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FALL HOME & GARDEN

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How to treat your local businesses in a pandemic

by April Lisante

Two weeks ago, restaurants that have been hanging on throughout the pandemic here in Chestnut Hill finally opened their doors for indoor dining at a 25 percent seating capacity.

This week, many Pennsylvania restaurants are rejoicing that the number of diners permitted indoors will increase to 50 percent – but this law does not apply to Philadelphia, which will remain at 25 percent.

And though some Hill eater-

ies are making the most of additional outdoor seating, pushing into the street with barriers thanks to a city variance, that will inevitably come to an end as the days and nights get colder and even the thought of a curbside cocktail can't compete with frigid temps.

The reality for many restaurants and businesses on the Hill is that almost none are experiencing their same pre-pandemic revenues, and with that reality comes the sobering fact that some businesses might not make it through this fall and winter if

patrons don't do their part.

Restaurateurs report they are still struggling to make ends meet and to keep things running after bringing back staff, stocking up on food and running electricity and gas to feed a fraction of the customers they once did. Compounding the problem? Some of the gift certificates sold during a spring promotion to help bolster Hill restaurants financially are starting to be redeemed, substituting in some cases for revenue and even server tips.

Aside from dining out once in

a while at your favorite local haunt, there are some conscious efforts everyone can make to help restaurants and other businesses stay open, according to local officials and business owners.

"I totally understand that people have been eating at home right now, and that it's been a unique, special opportunity to eat with their families at home," said McNally's co-owner Anne McNally, "But now more than ever is the time to dine out because we want main streets

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Mt. Airy block hosts party that drew local polls, encouraged voting



Despite the masks, everyone was all smiles at the Sedgwick-Mower Neighbors' Party with a Purpose fundraiser on Saturday. Attending were (from left) U.S. Rep. Dwight Evans, Democratic Committeeman Michael Kleiner, coordinators Pamela Gwaltney and Mary Kalyna. (Photo by Barbara Sherf)

by Barbara Sherf

Mt. Airy neighbors fired up their speakers this past Saturday for a "Party with a Purpose" in the form of a socially distanced block party in the 100 block of West Sedgwick and 7000 block of Mower Streets.

Democratic politicians State Representative Christopher Rabb, and US Congressman Dwight Evans visited with

neighbors and participated in an array of activities.

Food, drinks, Black Lives Matter (BLM) signs and t-shirts were for sale, voter registration tables were set up, residents put out rummage sale and free items, and all built community around the social justice theme.

Pamela Gwaltney and Mary Kalyna were co-coordinators for the "feel good" event.

"It was all very organic," Gwaltney said. "We had a

neighbor switching jobs and she said she wanted to dance in the streets and we had music on in our patios and several groups of neighbors danced with her and we said 'we should do that again' and so we decided to make it into a larger party. During this pandemic we are finding new ways to build community to support each other, so we are improvising and doing what we can with what we have."

According to Kalyna, who is the coordinator for the daily BLM vigils at the Unitarian Church on Lincoln Drive, the spotted lanternfly invasion also got neighbors talking in person and then online.

"We started talking by Zoom this summer and thought it would be about Black Lives Matter, but it grew into something more – a neighborhood party with a purpose. Physically we've had to distance but we are still very much a community," said Kalyna, who was all smiles on a pleasant Saturday afternoon. "This has far surpassed my expectations."

Democratic Committeeman Michael Kleiner was integral to getting the politicians on board.

"Having African Americans and others working together is important to explore issues like systemic racism and getting out the vote for the upcoming elections. It just seemed like a good time to get people engaged," Kleiner said. "There was a recent comment on my Facebook page saying that this is what makes Mt. Airy such a special neighborhood, and it is so true."

(Continued on page 3)

Springfield to improve police community relations

by Betsy Wallace

At its September Workshop and Business meetings, the Springfield Township Board of Commissioners explored constructive ways to improve community police relations and transparency with the community, focusing specifically on issues residents raised at the Board's August Business meeting. It also dealt with the challenge of keeping recycling costs down, residents' traffic control complaints, water drainage problems caused by tropical storm Isaias, and sediment buildup in certain parts of the township, among other things.

At the Business Meeting held on Wednesday, Sept. 9, Township residents, Dr. Craig Brown of the Cheltenham NAACP Political Action Committee and Chad Lassiter, Executive Director of

Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission, urged the board to act in solidarity to promote civil discourse on race issues and to support Commissioner Graham in light of very disturbing social media posts disparaging Graham for his work with police and juveniles of color. Here are some highlights.

Springfield Township Police Community Relations

At Tuesday night's Workshop Meeting, Board President Baird Standish proposed the formation of a township committee to focus on enhancing police relations with the community. Commissioners Graham and Lee, both of whom have family in law enforcement, will be on the committee. Graham brings experience from his four-year term as an appointee on former Governor Rendell's first Police Advisory Commission. Graham and Lee will come

up with an appropriate forum for engaging the community and the police in constructive dialogue that will complement what Commissioner Graham is doing with the Cheltenham Branch of the NAACP PAC and the Multi-Cultural Parents Association of Springfield Township (MCPAST).

Commissioner Lee will be a panelist at the next virtual town hall sponsored by the Cheltenham NAACP PAC and the MCPAST on September 16, at 7 p.m. All township commissioners will get a formal invite to the town hall. Registration is required. Residents can contact Commissioners Graham or Lee for more information.

At both board meetings, Commissioner Harbison suggested that the Township's Human Relations Committee ordinance, which was passed about 10 years

ago to address discrimination in accommodation and employment for LGBT people, could be expanded to deal with racial discrimination issues. The board welcomed the PA Human Relations Commission's offer of assistance in revamping the township's HRC and in expanding the ordinance if the board decides to go that route.

The board approved posting the police social media policy and complaint forms on the township website, which will be done the week of September 14.

Residents who attended the business meeting reiterated their frustration with obtaining adequate responses to their requests for police records. Township Solicitor Garrity explained that the PA Right to Know Law does not require the police to release records related to ongoing inves-

(Continued on page 10)

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Mt. Airy hosts block party that drew polls, encouraged voting

(Continued from page 1)

With the backdrop of the South Philadelphia based Unidos da Filadelfia drummers, State Representative Chris Rabb said he was proud to be a part of the surrounding community.

"I want to thank you for making this community so vibrant," he said. "It shows. It's very intentional and it's very loving and inclusive. I could use more of that in Harrisburg," said Rabb. "One of the highest forms of community building involves art and family and neighborhood and love, and in these pressing times this is what we need more of to move forward. We need more music and culture and understanding as it is the answer to hate and bigotry and division."

Rabb talked further about the state of affairs in a divided Harrisburg.

"I'm in a very toxic workplace 100 miles west of here. I'm surrounded by many people who don't believe in masks, who don't believe in diversity, who don't believe in racial equality, or indeed that black lives do in fact matter. They don't care about trans or queer lives. These are my colleagues and it is desperate times for me and other progressives. I'm here to get rejuvenated and to go back and represent this community."

Rose Roscioli had a front row seat to the drummers. She was



Democratic State Rep. Chris Rabb talked about being reenergized at the "Party with a Purpose" neighborhood event in Mt. Airy on Saturday. Behind him is the Unidos da Filadelfia drummers who provided entertainment at the Sedgwick-Mower Neighbors event. (Photo by Barbara Sherf)

selling household items, donating 25 percent to the Biden campaign.

"This is Mt. Airy. I'm so proud to have made my home here over 30 years ago. The diversity, the spirit and the kindness of the neighbors is so amazing," Roscioli said.

Susan King was there with her wife, Barbara Hall.

"It's great. I love to see this in our neighborhood. There's always something going on and we even have a listserv that is a good way

to keep informed," King said.

While there was no final count on money raised, the funds will go to the Black Lives Matter movement and Philadelphia Covid-19 Fund.

Congressman Evans used the opportunity to urge residents to get out the vote and to be counted in the census.

"Community events that are held in a safe way can be vital during this difficult time. I appreciate the opportunity to spend time with fellow Philadelphians

in ways that are designed to protect everyone's health. I also want to remind everyone there's still time to register to vote or check your registration at VotesPA.com, and Sept. 30 is the deadline to complete the census," Evans said. "Taking 5 to 10 minutes to complete the census is one of the most important things you can do to help our community get the federal health care funding it needs, along with our fair share of representation in Harrisburg and Washington."

Evans noted that the website for the census is 2020census.gov or call 844-330-2020.

Kalyna believes this is the first in a series of more organized events.

"Kids won't be going trick or treating in the normal way, but we will come up with a way to safely celebrate Halloween and also since it's so close to the election we will tie a get out the vote campaign into it as well," said Kalyna. "This is what building community is all about."

Committeeman Maurice Sampson said he was impressed with the efforts in organizing in a short amount of time.

"This is great. This block has always been tight but now they are organized and even had elected officials here and a party that came about very quickly. They have quickly come of age and I'm looking forward to working with them on election related issues," Sampson said. "This is what Mt. Airy is all about."

Correspondent Barbara Sherf can be reached at Barb@CommunicationsPro.com.

Crime Report: Five thefts from vehicles and stolen lawn signs

The following crime report is for crimes reported in Chestnut Hill from Sep. 7 to Sep 13.

Sep. 7 Theft from vehicle on unit block of Summit St. A man told police he returned to his car to find the passenger's side window smashed and a wallet containing \$15 of cash stolen. Total value of wallet and cash: \$50.

Sep. 10 Theft from vehicle at 100 block of W. Northwestern Ave. A woman reported that someone broke into her car and

stole the following: sunglasses, a black wallet, a purse and wallet, a Louis Vitto wristlet and a gray shirt. Items and cash taken worth \$895.

Sep. 10 Theft from vehicle on 200 block of W. Evergreen Ave. A woman told police that she found her front driver's side window smashed and the following items taken: a pair of Rayban sunglasses and a phone charger. Total value of \$200.

Sep. 10 Theft from vehicle on the 8700 block of Navajo St. A

woman left her vehicle unlocked overnight and reported more than \$200 worth of property stolen. Items were not listed.

Sep. 11 Theft from vehicle at Valley Green Road and Wolcott Dr. A woman reported her car's passenger-side window broken and property worth less than \$200 stolen. Items were not listed.

Sep. 13 Theft on 200 block of Rex Ave. A woman reported that a Black Lives Matter sign and a Joe Biden sign were taken from her property.

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OPINION

Arnie



This is not fine

The boiling frog is a well-worn metaphor for the remarkable ability of living things to adopt to their environment, even to the point when that environment becomes fatal. The frog in water that is heated slowly will continue to be content until the water becomes too hot for it to survive. While it would react painfully if it touched boiling water, it can't detect the gradual change.

