



InSide The Back Mountain

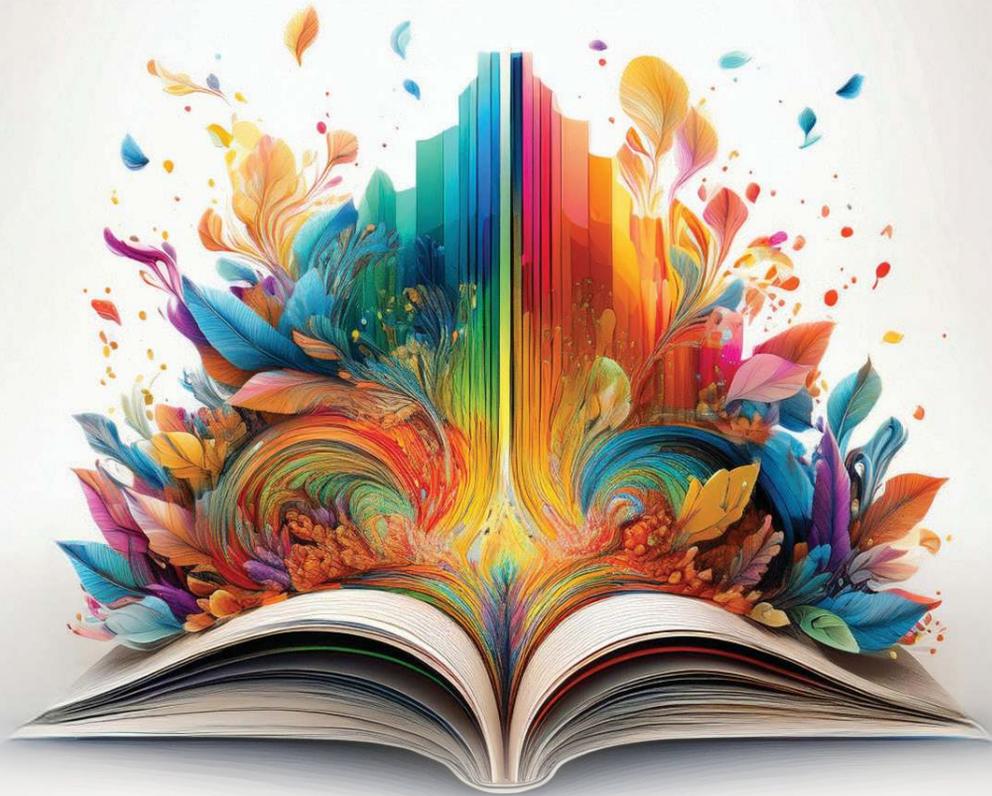
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InSide The Back Mountain

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We're looking for the kind of news you want to read about your neighborhood. Information on clubs, activities, events and charities, stories about your family, your kids or your pets that you'd like to share with your neighbors. This is your magazine. Make it everything you want it to be! Send your submissions to phamilton@bestversionmedia.com. Submission dates for upcoming issues are listed below. We'd love to hear from you. Thank you for supporting your neighborhood.

Content Due	<i>Edition Date</i>
December 15	<i>January</i>
January 15	<i>February</i>
February 15	<i>March</i>
March 15	<i>April</i>
April 15	<i>May</i>
May 15	<i>June</i>
June 15	<i>July</i>
July 15	<i>August</i>
August 15	<i>September</i>
September 15	<i>October</i>
October 15	<i>November</i>
November 15	<i>December</i>

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Dear Residents,

Happy February! We're one month into the new year, and I hope it's off to a great start for you and your family.

We all know this month brings us Valentine's Day when we celebrate love. But did you know that it's also American Heart Month? Why not share some love by donating blood to others who need it? You can find blood drives in the area by typing your zip code into www.redcrossblood.org.

This month we feature someone most of you may know. Sandy Race is the current President of the Back Mountain Chamber. You may know her through her long-standing relationship with the Chamber in various capacities or through her involvement in many other community and church activities. Although Sandy is "retired" from her professional career, she remains a true community champion who leads with vision, service and heart. Through tireless service and inclusive leadership, Sandy has made a lasting positive impact on every endeavor where she dedicates her time. Her story is yet another example of the best of our community that you will find inspiring.

Sunsets, beautiful sunsets! There are none better than those depicted in the images Sue Hand shares with us this month. Looking at these images take my mind to a beautiful, peaceful place. And her words are yet another lesson that provide a glimpse into another beautiful aspect of what it means to work together to produce meaningful, lasting memories.

We have other spectacular upcoming events that you'll read about in the pages of this issue. Please consider attending and/or contributing to the success of some of the organizations that make The Back Mountain the special place it is and has been for centuries.

