes all of the features

of *Home Pest Protection* as well as termite safety. The package features exterior termite monitoring and yearly termite inspection of your home or business. If a technician detects the presence of termites, different remedies will be proposed. Of the two service plans, *Home Pest Protection Plus* is a customer favorite.

For additional information about Patriot Pest Solutions and its services, to schedule an appointment, or to receive a free quote, call 610.489.5136 or email info@patriotpestsolutions.net, and visit their website www.patriotpestsolutions.net.



FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN

Deliah & Dean Market

Customers love shopping at Deliah & Dean Market is an independent natural food store dedicated to promoting health and wellness in the Pottstown community.

Store owners, Ronald & Dena Reeves, opened the store with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony in November 2019 and make it a point for customers to feel welcomed inside the renovated store which features fresh produce, organic and conventional foods, frozen foods, and a selection of vitamins, supplements, and health and beauty products. The store is proudly featured on Valley Forge Tourism's "Make It Main Street" promotions, seen on television and online, and is often highlighted in local Pottstown area social media.

With a location at 219 East High Street in the heart of downtown Pottstown, we are especially excited for local area

residents and visitors to experience Deliah & Dean's range of amenities, especially our plant-based food selections, cold-pressed juices, grab-n-go smoothie drinks, and desserts from our favorite New York bakery. The store's staff is very knowledgeable and helpful, and there is a wonderful selection of gluten-free, paleo, and lactose-free items to support any dietary restriction.

Deliah & Dean customers enjoy a relaxed, upbeat shopping experience and even learn about the nutritional benefits of functional foods.

Shop Small and visit Deliah & Dean Market during store hours on Monday-Friday 9:30 am – 6 pm and Sundays 11-4, or online at www.deliahanddean.com. For additional information, please call 610.551.4288 or email deliahanddean@gmail.com.



Lastick Furniture & Floor Coverings

Hello! We are the Lastick family and thought it would be good for you to get to know us. We are a niche' family business built on old school values, progressive products, tried and true vendors and superior customer service. We have been a staple in the downtown Pottstown community since 1973 and through the years have greatly expanded our customer and delivery base to surrounding areas. These include but are not limited to, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties. Our best advertising continues to be our customers satisfaction and word of mouth.

We have strong business roots! In 1973, Eli and Sonia Lastick and their son Jerry, embarked on an endeavor that would change the way business would be done at 310 E. High St. Pottstown, in the former notable Eagles building. The business grew quickly; it did not take long until additional space was needed for expansion. At that time, the family purchased the Block Furniture building at 269 E. High Street. In 1979, their daughter Marsha Lastick-Petnick and her husband, Martin, would also ultimately join the family business.

Fast forward to 2021. With 48 years in doing business downtown, 28,000 square feet of selling space for home furnishings and décor, and an additional 5,000 sq. ft. of flooring, you can be assured we have what you are looking for. Our showcase gallery status continues to provide our customers with the added benefits of

preferred pricing, ordering privileges and cost-effective shipping. The newest looks at the lowest prices! Who wouldn't love that?

Our flooring store should also be noted for the convenience of one-stop-shop for our customers and a diverse selection. Under the supervision of Marsha's husband Martin, the store has been given a complete makeover. The new lighting and flooring displays will surely spark a new level of interest. Our product lines include Brazilian mahogany and cherry, tiger wood, hickory, cork, maple, lyptus and of course laminates, carpets and vinyl.

We have received fifteen consecutive Mercury Reader's Choice Awards and the honorable achievement of the Harry C. Kahn Memorial Retailer of the year awarded by the Tri-State

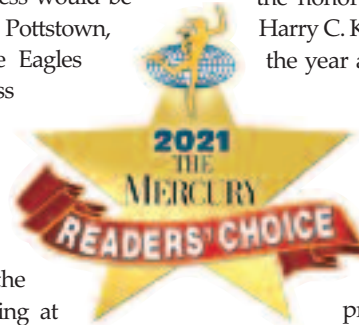
Home Furnishings Association. We could not be more honored to be here for you.

Our "secret sauce" is definitely a recipe of fabulous, on trend

products at low prices, superb customer service, and

much appreciated, customer loyalty. We continue the mission of Eli and Sonia Lastick and continue to conduct business with an exceedingly high level of integrity at the forefront of our business model. We walk our customers through every stage of the design experience giving special attention to the buyers needs before, during and yes, even after the sale!

For additional information, please call 610.323.4000 and visit www.Lastick.com.





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- Nurturing and experienced staff.
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- Developmentally appropriate lesson plans.
- Partnerships with family and community resources.
- Partnerships with the local school districts to provide a smooth transition from Preschool to Kindergarten.

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Warwick Child Care Center, Inc.

Warwick Child Care Center, Inc. was established in 1986 in Chester County, Pennsylvania and is a private child care center corporation comprised of nine early childhood education centers. Five of the centers provide care for infants through school age children and four of the centers are located within the Great Valley School District elementary schools and provide before and after care as well as summer camp.

The vision of Warwick Child Care Center, Inc. is to provide high quality care in a safe comfortable home like environment. Early Childhood should be a time of fun, warmth, security, exploring and discovery. Each child is unique, creative and receptive. The teachers and staff understand the importance of quality learning experiences and are fun and engaging.

Warwick Child Care provides an atmosphere that encourages social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth through the children's play and small group instruction. These skills lay the foundation for developing literacy, numeracy and other cognitive abilities that are critical for success in school and life.

The pandemic has taken a toll on many children's emotional growth. Warwick Child Care understands the importance of what children have missed out on over the last several years and provides support to help children overcome these new challenges.

The curriculum includes dramatic play, creative art activities, music, science activities, cooking experiences, computer instruction, block play, sand and water experiences, field trips throughout the community, daily outdoor activities and the celebration of birthdays and holidays. Children are exposed to shapes, colors, numbers and letters through developmentally appropriate activities taught using small group instruction.

Warwick Child Care's mission is to provide every child with a high-quality early childhood experience in a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment. An engaging curriculum with a focus of fostering each child's individualized social, emotional, physical and cognitive development is provided. Our goal is to support families and provide children with the skills to be successful in

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school and life. High quality child care is offered to children from infancy through elementary years by offering:

- Nurturing and experienced staff who are educated in early childhood education.
- Small group instruction.
- Standardized curriculum and assessment.
- Developmentally appropriate lesson plans.
- Partnerships with family and community resources.

- Partnerships with the local school districts to provide a smooth transition from Preschool to Kindergarten.

Warwick Child Care Center locations include: South Coventry Center; North Coventry Center; Lionville Center; Frazer Center; Cedarville Center; Great Valley General Wayne Center; and Sugartown Center. For additional information, please visit: www.warwick1.com.

FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN

Kimmel's Automotive

Kimmel's Automotive, DBA Rob's Auto Repair, is an independent, family-owned auto repair shop serving Pottstown, Morgantown, Boyertown, and surrounding areas. Since 1992, Kimmel's Automotive has been offering individual and commercial clients repairs and services using the most up-to-date, and state-of-the-art technology available ensuring that each vehicle receives the care it deserves. As a trusted name in auto repair and maintenance services for families across the area with a longstanding reputation for quality repairs, the Kimmel's Automotive team is dedicated to providing the best workmanship and customer experience possible.

Kimmel's Automotive is a NAPA AutoCare Center that backs qualifying work through a nationwide warranty. All automotive repair and mechanic services are performed by highly qualified ASE-certified technicians who undergo continuous training to stay up to date on the best repair practices. Kimmel's superior standards ensure that their mechanics always have the best interests of their customers in mind. They work on

numerous vehicles with the use of quality truck and car repair equipment. Whether you drive a passenger car, medium sized truck, mini-van, or SUV, Kimmel's mechanics strive to ensure that your vehicle will be performing at its best before leaving one of its service bays. Kimmel's auto repair shop is capable of servicing a variety of makes and models. Their mechanics to give you a reliable estimate of any automotive repair issue you might be facing.

Kimmel's Automotive offers A/C repair, battery replacement, belt and hose replacement, brake repairs, cooling system services, engine diagnostic and repairs, steering and suspension work, wheel alignments, and much more. They provide a clean and comfortable waiting area with free coffee and Wi-Fi, and Night Key Drop. Hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 AM through 5:00 PM.

Kimmel's Automotive is located at 1055 S Hanover Street, Pottstown, PA 19465. For additional information, please call 610.327.1999 and visit www.kimmelsauto.com.



High Street Auto Connection

Let High Street Auto Connection, located at 1415 West High Street, show you how easy it is to buy a quality used car in Pottstown. Owner Anthony Gasparro, and finance manager Tariq, believe fair prices, superior service, and treating customers right, which leads to satisfied repeat buyers.

High Street Auto Connection's friendly and knowledgeable sales staff are here to help you find the car you deserve, priced to fit your budget. Shop their virtual showroom of inventory available for purchase at www.highstreetautos.com, then stop by for a test drive. There you will see detailed information about each vehicle, a picture gallery, as well as convenient ways to obtain more information about that vehicle.

"I've been in this business over 10 years," says owner Gasparro. "We've been in Pottstown for about three years. We absolutely love it here in Pottstown and are planning to stay in the area for quite some time," he said. "From the moment you step on our lot until the time you drive away in your next car, your buying experience with High Street Auto is our number one priority. We encourage you to use the expertise and resources of our sales staff. They are here to help you find the right car at the right price."

For additional information, please call 484.624.3120; email: anthony@highstreetautos.com; and visit www.highstreetautos.com.

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Our intake assessments are very thorough. We want to understand your full history to see if there are any patterns in your life that are contributing to your current symptoms. If there are patterns, particularly if they are driving certain choices, your therapy will include learning techniques to reframe your thinking, your decision-making, and your actions. With positive reframing, you will be able to not only manage your symptoms, but experience increased happiness and contentment.

We combine the art and science of psychotherapy when we create our treatment plans. Every plan is unique: your treatment plan will be designed for you and no one else. We draw upon a full set of treatment modalities, including: Psychiatry & Medication Management; Suboxone Treatment for Opiate Addiction; Individual, Couples & Family Therapy; Grief Counseling; Alcohol/Substance Abuse Treatment; and Geriatric Psychiatry.

Medication is just one tool among many. If you don't need it, we certainly won't recommend it. Other times, we may recommend it temporarily to help you over a rough spot — kind of like using a crutch until a broken leg has a chance to heal. In other circumstances, a diagnosis may suggest medication because of a physiological imbalance in the brain. We'll explain it all: ultimately, the choice is always up to you.

There is no shame in having a problem in life — we all have them. There is no shame in needing help to handle that problem. Going to a therapist doesn't mean



you are "crazy" or "weak." It means you value your worth enough to invest in yourself. It means you are wise enough and strong enough to ask for help when you need it.

Are you ready to experience life-changing therapy? Contact us today at 484.973.6661 for comprehensive, customized therapy. For additional information, please visit: www.elurimdpc.com

FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN

Pottstown Hospital Is Committed to and Ranked for Social Responsibility



Pottstown Hospital has been ranked in the Top 100 Hospitals in the Country and second in Pennsylvania for Pay Equity by the Lown Institute, a nonpartisan health care think tank.

Pottstown Hospital earned a place on the Lown Institute's Honor Roll by earning "A" grades in inclusivity, clinical outcomes, cost efficiency, and pay equity within the following measures that determine overall social responsibility:

- Health equity — commitment to inclusivity, pay equity and community investment.
- Value of care — how efficiently hospital delivers care and avoids low-value services.
- Outcomes — success at clinical outcomes, patient safety and patient satisfaction.

Health equity has become a top priority for American hospitals amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and movements for racial justice. "It's not enough for hospitals to say they're committed to social responsibility. They need to put their commitment into action," said Dr. Vikas Saini, president of the Lown Institute in a news release announcing the rankings. "Doing well on the Lown Index is one way they can demonstrate progress."

The Lown Institute Hospitals Index examined the inclusivity of 3,709 U.S. hospitals to assess their success at serving the people of color living in their communities. To create the rankings, the Lown Institute assessed how well the demographics of a hospital's Medicare patients matched the demographics of the hospital's surrounding communities.

"At Pottstown Hospital, we are committed to providing the highest level of care to our community including our most economically challenged and diverse urban populations," said Rich Nowell, MPT, DPT, President and Chief Executive Officer. "The dedication from our entire staff to provide healing for all, above all, has earned us this recognition."