The metaphor was smartly captured by the "This is Fine" meme in which a cartoon dog drinking coffee in a room on fire smiles and says: "This is Fine!"

Scientists have shown human beings are the same and for pretty understandable reasons. Acclimating to our environment is an important way to avoid stress and get on with living. We can be remarkably resilient, adapting to war conditions, extreme cold, etc. If we didn't have the capacity to adapt – to go with the flow – we'd have a real hard time surviving. So we're wired to persist as circumstances change. This is especially true when the changes feel gradual. Like the boiling frogs, we often don't perceive the changes

at all.

We've seen that with Covid-19. Many people around the country refused to even take the pandemic seriously. In places where it was taken seriously – where stay-at-home orders were issued and businesses closed – people are again beginning to move on and get back to some semblance of normal, returning to restaurants and schools, cautiously hoping to get on with life despite the risks.

Covid has not touched most of us directly. In Philadelphia, the nearly 35,000 cases account for only 2.3 percent of the city's population. While many of us might intellectually know it's dangerous, we have to be careful not to get too relaxed.

In Philadelphia, and other major cities, we've become very used to living with extraordinary levels of gun violence. In Philadelphia, year-to-date homicides as of Sept. 13 were up 32% with 319 killed compared to 242 in 2019. That number has been going up every year since 2016 after a long period of decline. Again, homicide does not impact a vast majority

of people in the city or in the greater Philadelphia area. We can ignore it, consider it a scourge of "poor neighborhoods" and go about our business.

We can also largely ignore the fires consuming California, Oregon and Washington state. In California, 3.2 million acres of land – the size of Connecticut – have burned. And yet, it's not that much hotter here in Philadelphia and our skies aren't red and choked with soot.

While that instinct to keep calm and carry on is valuable, it's important to make sure we don't become so used to the changes around us that they don't register. While not everything we see or read in the news affects us directly, the larger implications of climate change and American gun crime are not abstract issues experienced only by others. They – and so many other problems – are faced by us all. To solve them, we have to recognize the pot is boiling and we're all in it.

Pete Mazzaccaro

An appreciation of Dave Goldberg, a hero to youth athletes and parents

by Joe Monahan

If kids were asked what they would like to be when they grow up, World Cup soccer star, award-winning actress, Eagles quarterback or pop singer would likely feature prominently on many of the answer sheets. Each of those responses would no doubt be consistent with the types of answers given by successive generations of kids, but with the specific names of their heroes varying from one era to the next.

While entertaining dreams of breathing such rarefied air is wonderful, it is sometimes easy to forget the critical yet less celebrated role that some play in making a profound impact on the life of a community. While not flashing a Super Bowl ring, nor heralded at a gala awards show, many of these unsung heroes make a far bigger impact on the daily life of these same children than they could ever imagine. While this letter could rightly focus on any number of such people we are lucky to call our neighbors and friends, Mount Airy's Dave Goldberg is one of these community champions, and his time to go from "unsung" to "sung" is overdue.

To say that Dave has made children the focus of his life's work is not mere hyperbole. Dave's day job finds him at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where he works long

hours as a pediatric cardiologist. While the demands of that role would be plenty for many of us to take on, for years Dave has occupied untold hours of his limited spare time to identify unmet needs for local kids looking for an athletic and social outlet, and creating the opportunities to address those needs. In some cases, the rest of us had not realized there had even been a need until Dave devised a plan to address it.

Whether it be creating a boys and girls travel basketball option through the Chestnut Hill Youth Sports Club, conceiving of and organizing an intramural basketball league for high school aged players where none previously existed, organizing an annual Turkey Bowl football game for neighborhood kids each Thanksgiving weekend, or scheduling every game for the thirty-plus baseball teams across Mount Airy Baseball's various age groupings, Dave's selfless work has impacted the lives of the kids in our community, and the community as a whole, far more than a professional athlete or celebrity ever could.

I write this not as a dispassionate observer, but as a father who has seen so much of his own son's life to date be shaped by the athletic opportunities presented him and the lifelong friends from all walks of life our whole family has made through those opportunities. Start-

ing with the informal gatherings that Dave organized for 6-and 7-year-olds for "Thursday Night Baseball" when the kids were still trying to figure out which hand was their throwing hand and which their glove hand, to the years of progressing through the various levels of Mount Airy Baseball playing games that were part of the complex master schedule devised by Dave, to as recently as this past Labor Day weekend, when Dave came up with the idea to create a reunion weekend of games so that the cohort of players who came up together from those early days (some even from the Thursday Night Baseball sessions) that are now high schoolers could come together again and play for the pure fun of playing the game they love with friends with whom they have grown up, Dave Goldberg created or enhanced so many of those opportunities.

Likewise when it comes to basketball, when Dave realized several years ago that Chestnut Hill did not offer a travel option, he created one across multiple age groups for both boys and girls, then helped coach several teams. More recently, just as my son and many others were aging out of the travel league, Dave recognized that there was a large group of high-school-aged players looking for a place to continue playing, and he created from scratch an in-house league for

them, which they loved. We parents loved it every bit as much, as it became a Sunday gathering spot for the families to socialize while rooting on our own and each other's children, kids for whom we all have been doing the same for the better part of a decade. Had Dave not stepped up to first recognize there was a need and then do all the work involved in addressing it (finding gym space for both practices and games, enlisting coaches, formulating the league schedule and lining up referees), that league simply does not happen, and a cadre of teenagers and their parents lose out on a special experience.

With the pandemic, widespread economic uncertainty, the ongoing fight for racial equity and justice and the unrelenting political news, it is sometimes easy to lose sight of some of the positives that should be rightly embraced. Among other things, strong, diverse and vibrant

communities should be both celebrated and nurtured. Such communities are not born spontaneously out of whole cloth, nor are they self-sustaining; they are instead the result of the work of the individual members that know they are part of something larger than themselves, who are generous with their time and talents, and who know the importance of leaving their respective communities in a better place than they found them. While he will hate the attention this letter brings his way, Dave Goldberg deserves to be recognized as just such an individual. On behalf of my family, and so many others who have been so positively impacted by his selflessness, this letter is intended to sincerely thank him and bring him the recognition he deserves. While he may not be a Grammy or World Series winner, he is a terrific role model all the same.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of this publication to anticipate community problems and prepare public opinion for their solutions, to review community problems as they arise and to present possible solutions, to study community problems and, with the help of expert opinion, direct community thinking toward a solution consistent with local tradition and the best forward-looking interests of Chestnut Hill.

It is the policy of the LOCAL to publish all responsible points of view on the various issues presented in the *Forum*. Unless otherwise expressly indicated, the opinions and points of view expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer who shall be identified by name.

Positions presented or adopted by the Community Association or its board of directors on any matter will be expressly identified as such.

All letters addressed to the LOCAL *Forum* must be signed and must include an address and a verifying telephone number. All letters must not exceed 300 words.

from our readers

Brick sculptor is "a great choice"

Thank you for the article on Michael Morgan ["Michael Morgan: Mot just another brick in the wall," Sept. 10]. In 2013, like many folks in Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy, we were educating ourselves about sustainability and wanting to commit ourselves to helping the environment. We were surprised to learn that our lovely green lawns actually had a negative environmental impact, due to problems involving water, fertilizers and other factors.

Converting our lawns by planting a garden of native plants could solve this problem, providing beauty, being self-sustaining and requiring less work! But how to do this? A neighbor recommended Morgan, an artist renowned for his brick sculptures. Uniquely, Michael is also a talented gardener who can look at a

few leaves emerging from the soil and name the type of plant it is.

Relying on Michael, we took up our front lawn! The result was a beautiful garden, all perennial plants with a natural stone path running through the greenery. Michael knew what would grow best in shade and sun, what would grow tall and what would remain small. He helped us define what we wanted and worked cooperatively with us to design a wonderfully natural space. Each year the garden "fills-in" more and more, just as Michael said it would.

No longer a collection of small plants sparsely spaced, it has become an English garden and every spring a miracle to behold. Now in September, it seems bursting at the seams with tall white flowers coming, like stars, out of the green leafed hostas. The garden requires only occasional weeding and the cutting back of bushes. Michael was a great choice. Honest, easy going, hard-working and tireless, Michael is

wonderful to work with.

Maxine and Alan Soffin
Chestnut Hill

Hill apt. complex an "eyesore"

I drive by Chestnut Hill village several times a week. Last week, I was taken completely by surprise when I saw that the bricks of the apartment complex were being painted a very ugly gray. I walked by the buildings this week and noticed that the brick appears to be in good shape. Once the brick gets painted, the upkeep in repainting them as the color fades is enormous. The owners have taken a well kept, charming complex and cheapened it by painting it that ugly gray, making it an eyesore. It is upsetting to see natural building products so wantonly destroyed.

Eileen DiFranco
Mt. Airy

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After 50 years, CH Hospital nursing class still active

by Rosemary Murphy Melnick

Miss Winterle told us we were the “cream of the crop” of nursing students! The Chestnut Hill Hospital School of Nursing set high standards that carried us through the last 50 years in our personal and professional lives. (Ed. Note: The Chestnut Hill Hospital School of Nursing was opened in 1908 and closed in 1987.)

In the 50 years since graduation, the 29 members of our graduation class were confident, hardworking, creative, competent, compassionate, caring and giving. Our interests and talents were varied. We used our knowledge and skills in hospitals. We worked in med-surg, ER, OR, IV team, oncology and transplant units. We worked on critical care units — ICU, CCU, NICU and PACUs. We worked in maternal and child care — pediatrics, nursery, labor and delivery and a lactation program.

We found other interesting opportunities in out-patient settings such as general surgery, plastic/reconstructive surgery, GYN and oral surgery. We were school nurses and substitute teachers with a developmentally delayed class. Long-term care facilities for the elderly and brain-injured adults, an infectious disease infusion center, home care agency and the American Red Cross benefitted from our knowledge and expertise.

We brought our talents into administrative positions transitioning to working in regulatory affairs, case management, problem management, compliance, peer review, strategic consulting and human resources.

We ventured in the direction of psychological care through psychiatric nursing, parent education and support, family therapy, hospice and bereavement counseling. We taught in nursing and family therapy programs and brought training in trauma informed care and telemedicine. We edited journals, authored books and appeared in Look magazine.

Along the way we attained multiple bachelor's and master's degrees and became clinical specialists and directors of programs in radiation oncology, family therapy, geriatrics, human resources and nursing tutorial lab.

We stayed close to home and traveled the world. We lived in 16 states and four foreign countries. On the home front we loved and raised 56 children and welcomed 79 cherished grandchildren into our lives. We have battled and won against many medical conditions. We buried and mourned loved ones and learned to go forward.

