



Living in Harmony with Nature

Harmony

Penn Estates Property Owners Association

February/March 2026

A Community of Kindness

Respecting our Neighbors and our Shared Spaces

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

One of the greatest strengths of Penn Estates is the sense of community we share. We live among friends, families, retirees, and new residents who have all chosen Penn Estates as their home — a place where people look out for one another and treat each other with respect. Kindness isn't just a nice idea; it is the foundation of a positive and welcoming neighborhood.

A simple wave, a friendly hello, or a willingness to be patient can go a long way toward keeping our community connected. Small acts of courtesy remind us that we are all neighbors, sharing the same roads, amenities, and common spaces. When we treat each other with respect and consideration, we help create the type of community we are all proud to call home.

Part of that responsibility also includes following the community's rules and regulations. These guidelines are not meant to be restrictive — they exist to protect property values, safety, and the overall quality of life for everyone. Cooperation ensures fairness and helps prevent misunderstandings or conflicts.

One important area where we especially rely on member cooperation is pet care. We understand that many residents consider their dogs part of the family. However, with pet ownership comes responsibility to others who share our community. This means all dogs must be properly controlled, and owners must curb their dogs and clean up after them at all times — whether on your own property, a neighbor's yard, or in common areas.

Not only is this a rule, but it is also an essential courtesy. Cleaning up after pets keeps our neighborhood clean, sanitary, and enjoyable for everyone — including fellow pet owners, children at play, and those out walking or exercising.

As neighbors, let's continue to show patience, respect, and understanding toward one another. Kindness costs nothing, yet its value to a community is immeasurable. By following the rules, caring for our surroundings, and being mindful of others, we help ensure that Penn Estates remains a safe, welcoming, and friendly place to live.

Together, we make the difference.

President's Message

by David Montalvo, PEPOA Board President

As we step into a new year, I find myself thinking less about resolutions and more about the quiet, steady acts of kindness that defined our community in 2025. They didn't make headlines, but they made a difference, and they revealed something essential about who we are.

When several of our neighbors lost their homes in a fire, people didn't hesitate. Clothing drives appeared almost overnight. Families donated money, supplies, and time. Others offered spare rooms, meals, or simply a place to catch their breath. No one asked for recognition; they just showed up because someone needed help.

On winter mornings, many of our older residents woke to find their driveways already shoveled; not by a service, but by neighbors who noticed a need and quietly took care of it. These gestures weren't coordinated or assigned. They were simply acts of kindness, offered freely.

These moments remind us that community isn't built by grand speeches or big programs. It's built in the everyday choices we make to look out for one another. It's built when we decide that someone else's challenge is, in some small way, our own.

As we begin 2026, I hope we carry this spirit forward. Let's continue to be the kind of place where generosity is instinctive, where kindness grows, and where we step in not because we have to, but because we want to.

If we can keep choosing that, the quiet work, the small kindnesses, the willingness to show up; then the year ahead will be a strong one, no matter what it brings.



Penn Estates 2026 New Years Eve Party



More photos on pages 8 and 9...



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PEPOA Announces Promotion of Dylan Rivera to Sergeant

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

The Penn Estates Property Owners Association is proud to announce the promotion of Officer Dylan Rivera to the rank of Sergeant with the PEPOA Public Safety Department.

Sergeant Rivera has been a resident of the Poconos since 2018 and is a graduate of Stroudsburg High School, Class of 2022. During high school, he also attended Monroe Career & Technical Institute (MCTI), where he successfully completed coursework in Criminal Justice — an early indication of his commitment to public safety and community service.

Since joining PEPOA, Sergeant Rivera has continually demonstrated professionalism, leadership, and dedication to our community. During his employment, he has earned multiple instructor certifications, including First Aid, CPR, and AED for all age groups. He is also certified as an instructor in baton, handcuffing, and OC spray. These credentials not only support his role in the field, but also allow him to mentor and strengthen the skills of fellow Public Safety staff members.

When asked what inspires him most in his work and life, Sergeant Rivera shared that his greatest motivation is his one-year-old daughter. “She inspires me every day to be the best version of myself,” he said. “I am driven to be a strong role model for her and work diligently to provide her with the best life possible.”

We congratulate Sergeant Rivera on this well-earned promotion and thank him for his ongoing commitment to the safety and well-being of the Penn Estates community. Please join us in recognizing his accomplishments and wishing him continued success in his new role.