Additional ranking information, including an explanation of methods, is available at: LownHospitalsIndex.org/inclusivity.

ABOUT POTTSTOWN HOSPITAL:

Located in Pottstown, Pa., and a member of Tower Health, Pottstown Hospital is a 219-bed hospital that offers a full range of health services, including inpatient and outpatient, medical and surgical, and diagnostic and

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emergency care. Accredited by The Joint Commission, Pottstown Hospital has been recognized for its quality outcomes and clinical expertise across many service lines. The Hospital is Joint Commission-certified for hip and knee replacement and is also an accredited Chest Pain Center. Recently, Pottstown Hospital was recognized as a recipient of Get with the Guidelines/American Heart Association/American Stroke Association — Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award with Honor Roll Elite and Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll. The Cancer Center at Pottstown Hospital is also nationally recognized, bringing over a decade of award-winning care to our region. The Pottstown Hospital Emergency Department, a Primary Stroke Center, is the second busiest in Montgomery County, seeing more than 45,000 patients a year. For more information, visit pottstown.towerhealth.org.

ABOUT THE LOWN INSTITUTE AND ITS METHODOLOGY:

Founded in 1973 by Nobel Peace Prize winner Bernard Lown, MD, developer of the defibrillator and cardioverter, the Lown Institute believes that a radically better system of health is possible and generates bold ideas towards that goal. The Lown Hospitals Index, a signature project of the Institute, is the first ranking to assess the social responsibility of U.S. hospitals by applying measures never used before like racial inclusivity,

avoidance of overuse, and pay equity.

The Lown Institute Hospitals Index evaluated 3,709 general acute hospitals in the U.S. Information on hospital characteristics was taken from the Fiscal Year 2018 American Hospital Association (AHA) annual survey and Medicare Impact File as well as the CMS Hospital Compare database

Non-acute care hospitals, federal hospitals (e.g. Veterans Health Administration) and those outside of the 50 states and Washington, D.C. were excluded, as were hospitals run by Medicare Advantage programs (e.g. Kaiser Permanente), and specialty hospitals with more than 45% admissions for orthopedic, cardiac, or surgical procedures. Hospitals that were closed as of October 2020 by checking against Hospital Compare, a website run by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), were eliminated. Hospitals with patient volume below 50 annual patient stays were also eliminated as well as hospitals that did not perform any surgery in each of the three years spanning 2016 to 2018. This left a list of 3,709 hospitals: 568 for-profits, 2,405 private nonprofits, and 736 public nonprofits.

The Lown Institute Hospitals Index has 54 metrics distributed across four tiers. Additional ranking information, including an explanation of methods, is available at LownHospitalIndex.org.



Dance School Prepares for Demonstration Concert

The Pottstown Dance Theatre, directed by international dance artist Michelle Jones Wurtz, is preparing for its first full Demonstration Concert in two years. Pottstown Dance Theatre (PDT) is different from other local dance schools in that students are not required to perform for a big end-of-year recital, purchase a catalog costume, and work on the show for most of the school year. PDT focuses more on the "art of dance" and has a Demo Concert to showcase to parents and friends where the student artists are in their training. True artists know that formal training is a lifelong process and there is never a moment of finality. The show is a little "moment of sharing."

PDT also has a Repertory Ensemble for dancers who want more performance opportunities in various venues. The dancers have performed at Ursinus College, Pottstown High School, The Hill School Center for the Arts, Boyertown High School, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall in New York City; and most notably in London during the 2012 Olympic Games. Currently the school is accepting dancers to join the Ensemble



that will travel to Paris, France for the 2024 Olympic Games. These trips change lives and provide life-long memories.

The Demonstration Concert is scheduled for May 22 at 2:00 pm for "Tots and Tweens" and 3:30 for "Teens and Adults" at Boyertown High School. Two alumnae that are currently Pre-Professionals at Pennsylvania Academy of Ballet and the Rock School for Dance Education, Michelline Bender and Lizzie Rasmussen, will perform as guest artists in both shows. Tickets will be available in May and can be purchased by calling 610.323.2569 or visiting us in our facility at 72 West Main Street, Pottstown, 19465. Summer classes are forming soon so feel free to visit the website at www.pottstowndance.com.

Got Dance?

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Michelle Jones Wurtz, Director

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Ask SCORE CLOSING SALES STARTS WITH BUILDING TRUST

People do business with people they trust. Closing the sale is simply the end result of building relationships and earning the trust of your prospects and eventual customers.

If you're selling a product or service to a business where your sales cycle is long — 12 to 18 months or more — closing the sale means playing the long game. It means being thoughtful, not transactional. It also means investing the time and effort to lay a foundation of trust with your potential customers.

There are no short cuts to building trust, but there are key steps you can take. There's no scientific formula for earning trust in any relationship, including professional ones. Successfully earning the trust of a prospective customer is a culmination of a series of efforts that coalesce into a relationship based on respect.

As you find your own recipe for building trust with your prospects, here are some steps and suggestions to help you along the way.

Listen: Step one in building trust is to stop talking and simply listen to your prospective customers. Demonstrate curiosity in what they do and show interest in helping them solve their challenges. Ask questions about them and their situation rather than jumping into a sales pitch.

Respect Their Time: Demonstrating respect for your customer's or prospect's time is a form of respect that should always be considered. Prepare for meetings in advance and focus your meetings on how you can best serve that customer.

Always Have Their Interests in Mind — Not Yours: Never offer solutions to problems your customers don't have or push them towards a product that doesn't add value to their business. Building trust and closing a sale will only happen if you put your customer's interests and needs above your own and find them the best solution for their business.

Keep Your Promises: When you tell a customer you'll do something, follow through and deliver on that promise. Finishing what you start, meeting deadlines and providing your customers with valuable solutions are some of the fastest ways to build trust.

(Continued on page 18)

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Location: 635 Route 100, Bechtelsville, PA 19505

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Online Bidding Closes Friday April 8th @ 4:00pm
Sheds, New/Used Mowers, Equipment, Tools
Location: 813 Willow Street, Pottstown, PA 19464

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(Continued from page 16)

Respect Your Competition: When you're speaking with your prospective customers, focus on why your solutions are valuable rather than why your competitor's solutions are inferior. Disrespecting your competition can have the opposite effect and cause damage to your reputation. Take the high road and present your business professionally.

Go the Extra Mile: Fulfilling your obligations is a must when building trust. But, going above and beyond is a sure way to expedite the process. Make your customers feel special by investing in their business and their mission. You can take them to lunch just to check in, send them article links that you think will help them with a project or initiative, connect them with your contacts on LinkedIn, or any number of efforts that they may value.

When you boil it all down, closing the sale requires listening, respect and putting the prospective customer's needs first. As you build your client base, remember that sales is not about selling. It's about building trust. If you take these six trust-building actions, you'll provide incredible value to prospective customers and increase your chances of closing the sale.

Closing the sale is no easy feat. Whether you're just getting started or looking to expand your client base, use

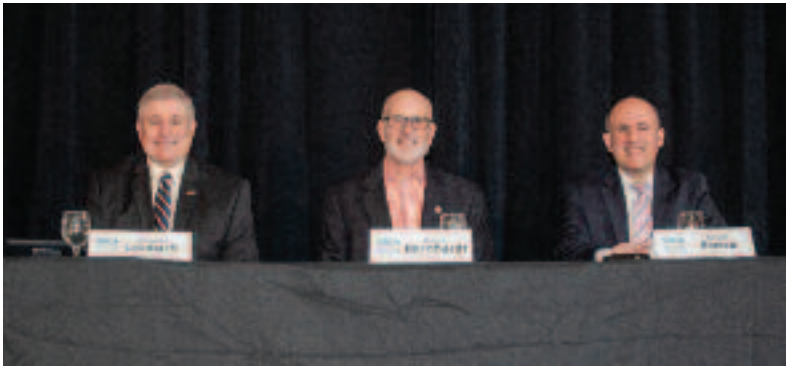
every resource you have at your fingertips, including your local SCORE chapter. When you work with a SCORE mentor, you'll gain the advice and insight of a seasoned professional with experience in building a client base built on trust. Contact a SCORE mentor today.

Since 1964, SCORE "Mentors to America's Small Business" has helped more than 11 million aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners through mentoring and business workshops. More than 10,000 volunteer business mentors in over 250 chapters serve their communities through entrepreneur education dedicated to the formation, growth and success of small businesses. For more information about starting or operating a small business, call 1.800.634.0245 for the SCORE chapter nearest you. Visit SCORE at www.score.org.

For more information about starting or operating a small business, contact SCORE TriCounty, <https://tricity.score.org/content/find-mentor-183>.

Today at SCORE, we are on the frontline fighting to keep Main Street America in business. If you believe that you can help a small business with your experience, advice and mentoring please think about joining us. Email us at tricity@scorevolunteer.org, call us at 610.327.2673, or to learn more. To submit an application to be a SCORE TriCounty volunteer, visit our website at <https://tricity.score.org/become-volunteer-2>.

SCORE is funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions, and/or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.



Berks County Commissioners Provide Updates at GRCA Breakfast Event

The Berks County Commissioners gave a community update about the various projects, services and challenges the County has faced in the last two years during a breakfast forum hosted by the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) at the Santander Performing Arts Center on Friday, March 11.

Commissioners Christian Leinbach, Kevin Barnhardt and Michael Rivera told the crowd of nearly 200 business leaders and community members how thankful they were to finally be able to gather in person for the event in more than two

years. The Commissioners acknowledged that many of their projects have been successful due to the ongoing partnership with GRCA, such as the support for the agricultural community, economic development work and the distribution of the Covid Hospitality Industry Recovery Program (CHIRP).

"The relationship between the County of Berks and GRCA has never been stronger, and we appreciate all the work your leadership team does," Leinbach said.

(Continued on page 20)

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GRCA BREAKFAST

(Continued from page 19)

Barnhardt focused much of his time discussing recent developments with the County's Office of Election Services, including the hiring of Director Paige Riegner, adding more staff positions and the implementation of electronic pollbooks during the upcoming primary. He also highlighted the County's purchase of the former GAI Tronics facility in Mohnton to serve as a South Campus and gives the County about 110,000 square feet of space for election equipment storage, County archives and other services.

"We've made these investments for the improvement of elections here in Berks County," Barnhardt said.

Barnhardt also spoke about the initial steps of the County's correctional facility project, which restarted in January after a hiatus due to COVID-19. He stressed that the project isn't about creating more space for cells, but for important services and updated resources to best serve the community. "This will be the number one financial project this County has ever undertaken," he said. "We need to understand the need for this and the process. When built correctly, this facility will last us for at least 50 to 70 years."

Commissioner Rivera shared about



Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt

his first two years in office and the learning opportunity the COVID-19 pandemic provided for him as a new Commissioner and the County overall. "These past few years there's been a lot of changes that we've implemented at the County that will have a long-lasting positive impact on the county and County finances," he said. Rivera shared about the County's overall fiscal situation, highlighting several positive factors, including no tax increases the last two years, a growing tax base and that Berks was one of only five counties in Pennsylvania to have a AAA bond rating that assures the County the lowest



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financing rates available. Rivera also shared about the formation of the Savings and Efficiencies Team, which meets monthly to discuss ways to reduce costs and improve operations. "We are constantly looking at ways to save money and be more efficient in the way we operate," he said.

Leinbach, who has been answering questions about the return of passenger rail service since his first run for office in 2007, said he is cautiously optimistic about its return to Berks County in the next five years. Following the formation of a Tri-County Committee in 2021 with Chester and Montgomery counties, all three counties are now preparing to consider the formation of the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority in April.

Leinbach said creating this authority is a critical next step in the process because it will allow for negotiations with Amtrak, Norfolk Southern and SEPTA and allow for the acceptance and expending of funds. He stressed that this authority would be created with a renewal clause in three years that would allow the counties to evaluate the process and determine if it is still the best path forward. "We're in an exciting place," he said. "But please understand that this is a



Commissioner Christian Leinbach

next step, and we are acting in a way that is fiscally responsible."

Leinbach highlighted that the City has also been involved in the passenger rail initiative and that Mayor Eddie Moran is one of the three authority members proposed for Berks. While some may be skeptical, Leinbach said he's aware of developers who are already looking into purchasing real estate in downtown Reading based on the prospect of passenger rail service.

"Nothing can transform the city of Reading more than the restoration of passenger rail service," he said.