We were generous with our time volunteering in youth services, Scouts and at our children's and grandchildren's schools. We were involved with our churches on committees and health ministry and went on mission trips to foreign countries. Our efforts enriched our communities with services to support groups, an ambulance service, a health clinic, cardiac rehab and health care, the Ronald McDonald House and retirement homes, food banks, horticultural society and garden clubs, libraries, a fishing program for handicapped kids and a horse-riding program for VETs and special ed students.

It was not all responsibilities and service; we relax and restore ourselves with activities adding fun and enjoyment along the way. We sew, quilt, knit, crochet, stitch, needlepoint and paint; we cook,



This undated photo depicts an instructor showing a group of students at the former Chestnut Hill Hospital School of Nursing how to strap a disabled patient into a gurney. The school was opened in 1908 and closed in 1987.

entertain; we garden and tend a farm; we read, sing and play cards; we ski, bike, golf, swim, figure skate, bowl, sail and walk dogs; we root for the Eagles and go to shows.

In the future we hope to stay as healthy as possible and resume many activities that are currently curtailed. We yearn to see distant grandchildren, get together with family and friends in restaurants, at the theater and on trips. We are planning on life changes, moving to apartments and retirement communities. We look forward to being able to travel again. We will continue with our hobbies and activities until we can't.

Ed. note: This article was submitted by Elaine Ominsky (eominsky@verizon.net), a recently retired nurse who graduated from the Chestnut Hill Hospital School of Nursing on Sept. 11, 1970. The class had planned to celebrate its 50th reunion in October, but because of the pandemic, they canceled the in-person event and held their reunion via Zoom on Sept. 11. One member of the class passed away in 2016. They were not able to get in touch with two, so 26 members took part in the Zoom reunion.

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We look forward to meeting you!

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Springside Chestnut Hill Academy and Woodmere Art Museum to showcase work of Philadelphia artist Sam Feinstein

This fall two major Chestnut Hill institutions will offer a rare glimpse into the work of Sam Feinstein, a prominent Philadelphia artist in the abstract expressionist style. The retrospective exhibitions, two at the Woodmere Art Museum and one at SCH Academy, will provide a career-spanning perspective on Feinstein's work.

"Sam Feinstein: The Early Years," opens in SCH Academy's Barbara Crawford Gallery on September 26 and will feature early works by the artist including watercolors, oil paintings, and illustrations. Woodmere, whose mission is to showcase the work of Philadelphia artists, will feature an exhibition of Feinstein's later works, "Sam Feinstein: Immersive Abstraction," as well as a show entitled "Group '55 and Midcentury Abstraction in Philadelphia." Feinstein was the founder and leader of Group '55, a group of artists, including architect Louis Kahn and painter Sam Maitin, who set out to educate Philadelphia's public and elevate the level of cultural dialogue in the city in the mid-1950s.

Feinstein was a protege and then close colleague of Hans Hoffmann, considered the leader of America's abstract expressionist movement. Feinstein briefly taught at Chestnut Hill Academy in the late 30s prior to the war. He married fellow artist Barbara Crawford who succeeded him as head of CHA's Art Department. His connection to the school continued for many years, with many of Crawford's CHA students, as well as students from Springside School, traveling to his Center City studio to work with him. A catalog available at the SCH exhibition includes essays by some of these students.

The journey that led to these exhibitions began in the fall of 2018, when Patricia Stark Feinstein, wife of the artist and curator of his estate, approached SCH and generously offered to loan the school a canvas by her late husband. Representatives from the school were invited to an art storage facility in New York City to view the collection. On that fortuitous day, a team from the Woodmere Art Museum, led by museum William Valerio, was



'Untitled' by Philadelphia abstract expressionist Sam Feinstein is part of an exhibit of the artist's work at SCH Academy. Feinstein taught at Chestnut Hill Academy in the 30s.

also present, and the idea of mounting shows jointly was born.

"Collaborating with our partners at the Woodmere to tell the story of Philadelphia's art and artists has been wonderful," says Head of SCH Steve Druggan. "We both treasure and believe in furthering the arts in Chestnut Hill."

Timed small-group visits to the Crawford Gallery exhibition will be available on opening day, Saturday, September 26, and via scheduled appointments during the run of the show, which closes on January 24. Together the two institutions have planned a number of special events around these shows, including virtual tours and student workshops. See

sch.org/feinstein for more information and gallery tour dates.

The SCH exhibition has been made possible by the generous support, mentorship and generosity of Patricia Stark Feinstein and the Samuel L. Feinstein Trust. Additionally, the Trust has generously loaned the school three large-scale abstract canvases that adorn the walls of the McCausland Lower School. The pieces — "Starry Night," "Opposing Elements," and "Untitled"—explode from their white walls in a swirl of intense colors and light that instantly grabs the attention of all who enter the building.

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Honoring essential workers: Officer Daisy Bransfield

by Heather S. Gray

The 2020 CHCA Meritorious Award was presented to the Essential Workers throughout the Chestnut Hill area. This is the seventh in a series of profiles of essential workers whose work has helped us all get through the pandemic.

If you haven't already met Officer Daisy Bransfield, you should. You may have seen her walking her beat on the 8600 block of Germantown Ave. of Chestnut Hill, checking in with the businesses and numerous banks thereabouts. Officer Daisy Bransfield was somewhat reserved in speech until the conversation turned to the dogs of Chestnut Hill, at which point she perked up and became very animated.

She's an animal lover who has two dogs and 10 chickens at her home in Oreland. She also considers the police district's cat, which she feeds, hers. Officer Bransfield loves working in Chestnut Hill: not just because of all the adorable Hill dogs she meets while walking her beat on Germantown Ave., but because Chestnut Hill feels like a little town. "Everybody is nice up here," she says.

This is Officer Bransfield's fourth year in Chestnut Hill, though she has served her entire career in Philadelphia's 14th Police District, which serves Chestnut Hill, Mt Airy, and Germantown. The police started parking their patrol cars on



the 8600 block after a rash of bank robberies in the Spring of 2019. Since the police have been a visible presence, none of the banks there have been robbed.

During the beginning of the pandemic, Germantown Ave. was a ghost town. Businesses were closed. Residents were shut away in their

homes. Crime was down. Now Officer Bransfield is starting to see more people on the Avenue. They are wearing masks and keeping their distance. Like many of us, Officer Bransfield isn't stopping to chat with residents as much as she did before the pandemic. When she visits a residence for a call, she tries

to talk to people outside rather than entering the house. It's safer for everyone. But she does miss petting the dogs.

She counts herself lucky that she didn't get Covid; her husband, a detective for the Philadelphia Police Department, did. Fortunately, (Continued on page 11)

CHCA Agenda

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CHCA Agenda for week of Sept. 14, 2020

The CHCA office is open for limited hours during the week. For the protection of our staff and members we are asking CHCA members and vendors who come to the office to wear a mask. In order to confirm that there is someone in the office please call 215-248-8810 or email info@chestnuthill.org

Thurs. Sept 24th 7:00 pm

CHCA Board Meeting
On-line Meeting

To obtain the link to attend an online meeting, send an email to info@chestnuthill.org. This meeting will be conducted using Zoom.com. You will need to have this application on your device prior to the meeting. For more information, call 215-248-8811

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Mt. Airy Schools Coalition's short film series highlights public school

by David Hunt

While the look and feel of the upcoming school year remains uncertain, one thing in Mt. Airy is always certain: its pride in, and connection to, its public schools.

The Mt. Airy Schools Coalition—a collaborative effort between Mt. Airy CDC, East Mt. Airy Neighbors (EMAN), West Mt. Airy Neighbors (WMAN) and the principals of six Northwest Philadelphia public schools—has put that connection and community pride on full display in a new series of short films highlighting each school.

The six schools featured in this short film series are Anna Blakiston Day School, Elanor C. Emlen School, Charles W. Henry School, Henry H. Houston School, John Story Jenks School, and Anna L. Lingelbach School in that particular order.

“Putting this series of videos together not only pulls the curtain back on the collaborative work of the Mt. Airy Schools Coalition, but it gives a moment in the spotlight to each of our six public schools and the people who make them work,” Executive Director of Mt. Airy CDC Brad Copeland said. Copeland is the lead partner of the coalition.

Funded by a grant from the EMAN Community Fund and pro-



A student at Jenks Academy of Arts and Sciences tests out a robot in one of Mt. Airy School Coalition's new short films about Northwest Philadelphia public schools.

duced by Mt. Airy-based Green District Media, the short film series began on July 27th and ended August 31st, the first week of school. One video has uploaded every Monday on the Go Mt. Airy FaceBook page and YouTube channel.

The videos are about 10 minutes each and feature not only interviews with principals, but also teachers, students, parents, and staff, providing an in-depth look into how each of the schools operate. The captivating videos invite

you to embark on the everyday experience of going to the school, from the first bell to the last. They feature shots of students immersing themselves entirely in the joys of learning. Students are seen studying vigorously in the classroom, being tutored by conscientious, caring teachers, and venturing in the beautiful nature and architecture Northwest Philadelphia has to offer during recess in the cool autumn air.

“There’s this negative narrative about Philly public schools that

leads a lot of parents and families to reflexively seek out private, parochial, or charter options for their children’s education,” Gary King, Mt. Airy CDC’s Schools & Literacy Coordinator, said. King is a father of two children attending one of the schools. “This video series was designed to combat mistaken and lingering assumptions people have about their local public schools, and instead highlighting the best of what they have to offer.”

The videos also showcase the schools well-rounded curriculum,

positive environment, and tireless literacy initiatives. Each of these are only the tip of the iceberg as to what contributes to the overall allure of Mt. Airy Schools. A big factor is their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

“These videos are an important effort to promote our local public schools as a good choice for all of our children,” EMAN Grants Committee Chair Margaret Salam-on said. “Quality integrated schools are necessary and need to be an essential part of our community’s commitment to anti-racism and equity.”

These videos offer more than a glimpse into the vast offerings of Mt. Airy Schools. They exemplify what all the work the schools have done during this uncertain time has meant for the community as a whole.

“We don’t know what the upcoming school year will look like during this pandemic, but our schools’ principals and teachers are showing us the outstanding work that continues to take place in spite of the challenges facing them,” EMAN President Tonyelle Cook-Artis said.

To see the short film series, click either of the following links: [youtube.com/channel/UCn1gxeTCCQLnc2d2BBkTxi](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn1gxeTCCQLnc2d2BBkTxi)

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How to treat your local businesses in a pandemic

(Continued from page 1)

like Chestnut Hill to thrive and survive when this is over.