Remember Valentine's Day, February 14th, falls on Saturday this year. If it's a special day to remember your special someone, you may want to shop early. Dinner reservations will fill up quickly so be sure to make that call to secure your favorite dinner venue.

Our team loves providing you, our readers, with stories of local community members. If you know of a family or individual who might be interested in being featured in future issues, feel free to send our team an email. I can't wait to introduce you to more of the families that make up this community, and your help is greatly appreciated in continuing to make *InSide The Back Mountain* magazine succeed!

And as always, thank you to our amazing sponsors! Because of them, this magazine is possible, and we're so grateful for their continued support. Enjoy this month's edition of *InSide The Back Mountain*.

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NOW
THROUGH
THE END
OF FEB

Vintage Porcelain Musical Barbies Display

@ Back Mountain Memorial Library, 96 Huntsville Road, Dallas
Collector Sharon Austin of Sweet Valley is displaying her collection in memory of the late Carol Ann Martino. All are welcome.
Time: Library Hours • Cost: Free
570.675.1182

FEB
WEDNESDAYS

Exploring Collage with Nina Davidowitz

@ Circle Centre for the Arts, 130 Rear S. Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre
There are endless opportunities for creative expression with the medium of collage. We will explore several different techniques, using a variety of materials to create landscape, still life, portrait and abstract compositions. If there is interest, we will also explore mixed-media techniques, adding painting and drawing to our collages. No previous experience is necessary.
Time: 10:30AM to 12:30PM
Cost: \$25/Members; \$40/Non-Members (Price per class; 4 classes per session)
570.288.1020 or Wyomingvalley-artleague.org

FEB
8
SUN

Stained Glass with Randy Lucas

@ Circle Centre for the Arts, 130 Rear S. Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre
Learn to craft a stained-glass piece from start to finish. Step into the timeless art of stained glass with local artist Randy Lucas of Hillcrest Creations. This 3-hour session will teach you how to create a stunning stained-glass piece from start to finish. It is beginner friendly and all materials will be provided. No experience needed.
Time: 11AM to 2PM
Cost: \$50/members; \$65/non-members
570.288.1020 or Wyomingvalleyartleague.org

FEB
7
SAT

Indoor Garage Sale

(rain date Sun., Feb. 8)
@ Dallas Eastern Star Hall, Foster Street, Dallas
Gently used and new items, including lots of books. Welsh cookie sale \$8/ dozen. Lunch available.
Time: 9AM to 1PM
570.675.4893 or diannec@ptd.net or visit Dallas Eastern Star Building Association on Facebook.

FEB
8
SUN

Kunkle Fire Company Buffet Breakfast

@ Kunkle Fire Company Social Hall, 815 Kunkle Road, Dallas
Time: 8 to 11:30AM
Cost: Adults \$12; Children 10 and under \$6; Children 3 and under Free

FEB
11
WED

Line Dancing

@ Harveys Lake American Legion, 4907 Memorial Highway, Harveys Lake
Have fun line dancing the second Wednesday of each month with instructors Pam Hadle and Nancy Mahle.
Time: 6pm to 8pm • Cost: Free
570.639.2240

FEB
12
THURS

North Branch Land Trust: Get Ready for The Great Backyard Bird Count! - Online Event (Online | ZOOM)

This online event is a great way to gain knowledge on "The Great Backyard Bird Count", a global community science event focused on identifying and recording different bird species. Learn more about the Bird Count, how to use eBird, and other ways to prepare for this 4-day event!
YOU MUST REGISTER ONLINE TO RECIEVE ZOOM LINK
This event is a free but donations are encouraged as they help support our mission and continue to provide events like this.
Time: 6 to 7PM

FEB
14-15
SAT-SUN

Bale Sale

@ Gate of Heaven Parish, Machell Avenue, Dallas
Time: After masses
Goholv.org

FEB
18
WED

Labyrinth Walk

(weather permitting)
@ St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 474 Yalick Road, Dallas
St. Paul's has acquired a moveable labyrinth, which is set up in the church Narthex. Members of St. Paul's will be on hand during the walks to offer guidance and information about labyrinths. Shoes are not worn while walking the labyrinth; please wear or bring socks. Finger labyrinths are available for those with physical or visual disabilities.
Time: 3 to 6PM • Cost: Free
570.675.3859 or stpaul@epix.net

FEB
19
THURS

Grief Support Group

(weather permitting)
@ St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 474 Yalick Road, Dallas
This group is a shared ministry of St. Paul's and Prince of Peace Episcopal Church, Dallas. Participation is free and open to everyone in the community who is in need of support due to a loss. No reservations are required. Grief support groups provide emotional support, validation and education about grief. This support group is an on-going group and is not time limited.
Time: 6:30 to 7:30PM • Cost: Free
570.675.3859 or stpaul@epix.net