(Continued on page 22)

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GRCA BREAKFAST

(Continued from page 21)



Retiree Mary Buerer received the "Long-Suffering Award."

Attendees were given a handout addressing frequently asked questions about the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority, such as the proposed route, who will operate it and how much will it cost.

In a light-hearted moment at the end the program, Katie Hetherington Cunfer, GRCA's Director of Advocacy and Government Affairs, gave a "Long-Suffering Award" to Mary Buerer, who retired in January after serving as Leinbach's executive assistant for

14 years. "Mary's touched so many lives, so many lives in County government and so many people that called and needed help," he said. "And Mary talked to them. She listened."

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SMALL BUSINESSES SAY INFLATION IS THEIR TOP CONCERN

New findings from MetLife and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Index shows soaring concern for inflation from small business owners. This quarter, 85% of small business owners say they are concerned about the impact of inflation on their business, up from 74% last quarter. Two-thirds (67%) have raised prices to cope with inflation pressures. Top Takeaways

- 85% of small business owners say they are concerned about the impact of inflation on their business, up from 74% last quarter.

- One in three (33%) small business owners now rank inflation as their highest concern.

- In response to inflation pressure, 67% of small business owners have raised prices.

Report Summary

Inflation is, by far, the top concern for small businesses this quarter, according to new data from the MetLife & U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Index survey taken January 14 - 26, 2022. Small businesses also expressed high levels of concern over supply chain disruptions. While these were key challenges cited in Q4 last year, concerns around inflation and supply chains have intensified.

Both issues are forcing small businesses to find ways to improvise and deal with an environment where increasing prices and supply chain headaches are the norm, at least for the foreseeable future. Some small businesses are reacting by raising prices or altering their supply chains.

Some small businesses cited concern about rising interest rates this year—and what impact that might have on their business. This comes ahead of anticipated rate increases from the Federal Reserve later in March. Although rising rates are not as top-of-mind as the reported difficulties small business owners are facing due to soaring prices or supply chain disruption, it's a concern to watch.

Heightened Concern for Inflation Spans Regions and Sectors

With inflation reaching multi-decade highs, small businesses say rising costs have become their top challenge. Furthermore, small business concerns over inflation are growing—they are much higher than they were last quarter (Q4 2021).

One in three (33%) small businesses now rank inflation as the biggest challenge facing the small business community (up 10 percentage points from Q4 2021) and up 14 percentage points from Q3 of last year.

More than eight in ten (85%) small business owners or decision makers are concerned about the impact of inflation on their business and almost half (44%) indicate they are very concerned (up 13 percentage points since Q4 2021). Three in four small businesses find managing higher costs due to inflation difficult (76%) and say rising prices have had a significant impact on their business in the past year (74%).

In Q2 2021, only 16% of small businesses surveyed said that inflation was a big concern, behind their concerns about taxes and consumer demand (both at 23% saying they were big concerns) at the time.

Small Businesses Raising Prices to Cope with Spiraling Inflation

To cope with rising inflation small business owners are adjusting, most often by raising the prices for their goods and services. A strong majority (67%) of small businesses report having to raise their prices over the past year. Another four in ten (41%) report having decreased staff or taken out a loan in the past year (39%) in response to growing inflation pressures.

(Continued on page 24)



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SMALL BUSINESSES – INFLATION

(Continued from page 23)

There are nuances to how small business owners are responding depending on firm size and sector. Larger small businesses (those with 20 or more employees) are more likely to report decreasing staff or taking out a loan in response to inflation than those with fewer employees. Small businesses in the retail sector are the most likely sector to report increasing the prices of their goods and services (80%) compared to those in professional services (68%), manufacturing (65%), and services (56%).

Inflation Everywhere: Across the Country and For All Sectors

Inflation is everywhere: the impacts of rising inflation are affecting small businesses of every size, in every sector, and in every region of the country.

In fact, small businesses owners in every region of the country cite it as one of the largest challenges they face. Small businesses with 1-4 employees and 5-19 employees also rank inflation as the top challenge — while small businesses with 20-499 employees rate it as a top-tier concern alongside COVID-19 protocols and supply chain issues. It is also among the biggest concerns in all four regions of the country. Finally, across sectors, those in the manufacturing (41%), services (35%), retail

(32%) and professional services (29%) sector all cite inflation as one of the top challenges facing the small business community.

After inflation, supply chain issues (26%), along with COVID (24%), are the next biggest concerns for small business owners this quarter. More small business owners (26%) now cite supply chain issues as their biggest problem, up eight percentage points from Q4 2021. (As noted above, 33% said inflation is their biggest concern). The vast majority (76%) of small businesses are concerned about the impact supply chain disruptions are having on their business.

More than six in ten (63%) small businesses report having their supply chain disrupted by COVID, though this has not increased significantly since Q4 2021 (61%). A similar share (65%) state it is difficult to manage disruptions to their supply chain (similar to 61% in Q3 2021).

In response to these disruptions, 61% of respondents report altering their supply chain in the last six months — consistent with the share who said the same in Q4 2021 (63%). Finally, a majority (55%) report having their supply chain disrupted due to a lack of workers.

Source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

U.S. CHAMBER URGES FOCUS ON ENERGY, FOOD AND HOUSING TO COMBAT HISTORIC INFLATION

On March 10, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures the change over time in the price of consumer goods. The new numbers for February 2022 show a 0.8% rise in the cost of goods and services from January, up 7.9% in the last year, with energy, housing, and food seeing the largest increases last month.

Following the release of February's CPI data, Neil Bradley, Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, released the below statement:

"Yet another report of historic inflation is a stark reminder that this is one of the most pressing economic challenges we face today and for the foreseeable future. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine adding to the inflationary pressures, it is time for policymakers to focus on what they can do to reduce rising prices. But first, the administration must stop blaming business for rising prices. The data is clear, prices are rising for all types of goods and

services, driven by constrained supply and increased demand.

"We urge policymakers to focus on three key areas that have a large impact on family budgets and the overall economy: energy, food, and housing. It's time now for the administration to partner with domestic energy producers to remove regulatory red tape and make it easier to produce more oil and gas here in America. Congress and the administration should act now to support American farmers in increasing production, to help offset what will be lost in Ukraine and Russia, including by dealing with rising energy costs and potential fertilizer shortages.

Finally, over many years housing construction has not kept up with demand. Policymakers need to reduce costs on housing inputs by reducing tariffs and reforming our zoning and permitting laws to make it easier to build new housing where it is needed."



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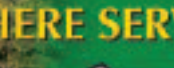
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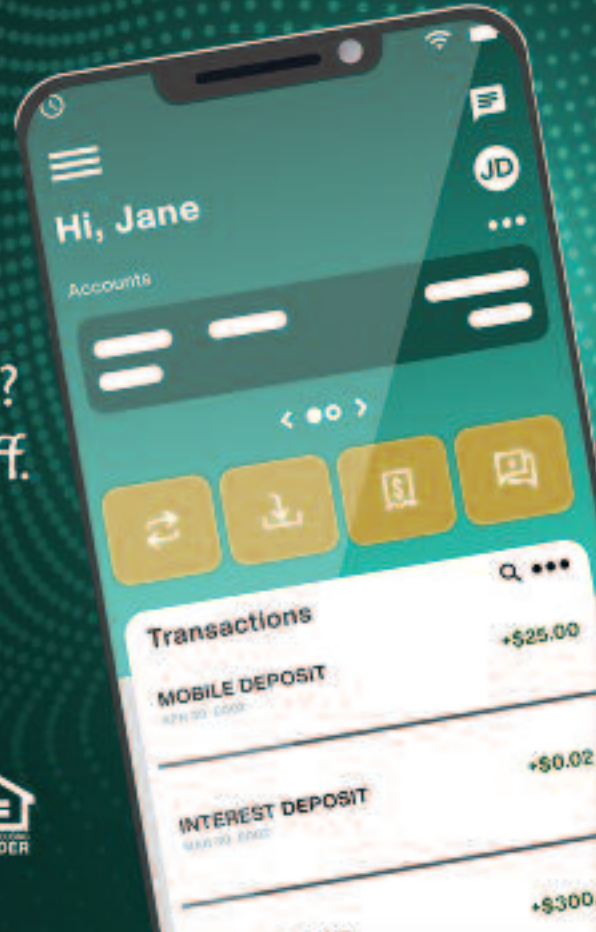
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By Theresa Mintzer

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All jobs are either management or owner supervised, and through owner/operator Sebastian Sottosanti's persistent dedication to excellence, integrity and dependability, his family business, started by his father in 1978, has steadily grown over the years. Today, Sottosanti Lawn Care provides a wide range of lawn care, hardscaping and landscaping

services (see accompanying sidebar for a complete listing of services).

In addition to a growing list of residential and commercial clients, Sottosanti Lawn Care has also expanded to include the Home-Owners Association market and the municipal market — providing services for townships and municipalities. The company is fully insured and provides FREE estimates and a one-year warranty on all hardscape and landscape materials installed, and a FREE consultation on all services except landscape design. The company is highly rated by *Home Advisor* and has received numerous business awards for providing outstanding service.

Sebastian Sottosanti clearly loves what he does for a living. "I love the business and I love making a difference in people's properties," he said. "We're all about property value enhancement. I take great pride especially in 'before' and 'after' photos. It's a great feeling of pride when you come into a property that's been neglected for a while and you turn that property around and get it to where it once was or should have been," he explains, adding, "I'm a strong proponent of supervised work. When we take on a job, we strive to service it as if it was our own property . . . If you do a good job for people, it's going to make a difference, and you make it a point to keep an open line of communication with clients as well. You don't want any miscommunication or misunderstandings getting in the way of a good client relationship."

Sebastian's hard-working father started the business by cutting lawns and doing yard work from 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM as a side job before heading to his full-time factory job each day in season. Since those humble beginnings, the business has steadily grown to currently include a fleet of seven trucks and 11 employees.





"I love hearing from people who tell me 'I see your trucks all over the place,' Sebastian says."

As the list of satisfied customers continues to grow, so does the demand for the company's services. On the cusp of becoming a large company with an eye toward future growth, Sottosanti Lawn Care is currently interested in hiring additional employees. "We are currently looking for motivated self-starters seeking the security of stable employment with a solid established, employee-friendly company," Sebastian explains. "There is a

definite opportunity for internal advancement, and our goal is to become a year 'round industry and expand into indoor property management," he said, adding, "This is not an easy job. It takes a special kind of person and that's the type of worker this company is looking for."

As a 10-year-old who sometimes butted heads with his father about having to help mow lawns during the summer months while other children played, Sebastian had no idea he was actually building the foundation for his future. "Instead of getting in trouble or wasting time, it

developed my career path" he said, adding, "It also instilled some values in me, and a hard work ethic. You always say you're going to be different, and you turn out exactly like your parents."

Ironically, Sebastian's father would have preferred that his son had gone into the business world, wearing a suit and tie to work instead of engaging in the struggle of hard labor that he had himself endured his entire life. Sebastian saw it differently. Upon graduating from LaSalle University in 1994 with a degree in Business Management, he decided to combine his knowledge of business with his innate love for the landscape work he grew up doing, and he decided to join forces and partner with his father in the family business.

Although it turned out to be the right decision for Sebastian, there were, of course, challenges along the way, particularly with the passing of his father in 2002. "The business was thrust upon me by necessity," he said. "I would say there was a good five or six years of struggle. Working with my dad, we were splitting profits basically. He was quite the efficient worker and when hiring workers as employees who were not as involved or invested in the business, the profits were not what they once were," he

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explains. As a result, Sebastian was determined to develop and expand his business skills. "You definitely sharpen your pencil on that. I've learned more professionalism, to under promise and over deliver, and generally do what you say you're going to do," he said.

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REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

GREATER READING CHAMBER ALLIANCE



• 606 Court Street, Reading, PA 19601
• 610.376.6766 • fax 610.376.4135
• info@greaterreading.org
• www.greaterreading.org

Our mission is to be Berks County's leading unified resource for building a healthy, competitive business community. Our vision is to assist companies to retain, expand and grow their operations and employment and attract new businesses to Berks County.