“If every household supported one business, it would go so far into the future.”

Here are some ways you can do your part to help restaurants, shops and other businesses locally right now:

Tip. Tip after sitting for a meal and tip even if you are ordering out. It’s tempting to run in to pick up your food and leave without tipping, rationalizing that there was no delivery or table service. But staff were still on the clock and still had to follow stringent guidelines to prepare your food, package it and get it ready. Also keep in mind servers here in Philly make under \$3 an hour in wages without tips. “Consider leaving a gratuity if you have the means to, even if you are

ordering out,” said Philip Dawson, executive director of the Chestnut Hill Business District.

Cater your events. If you are planning a backyard party or celebration this fall, or, if you are even having an impromptu Halloween celebration to cushion the blow of not trick-or-treating, consider ordering the food from one of your favorite local restaurants. Catering helps restaurants bolster their sales. And don’t forget the gratuity.

Buy gift cards. If you are looking for gifts to give loved ones or friends, consider walking into one of your favorite restaurants or shops and buying a gift card to be used at a later date. Restaurants were fortunate this past spring to be a part of a gift card promotion on the Hill, but many restaurants are reporting that the gift cards sold this past spring are starting to trick-

le in for redemption. Restaurant owners say they would love it if customers would hold onto the cards a bit longer, until after the heart of the pandemic, if they can, because it takes away from daily revenue. “I’m going to guess most people would prefer cash right now,” McNally said.

Pay cash. Which leads us to our next tip: pay cash whenever you can. Sure, large purchases like furniture and things require a credit or debit card sometimes, but daily take-out, dry cleaning etc. would be best paid with cash, because small business owners pay such a large premium for POS credit card transactions.

Pay up front. If you are using local small repair shops, dry cleaning shops and the like, paying cash when you drop off the clothing, shoes or appliances would be appreciated up front instead of when you pick them up, since it provides immediate cash to businesses that might otherwise be waiting weeks for you to come get your belongings.

Plan ahead. If you are dining out at a restaurant, plan your trip so that you are in and out faster, because table turnover has never been so critical, McNally said. “Once you are seated try to order right away, or look at the menu ahead of time,” she said.

Be polite and say thank you. And perhaps one of the most important things you can do to help all local businesses is to thank workers for showing up, being there, and making sure that guidelines and sanitation standards are being upheld. This is not the time to argue for a seat if the restaurant is full, backtalk staff, show up five minutes before closing time with a big order or refuse to wear masks. It only takes a second to say thank you to workers, but it makes their efforts seem more appreciated.

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Springfield Township

(Continued from page 1)

tigations and does not allow the names of minors to be disclosed. When asked whether the police keep records of arrests sorted by race, Mr. Garrity was not aware of any federal or state law requiring the police to keep such records.

Supporting Police Chief Pitkow's promise to conduct a community survey regarding the township police department, the board discussed at its workshop meeting hiring an outside consultant to assist with creating the survey and analyzing responses. Two township residents with experience in this area have volunteered their expertise. According to Township Manager, Mike Taylor, once the framework for a survey is developed, it will be shared with the commissioners.

Township Recycling Costs Will Rise in the Near Future.

The board passed a resolution at its Business Meeting, authorizing a six-month extension to the current recycling services agreement. November will be the first month that the Township will be paying more to recycle than to trash. Township members of the Montco Recycling Consortium, including Springfield Township, are pursuing technical assistance grants to study and plan for reducing recycling costs in the future. Springfield Township has already received a Technical Assistance grant that will focus on collection efficiencies.

Voting – General Election

The township will allow the use of its township buildings for voting purposes during the general election. The township also offered its buildings as drop-off box locations for mail-in ballots. Grace Church, the usual polling place for Ward 5-2, has been closed during the pandemic and has not yet responded to Montgomery County Voter Services regarding its availability as the Ward 5-2 polling place for the general election.

2021 Budget Meeting Schedule

The board announced its schedule for devising the 2021 budget as follows: September 15 at 7 p.m. (meeting with the Township agencies only); October 21 at 7 p.m. (Board Workshop budget meeting); November 11 at 7:30 PM (presentation of budget at the Business meeting); and December 9 (Budget Hearing and Adoption at the Business Meeting).

Written Examination for Entry Level Police Officers

Commissioner Maxwell announced the written examination for entry level Police Officers on Saturday, October 10. Interested individuals must pre-register to take the test by September 30 at www.montcopolicetest.com. Maxwell encouraged women and minority candidates to consider applying.

The Township is looking to fill one vacancy in the Parks and Recreation Committee. Township residents may apply by sending a letter of interest to Michael Taylor, Township Manager, by email: mtaylor@springfieldmontco.org

Township residents can request an audio recording of the Workshop Meeting by contacting Michael Taylor, Township Manager, by email: mtaylor@springfieldmontco.org. Residents may view the Recorded Business meetings and check all Public Meeting Agendas and Minutes here: <https://www.springfieldmontco.org/government/meeting-agendas-minutes/>.

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Fall sports action limited as area schools return to class

by Tom Utescher

High school sports fans at Germantown Academy, Germantown Friends School, Penn Charter and Springside Chestnut Hill Academy won't be able to watch any of their varsity teams in action this fall. It isn't simply a matter of spectators not being allowed in the stands due to COVID-19 distancing rules; the leagues to which these schools belong, the Friends Schools League (FSL) and the Inter-Ac League, have put off all interscholastic athletic competition until January of 2021.

In contrast, all six fall sports teams should be in action at Mount St. Joseph Academy, one of the eight all-girls schools that belong to the Athletic Association of Catholic Academies. During the regular season, at least, the AACA schools intend to compete only against one another. However, as we've all learned during the Coronavirus pandemic, website administrators who are scheduling events always need to have a finger hovering near the "delete" key.

Throughout the summer, governing bodies of high school athletics across Pennsylvania have rolled out seemingly COVID-compliant strategies to allow student athletes to play during the fall season, and then have had to revisit and modify those plans as circumstances and perceptions changed. In Southeastern Pennsylvania, in particular, this process eventually culminated in the cancellation of fall sports at many institutions.

On August 3, the Inter-Ac League announced that it was contemplating a late start to the fall season, with a schedule featuring no non-league opponents. A few days later, on August 6, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf issued a "strong recommendation" for schools to delay the resumption of all scholastic sports (and youth recreational sports) until January of 2021.

The School District of Philadelphia scrapped its fall season on August 10. Individual

suburban school districts which had already put the kibosh on autumn athletics included Norristown (July 30) and Pottstown (August 6). Other schools, school districts and athletic leagues on the Main Line and in Chester County would take the same step during the remaining weeks of August.

Germantown Friends and the rest of the Friends Schools League bowed out of fall competition on August 18, and the Philadelphia Catholic League followed suit on August 24. Now, even if the Inter-Ac schools wanted to play games outside of their league, the majority of their traditional non-league opponents would be unavailable.

The Inter-Ac acted two days after the PCL, putting off official competition until 2021. The league's August 26 announcement also noted that a reimagined schedule allowing for three shortened seasons, each seven weeks long, was under consideration. Tentative starting and finishing dates have been penciled in, with winter sports beginning in early January, followed by the teams that traditionally play in the fall and then by a spring sports schedule.

The Friends Schools League is also trying to take a flexible approach to the reintroduction of interscholastic athletics, stating in its August 18 announcement

that it's considering "designing a schedule to allow for the possibility of a compressed fall competitive season later in the year."

The Friends League and Inter-Ac schools (there are nine schools in each league) are members of the Pennsylvania Independent Schools Athletic Association (PAISAA). The Philly Catholic League schools and the AACA institutions belong to the much larger Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, which also oversees public school programs in the state.

On August 21, the PIAA decided to remain open for business in the fall, with substantial COVID-19 precautions in place. Individual school districts and regional athletic leagues could either choose to participate or decide not to play. In many parts of the state, fall sports are proceeding, following a modified format.

In Philadelphia, PIAA's District 12 has been put out of action entirely due to the withdrawal of the Philadelphia Public and Catholic Leagues. The counties surrounding Philadelphia fall within PIAA District 1, and the district is significantly fractured in regard to fall activities.

As mentioned, many schools that lie west of the Schuylkill River won't be playing, while the largest league east of the river, the

Suburban One League, is almost all in. Cheltenham School District athletes have been sidelined, but 21 other SOL schools are going ahead with fall sports, including Plymouth Whitmarsh High School and Springfield Township High School.

Also grouped in PIAA District 1, the Catholic Academies are independent schools not bound by the strictures followed by the schools governed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (the PCL). The eight league members, including the Mount, Gwynedd Mercy Academy in Gwynedd Valley, and St. Basil Academy in Jenkintown, decided that they could safely arrange intra-league competition.

After holding try-outs on September 21-23, AACA field hockey, soccer, tennis, and volleyball teams are slated to play a double round of league contests. The Mount St. Joseph cross country team has five regular-season meets lined up, and post-season District 1 and PIAA championship events have been scheduled.

The Mount's golf team is looking to defend its 2019 state championship, but instead of engaging in the normal head-to-head matches with league rivals during the regular season, several league-wide competitions have been set up. There are plans in place for both district and state championship tournaments.



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Officer Bransfield

(Continued from page 7)

his symptoms were mild. Daisy was tested twice, while she quarantined for two weeks, but both times her test results came back negative for Covid. Because Daisy, her husband and her adult daughter, who is a nurse, all work with the public in high contact jobs, their home is not a risk-free place. Daisy's children and stepchildren have primarily lived with other family members during the pandemic. That has been very difficult for Daisy, as a mother, but she has her dogs, her chickens and Chestnut Hill.

Officer Bransfield said she works harder now to stay connected while keeping a six-foot distance from the members of the community that she is sworn to protect. You can find her patrol car parked across from Chestnut Hill train station; you might glimpse her and her partner walking their beat on Germantown Ave. on their day shift or patrolling and responding to calls throughout greater Chestnut Hill during her night shift. You and your dog can get to know Officer Daisy Bransfield from a safe distance and say "hello" to this essential worker in our community.



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New Listing

WISSAHICKON HILLS \$299,000
Don't miss out on this charming home. This updated 3 bedroom, 1 bath, brick twin is move in ready. Living Room features hardwood floors and sun-drenched open concept floor plan. Enjoy cooking in the updated kitchen featuring a breakfast bar, stainless appliances and granite counters. Easy access from the Dining Room through sliding doors onto a large side trex deck. Head upstairs to discover 3 bedrooms with new carpet, fresh paint and a renovated hall bath. Call to see today!