FRB
21
SAT

Blood Drive

@ Gate of Heaven Parish Center, Machell Avenue, Dallas
Time: 9AM to 2PM
Goholv.org

FEB
25
WED

Lunch & Learn: Smart Nutrition for Heart Health & Diabetes Awareness

@ The Meadows Manor, Dallas
Join The Meadows for an informative Lunch & Learn focused on heart-healthy eating and diabetes awareness. Our guest speaker, Meadows Dietitian Laura Maxson, will share practical nutrition tips to support heart health and balanced blood sugar. Complimentary lunch provided, plus FREE blood pressure and glucose checks.
Time: Doors open at 11:30AM; Presentation at Noon
Cost: Free
RSVP by 2/23: 570.675.9336

FEB 28
SAT
Northmoreland Fire Company Dinner
@ Northmoreland Volunteer Fire Company,
1618 Demunds Road, Centermoreland
Dinner includes roast beef, real
mashed potatoes and gravy, vegetable
and dessert. Eat in or take out.
Time: 4:30 to 6:30PM

MAR 3
TUES
Back Mountain Chamber Awards Ceremony
@ Misericordia University, Dallas
See Page 12 for Details

MAR 6
FRI
World Day of Prayer Observation
@ Gate of Heaven Parish,
Machell Avenue, Dallas
Goholv.org

MAR 7
SAT
Workshop for Young Writers
@ Circle Centre for the Arts, 130 R.
South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre
Presented by Wyoming Valley Poetry Society and Wabi Sabi Studio, this workshop is open to students grades K through 12. The group meets the first Saturday of each month. Registration required.
Time: 9AM to 12 Noon • Cost: Free

wyomingvalleypoetrysociety@gmail.com to register the names and grades of the young bards

MAR 12
THURS
Covered Dish Dinner and Irish Sing-A-Long
@ Gate of Heaven Parish,
Machell Avenue, Dallas
Time: 5PM • Cost: Free
Goholv.org

MAR 24
TUES
The Meadows Open House: Mix & Mingle
@ The Meadows Nursing Center and Meadows Manor, Dallas
Join us for an Open House at The Meadows! Stop by to meet our team, enjoy light refreshments, and discover the different levels of care we offer, including short-term rehabilitation, long-term care, assisted living, and more. This is a great opportunity to tour our campus, ask questions, and learn how The Meadows supports residents at every stage of care.
Time: 3 to 5PM • Cost: Free
RSVP by 3/23: 570.675.8600

MAR 25
WED
North Branch Land Trust 2026 Annual Dinner & Auction
@ The Westmoreland Club,
59 South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre
See Page 9 for Details

APR 26
SUN
Back Mountain Library Annual Author Luncheon
Save the date!

JUNE 8
MON
7th Annual Back Mountain Chamber Golf Tournament
Save The Date
@ Huntsville Golf Club, Lehman

OCT 10
SAT
The Lands at Hillside Farms 20th Anniversary Celebration
Save the Date!

At the time this magazine went to print, all event and time locations were accurate, but please check event websites for the most current information. Some events may have been postponed or canceled.



Jessica Patricia
photography

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SANDY RACE

Community Focused Based on Generations of Service

RESIDENT FEATURE // By Sandy Race

Photography by Jessica Patricia Photography



Sandy at the Back Mountain Chamber Office

The Back Mountain Chamber (BMC) has an exciting story to tell, and Sandy Race, President of the BMC, is the perfect person to tell their story.

Sandy was born in Lancaster PA, and has lived in the Back Mountain for most of her life. A community, she said, that is easy to embrace and loved for all that it has to offer. We realized her roots run deep *Inside The Back Mountain* after she explained that she grew up on Carverton Road in Trucksville in a 15 room home built in 1900 by her great-grandfather, William C. Johnson. As documented in the book, *Pennsylvania's Back Mountain*, by Harrison Wick, the Johnson family lived in Lehman where William C. Johnson owned a general store. In 1895, William Neely built a general store at the intersection of Carverton Road and the Kingston and Dallas Turnpike in Trucksville. Before 1900, Neely traded businesses with her great-grandfather, Neely moved to Lehman, and Johnson moved his family to Trucksville where he owned and operated the general store. Her own father's family (nine children) grew up in the home, and then Sandy's family (father, mother, four siblings, & grandmother) lived there also. It was the perfect home for many people, and was a central place to gather in the neighborhood when Sandy grew up.

For the past 11 years, Sandy has been an active member of the BMC, has been a Board member since 2016, served on their Executive Committee for several years, and is currently serving a two-year term as its President. She couldn't be happier and embraces the opportunity every day. Why? The people. The people at the BMC, the people in the community, and all of the new friendships she has made serving in those roles.