UPCOMING EVENTS

INTRO TO EXCEL - SPRING 2022: Monday Apr 4, 2022

8:00 AM - 10:30 AM EDT

Four weeks on Mondays: April 4, 11, 18, 25

Location: Shearer Technical

727 Penn Avenue

West Reading, PA 19611

\$240/person - Chamber Members

\$340/person - Non-Chamber Members

<http://www.greaterreading.org>

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11142>

DISCOVERY FCU GRAND RE-OPENING EVENT: Tuesday Apr 5, 2022

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM EDT

Cutting at 4 pm sharp

Location: 2744 Century Blvd.

Wyomissing, PA 19610

Parking on-site

<http://discoveryfcu.org>

Contact Information: Melissa Hassler
mhassler@greaterreading.org

NETWORKING@NIGHT - ALVERNIA UNIVERSITY/ COLLEGETOWNE: Tuesday Apr 5, 2022

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM EDT

Location: Alvernia University (Collegetowne)

401 Penn St., Reading PA 19601

Free to GRCA members

Exclusive member event

Contact Information: Rachael Romig

rromig@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11031>

INTERMEDIATE EXCEL - SPRING 2022: Wednesday Apr 6, 2022

8:00 AM - 10:30 AM EDT

Four weeks on Wednesdays: April 6, 13, 20, 27

Location: Shearer Technical Computer Consultants

727 Penn Avenue

West Reading, PA 19611

\$240/person - Chamber Members;

\$340/person - Not-Yet Chamber Members

<http://GreaterReading.org>

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11143>

EXECUTIVE BRIEFING: WHAT IS IT COSTING YOU NOT TO LISTEN? HOW NOT LISTENING IS AFFECTING YOUR BOTTOM LINE: Thursday Apr 7, 2022

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM EDT

Location: Center for Business Excellence

49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing, PA 19610

Limited Seating! \$50 person for Chamber Members; \$295 person for Not-Yet Chamber Members

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11106>

ADVANCED EXCEL - SPRING 2022: Friday Apr 8, 2022

8:00 AM - 10:30 AM EDT

Fridays: April 8, 15, 22, 29

Location: Shearer Technical

727 Penn Avenue, West Reading, PA 19611

\$240/person - Chamber Members;

\$340/person - Not-Yet Chamber Members

<http://GreaterReading.org>

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11144>

LEAD WORKER CERTIFICATE PROGRAM AM - SPRING 2022: Monday Apr 11, 2022

9:30 AM - 11:30 AM EDT

11 weeks on Mondays: April 11, 18, 25 May 2, 9, 16, 23 June 6, 13, 20, 27

Location: Center for Business Excellence

49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing, PA 19610

or virtually on Zoom

\$660/ person - Chamber Members
\$760/ person - Not-Yet Chamber Members

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11117>

SUPERVISOR TRAINING MODULE 3: LEVERAGING WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS - SPRING 2022: Tuesday Apr 19, 2022

8:30 AM - 11:30 AM EDT

6 weeks on Tuesday: April 19, 26 May 3, 10, 17, 24

Location: Center for Business Excellence

49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing, PA 19610

or virtually on Zoom

\$595/person for Chamber Members;
\$745/person for Not-Yet Chamber Members

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11114>

GRCA | GREATER READING Chamber Alliance

THE DINNER

May 11 • 5 - 8:30 p.m.

Santander Arena

Eat, drink and network while celebrating the best of the best in the Greater Reading business community.

SCAN ME to purchase tickets & for more info

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WOMEN2WOMEN CONFERENCE & EXPO 2022: Wednesday Apr 20, 2022

7:30 AM - 3:30 PM EDT

Location: Santander Performing Arts Center

136 N 6th Street, Reading, PA 19602

\$90 / All Day; \$20 / Breakfast Only

\$175 / Expo Vendor (includes 6ft table outside Ballroom, one all day ticket, & designated Expo time with attendees - download application here

Contact Information: Rachael Romig 610-898-7775;
rromig@greaterreading.org

Register:
<https://business.greaterreading.org/events/details/women2women-conference-expo-2022-11034?calendarMonth=2022-04-01>

SUPERVISOR TRAINING MODULE 2: MANAGING PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPING EMPLOYEES - SPRING 2022: Wednesday Apr 20, 2022

8:30 AM - 11:30 AM EDT

6 weeks on Wednesdays: April 20, 27 May 4, 11, 18, 25

Location: Center for Business Excellence

49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing, PA 19610 or virtually on Zoom.

\$595/person for Chamber Members;
\$745/person for Not-Yet Chamber Members

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
610-898-8386; mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11116>

ARE TAXES ON SALE?: Wednesday Apr 27, 2022

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT Location: Zoom
FREE to Members and \$50 to Not-Yet Members
<http://GreaterReading.org> Contact Information:
Mark Dolinski; mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11148>

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE: Thursday Apr 28, 2022

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT

4 weeks on Thursday: April 28, May 5, 12, 19
Location: Center for Business Excellence
49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing, PA 19610

\$695/person for Chamber Members;
\$845/person for Not-Yet Chamber Members

<http://GreaterReading.org>; Contact Information:
Mark Dolinski; mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11145>

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TRICOUNTY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Building Communities, Creating Connections, Supporting Commerce

152 E. High St., Suite 200, Pottstown, PA 19464 | 610.326.2900 | www.tricountyareachamber.com

Our Mission: Leveraging the power of membership to provide valued membership services and proactive leadership for the tri-county region.

Our Vision: The tri-county area has a strong sense of place – quality of life, economic opportunity, and generations of leaders - to support the region's businesses and communities.

WELCOME APPROVED NEW MEMBERS!

Congratulations to the businesses listed below. Their applications were approved by the Board of Directors in March.

1200 High Street LLC
Property Management Real Estate -
Commercial / Industrial
Real Estate Investment

Chris Rezapour Agency, Allstate
<https://agents.allstate.com/chris-rezapour-pottstown-pa.html>
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MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Anniversary to the following Members!

44+ Years

AAA East Central

30 Years

KenCrest EmployNet

24 Years

Berks County Abstract Company

Spring Ford Country Club

Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, PC

15 Years

422 Business Center

10 Years

Staples, Inc. #0329

6 Years

Dana Incorporated

Pearl Exhibit Group

Building Communities

Creating Connections

Supporting Commerce

Membership opens the door for your business to exchange ideas with other talented leaders in business, community, and government.

CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT



**By Eileen Dautrich,
TCACC President**

2022 brings more change for the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce. I had mentioned in a previous article that the

Chamber adopted a new Tiers Investment opportunity for our Members to participate in providing them with more control to customize their Membership experience. This new membership structure not only includes the annual payment of membership dues, but each tier also includes various values of member benefits, marketing exposure, and event sponsorships. Our top tier are "Stakeholders" based on their support of our organization but also providing support across the tri-county region and throughout our communities. The other three Tier Investments match the TriCounty Chamber's three cornerstones – Building Communities, Creating Connections, and Supporting Commerce. Each cornerstone named Tier has a particular area of focus and includes benefits that align with that focus.

In an effort to guarantee our Members' success with their tiers and realize the greatest value out of all the benefits that their tier offers, we are investing in an employee to work with our Tier Investors. This new part-time position, our Member Relations and Engagement Director, will serve as a concierge for these Members as her initial responsibility.

It is my pleasure to announce Megan McKee has been hired for this new position as Member Relations and Engagement Director. Megan is a former TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce employee, and we are excited to welcome her back and benefit from her skills.

With this new change comes a re-organization of some current staff responsibilities and with the talented team that we have in place we are grateful to the entire team for their attitude and owning of their areas of responsibility and bringing their best every day to benefit the Members of the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce. Alice Funk will modify a portion of her responsibilities and her title will change to reflect her focus on managing and facilitating our events and expanding the programs that we offer to our Members. Her new title is Events and Member Programs Director.

One thing that does not change is our dedication to our Membership and we look forward to continuing to ask our Members what their needs are and with the dedication of our small (but growing) team we commit to working to meet and exceed those needs and our Members' expectations.

A special thank you to the companies that to date have selected a Tier Investment opportunity:

Stakeholder Tier Investor: Constellation; DANA, Pottstown Hospital Tower Health; Precision Polymer Products Inc.; Schultz Technology

Building Communities Tier Investor: CEDARVILLE Engineering Group, LLC; Herbein + Company, Inc.; Maillie LLP; Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation

Creating Connections Tier Investor: Boyertown Oil & Propane – Cool Crew; Martin Stone Quarries, Inc.; O'Donnell, Weiss & Mattei, P.C.; Pottstown Area Economic Development

For additional information on Tiers Investment participation please contact me at 610.326.2900 or eileen@tricountyareachamber.com.

"Progress is impossible without change,"

– Walt Disney



#tcaccbettertogether

It is our Anniversary!



Join Us in Celebrating 95 Years!

- 5 Breakfast Meetings
- 9 Speakers Featured Over 5 Months
- 95 Minute Events

Featuring:

- Networking
- Introductions from all in attendance
- Keynote Speakers
- Did we mention networking? 😊

Wednesday, April 20th Breakfast

Madeleine Dean & Harry Cunnane

BROOKSIDE COUNTRY CLUB | 8AM-9:35AM

Member: \$35 | Non-Member: \$70



2022 TIERS INVESTORS!

STAKEHOLDER



Constellation



Pottstown Hospital
TOWER HEALTH
Advancing Health. Transforming Lives.



Precision Polymer Products, Inc.

Let's best friend
SCHULTZ
technology

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CEDARVILLE



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Martin
STONE QUARRIES INC.



MONTGOMERY
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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LAW



POTTSTOWN AREA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sharing Your Potential

LUNCHEON

Panel Discussion



Barbara Akins, Owner- Barbara A. Akins Certified Personal Accountant

Terese Brittingham, Broker/Owner; Keller Williams Realty Group

Tonya Petrunak, Director of Marketing, Reading Fightin' Phils; Executive Director, Baseballtown Charities

Wednesday | 4 May 2022 | 11:30AM-1:00PM

at The SunnyBrook Ballroom



FOR QUESTIONS OR FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SPONSORSHIPS PLEASE CALL ALICE AT 610.326.2900 OR EMAIL ALICE@TRICOUNTYAREACHAMBER.COM. REGISTER USING THE QR CODE OR GO TO WWW.TRICOUNTYAREACHAMBER.COM

TRICOUNTY AREA CHAMBER ANNUAL DINNER

Keynote - "Think Like an Olympian"

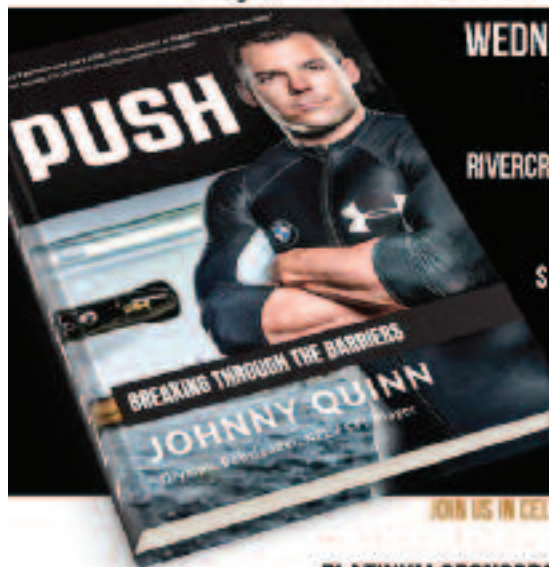
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27TH

START TIME: 5:00 PM

RIVERCREST GOLF CLUB & PRESERVE

\$95 PER MEMBER

\$190 PER NON-MEMBER



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REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

SPRING-FORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Building a Better Community Through Business

• P.O. Box 127, Royersford PA 19468 • 610.489.7200



The Spring-Ford Chamber of Commerce is a community-focused business advocate. We strive to help our member businesses grow while improving the community in which we all live and work.

The Chamber consists of local businesses whose main objective is to run a successful business. We are a great resource for members, not only because we offer the opportunity to network and brainstorm with fellow members, but also to have exposure to the local community, your customer, through our continued involvement in community events and charitable endeavors. Visit www.springfordchamber.com for Chamber Events, Press Releases, Online Newsletters and more!