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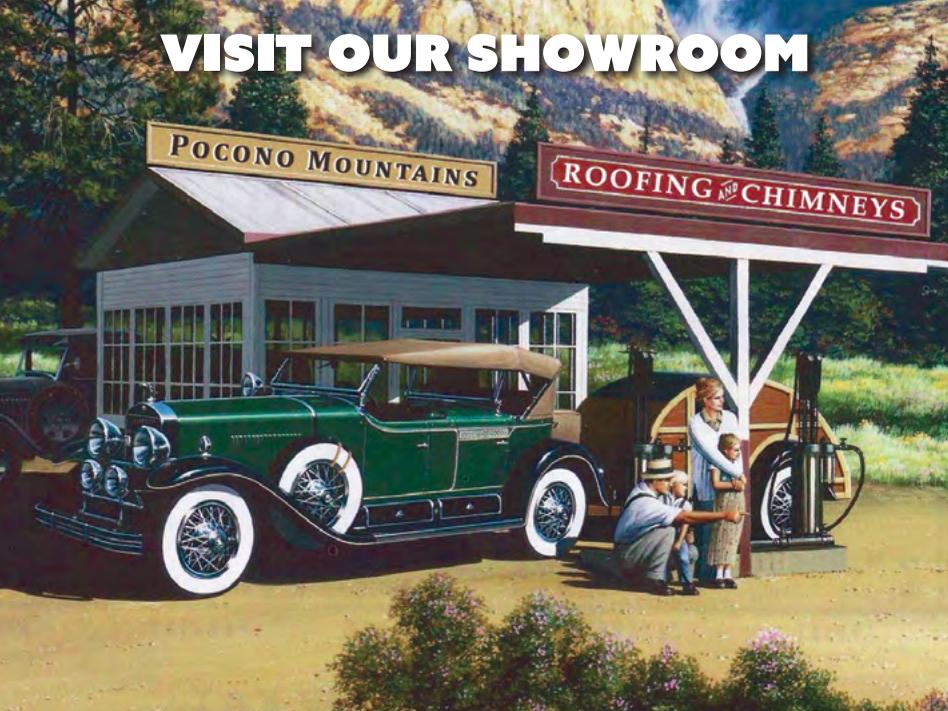
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From Phyllis's Desk

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

Thinking Ahead to Summer...

Join Our Team!

It may still be early in the year, but now is the perfect time to start planning for the summer season in Penn Estates. Each year, our pools and lakes become the heart of community activity, and we rely on dedicated, responsible individuals to help keep these areas safe and enjoyable for everyone.

The Association is now accepting applications for Lifeguards and Badge Monitors for the upcoming summer season. These positions are ideal for students, retirees, seasonal residents, or anyone who has time available during the summer and would like to serve the community in a meaningful way.

Lifeguards - Adults Welcome Too!

Applicants interested in becoming certified lifeguards are encouraged to apply — and this opportunity is not just for teens and young adults. Adults and seniors are welcome to obtain certification and join our lifeguard team as well.

To support interested applicants, the Association will reimburse the cost of lifeguard certification upon successful completion of the course and hiring. This is a wonderful way to stay active, support community safety, and enjoy a rewarding seasonal role.

Badge Monitors - A Great Summer Position!

We are also seeking Badge Monitors for both the pools and lakes. This role is perfect for those who enjoy interacting with others and spending time outdoors. Badge Monitors help ensure that amenities are used properly and that our recreation areas remain safe and welcoming for all members.

Working within the community provides not only seasonal income, but also the chance to meet neighbors, support our amenities, and contribute to the positive environment we all value here in Penn Estates. Whether you are:

- a student on summer break,
- a senior looking for a friendly, community-based role,
- someone whose workplace closes seasonally,
- or simply a resident with extra time who wants to help,

...we invite you to consider joining our summer team.

For more information on positions, requirements, or how to apply, please contact the Association Office. Let's make this summer safe, fun, and well-staffed — together!



Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times. Also, please be kind and clean up after your pet. Thank you!



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2026 Election

Board Candidate Packets and Other Information

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

As a reminder to all Penn Estates members, the annual mailing sent on November 25, 2025, announced that Board Candidate Packets became available for pickup beginning January 2. Members interested in running for the Board are encouraged to pick up their packet and review the qualifications and responsibilities carefully.

There will be three (3) Board seats open for the 2026 Election, with the election results to be announced on May 2, 2026.