New Listing

LAFAYETTE HILL \$799,000
The house provides plenty of room for entertaining and relaxing in style. Five bedrooms, three full and two half baths, renovated kitchen, open floor plan, large rear patio, a hot tub, side entry garage, and the basement is fully finished. The lot has mature trees and lovely landscaping and a fenced rear yard and a two tiered garden for flowers or vegetable. All of this in highly desirable Colonial School District.



New Listing

FITLER SQUARE \$725,000
This charming house with two bedrooms and two full baths, has a garage and parking spot also comes with an adorable street! Spacious living room with wood burning fireplace opens to the raised dining room and updated kitchen. The lower level has a full bath and nice size room that leads to the garage and laundry. Incredible location, one block to Schuylkill River Park, great for walking and biking.



WAYNE \$1,370,000-\$1,445,000
Bloomingdale Court – only 2 townhomes left in this walk-to-everything location in the heart of downtown Wayne. These distinctive quick delivery homes can still be customized with several upgrade packages to create the home of your dreams. Flexible floor plans, luxurious gourmet kitchens, 4-stop elevators and gorgeous master suites. Just steps from the train, and the fabulous shopping and dining that Wayne has to offer.



GERMANTOWN \$265,000
Attractive Cotswold style semi-detached stone and brick home tucked into a quiet one-way street but convenient to everything! Open first floor plan with new kitchen. 3 bedrooms, 1 bath upstairs. Green rear yard. And pleasant front porch made very private with mature shrubs. Perfect place to read poetry by Lauren Slaughter or "The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin.



ROXBOROUGH \$469,990-\$602,990
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Chicken pot pie: America's familiar fall favorite

This week marks the annual national celebration of a fall staple: the chicken pot pie, the ultimate one-dish autumn meal.

The pie, which became an American staple in the 1950s in its frozen form, is the perfect dish for the changing season, something savory, warm, comforting and filling.

Before I write my ode to the savory dish, there are a few things I have to confess right off the bat: I am in love with chicken pot pies



Chicken pot pie is on the menu at Campbell's Place in Chestnut Hill.

and yes, when I don't feel like making fresh dough I have been known to go the frozen route, buying a "family size" version that makes a perfect, easy and complete dinner for four.

But when I started looking this week for tasty ways to make and enjoy the pies instead of buying the frozen style, I made an interesting discovery. Did you know that the chicken pot pie, for all its

comfort and nostalgia, actually seems to be having a moment right now? Traditional recipe pies are in demand at local stores and restaurants, sometimes year-round, and some eateries are even paying tribute to the dish with interesting variations that look nothing like pot pies, but sure taste as good.

Let's start with the traditional. The secret to a great pot pie is

definitely in the crust – the flakier the better – but it's also in the gravy. The mixture of flour and butter must be in equal ratios to work up a roux that, when mixed with stock and cream, will create a soupy consistency, not a stewy one, according to Weavers Way's Prepared Food Manager John Adams. He makes a dead-on traditional version with a homemade puff pastry crust, and goes

all out with some fresh veggies, heavy cream, chicken stock and of course, fresh chicken.

"We try to keep it as traditional as possible," Adams said. "The consistency of the mix is what matters most. Equal parts butter and flour makes the roux thick."

Adams uses boneless, skinless chicken, as well as dry sage to add "more aromatic and flavor." Pars-

(Continued on page 17)

Memoir: from 3rd degree burns to 50 surgeries, doctorate



Dr. Lise Deguire tells how she overcame depression and unbelievable pain from more than 50 surgeries in her book that was just released Sept. 17, "Flashback Girl: Lessons on Resilience From a Burn Survivor."

by Len Lear

Message of non-violence in music video by GFS student

by Len Lear

The current generation of teenagers is anything but apathetic. Since the 1960s we have never seen so many young people of all races, economic classes and parts of the country engaging in traditional political activity, protests and artistic and cultural expressions decrying systemic racism, injustice, inequality, governmental bungling, etc.

A case in point: 15-year-old Germantown Friends School student Angelina Mack, whose family recently moved from Mt. Airy to Elkins Park, has written and produced a YouTube video with excellent production values showcasing her timely pop song, "Stop A Fight." Her song is for "the men of color in my life, starting with my father and brother." Her message is of "non-violence through listening to the issues sensitively and then playing a positive role after gaining a deeper understanding."

Some of the lyrics of "Stop a Fight" are: "You say you don't see color. Then draw your curtains like the others Who opened long ago. See our brothers with no hope. We stand for them, so join the lovers."

We teach love for one another. We see pain. Walk on the stains. We're the beasts you cannot tame ... I spent my days denying who I am. I never had the courage to take a stand, But in my head I know that I should be The bridge for you and me."



Angelina watches the YouTube video with excellent production values showcasing her timely pop song, "Stop A Fight."

Angelina's song is rapidly accumulating views on YouTube (more than 10,000) and caught the attention of TeenMag, where she was recently featured. "As a multi-racial artist," said Miles, her proud 18-year-old brother, "her music is a testament to the times we currently live in. Her heavy, dark-toned and mature vocal will bring goosebumps to even the most seasoned listener."

Angelina, a 10th grader, is not studying piano right now, but last year she took a music production class at GFS with teacher Sean Hennessey because she wanted to create a song on her computer. Sean pushed her into writing a song for her class. "When the protests were soaring," said Miles, "Angelina took our pain and

channeled it into her songwriting. My dad helped her with the final production, and in two days 'Stop A Fight' was born. A family friend named Arton also helped."

Angelina, who enjoys making videos in her spare time on a platform called iMovie, has just written another song called "Free." According to the songwriter, "It is a song of hope stemming from being oppressed by peers. My dad always said to me and my brother, 'If you're ever bullied, tell them that you are gonna love them anyway, and there's nothing they can do about it!'"

"The Black Lives Matter Movement rings loud in my heart. My dad, Al, is African American/African Caribbean and Japanese, and my mother, Cris-

tiana, is from Lake Como in Italy, so I felt compelled to share my perspective. My goal is to create bridges of understanding for anyone in need of having their voice heard louder and peacefully. With all of the protests, I felt like I wasn't contributing my share, so I decided to write a song to bring more attention to the movement through music."

There are dozens of comments from viewers about "Stop A Fight" on soundcloud.com, and there is not a thorn in the bunch. Here is a sampling: Alessandra DeBernardi: "Powerful lyrics and magnificent voice. So young, yet so ripe and expressive." Amparo Stetina: "A balm for the soul; you are amazing." Naomi Kenyatta: (Continued on page 19)

When she was four years old, Dr. Lise Deguire was trapped in a fire which destroyed her chin, neck and lower lip and left her with third degree burns on two-thirds of her body. She miraculously managed to survive the fire but spent many months in the hospital, mostly alone. She had more than 50 surgeries. Much of her childhood was spent in isolation.

When she was home, she was often bullied and taunted by strangers because of her appearance. "It was a hard life, and that was just the beginning," she said last week. "My parents were gifted but psychologically limited, unable to provide the emotional care that my brother and I needed. We were both neglected as kids."

Despite these traumas, Deguire, now mid-50-ish, who grew up in New Jersey but later moved to Roxborough, graduated from Tufts University in 1985, Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa. After earning a doctorate in clinical psychology at Hahnemann University, she has worked in rehabilitation hospitals, general mental health clinics and private practice.

"I am now happily married with two wonderful daughters and many friends," she said, "so healing and overcoming trauma are possible. Psychology was a way for me to understand resilience, how we recover from tragedy and how we can help others recover, too. I think I became a psychologist to understand why people are the way they are. In particular, I wanted to understand why some people like me can overcome trauma and thrive while others cannot."

(Continued on page 14)

Mt. Airy actress starring in Fringe Festival 'Zoom' play

by Rita Charleston

Someday you might take the girl out of West Mt. Airy, but you'll never take West Mt. Airy out of the girl. That's because Ft. Lauderdale, Fl., born, and Albany, N.Y., raised Melinda Messina purposely chose West Mt. Airy to be her home.

"I originally moved here to attend Arcadia University in Glenside," she said. "And about 10 years ago, shortly after graduating with a BFA in Acting and a minor in Communications, I decided to move to West Mt. Airy."

Messina, 32, said that she had friends living in West Mt. Airy and got used to it all during her years in college. "I like life here. It feels very much like living in suburbia, but you are still very close to the city. Here you are surrounded by greenery, big, beautiful old homes and very friendly people. It's also an area that's very supportive of the arts, and so I feel extremely comfortable and perfectly suited to be here."

Growing up, Messina wasn't sure what career path to pursue. But somewhere in her teens, she began to focus on her future dreams. And those dreams eventually led her to Glenside and Arcadia.

"I've always loved comedic films," said Messina, "especially those of John Candy and Robin Williams, and shows like 'Who's



West Mt. Airy actress Melinda Messina stars in the hilarious "Study Hall," part of the Philly Fringe Festival which can be seen via Zoom every Wednesday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 7 p.m. currently through Oct. 3.

Messina is currently appearing in "Study Hall," one of Philadelphia's longest running improv comedy shows. "Study Hall," created in 2011, features Drexel University professor Michael Yudell and guests lecturing on a wide variety of subjects that may start out as serious but soon turn into comedy. As part of the Philly Fringe Festival, the show can be seen via Zoom every Wednesday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 7 p.m. currently through Oct. 3. (It opened Sept. 9.)

As one of the performers in "Study Hall," Messina claims that she loves doing improv. "I love its organic nature where everything is happening in the moment. With a long list of performers, each night is different, depending on who is in the cast. Also, you're building scenes with others, and I love the camaraderie."

Messina's comedy credits have been growing over the years. She is currently a performer/instructor with ComedySportz Philadelphia and also performs with Philadelphia Improv Theater (PHIT). Additionally, she co-runs a monthly showcase in South Philly with her indie team, The Teens.

And when she's not on stage, the comedic actress works in the health care field. "But I find that doing improv brings me the greatest joy," Messina insisted. "And so, even years from now, I hope to hold on to that joy and in addition to other things I might be doing, still be enjoying making people laugh."

Tickets for "Study Hall" are \$10. To get them and a Zoom invite, call 215-413-1318 or email patronservices@fringearts.com

Memoir: from 3rd degree burns to 50 surgeries, doctorate

(Continued from page 13)

In her first book that was just released Sept. 17, "Flashback Girl: Lessons on Resilience From a Burn Survivor," Deguire discusses how she worked through the internal and external pain of her childhood to find a path towards love, health, joy and life satisfaction. She credits her survival to finding strength and resilience, which many of us are struggling to find as this pandemic and its isolation continue.

But the fire and its aftermath are only the beginning of this compelling story. Deguire vividly recounts the dysfunctional and tragic world of her family, which included artistic genius, eccentricity and four suicides, her formative years spent in the hospital undergoing reconstructive surgeries and her experiences being bullied and isolated.