Sandy noted that the BMC's mission can be summed up in three words - Commerce, Community, and Culture. The Chamber promotes economic growth by enhancing and promoting business through networking, education, and social experiences. All of which are front and center on a daily basis at the Chamber's office. The BMC strives to improve its local community, augment the culture, and carefully cultivate a balance of business growth with a relaxed and enjoyable quality of life..... and all of this right here *Inside the Back Mountain*.

Sandy offered a little bit of history of the BMC. It was formed in 2012 and has steadily grown in its scope and activities. The Chamber is governed by a Board of Directors of 21 volunteers from area businesses, nonprofit community organizations, and community members. While the Chamber was formed primarily to promote and support the businesses of the Back Mountain area, it has expanded its role to one of cooperation with other chambers and businesses throughout the region. Employment opportunities are enhanced through workplace development and educational programs offered by the BMC. Its robust website enables its members to better promote their businesses, it provides a membership directory, offers a calendar of events, posts employment opportunities, and much more. You can check it out at www.backmountainchamber.net.

In addition, the BMC takes pride in its nickname "*The Little Chamber With a BIG Heart.*" Sandy said that they are intent on giving back to the many member nonprofits that are doing good work in our community. In 2025, the BMC raised and donated \$4,735 for the Kunkle Fire Co., the Back Mountain Little League, Dinners for Kids, and Brighter Journeys. Added to that was 2,300 pounds of non-perishable food that was collected and donated to the Back Mountain Food Pantry. Sandy couldn't be prouder of this side of the Chamber and said "The Chamber really does have a BIG heart and truly cares about the community it works within."

In addition to the Board of Directors, there is a large group of volunteers (42 in 2025) that served on 14 different committees. Sandy mentioned just a few 2025 events that these volunteers organized:

- A Meet & Greet networking event that kicked off the new year.
- The Annual Awards Ceremony which showcased our exemplary member businesses.
- The three-week-long Community Food Drive which benefited the Back Mountain Food Pantry.



JOSEPH BULFORD BLACKSMITH SHOP, 1914. Joseph Bulford (1876–1948) owned a blacksmith shop on the Kingston and Dallas Turnpike in Trucksville. He purchased the shop from John Space. This photograph includes, from left to right, Thelma Bulford, Robert Bulford, James Stevens, and Joseph Bulford. Robert Bulford was a veteran of World War I. Joseph Bulford sold hardware, shoed horses, and repaired wagons. Note the automobile in the garage; he also sold gasoline and serviced automobiles. (Courtesy of Louise Schooley Hazelatine.)



Some of Sandy's Family History

WILLIAM C. JOHNSON HOUSE, 1912. William C. Johnson (1865–1928) built this house on Carverton Road in Trucksville. He lived next door to Dr. Gilbert L. Howell. William C. Johnson was postmaster of Trucksville from 1907 to 1908 and served as the Kingston Township school director. He ran the post office out of his general store on the corner of Carverton Road and the Kingston and Dallas Turnpike. (Courtesy of Elizabeth Spaciano.)

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- The Business Expo & Career Fair that spotlighted its member businesses during National Small Business Week.
- The Legislative Breakfast where two U.S. Congressmen, one PA Senator, and five PA State Representatives attended to report on their districts and allowed Q&A time for the public.
- The Annual Golf Tournament at Huntsville Golf Club (SOLD OUT).
- A Lunch & Learn on Human Trafficking session that was presented by a professional panel of experts in that specific field.
- A Multi-Chamber Mixer with the Wyoming Valley and Wyoming County Chambers of Commerce.
- The Federal Reserve Breakfast with a speaker from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia.
- The long-standing popular cultural event featuring International Dueling Pianos that provided true talent at the keyboards (SOLD OUT).
- An educational seminar titled *Demystifying AI: What it Is And How To Use It* (SOLD OUT).
- A year-end Jingle & Mingle holiday party that recognized 42 volunteers, the Board of Directors, member businesses, and more. It was a time to celebrate the Chamber's 2025 accomplishments and network with all in attendance.

Sandy was excited to announce that in October, the BMC hired Kim Scranata, as their Business Development Manager. The new position will allow the Chamber to provide more services and opportunities to its members and help the Chamber grow. Contact Kim at kim@backmountainchamber.net. Kim works alongside of Nicole Romeo, who is the Administration Assistant. Nicole can be contacted at nicole@backmountainchamber.net.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Sandy's Ancestors

JOHNSON FAMILY, TRUCKSVILLE, C. 1910. This photograph includes William C. Johnson and his wife, Jennie Coolbaugh Johnson, and their sons, Benjamin Ford Johnson (back) and Arthur Clyde Johnson (front). William C. Johnson married Jennie Coolbaugh on March 27, 1890. Benjamin Ford Johnson was born in 1893, and Arthur Clyde Johnson was born in 1901. The family lived in Lehman where William C. Johnson owned a general store. In 1895, William Neely built a general store at the intersection of Carverton Road and the Kingston and Dallas Turnpike in Trucksville. Before 1900, William Neely traded businesses with William C. Johnson, and William Neely moved to Lehman. William C. Johnson moved his family to Trucksville, and he operated the general store built by William Neely. (Courtesy of Joan Coolbaugh Britt.)