Candidate Qualifications

To be eligible to run for a seat on the Board of Directors, a member must meet all of the following qualifications:

- **Age Requirement** - I am at least twenty-one (21) years of age and have provided proof of the same by submission of a valid driver's license, passport, or state-issued identification card.
- **Ownership Requirement** - My name appears as a grantee on a recorded deed of property within Penn Estates.
- **Voter Registration Requirement** - I am registered at my Penn Estates lot(s) address to vote in the municipal election.
- **Compensation Acknowledgment** - I understand that if selected, I shall serve without compensation.
- **Good Standing Requirement** - I am a member in good standing, as I am in compliance with the Declaration of Covenants, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, and have paid all financial obligations owed to the Association.

If you have any questions regarding eligibility or the packet process, please contact Phyllis Haase, Community Manager at phyllishaase@pepoa.org for assistance.

Out & About

Things to Do and See in the Poconos

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee

Winter in the Poconos. Hmm. It actually feels like winter in the Poconos with all the snow days in December. I love when it snows frequently enough that everything stays white, but little enough to not prevent going out and driving safely. With all the difficulties in this country and the world right now, a bit of peaceful beauty is a much-needed joy.

The fall and early winter activities were abundant both in and outside the community; however, we are now entering the slow season. The holidays are over and the festivals and carnivals have not yet started. Here are a few of the local activities for the upcoming couple of months.

It is the time to go searching for eagles in this area. Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center has an eagle watch bus tour on January 23rd and February 6th for \$35 per person. Call 570-629-3061 for reservations. Delaware Highlands Conservancy offers eagle watch bus trips as well. They charge \$25 for members, \$35 for non-members and kids under 12 are free. Their bus tours run on Saturdays through 2/7. Call 570-226-3164 to reserve.

Monroe County Historical Association is doing a "Stars and Stitches Forever" quilt event. They are accepting quilts to display until 2/27. Then the quilts will be on display from April 1 to July 31 at the Stroud Museum in Stroudsburg and you can go see them and vote for your favorite.

Skytop will host their Winter Beer Festival on 2/7. The cost is \$65. They also list a Food and Beer Festival on 3/7. The cost is \$35 ahead or \$45 at the door. Country Junction will host a Beer and Chili Contest on 3/14. You can enjoy some chili and vote for your fave. Entrance is \$15 if you want to taste beer and chili but \$7 for chili only. They will also have a "Meet the Makers" event on 2/14 and 2/15 where artisans and crafters will display their wares and explain their arts.

Jim Thorpe's Winterfest is on 2/14 and 2/15. There will be ice carvings, carriage rides, etc. Stroudsburg's Winterfest is on 2/14 from 11-4. There will be ice carvings and ice carving demonstrations and activities for children.

Have fun!

Board Motions

submitted by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

2025-2051 - Motion to Authorize CPA to file Form 1120 or 1120H as they determine which is most beneficial to the Association. Rivera/Morton, 8/0, Motion Passed.

2025-2052 - Motion to ratify the 2024 Tax Payment and 2025 Estimated Tax Payment to be paid from the Reserve Account. Ortiz/Neri, 8/0, Motion Passed.

2025-2053 - Motion to accept the amendments to the Election Packet. Rivera/Neri, 8/0, Motion Passed.

2025-2054 - Motion to approve regulations for E Bikes. Ortiz/Fariello, 8/0, Motion Passed.

2025-2055 - Motion to authorize expenditure for the Phone (PTD VOIP) Integration to be paid from the Reserve Account. Rivera/Arroyo, 8/0, Motion Passed.

2025-2056 - Motion to approve the 2026 Budget. Rivera/Arroyo, 8/0, Motion Passed.

2025-2057 - Motion to approve the 2025-2026 Fee Schedule. Ortiz/Rivera, 8/0, Motion Passed.

Celebrating Saint Patrick's Day

by Sandy Black, Contributor

The celebration of Saint Patrick's Day 2026 is almost around the corner. I decided to research the different ways people celebrate this day.

Present day Saint Patrick's Day celebrations have been greatly influenced by those that developed among the "Irish Diaspora" (refers to ethnic Irish people and their descendants who live outside the island of Ireland), especially in North America.

Celebrations generally involve public parades and festivals, Irish traditional music and the wearing of green attire or shamrocks. There are also formal gatherings such as banquets and dances, although Saint Patrick's Day parades began in North America in the 18th century, Ireland did not start their parades until the 20th century. Participants include marching bands, the military, fire departments, cultural and charitable organizations, etc.

Since 2010, famous landmarks have been lit up in green on Saint Patrick's Day. Christians may also attend church services and the Lenten restrictions on eating and drinking alcohol are lifted for the day.