Why did Deguire wait so many years to tell her story in book form? "Many of the tragedies in this book involved my parents," she told us, "and the truth of their actions does not reflect well on them. They meant no harm, but they were emotionally limited people who were self-involved, in particular my mother. I did not wish to cause her pain or embarrassment, so I waited to tell my true story until after she and the rest of my family passed away."

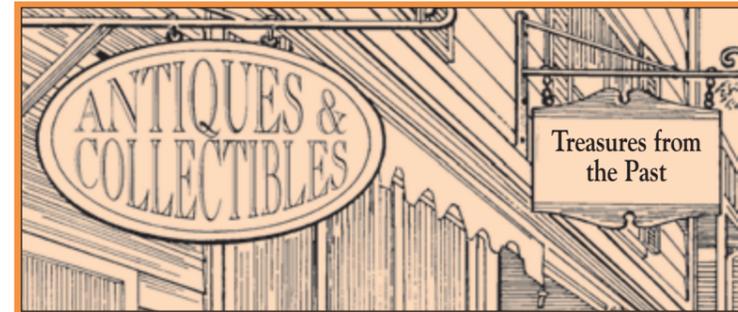
Deguire's background of numerous traumas has turned out to be an asset as a psychologist. "I worked hard to heal from everything that I have endured. Now, I am able to use the memories of my own pain to connect deeply with my clients... I think clients can sense, perhaps unconsciously, that I truly understand pain and that I can help them recover. And of course, my burn scars are visible, so clients know that I have had my own journey with hardship."

According to the psychologist/author, recovery from severe burns is one of the most physically painful experiences a person can possibly experience. "Each one of my more than 50 operations was excruciating and scary. It has been hard to keep going, to keep my chin up and keep working toward healing. I have been disfigured all my life, which is not easy, particularly as a woman. I am used to being stared at, but just the same, it hurts. It is painful to look different."

One wonderful person you will be introduced to in "Flashback Girl" is Deguire's brother, Marc-Emile, who was five years older than she. "He was honest and ethical, and he believed in being kind and loving to others. He was a great listener and offered good advice. He was the person I could turn to with my problems. Tragically, Marc had serious problems himself, and he suffered from depression... When he was 19, Marc took his own life... I miss him every day, even though he has been dead for over 40 years."

"Flashback Girl" has received rave reviews from other authors who have written about overcoming extreme trauma. For example, John Hanc, New York Times contributor and author of the award-winning memoir, "Your Heart, My Hands,"

(Continued on page 15)



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The Weekly Crossword by Margie E. Burke

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| ACROSS | 1 Puts in stitches | 5 Tiptop | 9 Hot sauce | 14 Cookie for dunking | 15 Watch-step link | 16 French farewell | 17 Kewpie, for one | 18 Connery film of 1999 | 20 Go off-script | 22 Trepidation | 23 Engrossed by | 24 Match, in poker | 25 Conclusive trial | 28 Poe's middle name | 30 Bic filler | 31 Long, long | 34 On the way | 36 Ammunition wagon | 38 Arithmetic sign | 39 Kind of cavity | 40 Summer beverage | 43 Unable to sit still | 45 Hollywood's Danson | 46 Make a goof | 47 Mr. T's group | 48 False show | 50 Dog reprimand | 53 Certain dancer | 56 Staff symbol | 57 Kind of cap | 59 One-sided | 62 Reduce, as expenses | 63 Money substitute | 64 iPhone assistant | 65 Spellbound | 66 Spartan slave | 67 Leak slowly | 68 Telephoto, for one |
| DOWN | 1 Bubby drinks | 2 Lose ground? | 3 Justly deserved | 4 Songs for one | 5 Sailor's assent | 6 Keep in custody | 7 Like some colors | 8 Unpredictable | 9 Tree trickling | 10 Cop to | 11 Bank claim | 12 Email folder | 13 Pilot starter | 19 Gladiator's place | 21 Railing part | 26 Felix, for one | 27 Like beauty, they say | 29 ___ and clear | 31 Gathering, as of things | 32 Capricorn's creature | 33 One's partner | 34 Shed | 35 "Way to go!" | 37 Sprawling story | 41 Standing | 42 Unpretentious | 43 Showy display | 44 Computer pros | 48 Salk's conquest | 49 Chilling | 51 Singer Neville | 52 Bottom of the barrel | 53 Overdo the praise | 54 Enough, for some | 55 Kind of scout | 58 Translucent gem | 60 Anagram for "tap" | 61 Sassy talk |
- Answers to Last Week's Crossword:**
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Pre-teen with lots of drive starts successful business

by Len Lear

While most kids who are not able to attend in-person school classes because of the pandemic are no doubt frustrated and upset at the forced isolation, one 12-year-old Germantown resident has been able to make ice cream out of ice, in a manner of speaking. ("Make lemons into lemonade" has been done to death.)

Jabre Dutton, a 7th grade student at Wissahickon Charter School, was doing a favor recently by cleaning out the inside of a car belonging to his mother, Sabrina's, friend. The friend paid Jabre with video game bucks, which Jabre used to play his favorite video game, Roblox, an online game platform and game creation system that allows users to program games and play games created by other users.

"I then told Jabre that he could probably make real money by cleaning people's cars instead of just video game bucks," said Sabrina, 29, a single mother who grew up in West Oak Lane and for the last four years has been a research medical assistant in the genetics department at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "So I asked a friend at work to make up a flyer for me about the car cleaning, and we posted it all over social media."

Before you could say "sports car," requests were coming in from car owners only too anxious to avail themselves of Jabre's actual business, now called Jabre's Car Cleaning Service (JCCS), which started in August. So far Jabre, who has no siblings, has cleaned 20 cars and is booked up through Oct. 17, so he is not putting the brakes on the work. He and his mom go to the customer's home instead of having the customer come to them. Most customers have been in North-west Philly, but the mother/son team has traveled as far away as Willow Grove to clean a car's interior. JCCS only cleans the



Jabre, who just turned 12, has already established a successful business cleaning car interiors.



Sabrina, a very proud mom, stands with her entrepreneurial son in front of their Germantown residence. (Photo by Len Lear)

interior of each vehicle and prioritizes safety amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Lynette M., one of Jabre's first customers, "Jabre was on-time, focused on his work and polite. He was professional

and did a great job!"

Most customers now hire Jabre (pronounced "Jabree;" he was given the name because it sounds like Sabrina) through the "booksy" app, but he also has an email address. The basic cleaning

legally separate from its owners. Other Black businesses in the area have also lent a hand. One, "I Love Thy Hood," gave Jabre \$100 after he cleaned their vehicle. One Mt. Airy resident who learned about Jabre gave him a \$100 Google Play gift card as a birthday present. (He turned 12 on Sept. 2.) He was also given a vacuum cleaner, and he has arranged meetings with other Black business owners in the area to learn from their experiences.

"I really want Jabre to have friends who are also in the entrepreneurial world so that he can ask them questions about how to do things in business and how to deal with the stresses of business," said his proud mom. "I want those other Black business owners to inspire Jabre, and I want him to inspire other Black kids to think about starting their own businesses. It can be done at any age, which Jabre has proven."

of the interior of a regular-sized car costs \$30; for a large car it costs \$45. Extra services can bring the price up as high as \$70. It takes anywhere from one-and-a-half hours to two-and-a-half hours to complete a job, depending mostly on the size of the car. "He is a perfectionist," said Sabrina about her son's skill with vacuuming, polishing and treating stains.

Jabre is saving the money he is making to help set up a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), which limits the personal liability of an owner because an LLC is

Although he is not yet a teenager, Jabre already knows about things like credit scores and investing money wisely instead of just spending it all right away on transitory pleasures. And when the cold weather grips the area, he might de-accelerate the car cleaning business and put a snow clearing business in gear.

For more information about Jabre's Car Cleaning Service, email Jdcs2020@yahoo.com. Len Lear can be reached at lenlear@chestnuthilllocal.com.

Memoir: from 3rd degree burns

(Continued from page 14) wrote, "Flashback Girl" is a riveting, compassionately-told story of grit and fortitude. As a childhood burn victim and now as a mental health professional (and wife and mother), it's hard to imagine anyone better qualified than Deguire to help teach us lessons in resilience.

"Flashback Girl" is available on Amazon and IngramSpark. For more information, visit lisedeguire.com. Len Lear can be reached at lenlear@chestnuthilllocal.com

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215-242-8800

www.cincinrestaurant.com

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215-242-9900

www.ordercosimospizza.com

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More Info:

267-766-5372

www.elpoquito.com

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Location:

8339 Germantown Ave.

Hours: Mon-Thurs

12p-8p, Fri-Sat 12p-9p,

Sun 3p-8p

More Info:

215-247-4141

www.fiestapizza3menu.com

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Service Options:

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Location:

7830 Germantown Ave.

Hours:

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Fri-Sat 4:30p-8:30p

More Info:

215-242-4489

www.restauranthokka.com

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www.ironhillbrewery.com

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570-726-7030

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215-248-9235

nightkitchenbakery.com

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www.mcnallys.com

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More Info:

215-247-9948

www.tavernonthehill.biz

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7136 Germantown Ave.

Hours:

Wed-Sun 4:30p-8:30p

More Info:

215-242-6666

earthbreadbrewery.com

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Service Options:

Curbside, pickup, delivery

Location:

277 W. Mt. Pleasant Ave.

Hours: Mon-Thurs

11a-9p, Fri 11a-10:30p,

Sat 11a-8:30p, Sun 11a-10p

More Info:

215-248-1100

evobrickovenpizzamenu.com

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#1842

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Goldencrustmenu.com

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Jansenmtairy.com

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More Info:

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Facebook: [Jyoti Indian Bistro](https://www.facebook.com/JyotiIndianBistro)

Chicken pot pie: America's familiar fall favorite

(Continued from page 13)

ley, thyme or rosemary would also work. (See full recipe from Weavers Way below.)

While chicken pot pie typically includes carrots, celery, potatoes and peas, corn is often thrown in. But it is the pastry crust – store-bought or homemade – that differentiates it from other hot pies like the shepherd's pie or cottage pie. Made with minced lamb, the shepherd's pie calls for mashed potatoes as its bottom and top crusts, not pastry dough. The cottage pie, made with beef, also calls for mashed potatoes. Campbell's Place makes both a chicken pot pie and a shepherd's pie but maintains that the chicken version is always popular.

"The Campbell's Place chicken pot pie is such a staple, that we always keep it on the menu," said chef and owner Rob Mullen, adding it "seems to always hit the spot when someone is seeking warming, flavorful comfort food."

Still somehow not in the mood for a traditional chicken pot pie?