Chamber Member Notes:

- The chamber has a lot of great upcoming events. Registration for events can be found at www.springfordchamber.com
- Be sure to check out member to member discounts
- The Chamber is now accepting dates for networking events and workshops. If you are interested in holding an event in 2022, please contact us at info@springfordchamber.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Registrations can be found at www.springfordchamber.com

10th Annual Fashion Show Thursday, April 7th

11:15AM – 1:45PM

Sunnybrook Ballroom

Benefitting the YWCA Tri-County Area
Lunch, Basket Raffle, Fashions, Crafters & Entertainment

KICK OFF - Spring-Ford Young Professionals Network Wednesday, April 20th

6:00pm - 9:00pm

The Loft at Landis Creek

\$5.00 Includes drink ticket and flatbreads

Open to the general public

Everyone young at heart is welcome

Shark Think Tank - Business Owners Roundtable Thursday, April 21st

11:30am – 1:00pm

Copperfield Inn at Creekside

Business owners' members only

Announcing Spring-Ford Chamber 2022 Annual Luncheon

JOIN US
THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2022
11:30AM - 1:30PM
COPPERFIELD INN AT LAKESIDE
\$45 - MEMBERS/ \$55 - NON-MEMBERS

Lunch includes: networking reception, lunch, chamber awards, and keynote speaker Aaron Muderick. Owner and Creator of Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty. The fidget that went world wide and based in Greater Philadelphia!

Sponsorships and Lunch Registrations Available on Chamber Website

crazy AARON'S

RETURNING TO IN-PERSON EVENTS IN A BIG WAY!

The Spring-Ford Chamber of Commerce has a packed schedule for the spring and early summer of 2022. Kicking off with their 10th Annual Fashion Show and Basket Raffle for Charity benefiting the YWCA Tri-County Area on Thursday, April 7th at Sunnybrook Ballroom. This event is open to the general public and will include fashions by Piccolo

Boutique, Rust and Sparkle, Nich, Dress Code and Nautica. Tickets are \$35.00 and include lunch, the fashion show, basket raffle, local women artisan vendors and more... Registration can be found at www.springfordchamber.com

On April 20th, the chamber is launching a Young Professionals Network that will kick-off at Creekside Bar and Grill from 6pm – 9pm. The cost is \$5.00 but includes a drink ticket and flatbreads. The YPN will continue in the upcoming months with lunch and learn opportunities and other happy hours throughout the Spring-Ford community. These events are open to the public and include everyone young at heart.

As we jump into May, the chamber is excited to bring back our Dog Days of Summer at the Upper Providence Township Building, Black Rock Park on Saturday, May 7th. Bring out those four-legged furry pals for a day of fun filled frivolities including pet adoptions, yard games, a pet parade, photos and a costume contest. A special appearance by Bluey. Vendors are welcome.

The highlight of the spring will be the Annual Luncheon on May 12th; where we will welcome keynote speaker Aaron Muderick, owner and creator of Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty. This amazing company is located right in Norristown, PA and is distributed world-wide. Come hear how Aaron created this amazing product and designed a production that accommodates individuals with disabilities. The Annual Luncheon will also include chamber awards and a networking reception. Sponsors include Keller Williams Realty Group and Patrick J Kelly Insurance Group.

We hope you can join us for these amazing 2022 events.

Dog Days of Summer
May 7, 2022
Expo and Carnival

BLACK ROCK PARK
1286 BLACK ROCK ROAD, PHOENIXVILLE
10:00AM - 1:00PM

Vendors Wanted

FOOD FOR PEOPLE AND PETS,
YARD GAMES, PET ADOPTIONS AND
THE DOG WALK FOR CHARITY, PET PARADE
COSTUME CONTEST, PET PHOTOS AND MORE...

Presented by the UPT Parks and Recreation and the Spring-Ford Chamber of Commerce

CITADEL

REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- 171 East Bridge Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460
- 610.933.3070 • fax 610.917.0503
- info@phoenixvillechamber.org
- www.phoenixvillechamber.org

**Celebrating 90 years in the
PXV Business Community**



The Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce is an independent organization serving the business interests of Northern Chester, Western Montgomery and parts of Delaware Counties.

The Chamber's mission is to "advance the principles of free enterprise by providing the leadership which will enhance the economic climate of the region, address the priority needs of its members, and interact with other individuals and organizations for the overall benefit of the business community."

UPCOMING EVENTS

PHOENIXVILLE SOCIAL HOUR

connecting our community
presented by



Young Professionals Networking (YPN), has changed its name to Phoenixville Social Network with the Phoenixville Jaycees on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Visit the Phoenixville Social Hour Facebook Page for details.

Annual Chamber Awards Dinner & Membership Meeting March 30th, 5:30 PM, Rivercrest Golf Club & Preserve

Each year, the Chamber honors its members for their contributions to the Phoenixville Community. Join us for this outstanding night. See Phoenixville Chamber website for more information and to register. www.phoenixvillechamber.org

First Fridays, 2022

First Fridays - May 6, June 3, July 1, August 5, September 2, October 7. See phoenixvillefirst.org for updated information in April.

For dates and times of events including Non Profit Roundtable, Chamber Round Up and Chamber 101, visit the Phoenixville Regional Chamber website.

REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

PERKIOMEN VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



521 Main Street, Trappe, PA 19436 • 610.489.6660
• info@PVchamber.net • www.PVchamber.net

Welcome to the Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce!

For over 60 years the Chamber has been the recognized voice & advocate for the business community. Creating opportunities for members to connect with business professionals, mentors, and potential customers, the Chamber helps members improve business and create a thriving community for themselves and their employees. We can help grow YOUR customer base in Collegeville, Trappe, Schwenksville, Upper

Providence, Lower Frederick, Lower Providence, Perkiomen, Skippack, and Oaks. For more information contact Executive Director, Renee Blomstrom, 610-489-6660, renee@PVchamber.net.

Don't miss Virtual Chamber events, member news, special offers and more... Like us on Facebook @PerkValleyChamber and email info@PVchamber.net to receive weekly e-news! Visit www.PVchamber.net to view membership directory

e-News: We've increased communications, sending time-sensitive announcements/resource links through email and social media. To sign-up for E-news, send request to info@PVchamber.net. Follow the PV Chamber Facebook Page @PerkValleyChamber.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2, 2022 @ 9am – 12pm: Business & Community Secure Shredding Event

Open to all residents (no appointment needed). Due to space limitations, businesses with more than 6 boxes must pre-register for a time slot by calling the PV Chamber office at 610-489-6660. Free event; Suggested donation \$10/box. First 100 attendees will receive a swag bag!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

Look for details on www.pvchamber.net

April 8, 2022 @ Noon: 2022 PV Chamber Business Book Club

Attendees at bi-monthly PVCC Business Book Club participate in book discussions and "all things business" reviews. All are welcome to attend. Book discussion: The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team, by Patrick Lencioni. RSVP required.

April 28, 2022 @ 11:45am: Business Roundtable Luncheon

Join us for an interactive discussion and sharing of best practices among other business owners and key decision makers at a lunch meeting at Margarita's Restaurant, Collegeville. Networking 11:45am – Noon. Discussion and lunch Noon – 1pm. Member-only event. Pre-registration required.

July 12, 2022: PVCC Annual Summer BBQ & Mixer

Back by popular demand - BBQ Picnic & Mixer at the PV Chamber office! Stop by between 3pm – 6pm to network with business leaders, enjoy food and refreshments, and tour the chamber office. A large tent will provide shade and protection in event of inclement weather. Sponsorships available. RSVP no later than July 1st.

July 25, 2022: Inaugural Sporting Clay Outing

****New Event**** The Chamber's Events Committee will host the first PVCC Sporting Clay Outing on Monday, July 25th at LVSC. Package includes loaner gun (or bring your own), ammunition and other supplies, as well as basic instructions from expert instructors – no experience necessary! Networking luncheon at Grumpy's BBQ immediately following the outing. Sponsorships available. Call Chamber for details.

August 3, 2022: Annual Night Out at Reading Phils

Baseball is back! The PV Chamber will be returning to First Energy Stadium this Summer!

Become a Sponsor - YOUR logo will be printed on 10,000 tickets and receive 400 tickets to gift to clients, employees, friends and family. Sponsorship \$400...that's just \$1 per ticket!

...More events at
www.PVChamber.net

FEATURED EVENT PVCC Annual Golf Outing

June 13,
2022

Spring Ford Country Club



This event is BIGGER THAN EVER!!! Get your business name in front of 144 golfers and volunteers! Golfer ticket includes Lunch, Bloody Mary's, golf, goody bag, snacks and beverages on course, many contests and networking dinner! Non-golfers welcome to volunteer or purchase a ticket for the networking dinner.

Golf and Sponsorship Details and Registration on www.PVchamber.net or contact Renee Blomstrom to discuss a custom package! Sponsorship packages starting as low as \$100. The Chamber is seeking donations for Golfer Goody Bags, Raffle Prizes and Golf Prizes!

Title Sponsor:



Interested in Hosting a Chamber Mixer?

Mixers are an ideal opportunity to gain exposure and publicity for your business. We now offer morning and afternoon time slots. Pre- and post-event recognition in PVCC newsletter, including photos. The 2022 calendar is filling up fast. Contact Renee Blomstrom at 610-489-6660.

REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP



MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

• 101 Bill Smith, Blvd King of Prussia, PA 19406
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The actual charter of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce can trace its roots to the 1912 charter of the original Norristown Chamber of Commerce, later becoming the Montgomery County Board of Trade. Over the course of the 20th century, these Chambers evolved into the Ambler, Conshohocken, Central Montco, King of Prussia, Valley Forge and Wissahickon Valley Chambers of Commerce. We proudly welcome over 400 companies and 1500 stakeholders in southeastern Pennsylvania.

BENEFITS OF JOINING THE CHAMBER:

Advocacy | Networking | Grow Your Business | Referrals | Benefits Management
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UPCOMING EVENT



Wednesday, April 27, 2022
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

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GUEST SPEAKER
Kevin Steele

District Attorney of Montgomery County



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THE SBRA COMMUNITY

WHY SHOULD I NETWORK?



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association**

That's a great question and it made me think, if you asked a dozen different people about their thoughts on "networking", what would they answer? Would you get consensus or a dozen different perspectives? So, at a networking meeting last week, I asked the question to a small group of business owners and here are some of the comments they made.

I hate it but it's a necessary evil. I feel uncomfortable going into large groups of people that I do not know. I am afraid someone will ask me a question that I don't know the answer to. I am not good at starting a conversation with a stranger. I don't like that everyone is trying to sell me and I am trying to sell them. Everyone seems to be in small groups, huddled in the corners of the room or around the bar and I would have to break into the group. Some of these networking groups are expensive. Some of the groups meet every week and it is very time consuming. It is the same people every week and I have to be a member of several groups to meet new people and that is additional cost and time out of the week. I have met some great people and I do business with some of them and I really enjoy going to the meetings, however, the social experience has now been overpowered by the financial expense.

You can make all the excuses in the world about why you do not like networking, but, at the end of the day—get over it. You will not be able to build your business waiting for the phone to ring or hoping someone sends you an email. Believe in yourself and your product and be excited to tell others.

Here are a few ideas that might help you better enjoy and benefit from your next networking event.

Prepare for the event

- Find someone that has participated in the event previously to find out what to expect. How many people, types of attendees, dress, atmosphere, when best to show up...
- Find someone you know that has attended before and see if you can go with them.
- Take a good supply of business cards
- Make sure you have a good 15-second elevator speech. Practice it over and over in front of a mirror to make sure you can deliver it in a normal, friendly speech tone.
- Think of a couple of introductory questions that could start your conversation.

During the event

- Put on your smiley face, be positive and approachable. Most people like to associate with happy, friendly people.
- Walk up to someone you don't know, extend your hand and introduce yourself and briefly tell them what you do (in as few words as possible). Either they will ask you a question about yourself or about your business or they will give you their name and what they do. Regardless, the ice is broken and a conversation should pursue.
- Try not to spend more than 10 or 15 minutes with any one person as they may be wanting to network more and meet other people.
- Always get their business card and if possible, write a couple of notes on it to remind you later about specific facts you wanted to remember.

- If possible, introduce people you met to other people you might know. This shows that you are looking to help others rather than just looking for your own sales. This is what I call REVERSE NETWORKING. The more you help others, the more likely they will want to help you.

After the event

- Within 24 hours, make sure you have emailed everyone you met with a thank you for spending time with you and sharing their story. If possible, something in the email that reflects back to the note you placed on their card. Make your email personal.
- Within a week of the event, if you feel you met someone that would be a good potential client, call or email them to set up a meeting. Get them in or out of the system as soon as possible.