The Saint Patrick's Day custom of "drowning the shamrock" or "wetting the shamrock" was historically popular. At the end of the celebrations, especially in Ireland, a shamrock is put into the bottom of a cup, which is then filled with whiskey, beer, or cider. It is then drunk as a toast to Saint Patrick. The shamrock would either be swallowed with the drink or taken out and tossed over the shoulder for good luck.

On Saint Patrick's Day, it is customary to wear shamrocks, green clothing or green accessories. Saint Patrick is said to have used the shamrock, a three-leaved plant, to explain the Holy Trinity to the pagan Irish. Patrick is often depicted with a cross in one hand and a sprig of shamrocks in the other.

The first association of the color green with Ireland is from a legend in the 11th century "Lebor Gabala Frenn" (The Book of the Taking of Ireland).



Harmony

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Avoid the Drive and the Wait – Taking a Look at Social Security’s Enhanced Online Services

by SSD Attorney Stephanie Joy, Contributor

Note: This article is for general information only and is not legal advice to any reader or individual. For legal advice, you must specifically retain a lawyer who evaluates your specific situation. For Free Social Security Disability, Retirement and SSI Daily Tips and News, visit the YouTube Channel, “All Things Social Security” at <https://www.youtube.com/@AllThingsSocialSecurity>.

Penn Estates residents have the good fortune to have a Social Security field office right here in East Stroudsburg. When I say good fortune, that is because some people have to travel 60-100 miles to their nearest Social Security office.

That all said, the improving services of the Social Security Administration can potentially help us all avoid a trip to the field office in East Stroudsburg, and completing our business faster. I wanted to take a moment to share something practical and helpful about Social Security—especially for those of you who have felt frustrated by long phone holds or crowded offices.

This is not legal advice, just community guidance from a local Social Security Disability lawyer who spends a lot of time dealing with SSA systems as they actually exist.

The Social Security Administration has been steadily expanding what people can do online, and despite the very real challenges the agency faces, this shift is making a difference. When more routine matters are handled online, it reduces pressure on phone lines and field offices. That, in turn, helps improve wait times for everyone—particularly for people who truly need in-person assistance.

Through SSA’s secure online system, many people can:

- Apply for retirement, disability, or Medicare benefits
- Check the status of a pending application or appeal
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most cases)
- Print benefit verification letters
- Access tax forms such as the SSA-1099
- Review earnings history and estimated future benefits
- Update address or direct deposit information

The heart of this system is something called a “my Social Security” account. If you don’t already have one, it is worth creating—even if you are not applying for benefits right now. You can learn about it here:

<https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

And create an account here:

<https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/create.html>

Once you have a “my Social Security” account, you can manage many aspects of your benefits online, securely, and often outside of normal business hours. That alone can save hours of waiting and eliminate unnecessary trips.

It is also important to note that **online access itself has improved**. In earlier years, many people encountered frequent system downtime, long maintenance windows, or messages telling them to “try again later.” SSA has acknowledged those issues, and in 2025 the agency made noticeable improvements to system availability and stability. Online services are now more consistently up and running, with longer access hours and shorter, more predictable maintenance periods.

SSA explains its current approach to online access and maintenance here:

<https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

<https://www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency/>

In practical terms, this means fewer failed logins, fewer surprise outages, and a much better chance that when you log in to check a status, print a letter, or submit information, the system actually works. That increased reliability is one of the reasons SSA is encouraging people to start online first.

For those already receiving benefits, SSA also explains online benefit management here:

<https://www.ssa.gov/manage-benefits>

SSA itself publishes guidance confirming that many services traditionally handled in person can now be done online, including this publication:

<https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10121.pdf>

For those in our local area who still need in-person assistance, the Social Security field office serving East Stroudsburg is located at:

9090 Franklin Hill Road, Suite 101
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

General local office information is available here:

<https://www.socialsecuritybranch.com/pa/east-stroudsburg/east-stroudsburg-social-security-office/9090-franklin-hill-rd-ste-101/>

Hours can change, and appointments are strongly recommended. My practical advice is this: before calling or going in person, start online first. Even if you cannot complete everything digitally, doing the initial steps online often shortens what you need to do later.

I know SSA systems are not perfect. I work with them every day. But these online tools are real, they are official, and in 2025 they became meaningfully more stable and usable than they were in prior years. When more people use them for routine matters, it frees up limited SSA staff to help those with complex or urgent needs—including people pursuing disability claims.