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Sandy at the Beach with her Husband, Bill, and their 6 Grandchildren

Sandy also announced that a nationally-renowned chamber consultant was hired in 2025 to evaluate the BMC to ensure best practices and procedures were in place, and also to provide suggestions on how the Chamber can better serve its members. This was a huge step forward for this small Chamber.

There were many *firsts* for the BMC in 2025. It participated in the Dallas American Legion's Memorial Day Parade, the Back Mountain Bloomers Garden Tour at registration, the Dallas Harvest Festival, and a Community Blood Drive that the American Red Cross confirmed was a complete success in an effort to save lives.

And, as if all of that was not enough, she indicated that the BMC is proud to announce that they are part of the America250PA initiative which reinforces the celebration of America's 250th anniversary in 2026.

In 2025, the BMC won The Times Leader's Silver Award for the Best Chamber in our area! Sandy believes this was a first for the Chamber.

Sandy invites everyone to stop by their beautiful office inside the even-more-beautiful Dallas Township building located on Lt. Michael Cleary Drive in Dallas. Stop in to meet Nicole and Kim, pick up a Member Directory, explore additional options the BMC has to offer, etc. The possibilities are endless! The office is not only open to its members, but to the public also.

If anyone would like more information about the BMC, you can easily reach them:

Call: 570-675-9380

Email: nicole@backmountainchamber.net

or kim@backmountainchamber.net

Website: backmountainchamber.net

Back Mountain Chamber Team (Photo ID L to R: President Sandy Race; Business Development Manager Kim Scranta; Administrative Assistant Nicole Romeo)



On the personal side of Sandy's life, she is married to her best friend Bill for 48 years. They live in Franklin Township which is a beautiful section of the Back Mountain. They spend a lot of time with their three grown children, their spouses, six grandchildren ages 16, 14, 8, 7, 6, and 5, and more extended family. Sandy is retired for over a year now from The Pennsylvania State University, which gives her ample time to volunteer for the BMC. Some of her favorite activities include hiking, biking, kayaking, and spending as much time outdoors as possible. In October, she and her husband completed a 150-mile bike ride along the Great Allegheny Passage from Pittsburgh PA to Cumberland MD. It took them four days, they stayed at B&Bs along the way, and only carried saddle bags with their belongings. A true adventure! In 2026, they plan to finish the remaining 185-mile ride from Cumberland MD to Washington DC along the C&O Canal. A long stretch, but one they are looking forward to. In 2025, she and Bill went on a cruise to Alaska which included a train ride into Canada. They also spent a week with their family at Sandbridge Beach, VA. She loves to travel and do all of these things, but her travels have proved that there is no better place to be than *Inside the Back Mountain!*

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ANNUAL DINNER AND AUCTION

COMMUNITY SUBMISSION // Submitted by Brittany Lynn, NBLT Marketing Manager

North Branch Land Trust, a nonprofit dedicated to conserving the natural and working lands and waters of Northeastern Pennsylvania, is thrilled to invite the community to attend its Annual Dinner and Auction on MARCH 25, 2026. Proceeds directly support NBLT's ongoing efforts to conserve critical lands, expand outdoor education, and inspire environmental stewardship across Northeastern Pennsylvania. This year, NBLT is honored to recognize The Mericle Family for their longstanding support of the nonprofit and its mission.

This year's Annual Dinner and Auction is proudly led by our dedicated Committee Co-Chairs, Kelly Bray, Director of Business Development, Pennsylvania American Water, and Jeremy Eden, Senior Director of Northeast Operations, Pennsylvania American Water, whose leadership and passion for conservation will be instrumental in bringing this event to life.

"North Branch Land Trust is thrilled Kelly Bray and Jeremy Eden of PA American Water will be Co-Chairs of the 2026 Annual Dinner and Auction. This is the Land Trust's largest fund and friend raising event of the year and is critical as we continue our mission to conserve the precious lands and waters, forests, farmlands and habitats of Northeastern Pennsylvania, our common wealth of beauty and nature. We hope the community embraces the event by learning more about North Branch Land Trust and sponsoring and attending the event," says Ellen Ferretti, Executive Director of North Branch Land Trust.