Now maybe you can relate to one of these responses: "I make networking part of my weekly business routine", "Without networking I would not be as successful", "I network just to meet people and make new friends but, business usually follows shortly thereafter".

I can really relate to the last response. "I network just to meet people and make new friends but, business usually follows shortly thereafter". This person obviously takes a different approach to networking. They view networking events as a time and place to make new relationships. One of the primary reasons we are on this earth is to socially interact with other human beings. Networking provides a great way to fulfill that need.

Once you meet someone and have developed a relationship with them, you will better understand who they are, what they might need and how you might fulfill that need. Networking can help you define and refine who your target client really is. Network to find those people.



SBRA Business Spotlight



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WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The *Emerging Entrepreneurs Academy* Provides High School Students With the Opportunity to Explore a Career as an Entrepreneur

The Small Business Resource Association (SBRA), in collaboration with Career Ready Berks, is launching the Emerging Entrepreneur's Academy (EEA), a unique educational program for high school students who aspire to someday own their own business. The EEA is designed to provide 11th and 12th grade students with both classroom instruction and in-the-field training through internships, allowing them to benefit from the knowledge and experience of local business owners. The six-week summer program for 2022 is being offered to 2 students selected from each Berks County school district that have expressed a desire to be an entrepreneur. Students of the EEA will learn the fundamentals of being an entrepreneur - how to analyze the market and competition, create a business plan, develop and execute a marketing plan, hire staff, manage a sales team, create a culture and more.

Students who have an interest in someday owning a business will gain valuable insight and knowledge in recognizing opportunities and understanding the challenges of owning a business... directly from local entrepreneurs. This interactive curriculum delivers a unique combination of educational workshops along with an internship-like experience for

greater guidance to career decision making - beyond the choices of college, trade school or entering the workforce after graduation. The SBRA aims to reverse statistics that show Berks County has the lowest business birth rate compared to neighboring counties, the State of PA and the entire nation. Launching this program makes perfect sense for the SBRA to help build a stronger Berks by fostering the growth of business.



The Emerging Entrepreneurs Academy Needs the Support of local Business Owners that want to make a difference!

Local business owners are encouraged to support this program as a presenter, an instructor, participating on a panel, offering an internship or sponsoring students. The SBRA's goal is to offset the entire cost of tuition through sponsorships. Sponsorship packages for those interested in supporting the EEA are available.

For details about the EEA - <https://www.sbrassociation.com/ee-academy>

Contact Gary Seibert at: gseibert@sbrassociation.com

SBRA Monthly Member Shout Out

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SBRA EVENTS - BE BETTER. GROW FASTER.

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Free to the public. Get more details and register at <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

- Tuesday, April 12th - 9:30-10:30 a.m. - SBRA Workshop
- Tuesday, April 26th - 9:30-10:30 a.m. - SBRA Workshop

120 MINGLE NETWORKING

- Wednesday, April 27th 5:30-7:00 at B2Bistro in West Reading

Register: <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

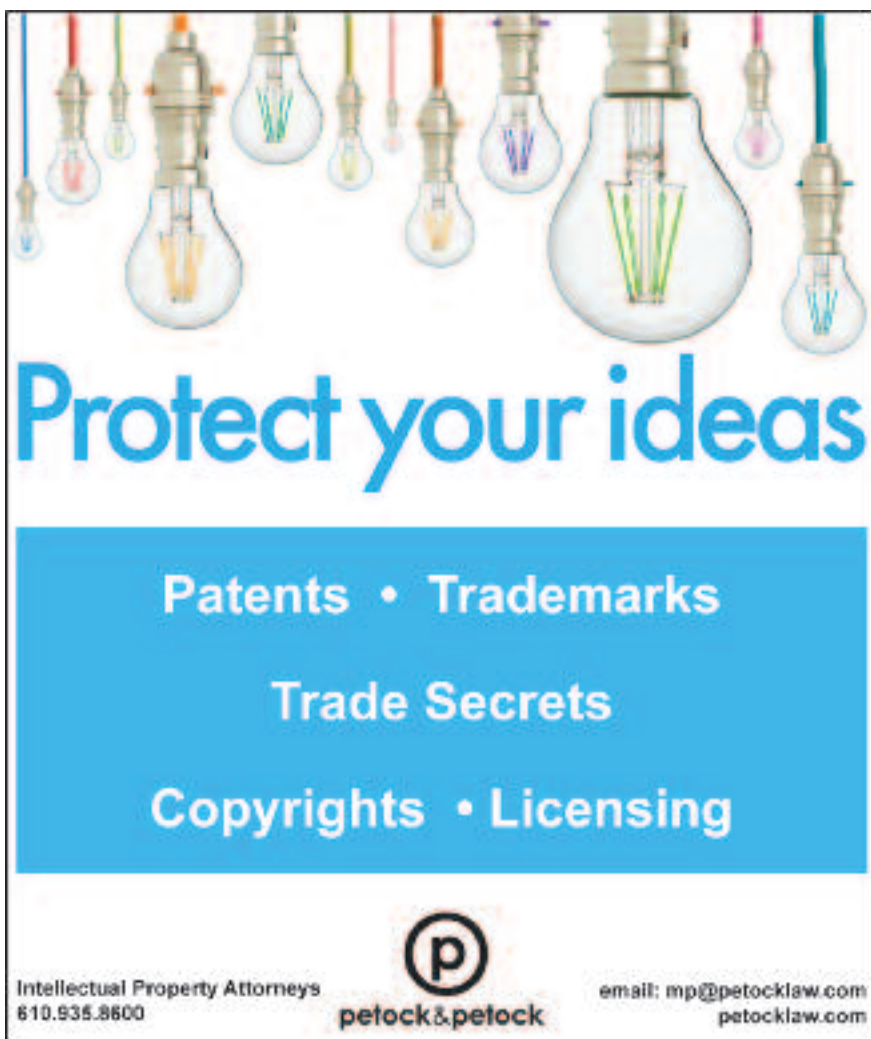
- Learn How the SBRA Can Help Your Business Grow - Membership Benefits Update Wednesday, April 27th, 9:00-9:30 a.m. via Zoom

Register: <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>



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THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF TRADEMARK PROTECTION



By **Michael C. Petock, Esq.**
Petock & Petock, LLC

Something I didn't anticipate in 2004 when I first started practicing Trademark Law, was just how big an impact the internet would have on this area of the law. Nowadays many businesses literally live and die by their internet presence, whether its marketing and running ads through Google, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, or selling through online marketplaces like Amazon or Etsy. Although the law hasn't always managed to keep up with the rapid pace of technology, knowledge of the issues and your options can help you keep up even when the law cannot.

For businesses treading the murky waters of selling on Amazon, consideration should be given to enrolling in Amazon's Brand Registry program. Amazon Brand Registry provides brand

owners with enhanced marketing features and brand protection tools. Amazon has recently amended its Brand Registry requirements to allow owners of pending trademark applications to enroll prior to registration in certain cases.

Even for businesses that don't rely heavily on Amazon, most businesses increasingly use social media for marketing, connecting with customers and ads. Infringements on social media are commonplace which can have serious adverse effects on your ability to control your brand and brand story. All social media sites have trademark enforcement policies that allow a brand owner to request removal of an infringing account. Mentioning in the request that you have a registered trademark greatly increases the chances that the social media site will act favorably on your request and remove the infringing account.

(Continued on page 42)

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TRADEMARK PROTECTION

(Continued from page 40)

Another interesting issue that has arisen is with "keyword" advertising. Occasionally a competitor will purchase your trademark (or you will purchase theirs) as a keyword in an internet advertising campaign (for example, in Google Ads). The end result is that when a potential customer "Googles" the trademark expecting to find the trademark owner's website, the competitor's "sponsored ad" appears instead. Courts have typically been reluctant to take action based on such advertising methods, but it's certainly an area where lines can be crossed — so it's wise to tread carefully.

In recent years many internet scams have also popped up targeting brand owners. For example, scammers (often located in China) have begun monitoring trademark filings at the United States Patent and Trademark (USPTO) for the purpose of registering the trademark as part of a domain name as soon as they see the trademark filing in the USPTO's public database. It's no fun to file a trademark application only to get an email a few days later offering to sell you yourtrademark.com! Fortunately, this one's easy to avoid simply by making sure all of your domain names are secured

prior to filing a trademark application.

Another scam to be aware of relates to many of the online companies offering trademark filing and registrations services. Recently the USPTO has been cracking down on improper submissions by some of these companies, including by issuing sanctions cancelling the applications and registrations of trademark owners who unwittingly fell victim to the fraud. Obviously, it makes sense to know who is filing your trademark applications.

The issues mentioned above and many others (and likely more to come) have convinced me more than ever that taking steps to secure and bolster your trademark rights as early as possible is well worth it. To this end, I strongly encourage all businesses to federally register at least their most important trademarks and service mark with the USPTO. The relatively modest effort and expense involved will prove well worth it if you ever find yourself needing to enforce your brand in the real world, on the internet, the metaverse or wherever the future may take us.

For additional information, please call 610.935.8600 or email: mp@petocklaw.com and visit www.petocklaw.com.

Meet Patti Seigel

Route 422 Business Advisor Advertising Manager



I enjoy working with a multitude of businesses throughout the region each month, and I get to see how our combination of advertising and editorial can have an impact, as I have watched these businesses thrive when they have effectively integrated our magazine into their marketing strategy.

Personally, I thrive on the inter-personal communications, and it is rewarding to see these businesses grow.

Please feel free to call me at 610.323.6253 to learn how you can take advantage of our publication.



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"The 422 Business Advisor is a great way to stay connected to the community. When we first started Patriot Pest Solutions ten years ago, Patti and Bill were invaluable in the initial stages of our business. We were able to start advertising at a budget that was doable at the time. As we have evolved over the years, it has been a terrific way to inform the Route 422 Business Advisor readers of the latest pest issues in the area. The Route 422 Business Advisor has become a staple in the region for local businesses!" – Denice Harrison
#Patriot Pest Solutions



"Being on the cover of the Route 422 Business Advisor has been a fantastic marketing opportunity for us! We have made some significant changes to our office, and we wanted fellow business owners and the rest of the community to know about our growing business. We received numerous calls, emails, and texts from friends, family, patients and business acquaintances congratulating us on how much they enjoyed and appreciated the cover story!" – Dr. Rod Gabel,
Yucha Medical Pain Management & Chiropractic Rehabilitation



"It (cover story) was a great experience and we have gotten a lot of phone calls from the exposure. From a marketing perspective the story was great for two reasons. It got us some terrific exposure which led to phone calls and quote requests. That's the short-term goal you would hope for and expect from this kind of exposure. The second and hopefully longer lasting benefit is the validation it can bring. It's easy for us to tell you we are experts at what we do and that we can help grow your business online, it's an entirely different thing when someone else does the research and writes a story telling the world the same exact thing." – Brian Welch, Partner, Amity Digital

ROUTE 422 BUSINESS ADVISOR



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**By Heide Peters,
Rothenberger
Insurance Services**

Personal umbrella insurance is a type of insurance that extends liability insurance from your homeowners and automobile policies, giving you higher limits of liability coverage. Personal umbrella policies offer extended coverage starting at \$1 million and going as high as \$10 million. It covers a broader range of situations that may not be covered by auto, homeowners, or boat insurance. Umbrella policies are typically very affordable, especially when written in a bundle with the same company as your automobile and homeowners' insurance. A \$1 million umbrella policy will normally run between \$150 and \$300 annually.

What Does an Umbrella Policy Cover?

It could be a serious car accident involving extensive medical bills or an incident on your property, and you might quickly be finding yourself responsible for damages higher than the limits of your auto, homeowners, or boat policy. That's when having an umbrella insurance policy can provide coverage that goes beyond the limits of your primary coverage. It can also help cover defense costs, attorney fees and other charges associated with lawsuits, plus liabilities that happen outside the United States. These days, anyone can be faced with a lawsuit, even if you think you've done nothing wrong. That's why it's very important to consider adding an umbrella policy as an extra layer of protection for your assets, as well as your piece of mind. Typically, umbrella insurance can help provide coverage for claims like libel, slander, defamation of character and invasion of privacy. It is also extra liability for things such as your pet biting someone, or someone falling on your property and

getting very seriously injured and your homeowners amount of liability coverage not being enough to cover the hospital bills and other expenses that may incur from an accident.

What is Not Covered by an Umbrella Policy?