If you feel like the crust is too much distraction from the hearty interior, you could always serve the pot pie like Iron Hill Brewery, which makes a pan seared chicken and vegetables dish that it defines as a "deconstructed" chicken pot pie. Iron Hill used to have a seafood pot pie and a chicken pot pie on the menu, but this latest take gets rave reviews.

The dish consists of a piece of pan-fried chicken, served alongside the traditional and not-so-traditional veggies like carrots, cauliflower and red bliss potatoes. They place a fresh biscuit on the plate, then top everything with the trademark chicken pot pie gravy.

"It's all the same ingredients, just deconstructed," said Iron Hill Chestnut Hill general manager Shaun Sawyer. "When the chefs designed it, they had the pot pie in mind."

If you want to get even more adventurous with your chicken pot pie remake, try the ultra-Americanized version from Humpty's Dumplings in Glenside, a noodle bowl and dumpling café on Keswick Ave.

Their "chicken pot pie noodles" dish is a carb fiesta, with a bowl of spaghetti noodles swimming happily in chicken pot pie ingredients and gravy, then topped with crumbled crust pieces.

"I think we get more orders for it when it is colder but it's a pretty good seller year-round," said one of the owners, Phillip Yesenosky. "It's one of our top two or three dishes."

If you are finally craving some pot pie – another confession, I actually went to the grocery store and bought one in the middle of writing this story – here is the version sought out by pot pie devotees at Weavers Way.



Weavers Way prepared food manager John Adams with the traditional chicken pot pie.

Weavers Way Chicken Pot Pie

For the dough:

- 1/4 lb. butter
- 2 cups flour
- Pinch of salt

For the filling:

- 1 lb. boneless and skinless chicken, cubed to 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 1/2 cups chopped onion
- 1/2 cup diced carrot
- 1/2 cup diced celery
- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 qt. chicken stock

1 cup heavy cream

1 lb. potatoes, diced then boiled separately

1 small bag frozen corn

1 small bag frozen peas

Salt and pepper to taste

To make the dough:

Mix butter, which should be as cold as possible, with flour and salt. Add a few tablespoons of cold water at a time to form the dough ball. Hand knead it to maintain proper consistency. Refrigerate dough for one to two

hours before rolling out.

To make the filling: Melt butter in a sauce pot. Add carrot, celery, onion and sweat until half cooked. Add chicken, corn and peas and cook for another 10 minutes on low-medium heat. Add salt and pepper.

Add flour and stir with spatula to make the roux. Add chicken stock and bring to a simmer. Add heavy cream and adjust seasoning, or add aromatic herb at this point. Continuously stir so roux does not stick to the bottom of the pot. Add boiled potatoes to the mix. Allow filling to cool overnight.

When ready to bake, place pie crust in the baking pan, pour filling into pan. Weavers Way tops the filling with a homemade puff pastry dough, but any store-bought dough will work. Brush top of dough with egg wash before baking. Bake 15 to 20 minutes at 400 degrees.

Not up for making a chicken pot pie from scratch? Here's where you can get your fix this month:

Weavers Way Co-op Chestnut Hill, 8424 Germantown Ave. 215-866-9150

Humpty's Dumplings, 277 N. Keswick Ave., Glenside. 215-935-6180

Iron Hill Brewery, 8400 Germantown Ave. 215-948-5600

Campbell's Place, 8337 Germantown Ave. 215-242-1818

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Facebook: Scoogis

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Facebook: Rockys Glenside LAFAYETTE HILL

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www.caspiangrille.com

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www.fromtheboot.com

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More Info:
610-897-8107
www.knishesanddishes.com

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Curbside pickup

Location:
405 Germantown Pike

Hours: Tues 3p-8p,
Wed-Sat 11a-8p,
Sun 12p-8p

More Info:
610-825-2469
Facebook: Ye Olde Ale House

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900 E. Willow Grove Ave

Hours:
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Fri-Sat 12p-9p

More Info:
215-575-2915
Instagram @enzapizzeria

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267-422-3165
www.localscoffee.com

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www.tonyspizzacity.com

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FB: Bacio Wholesome Italian Cucina

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More Info:
215-886-4277
@KeswickTavernGlenside

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brunosfood-lafayettehillpa.website

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FALL HOME & GARDEN

Dealing with blackspot fungus, enemy of roses

by Stan Cutler

Years ago, after struggling to keep a couple of dozen hybrid tea and floribunda rose bushes healthy in our Germantown garden, we decided that the effort was not worth the reward. For two decades, the memory of our first rose garden dissuaded Valerie, my wife, from trying again in Chestnut Hill. But memories fade. Valerie finds it difficult to resist the flowers she sees in the catalogs. She consulted with her enabler (me) and ordered a few more rose bushes than were sensible.

In May, halfway through Covid Phase One, I cleared daylilies from a 10' by 10' patch in front of the toolshed at the back of the property, planted four new bushes and transplanted three specimens that had not thrived elsewhere in the garden. Valerie was not pleased when she noticed the first signs of blackspot in late June but had studied the disease and believed she had the cure.

Blackspot is a fungus, *Diplocarpon rosae*, that starts at the bottom

of the plant and gradually rises. By the time the weather starts to cool, two-thirds of a bush's leaves have dropped after turning yellow with black spots. Amazingly, after blackspot has done its damage, the roses find the strength to set new buds. When they flower in late summer, the roses are considerably smaller than the show-quality June blooms.

The books will tell you that you can eradicate blackspot if you catch it early, spray with copper sulfate and clear the ground of fallen leaves. We started spraying even before the first signs. We sprayed from early June through July, spacing applications ten days apart, as advised by the "experts." The advertising hype for the chemical fungicide claims it will do no harm. In late July, watching the blackspot appear on the leaves of every one of the plants despite spraying, Valerie looked online for an alternative and discovered that copper sulfate is harmful to insects. We stopped using it at the end of July. It's now early September and every one of the plants is quite sick.



Valerie inspecting blackspot damage.

There are no other blackspot killers that she was able to discover. One experienced grower told her she had two choices: use chemicals and have roses, or not have roses. We risked puncture by

rose thorns, crawling between the bushes to collect fallen leaves. Mother Nature laughed. Our hot humid summers are perfect for *Diplocarpon rosae*.

Each spot is a cluster of speck-size fruiting structures (acervuli) that produce hundreds of microscopic spores. The hotter and more humid, the more spots and spores. The spores are carried to the ground by splashing rainfall, dripping dew, overhead sprinkling and gardeners working among wet plants. The next day, if the weather is right, after it matures on the ground surface, a spore floats upward to a leaf, germinates and penetrates rose tissue in 9 to 18 hours. It starts producing new spores the next day. Spots become visible in about a week, too late to save the leaf. As far as the fungus is concerned, the more humid the atmosphere the better. Welcome to the Delaware Valley.

For addicted gardeners, there are few things more intoxicating than a clear patch of soil. After I cleared out the daylilies and turned over the ground, Valerie's craving intensified. When the bare-root plants arrived from Oregon, she just had to put them in the ground, regardless of whether there was enough room. We planted the bushes about three feet apart, violating the recommended four-foot spacing. And the area is too close to the shed that blocks the breeze. There were many overcast, humid days in August when the leaves did not dry.

If you are thinking about planting a rose bush, put it in an open area at least four feet away from others. Go for shrub roses that are more blackspot resistant than teas or floribundas. And consider the beach rose (*Rosa rugosa*) that produces dozens of deep-pink flowers and is almost immune to blackspot. The flowers are not as showy as hybrids but have a wonderful fragrance. Other than occasional watering, they require no care at all. The fat red rose hips, the seed pods that remain after the petals fall off, are rich in Vitamin C and used to make medicinal tea.

We had learned all the lessons about spacing and the persistence of blackspot the hard way, years ago, but chose to forget. Addicts make bad choices.

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Plant trees now for decades of shade and beauty

by Melinda Myers

Cooler temperatures and warm soil make fall a great time to add trees to your landscape. Make the most of this investment of money and time and give your tree its best chance at survival with proper planting and care.

Select a tree suited to the growing conditions, your landscape design and available space. Make sure it tolerates the sunlight, soil and temperature extremes. Check the tag for the mature height and spread. You'll have a better-looking plant that always fits the space with minimal pruning.

Avoid planting near overhead utilities since trees and power lines make for a dangerous combination. Contact your underground utility locating service at least three business days before placing the first shovel in the ground. It's free and all you need to do is call 811 or file an online request.

Once the area is marked, you can get busy planting. Ensure your tree thrives for many years to

come with proper planting. Dig a saucer shaped hole three to five times wider than the root ball. It should only be as deep as the distance from the root flare to the bottom of the root ball. The root flare, where the roots bend away from the trunk, should always be at or slightly above the soil surface.

Set the tree in the hole, then peel back and cut away any burlap and wire cages. These can eventually constrict root growth. Roughen the sides of the hole and backfill with the existing soil. Water thoroughly to moisten the roots and surrounding soil.

Continue to water thoroughly whenever the top few inches of soil are crumbly and moist. Proper watering, especially during the first two years, is critical for establishing trees. Watering thoroughly as needed encourages deep roots and a more drought tolerant and pest resistant tree.

Monitor soil moisture near the trunk and beyond the root ball. Since many containerized trees are grown in soilless mix, the root ball dries out more quickly than



The root flare, where the roots bend away from the trunk, should always be at or slightly above the soil surface

the surrounding soil. Adjust your watering technique and schedule to accommodate this difference.

Mulch the soil surface with a two- to three-inch layer of wood chips or shredded bark to conserve water, suppress weeds and improve the soil as it decomposes. Pull the mulch back from the trunk of the tree to avoid disease problems.

Remove any tags that can eventually girdle the tree and prune out any broken or rubbing branches. Wait a year to fertilize and wait

two years, once the tree is established, for additional pruning.

Continue providing tender loving care for at least the first two years. Make regular checkups, prune to create a strong structure and keep grass, weeds and lawn care equipment away from the trunk throughout the lifetime of your tree. Your efforts will be rewarded with years of beauty and shade.

Gardening expert Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening*. Myers is the host of *The Great Courses* "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* TV & radio segments. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. Myers' website is www.melindamyers.com.

Message of non-violence in music video by GFS student



Angelina is seen during a trip to Italy before the pandemic with her brother Miles and parents, Al and Cristiana, who is originally from the Lake Como region of Italy.

(Continued from page 13)

"WOW! Your voice and lyrics give me hope." Rachel Bradburd: "Beautiful song! Such moving lyrics. I'm so glad to be able to hear it." Giorgio Luca Tornaghi: "Very mature, and I love your tone." Maxine Resnick: "Angelina, this is absolutely amazing. Your voice is gorgeous, and the song is moving and hopeful. GREAT JOB!"