"As co-chair of the NBLT Annual Dinner, I'm honored to help lead an event that celebrates our commitment of protecting the open spaces that define our region. This event ensures that future generations will enjoy the same clean water, scenic beauty, and natural landscapes we cherish today," said Kelly Bray, Esq.



Founded in 1993, North Branch Land Trust is a nonprofit, community-driven organization dedicated to conserving the lands, waters, and natural resources of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

"It's a true privilege to co-chair this year's Annual Dinner in support of North Branch Land Trust. Their unwavering commitment, alongside devoted community partners, to protecting the cherished lands and waters of Northeast Pennsylvania inspires deep gratitude and hope for the future," said Jeremy Eden.

This signature event brings together conservation supporters for an evening of celebration, impact, and generosity. Guests will enjoy great comradery, delicious fare, and the chance to bid on exclusive auction items, all in support of North Branch Land Trust's mission to conserve and care for Northeastern Pennsylvania's lands and waters.

"I always look forward to the annual dinner and auction. It is a great time of year to celebrate the Land Trust's accomplishments and recognize all who contribute to our success - save the date as this will be a great event!" - Stephen Maakestad, Chair of North Branch Land Trust.

North Branch Land Trust invites everyone - community members, conservation advocates, and business leaders alike - to come together for this special evening of celebration and philanthropy on March 25, 2026 at 5:30 PM at The Westmoreland Club. For more information on North Branch Land Trust's mission, how to support it, or ways to get involved, visit nblt.org.



Image: Jeremy Eden (left) and Kelly Bray (right), co-chairs of 2026 North Branch Land Trust Annual Dinner

THROUGH THE ARTIST'S EYE

FOR THE LOVE OF THE LAKE



**SUE
HAND**

COMMUNITY SUBMISSION // Article and artworks by Sue Hand

Group 1



He hangs out a lot at Harveys Lake. He loves to fish and owns a boat or two. He is a beloved father and grandfather, married for 52 years to one of my talented artist friends. Because he lives with an artist, he knows the importance of color, contrast and visual texture. He snaps cell phone photos and texts his trophy shots to a very small, select group of people. He not only enjoys sunsets—Sam Giunta STALKS sunsets! Sam is an opacrophile, a person who loves sunsets and their seemingly magical transition from day into night. That word comes from opacare, Latin for dusk or sunset, and phile, Greek for love.

I am blessed to be in his select group of sunset photo recipients. With Sam's blessings, I have set out on a new artistic journey! Long ago, I recognized my own personal need for goal setting. Thus, one of my current goals is to transform a minimum of 100 of Sam's photos into small acrylic paintings, showcasing the lake that many of us here *InSide the Back Mountain* call our favorite! Harveys Lake's history, recreational opportunities, and wonderful people are well known. Sam and I would like to make it recognized for its magnificent sunsets, rivaling those vast skies seen from the vantage point of the Wyoming Valley Mall!

Sam's beautiful wife, Renee, and I have shared many wonderful experiences, including one of the most unique and exciting sunset hot air balloon rides I have ever flown... but I digress! Months ago, when Renee showed me a few of Sam's Harveys Lake sunset photos, I gasped and immediately asked if Sam would mind if I painted from a few of them. Sam added my name to his select photo group and within days there were a growing number of gorgeous sunset reference photos in my "Sam Giunta" phone album. That's when I set my goal of at least 100 small acrylic paintings, all the same size, 4 inches high and 6 inches wide.

Some are painted on canvas panels. Others are painted on gessoed rag board to provide a smooth surface allowing a bit of extra detail since the bumpy texture of the canvas panel is sometimes a hindrance. Bumps are especially challenging when the painting surface is only 4 inches high and 6 inches wide! Many have asked why I chose the medium of acrylic, not watercolor or oil—and why did

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I choose such a small size? I chose acrylic paint, which is a polymer, basically a liquid plastic, because tube colors are vibrant, luminous, and capable of the multiple glazes needed to depict realistic skies with many cloud layers. The small size was simply a practical decision. Even these "Harveys Lake Littles" take me 8 to 12 hours each, depending on the complexity of sky formations and water reflections. Larger sizes would significantly increase the time required for each painting and reduce the number of sunsets I could explore!

As an artist with decades of experience behind me, I still love learning. I am a huge fan of James Gurney, the greatly admired artist who created Dinotopia. In 1982, I bought the book written by Gurney and his friend Thomas Kinkaid, who later became famous as the "Painter of Light." Both were art school dropouts who became wildly successful in the field of art! For decades I have taught the principles in their book, *The Artist's Guide to Sketching*, which they wrote while bumming/hitching their way across the United States. Today it's considered a classic! In one of Gurney's recent writings, he expounded on the usefulness to the serious painter of abandoning the commonly accepted red-yellow-blue primaries taught in art schools everywhere for color mixing, replacing them with the printing industry's cyan-magenta-yellow, and adding the stage and screen primaries of red-green-blue. So, I decided to use them to paint these Harveys Lake scenes. For anyone interested, there's a plethora of information available about the subtractive color system of CMYK and the additive system of RGB... it's too much info for this little article! Suffice it to say, I dropped the K which stands for Key color, or Black, because I don't paint with black. By mixing RGB with CMY, I can achieve the best darks, plus all these other hues you see in these paintings and have a blast doing it!