Generally, damage to your own personal property, or physical injuries to yourself are not covered under a personal umbrella policy. Business losses are not covered. Damage to your business property or losses related to the running of your business generally would not be covered by a personal umbrella policy. Even if your business is operated from your home, this exclusion would apply. You should be purchasing business insurance if you need this type of coverage.

Intentional acts by you, the insured are not covered. A personal umbrella policy isn't designed to protect you from liability connected with your own intentionally harmful behavior. For example, if you intentionally harm a visitor to your home, you would not be covered by your personal umbrella policy.

Talk to your agent and see if an umbrella policy is something you should consider. You will be surprised at how affordable it is, for so much coverage, and it will be there if you ever need it.

Rothenberger Insurance Services is a full-service independent insurance agency specializing in residential insurance and commercial insurance. Residential insurance services include automobile insurance, homeowners' insurance, and life insurance. Commercial insurance services include group life insurance, group health insurance, and general liability insurance. Rothenberger Insurance Services has two locations: 436 Penn Ave West Reading 19611, Phone 610.406.5827, and 507 Madison Ave Reading 19605, Phone 610.685.2804



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We operate 14 Flooring Superstores serving Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, South Jersey and South Carolina. Now we are bringing the Carpet & Tile Mart value proposition and buying power within reach of flooring customers from Coast to Coast in the US on our website CARPETMART.COM.

Q: How does Carpet & Tile Mart keep prices so low?

A: We buy direct from mills and manufacturers for all flooring categories, eliminating middleman and mark-ups that are normally associated with flooring franchise stores, big-box home center flooring departments and floor covering buying group operations. Working closely with the mills and flooring suppliers for decades, we have also been able to maintain a superior product-quality level that

other 'flooring liquidators' cannot match. Our long-standing history with these vendors, and a unique liquid position in the marketplace, allows our buyers to negotiate and buy at deep discounts, and obtain goods or special limited deals not readily available to other retailers. Combined, this cost and pricing advantage has allowed us to pass all those savings on to our customers with products and prices you can't find anywhere else.

Q: How many flooring options are there?

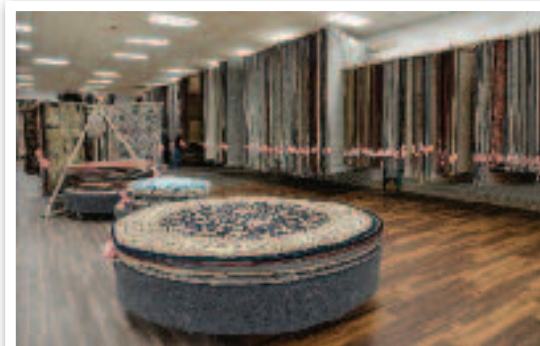
A: We have thousands of area rugs, miles of the finest tile and natural stone, durable luxury vinyl tile, hardwood flooring from the USA, and of course the largest selection of carpet around. The best part is it's all in-stock at Carpet & Tile Mart! You can take most new floors home today. Or if you prefer we'll deliver it to your home. We also offer professional installation services on all of our floors. Pick, pay, take it away, or we'll install it as soon as you say!

Q: Are there any Waterproof floors?

A: Yes! Waterproof Floors are the fastest-growing category that includes many Sheet Vinyl and Luxury Vinyl Tile and Plank options, not to mention inherently



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CJ's Tire and Automotive Service Over a Half Century of Keeping Drivers and Their Vehicles Safe

By Kathy Hunt

Vehicle safety should be at the forefront of every driver's mind. In inclement weather do you find your tires skating across, instead of gripping, the road? Do your wipers clean your windshield or leave streaks of water, sleet or snow behind? When you step on the brake pedal, does your automobile respond immediately or shudder slowly to a stop? At CJ's Tire and Automotive, keeping cars and trucks road-worthy while making automotive maintenance "better, faster, more affordable" is the top priority. Winner of Berks County's "People's Choice Award" for the past eight years, the family-owned and operated business has a proven track record of providing reliable, consistent and reasonably priced service in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Over 50 years of automotive care and customer service

Many businesses profess to have a lengthy list of satisfied customers, but very few can back up that claim with a half-century of happy consumers. In 2021 CJ's Tire and Automotive celebrated 50 years as an independently owned and operated business. A former employee of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Pottstown, Paul "Skip" Levensgood Sr. opened CJ's Tire in Birdsboro, Berks County in the spring of 1971. He was motivated by the belief that people should receive better customer service than what he had experienced himself.

"We recognize that what we sell, tires and automotive service and repairs, are commodity products," explains said Bill Bainbridge, vice president of marketing and business development at CJ's. "There are a lot of people right down the street, so to speak, who sell the same thing. The difference between our competitors and

CJ's comes down to our people and the experience customers have when they visit our website, call us on the phone, or come into our stores and work with our staff. We emphasize exceptional customer service. At the end of the day, that's what makes us different," he said. CJ's 4.5 star Google ratings seems to back that up.

This dedication to a positive customer experience has paid off. Although it began as just a tire shop, CJ's has evolved into a much larger enterprise. Over the years it has added automotive services, repairs, and aftermarket custom wheels to its offerings and developed a strong business-to-business (B2B) as well as retail consumer client base. Today, small to mid-sized businesses take their fleets to CJ's not only for tires but also scheduled maintenance.

Over the past 50 years, CJ's has increased the number of its retail locations from one to 17 and operates six distribution centers (with more than 90,000 tires in stock!) and servicing their own stores and wholesale customers in 21 Pennsylvania counties. If the area's population is growing, and the right real estate is available, CJ's will consider opening additional locations.

Although Skip Levensgood has stepped back from day-to-day operations, his son Paul serves as CJ's president and oversees the business. All three of Paul's children are involved in the family business.

Every April and October, CJ's Tire and Automotive celebrates "car care month." These are the months when people typically begin to prepare their cars for changes in the weather and in their driving habits.

"Spring is a time of people getting out and putting more miles on their vehicles," Bainbridge said. "It's also a time when people start thinking about vacations and about how often their cars'

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air conditioners will need to run in the coming months. In the fall, people start thinking about being prepared for cold weather. They want to make sure that their tires are in good condition and provide the traction to get them where they want to go, when they need to go there. They also want to know that their wipers are working, they have enough antifreeze in the cars, and their batteries aren't affected by the cold temperatures," he said.

One of the newer technology products that CJ's carries and about which drivers should be aware is the all-weather tire. Comprised of different rubber compounds

than all-season tires, an all-weather tire provides close to the same grip of a traditional winter tire in cold weather and on snow and ice-covered roads. However, if driven year-round, winter tires simply can't last as long as an all-season tire.

"A nice thing about the new technology in all-weather tires is that, even when it's cold and winds are blowing, the tread remains flexible and grips a slushy, snowy road as if it's dry, but the tires will last for up to 70,000 miles. And the great news for consumers is that all-weather tires really don't cost any more than premium all-season tires," Bainbridge said.

Global manufacturers including Bridgestone, Goodyear, Continental, Hankook, and Nokian are all now producing all-weather tires.

In April and October, CJ's offers several preventative maintenance packages to prepare drivers and their vehicles for the upcoming season. Information on these special offers can be found on CJ's website and in print.

A way to guarantee that your vehicle performs optimally, not only in the summer and winter, but also year-round is to have it checked by one of CJ's licensed

technicians. Their tire technicians are trained and recertified each year through the Tire Industry Association. CJ's Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified technicians must stay up-to-date on the latest technology and retake their ASE certification test every five years.

CJ's retail locations are open Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 6 PM and on Saturday. As Saturday hours vary, it's best to contact the specific store or consult CJ's Facebook page for details.

For more information about locations and service, please visit <https://cjtire.com>.

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LET THE SUNSHINE IN



LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

By Charles D. Garner, Jr., Esquire, Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C.

As is common knowledge to most municipal officials, the *Pennsylvania Sunshine Act* is the law which governs municipal entities (agencies) and requires them to deliberate and undertake voting in a public meeting setting. This allows the public to observe and provide comment on the actions of their elected officials. The Act has evolved significantly over the last 50 years and changes have occurred that have broadened its scope and have required local governments to be transparent.

The first version of the Act was adopted in 1974, and, at that time, local officials only needed to vote and set policy in public. The current version that was enacted in 1986 was significantly different and broadened the scope that is recognized today and is followed by agencies.

Under the current law, there are a number of exceptions that allow an agency or municipal entity to discuss matters behind closed doors, so long as those sessions are properly announced and the topics are permitted under the statute. Some of the most commonly used exceptions to public meeting discussions are set forth below:

1. Matters involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, or terms and conditions of an employee or potential employee;
2. To hold information, strategy and negotiation sessions related to arbitration or collective bargaining;
3. To consider the purchase or lease of real property;
4. To consult with its attorney or other professional advisors regarding information or strategy in connection with litigation or threatened litigation; and

5. Where appropriate, to undertake quasi-judicial deliberations.

Since 1986, there have been certain amendments to the Sunshine Law that have been enacted. One such amendment specifically required that public comment be taken before any official action occurs at a public meeting. To address this requirement, most municipalities provide for a public comment or public participation session before any formal agenda items. Some municipalities also provide for a second period of public participation that would occur at the end of the meeting to take comments on other matters of public concern that might not have been listed on the agenda. Municipalities are free to make their own meeting rules, so long as the meeting rules are consistent with the provisions of the Sunshine Act.

Another amendment that was adopted required that interviews of potential candidates that might be appointed to any elective office be held in public. Prior to such enactment, many municipalities interviewed such candidates in Executive Session, which would now violate the Sunshine Law.

(Continued on page 50)

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LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from page 48)

Most recently, in 2021, the state legislature passed Act 65, which now requires that a meeting agenda be posted at least 24 hours prior to the agency's meeting. In addition, Act 65 places restrictions and limitations on items that can be added to meeting agendas. While it is still possible to add items to an agenda pursuant to Act 65, there is a specific process that must be followed and those items are limited in nature to minor items that do not require the expenditure of tax dollars or situations that would qualify as a true emergency.

In addition to amendments to the Act, there have been appellate court decisions interpreting provisions of the Sunshine Act. In 2013, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court examined the specific language of the Act and found that under the circumstances presented, a gathering of a quorum of elected officials was permissible behind closed doors, where the intent of the gathering was to gain information that could be useful to assist the governing body in the future in making a decision or taking official action. The court held that so long as the closed-door gathering did not involve deliberations, they were permissible for the purpose of sharing and providing information.

In another appellate case, which is an unreported decision from the state's Commonwealth Court, the court held that the real estate exception applied to both sale and purchase of property, which holding seems to contradict the language in the specific exception provided in the Act.

While there are certain valid reasons to hold Executive Sessions, it would seem that, for purposes of transparency in local government, agencies should consider undertaking as much discussion as possible in public setting so that the members of the public and their citizenship understand the logic behind future decisions.

Charles D. Garner, Jr., Esquire is an attorney in the law firm of Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C., which maintains offices in Pottstown, Pennsburg, Reading and West Chester. He has significant experience in municipal representation, zoning, and land use matters. He and the firm have other diverse experience including small business representation, municipal employment negotiation and litigation, contracts and civil litigation, and estate planning and administration. In addition, Mr. Garner is a former member and former Chairman of the New Hanover Township Board of Supervisors. Mr. Garner can be reached at 610.323.7436 or by email to cgarner@wolfbaldwin.com.

CHANGE: THE ABILITY TO SAY WHAT YOU THINK II



OPINION

By Barry Cassidy

In a stunning development Big Tech, which monitors every word posted on their site, now gives "hate speech" waivers. So, it is now okay to advocate death for the President of the Russian Federation. I believe that giving the so-called "hate speech" a waiver invalidates the entire theme of "hate speech" as we know it. The modified definition would condemn "hate speech" but allows it if Big Tech says it is okay.

Let us not forget in 1977, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) argued for the Nazis to be able to march through Skokie, IL, a community with a large Jewish population. They argued that if the government can prevent Nazi protest and lawful speech because it is offensive and hateful, it can prevent any speech it dislikes.

Skokie's opposition to the Nazi demonstration was very similar to the efforts of Southern segregationists seeking to stop civil rights marches led by Martin Luther King during the 1960s. It was agreed that the march could be held in Downtown Chicago and the park near the

Nazi Party Headquarters would be available by federal court decision. Now, this is not a government banning free speech but a private entity with a platform for expression.