Angelina played classical piano all throughout her childhood but stopped studying when her beloved music mentor, Edith Hirshtal, died. The pandemic took away most of her social interaction, of course, and "diminished so many massive opportunities to exchange ideas and laugh out loud ... And we, of course, couldn't travel."

When asked what was the best advice she had ever received, Angelina replied, "That we shouldn't be so concerned about conforming to what others want us to be. We should learn first to love ourselves so we can then love others."

You can see and hear Angelina's song at youtu.be/5DsVGpvVfME. Len Lear can be reached at llenlear@chestnuthilllocal.com

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FALL HOME & GARDEN

Ex-health care worker has prescription for healthy living

by Len Lear

Lifelong Germantown resident Christa Barfield, who just opened a store at 6730 Germantown Ave. in Mt. Airy called “Grow, Sip, Repeat: Viva Leaf Tea & Plants,” has a life story that reads like a script from a Julia Roberts movie. A graduate of St. Joseph’s University with a degree in health care administration, the effervescent 32-year-old mother of two got a job after college managing the billing for a huge medical practice in center city with 23 doctors and more than 200 patients per day on average. “It was very stressful,” said Christa. “It was affecting my own mental health. I had low energy for anything outside of work.”

As a result, Christa quit her job in 2018 after 10 years there, although she had no other job lined up and had not even looked for other employment. To celebrate her liberation, Christa got on a plane by herself and flew to Martinique, an island in the eastern Caribbean that is a territory of France. She had no plans

except to relax, swim, eat freshly grown food and seafood, forget about her former job and celebrate her 30th birthday.

“I first stayed in an AirBNB that was owned by a Thai chef,” she said, “who made the meals. Also, in the morning he would take fresh herbs from his garden and make tea blends. I loved it. I was fascinated by the whole experience.”

The second AirBNB Christa stayed in was owned by a family of three Black farmers who were deeply involved in Community-supported agriculture (CSA), a system that connects farmers directly to consumers without middlemen like supermarkets. Usually the consumers subscribe to the CSA and pay a certain amount of money periodically in return for which they receive a box of produce and/or other farm products weekly or bi-weekly. “The family was very nice,” said Christa, “and they let me travel with them to their farm and CSA pick-up. It was the first time I saw up close a CSA in action.”

Inspired beyond belief by the



Germantown resident Christa Barfield waters the crops she has planted in one of her FarmerJawn Community Greenhouses at 770 Jenkintown Rd. in Elkins Park, where she runs a very successful farmers' market on Fridays and Saturdays. She also just opened a store at 6730 Germantown Ave. in Mt. Airy called “Grow, Sip, Repeat: Viva Leaf Tea & Plants.”

lifestyle she was participating in — eating fresh food right from the earth — Christa knew that when she got back to Philly, she would be growing food, even though “I had never grown anything before. I’m totally self-taught. I went to a local bookstore and found some books with information about herbal medicine. I also learned a lot from the internet. A friend purchased a small greenhouse for me, and I put it in my backyard at my house in Germantown.”

Christa began growing herbs for tea and eventually leased 2,500 square feet of land from the Schuylkill Environmental Center, which has hundreds of acres of communal space in upper Roxborough. She began planting herbs and spices like ginger, cardamom and turmeric and fruits and vegetables like melons, lettuce, beets, plums, apples, pumpkins, etc.

At the beginning Christa was growing food for 10 families, but word-of-mouth quickly spread. Today she has two companies, Viva Tea Leaf and FarmerJawn Community Greenhouses. She has 50 subscribers who have “rotating memberships,” but she also has 300 families on a waiting list to join. Farmer Jawn recently had a produce pop-up at Attic Brewing in Germantown, and Christa has collaborated with LA Prepped, a local firm that offers catering and private chef services.

In addition to the space in upper Roxborough, Christa now leases thousands of feet of greenhouse space and a storefront at 770 Jenkintown Rd. in Elkins Park, where she runs a very successful farmers' market on Fridays and Saturdays that is open to the public. Consumers can purchase a “mystery box” of fresh fruits and veggies for \$25. Christa’s summer CSA is sold out. Her fall SCA sign-up begins at the end of September.

Christa has two children, Micah, 17, and Crystal, 12, who both help out in the farmers' market. Christa also has a farm manager and five part-time employees who were formerly volunteers. Christa also opened her new store, “Grow, Sip, Repeat: Viva Leaf Tea & Plants,” in Mt. Airy on Sept. 11. It sells house plants, tea and wellness products, among other things.

For more information, visit Vivaleaftea.com or email info@farmerjawnphilly.com. You can reach Len Lear at llenlear@chestnuthilllocal.com



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Spiritual transformation leads to operatic life change

by Len Lear

Jacob Agar's paternal grandfather, Vladimir Agaronov, died when Jacob was 22 years old. The rabbi officiating at the funeral service suggested that Jacob sing some Jewish prayers because he knew that Jacob was a trained opera singer. The young man had just graduated the year before from the conservatory at the State University of New York at Purchase, 25 miles north of New York City. And Jacob had been helping to take care of his grandfather.

The young singer was nervous because he had not sung religious music before. "My grandfather was a wonderful man," recalled Agar in an interview last week. "When he was younger, he was a very robust man; in fact, he was a champion boxer in Uzbekistan, but late in life he developed Alzheimer's disease and no longer recognized family members."

So to honor his beloved grandfather, Jacob proceeded to sing several Jewish prayers, which essentially changed Jacob's life. "I connected so much to the spiritual music," he said. "It moved me so much. I felt the music and the suffering so deeply."

When Jacob had been caring for his ailing grandfather, he sang to him, and even though Alzheimer's disease had taken over the elderly patient's mind, when he heard the singing, suddenly "he became alive, singing the lyrics and dancing. That's when I could really feel the healing power of music."

As a result, after the funeral service, Jacob made a life-changing decision. Instead of performing the glorious music of Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, et al, on stage, the handsome tenor enrolled in the Jewish Theological Seminary's H.L. Miller's Cantorial School in New York. (The cantor is a clergy member who fills a diverse role within the Jewish community. Cantors lead worship, officiate at lifecycle events, teach adults and children, run synagogue music programs and offer pastoral care.)

After graduating from the cantorial school, Agar got a job as a cantor at the Central Synagogue in Rockville Centre, Long Island, but on Aug. 1 of this year he took over as cantor at Beth Sholom Congregation at 8231 Old York Rd. in Elkins Park. It is the only synagogue in the country designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Beth Sholom is Hebrew for "House of Peace."

So far the services have been conducted via Zoom except for one outdoor service attended by



Jacob Agar, who went on a musical journey from rock music to operatic music to spiritual music, has just taken over as cantor of Beth Sholom Congregation, 8231 Old York Rd. in Elkins Park, a building that was designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright. (Photo by Elizabeth Agaronov)

50 members with social distancing and masks. It was also streamed on the synagogue's website. "I love it," said Agar. "The area is historical and is similar to where I grew up in Rockland County," a suburb of New York City.

Another powerful musical influence on the young cantor, now 28, was his maternal grandfather, Yakov Meyerov, even though the two never met. Yakov, for whom Jacob is named (Yakov is the Russian or Hebrew variant of Jacob or James), also an opera

singer, died the year before Jacob was born. Jacob was inspired by his namesake in both music and linguistic facility.

"Yakov spoke several languages," said Jacob, who himself is fluent in English, Russian, Italian and French and "so-so" in German, Hebrew and Spanish. Jacob has seen photos of Yakov and in 2016 visited the grave where he is buried in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan in the former Soviet Union.

Jacob was born in Baku, but his parents emigrated to the U.S. near New York City in 1990 after the breakup of the Soviet Union when Jacob was eight months old. "They did not leave because of anti-Semitism," said Jacob. "Jews were not persecuted in Azerbaijan, as they were in Russia. There were Jewish people in the professions and at higher levels of government in Azerbaijan. Jews left because they wanted a better life for their families." (There were about 10,000 Jews in Azerbaijan when Jacob's family left, and there are about 4,000 left now. Most who left went to either the U.S. or Israel.)

Jacob's mom, Tatyana Meyerov, was a Russian linguist and now works in information technology. His father, Gary Agaronov, was an engineer in the old country and is now a photographic designer. He was also a classic rock music fan, which rubbed off on Jacob, who started a rock band at age 15 that had no name and included the son of Eddie "Fingers" Ojeda, guitarist for the 1980s heavy metal band, Twisted Sister. But Jacob later fell in love with the singing of Luciano Pavarotti and switched his allegiance to operatic music.

"Jacob's maturity level is well beyond his years," said Jeffrey Gordon, Beth Sholom congregation president, in a recent interview. "He's a real — there's a Yiddish word, 'mensch' (a person of integrity and honor) ... We think he fits perfectly into our organization." Jacob's parents still live in Rockland County, New York, as does his sister, Elizabeth, 25.

For more information, visit bethsholomorganization.org. Len Lear can be reached at llenlear@chestnuthilllocal.com

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 6112 Ensley Drive : MLS #PAMC661704
\$1,125,000 : 6 BED : 3 FULL BATHS + 1 HALF BATH



Queen Village **NEW**
 712 S. Philip Street : MLS #PAPH926560
\$1,050,000 : 4 BED : 2 FULL BATHS + 1 HALF BATH



Fitler Square **SOLD**
 510 S 24th Street : MLS #PAPH917320
\$960,500 : 3 BED : 2 FULL BATHS + 1 HALF BATH



Queen Village **UNDER CONTRACT**
 846 Independence Court : MLS #PAPH909206
\$790,000 : 3 BED : 3 FULL BATHS + 1 HALF BATH



Wyndmoor
 531 E. Willow Grove Avenue : MLS #PAMC649774
\$675,000 : 5 BED : 2 FULL BATHS + 1 FULL BATH



Chestnut Hill
 8413 Anderson Street : MLS #PAPH874410
\$610,000 : 5 BED : 2 FULL BATHS + 2 HALF BATHS



West Germantown **NEW**
 431 W. Stafford Street : MLS #PAPH934754
\$425,000 : 6 BED : 2 FULL BATHS



West Mount Airy **UNDER CONTRACT**
 124 W. Hortter Street : MLS #PAPH930898
\$399,900 : 2 BED : 1 FULL BATH + 1 HALF BATH



Roxborough **NEW**
 4373 Pechin Street : MLS #PAPH933880
\$349,000 : 5 BED : 2 FULL BATHS



West Mount Airy
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\$288,000 : 3 BED : 1 FULL BATH



Elkins Park **UNDER CONTRACT**
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