There's also an entire science to sunsets, their colors, the cloud formations, angles of the setting sun, and other variables. Opacarophiles like Sam Giunta simply love the beauty of sunsets. Painters like me echo that thought! Care to join us?

Group 2



Group 3



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THE BACK MOUNTAIN CHAMBER TO HOST

2026 Annual Awards Celebration

COMMUNITY SUBMISSION // Submitted by Nicole Romeo

The Back Mountain Chamber will host its Annual Awards Celebration on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at Misericordia University, honoring outstanding businesses and leaders for their exceptional contributions to the Back Mountain community.

The Annual Awards Celebration is one of the Chamber's signature events, bringing together business owners, community leaders, and partners to recognize excellence across several award categories. These honors celebrate businesses that demonstrate leadership, innovation, community involvement, and a commitment to strengthening the local economy.

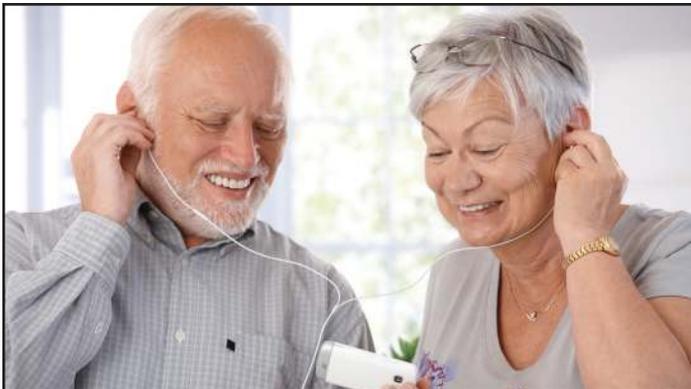
Nominations for the 2026 Annual Awards will be accepted from January 13 through January 15, 2026. Following the nomination period, community voting will take place from January 27 through January 29, 2026. Nominations and voting may be submitted by visiting www.backmountainchamber.net, allowing the public to help recognize deserving local businesses.

Attendees can expect to enjoy an evening of networking while sampling food and beverages provided by in-kind business partners. Guests will also have the opportunity to vote for their favorite Best Food and Best Beverage during the event.

For more information about the Back Mountain Chamber, the Annual Awards Celebration, sponsorship opportunities, participation as an event vendor, or other upcoming events, please visit www.backmountainchamber.net or call 570-675-9380.

Media Contact:

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Back Mountain Chamber
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VALENTINE'S Decorations

THEMED CONTENT // *By Grace Schulte*

One of the most recognized holidays in February is known as Valentine's Day. Most people don't think about decorating for Valentine's Day unless their occupation prompts them to. Whether you're a grade school teacher, a daycare provider, or are in charge of decorations for your store or restaurant, here's a fun craft idea for decorating this Valentine's Day!

Chain of Hearts

This decoration looks relatively impressive for how simple it is! Essentially, what you'll be doing is cutting out hearts and attaching them every few inches down the string. When it's hung up it will look like floating hearts!

General Materials

- Construction paper (preferably pink, red, and white)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Clear string

1 To make this decoration pop, you'll be cutting two of each heart. Fold your colored construction paper in half the long way, and trace a heart.

2 Cut out the traced heart. Since you folded the paper in half before cutting, you should be left with two hearts of the same size and color.

3 Fold both of the hearts down the middle so they look like raindrops. For simplicity, I'll refer to the inside of the raindrop (concave side) as the front and the outside of the raindrop (convex side) as the back.

4 Place one heart front-side down on your work space. Take your glue and create a thin line following the convex crease of the heart.

5 Take your string and gently lay it where you want the heart to be placed on the string.

6 Take the matching heart and carefully line the creases up back to back, keeping the string between the two. You may need to add a line of glue on the second heart as well.

7 Once it is dry, you can manipulate the wings of the heart to make it 3D by folding them gently along their creases again.

8 Repeat this process with varying colors and sizes of hearts. Leave a few inches between each heart. Create multiple strings and hang them up together so it looks like a curtain of floating hearts!