My own experience, which inspired these columns, was with Facebook and Twitter, where I said things that people did not like. Understand that I was awarded Laureate Status by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an "Agent of Change," so the kinds of things I say are sometimes uncomfortable to some.

Facebook banned me because I said that Saint John Vianney in Downingtown has

housed pedophile priests under the theory that I was a bully. The institution did and probably still does house pedophiles because they are diagnosed as having an alcohol or drug problem or are "going through diagnosis." I originally got involved in this when "Monsignor Meth" petitioned the federal court in Connecticut not to go to jail and instead return to Downingtown. I did not want that nimrod living a couple of blocks from me.

Think about this — the names of the Pedophile co-conspirators of Jeffery Epstein were never released. It gives me pause that some entity is going to great lengths to protect perpetrators of the most heinous crime that I can imagine. So, it is not just what is said, but it is withheld to present a version of the truth.

Twitter banned me for commenting on a Chinese Communist Party tweet asserting that the United States' future was somehow dependent upon them. I replied with the famous Nikita Khrushchev quote, "We will bury you."

(Continued on page 52)

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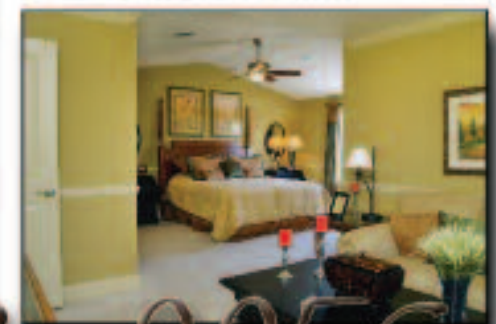
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OPINION

(Continued from page 51)

The great thing about that suspension was I was given the option of taking down the quote and giving them my phone number. I did not give the communist oppressors my phone number, although it is publicly available.

This leads me to the second phase of Big Tech Censorship concerning publishing embarrassing facts and government officials' criticism — The Fake News. Because the United States of America is an open society, we allow people to come here and do what they do. Sometimes it is legal, and they want a better life, but it is to promote a foreign government or confuse the truth either here or remotely.

When the cultural revolution in China happened, one of the effective things was to repeat lies enough that it became the truth in the eyes of many, obliterating truth. I understand that truth is relative to the understanding of society and humanity, but the truth is truth. Again, I do believe Galileo was a heretic.

So how does it happen that you have to watch what you say, or people will try to ruin your livelihood? — A frenzy responder to pressure employers by bots controlled by a foreign power or a self-appointed elitist group with a different viewpoint.

I have been called "racist" several times on Facebook because I could not, in all good conscience, support certain candidates. I have dedicated most of my life to providing services to the underserved. In particular, I worked in the civil rights/labor movement in the south and later did housing counseling in the redlined and underserved neighborhoods. So instead of shying away, I have to admit I thought the best way to handle it is to put their profile picture up and say, "this guy called me a racist, and I don't like it."

I probably will not write about this again, but I want to make a solid point. People have to say what they believe, whether or not is others do want or don't want to hear it. Your expression as a human, thinking, living organic entity needs to be heard if you choose to make it heard. No bot, no elite, no foreign government, US politician, or some nimrod can take that away from us. As we are Americans, we have the right to free speech. No matter how others perceive the content.

Barry Cassidy is a freelance grant and economic development consultant. He can be reached at barrycassidy@comcast.net.

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BARRY CASSIDY INCLUDED IN MARQUIS WHO'S WHO

Barry Cassidy has been included in *Marquis Who's Who*. As in all *Marquis Who's Who* biographical volumes, individuals profiled are selected on the basis of current reference value. Factors such as position, noteworthy accomplishments, visibility, and prominence in a field are all taken into account during the selection process.

Driven by his desire to help others and represent those without a voice, Mr. Cassidy's journey began with a dream to save the world. Born and raised in an exclusively white environment, he proceeded to receive his college education from a historically Black university, the West Virginia State University. Gradually, he grew to understand people he had not been in contact for much of his life and became immersed in their concerns. During the early 1970s, Mr. Cassidy organized unions in Mississippi, Arkansas and Tennessee, but found that he required a superior way to address the issues for which he longed to find resolutions.

Supported by his considerable expertise, Mr. Cassidy excels today as the principal and consultant of Barry Cassidy Planning and Development, where has just launched a website: www.lastdaysoflockdown2021.com where he used over 7000 photos to chronicle conditions in seventy

cities across the United States he visited during the last days of the corona virus lockdown. Recently he developed a homeownership program in Lower North Philadelphia, and an outreach program and grant proposal for Permanent Peace Movement. Previously, he gained valuable professional expertise as and the director of Main Street Community Development Corporation in Phoenixville, South Street Headhouse District and Main Street Downingtown.

An expert in his field, Mr. Cassidy holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science and government from West Virginia State University and a Master of Science from the London School of Economics and Political Science. He also studied at Carnegie Mellon University and gained a Municipal Finance Certificate from the University of Chicago Harris School for Public Policy. In conjunction with his work, Mr. Cassidy has contributed to his community through the Pennsylvania Local Arts Network, and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, which he co-founded. Due to his outstanding work in the field, he was named as a Keystone Laureate by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and was listed in *Who's Who Among Students at American Universities and Colleges*.

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From North Montco Technical Career Center to Yale University Lauren Harkins Pursues Dreams in Biomedical Technology

In the wake of COVID, during these past two years, we became a little more attuned to the term "following the science." And because each of us eagerly awaited for the vaccines and therapies that would return our lives to normal, people championed the dedicated researchers, scientists, and medical professionals that would help us decode and fight this terrible illness. Individuals in biomedical careers work every day to better understand and solve many puzzling diseases that can affect one's health. For the high school student who has been dreaming of such a career, North Montco Technical Career Center offers a selective admission program open to high school students of the sending districts.



In this interview, former North Montco Biomedical Technology student Lauren Harkins discusses why she chose North Montco and her future career plans. Lauren currently is a graduate student at Yale University, earning her Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering. She was a part of

the first class taught by the program's Biomedical Technology teacher, Mrs. Mary Courtney, in 2016! Lauren graduated from Souderton Area High School in 2016, then went on to graduate from the University of Virginia (UVA) in 2020 with a BS in Biomedical Engineering.



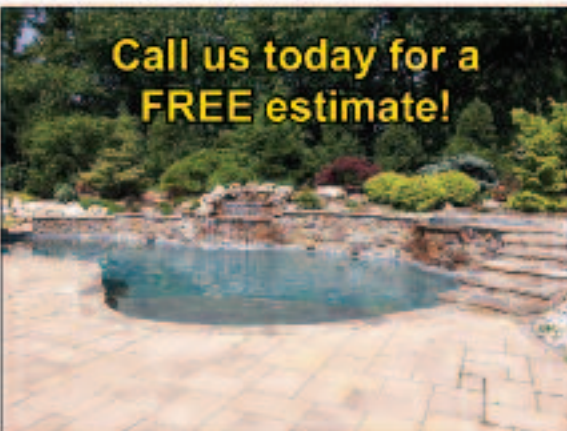
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Mrs. Courtney enjoys the deep dive her students are able to take in Biomedical Technology. "The program at North Montco is designed to provide a 'jump-start' advantage to students who are ready to pursue the path at a young age. Students that are selected for this program have taken advanced science and math classes, performed well, and are ready to practically apply their knowledge to real world scenarios."

North Montco's Biomedical Technology program is quite impressive, and spots are limited for the many bright students who apply. Mrs. Courtney explained how this program differentiates itself from other advanced science courses. "The Biomedical Technology program at North Montco introduces students to the world of medical research. These students learn to think and work like a medical scientist every day, by applying the theory and laboratory skills to solve real-world problems in the medical field. This involves the investigation of the causes of disease, while developing diagnostic tests and new treatments for human diseases and disorders. In the laboratory, students work with the state-of-the-art equipment that allows them to perform genetic engineering, fluorescent microscopy, PCR, 3-D printing, electrophoresis for both DNA and protein, and mammalian cell culture to explore cancer

cells. This program is a dual enrollment class whereby students also can earn eight college credits at Montgomery County Community College."

Furthermore, it is very interesting that all of all of students end up pursuing a career in the scientific and/or medical field. All of North Montco's Biomedical graduates attend four-year colleges with majors in biology, Biomedical Engineering, pre-Med, and other related areas. "In fact," Mrs. Courtney continues, "medical researchers at many universities already know about this program and are excited to hire our students for their lab positions. Therefore, these students have the opportunity to make contributions to medical research before many of their peers."

With her start at North Montco, Lauren is well on way to doing very important work in the biomedical industry. She shared more on her background in the interview below:

Did you have some personality traits that led you and your parents to have insight into your interest in science?

I was always a scientist at heart! I grew up in a very science-oriented family, which influenced me. My dad studied computer science, my mom studied biology, and my brother studied mechanical engineering.

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FROM NORTH MONTCO TO YALE UNIVERSITY

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My grandfather taught high school chemistry, so I would go in with him and play with the molecule-building kits when I was little. Then, when I was in elementary school, he would come into my school and run science experiments with us (like Elephant's toothpaste!), which I absolutely loved.

When did you learn about North Montco's program, and were your parents supportive of you attending the technical school?

I learned about the program my junior year. Two of my friends were enrolled in the program and told me about it. My parents were very supportive of me attending the technical school. They liked that I had the opportunity to take a more specific class to my interests in science.

How many years did you attend? Were there options for dual credit then?

I attended for one year (Fall and Spring semesters) of my senior year. However, I did enroll for dual credit.

I know Mrs. Courtney is a champion of her students and encourages them to "shoot for the stars" in their future careers. What part did the Biomedical Program and Mrs. Courtney play in your decision to move forward in the direction you did?

First, having the opportunity to do the

techniques we learned helped me confirm that this is something that I wanted to pursue. It is easy to think you might enjoy something after learning about it in class, but it is helpful to get the chance to try the techniques yourself and run an experiment. It was also great to hear about biotechnology's various applications (medical, environmental, etc.) and think about which area I was most interested in learning. Finally, I also enjoyed hearing about Mrs. Courtney's career path and her research experiences in the industry!

How do you believe North Montco's program prepared you for your future?

North Montco's program was beneficial in preparing me for my future! Participating in this program and gaining the biomedical technology knowledge and experience helped me stand out among applicants and make UVA's Genetically Engineered Machine Team (part of the iGEM competition). Furthermore, performing actual lab work like running PCR and DNA gels was very helpful when I joined a research lab and had to run DNA gels almost every day! Having all these experiences, which all started with North Montco's program, helped me know that I wanted to go to graduate school and gave me a strong resume when applying.

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Were there any memorable moments from your experience at North Montco that you would like to share?

One day that stood out to me was when we had the opportunity to visit Fox Chase Cancer Center. It was fascinating to learn about the type of work being done there. It was also great to see how the specific skills we learned and practiced in class are directly applicable to research and solving real-world medical issues!

Many Biomedical Technology students find their way into top-tiered colleges. What made you select Yale?

I chose Yale for many reasons:

Graduate school is very lab and research-focused. I liked the research in Dr. Greg Tietjen's lab at Yale, where the work centers on organ transplants. There is a very clear issue: we don't have enough transplantable organs for the number of people that need transplants.

I liked that we were encouraged to use any tools and techniques (genomics, nanoparticles, etc.) to figure out why the organ is not transplantable and how to fix the problem.

Yale encourages collaboration among its departments and schools. I am in the Biomedical Engineering department but work with researchers in the immunobiology department and the medical school. This experience has allowed me to work

directly with transplant surgeons and access resources and equipment that the other departments have that we may not.

I like the culture at Yale in the Biomedical Engineering department. It is a very positive and supportive environment!

What are your career goals?

After completing my Ph.D. in drug delivery or biopharmaceuticals, I plan to go into the industry.

Tell us a little about your thesis?

My thesis work is focused on achieving cell type-specific drug delivery in the liver through nanoparticles and protein engineering. We receive human organs that have been recovered from a donor but were declined for transplant, which allows us to test our drug delivery techniques in the organ. Ideally, we want to take these drug delivery techniques and use them to treat pathophysiologies in recovered livers so these methods can be used for transplant or potentially for liver diseases.

Anything else you would like to add?

I would highly recommend the Biomedical Technology class at North Montco to anyone interested in science, especially those who want a hands-on learning experience! This class benefitted me and helped shape where I ended up!

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