Built by Community

THE LANDS AT HILLSIDE FARMS
MARKS ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

COMMUNITY SUBMISSION // *By Suzanne Kapral*

A Legacy Rooted in the Land

This year marks a meaningful milestone for The Lands at Hillside Farms (Hillside Farms) as it celebrates its 20th Anniversary as a nonprofit educational farm. While the organization itself is two decades strong, the land has been lovingly stewarded for far longer. Since 1881, the Conyngham family cared for the historic dairy farm, preserving its agricultural heritage and deep connection to the surrounding community.

In 2005, a new chapter began with the formation of The Lands at Hillside Farms, a nonprofit created to teach life choices that are healthy, logical, and sustainable—so that those born 200 years from now will have access to the same or better opportunities and resources we enjoy today. In 2009, the nonprofit officially purchased the 438-acre farm from the Conyngham family, securing its future as a place where education, stewardship, and community intersect.

A Living Classroom for All Ages

For the past twenty years, Hillside Farms has operated with a clear purpose: to use the working dairy farm as a living classroom where children and adults learn through hands-on experiences that connect land, animals, food, and personal responsibility. From agricultural education and environmental stewardship to animal welfare and therapeutic programming, Hillside has grown into a place of learning, healing, and connection for thousands of visitors each year.

“Hillside was never built by one person or one team—it has always been built by community.”

As the organization enters its anniversary year, Hillside Farms is taking time to reflect on the journey—sharing stories of growth, challenges, achievements, and lessons learned along the way. None of this progress has happened in isolation. Every milestone has been shaped by the people who believe in Hillside’s mission: neighbors, families, educators, volunteers, supporters, and friends who have stepped forward over the years to help this place thrive.



Hillside Farms Coach Barn

Looking Ahead: A Celebration Built Together

Looking ahead to October 10, 2026, Hillside Farms is preparing to mark this milestone with a special 20th Anniversary Dinner. In true Hillside fashion, the celebration is being planned the same way the organization itself has always been built—through community involvement.

To support this effort, Hillside Farms is forming a 20th Anniversary Celebration Committee and inviting those who feel connected to the farm to help plan this once-in-a-generation event. Volunteering may look different for each person. Some may enjoy helping sell tickets, others may feel comfortable reaching out to local businesses, and some may simply want to help spread the word. No event-planning experience is required—only a belief in Hillside’s mission and a willingness to lend a hand.

Honoring Impact, Sustaining the Future

This celebration isn’t just about marking time—it’s about honoring impact. Every program built, every child served, and every lesson taught on this land has been possible because people cared enough to get involved. The 20th Anniversary Dinner will help ensure that Hillside Farms remains strong, accessible, and vibrant for future generations.

Those interested in being part of the celebration—whether in a big way or a small one—are warmly invited to join the planning effort. You can join our 20th Anniversary Dinner Team by sending an email to Abby Collins: abbyc@hillsidefarms.org. Local businesses interested in sponsorship can contact Suzanne Kapral at: suzanne@hillsidefarms.org.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of the Hillside community—past, present, and future. Together, let’s celebrate 20 years of learning, stewardship, and shared purpose.

The Lands at Hillside Farms is a historic, 438-acre, nonprofit educational dairy farm. EIN: 202975553. hillsidefarms.org.



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Kitty Turkey Breast and Sweet Potato Meal

PET CORNER // Compiled by Peggy Hamilton

Ingredients:

- 3½ oz. Cooked turkey breast (meat only)
- 1½ tsp. Canola oil
- ½ ml. Nordic Naturals Omega-3 Pet Liquid
- 5/16 cup Baked sweet potato
- ¼ tsp Salt

Instructions:

1. Roast the turkey breast at 350 degrees until fully cooked.
2. Bake the sweet potato with the turkey until tender.
3. Combine flesh from the sweet potato with finely chopped turkey breast.
4. Combine the sweet potato and turkey in a mixing bowl.
5. Add supplements to the turkey and sweet potato; mix well and serve desired portion.
6. Refrigerate leftovers.



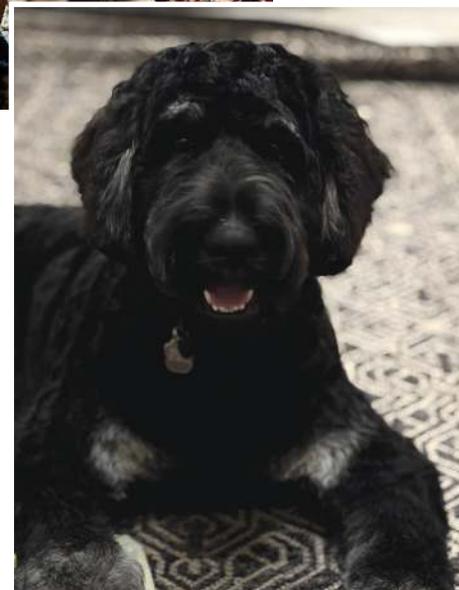
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