If this letter helps even one person avoid an unnecessary wait, long drive, or frustrating phone call, then it is worth sharing. Please feel free to pass it along to friends, family, or neighbors who might benefit.

May everyone have a peaceful and meaningful 2026!

Stephanie O. Joy is a Social Security Disability Lawyer and founder of Monroe County based SSD Practice, Joy Disability Law, 2005-2025. For free consultation to review whether you can and should file for SSDI (or SSI) you are invited to fill out the Free Evaluation form found at <http://joydisability.com>

Stay in Touch
with Penn Estates



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Community Manager > Phyllishaase@pepoa.org

Eats Around Town

by Paul R. Quillin, Contributor

Chris' Polish American Restaurant

Do you like to try different kinds of food as much as we do? Recently we decided to try Chris' Restaurant, located right on Main Street in Stroudsburg. Their sign: "Polish-American Cuisine" says it all. It's a really cute place, immaculate in fact and offers great service. And do they deliver on flavor!

Once we were seated and had ordered our beverages, we started our meal with an order of Pierogies served with Sour Cream. Perfect!



Many of the entrees come with your choice of two sides. So, for our entrees, Mike had Cabbage Rolls with French Fries and Pickled Beets. Our partner in ethnic-food sleuthing, Sharon, went for the Gou-



lash served with a Potato Pancake and Coleslaw. My choice was Gou-lash and Kasha (a toasted buck-wheat grain) and some Creamed Spinach.

Prices at Chris' are very reasonable considering the quality of the food. I'm sure we will be headed back soon and I am happy to recommend Chris' Restaurant to all my fellow Penn Estaters!

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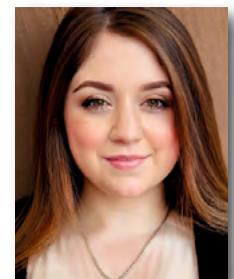
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Penn Estates - Listings & Sales as of 1/30/2026

Active Listings: 12 Pending Listings: 7
Sales Closed Year to Date: 3

HEALTH & FITNESS

by Yolanda Sarrabo, CPT, BCS NASM, Contributor

Meal Plan Tips for 2026

It's the top of the new year and meeting fitness goals is a partnership. You can't embrace a fitness attempt without considering changes like diet in the overall conversation. A meal plan is a strategic way in keeping with intentional food intake. The meal plan is supposed to help you stay on target in what to eat for days/weeks. It can help you focus home arranged food that makes sense.

What do I mean? Well, if eating McDonald's every day is your meal plan, does it allow you to lose weight? Do you feel good with the contents of the ingredients? Are you spending more money by doing so? How if at all do these choices douse your efforts in fitness goals?

Here are a few first steps to plan on your meal prep journey:

Recipe Rotation

For the month, choose 10 go-to meals, while choosing 4 for that weekly goal. It's okay to rotate out the 4 with twice a week or all 4 for the week. Ensure the plan involves orange, yellow, and green foods. (For example: orange sweet potato or carrot, yellow corn or squash, and green brussels sprouts or peppers.)

Prep Day

Pick a day where you can plan ahead for setting up your meals, that would include cooking all recipes for the week. Take a look at all items in your pantry, and remember the colors mentioned above when making a plan. It's a good idea to purchase meal prep (BPA or glass) containers that come in 10 and up, and can be found reasonably priced.

Example: Dinner or Lunch - Chicken Teriyaki, Peas (green), Brown Rice, and a snack of Raw Carrots (orange). Arrange cooked items in the containers for the week or half of the week.

Small Attempts - Start small with a meal plan for the week starting with 1 or 2 recipes. You can consider adding lunch and dinner, or dinner only throughout the week.

Other Tips:

- Shop sales
- Stay consistent to planned meals
- Keep it simple but mindful
- Create a master meal prep grocery list
- Celebrate small wins. There's always room to improve; just start.

Cheers!

Yolanda Sarrabo is principal at Chronic Fitness Personal Training Boutique Service and a regular contributor. www.chronicfitnessinc.com



February is Black History Month

by Sandy Black, Contributor

Black History Month is a yearly observance which originated in the United States of America where it is known as "African-American History Month." Black History Month received official recognition from the governments both in the United States of America and in Canada. Most recently Ireland also started observing Black History Month with the United Kingdom.

Black History Month began as a way of remembering important people and events in the history of African-Americans. It is celebrated in February in the United States and Canada while in Ireland and the United Kingdom it is observed during the month of October.

The recognition of Black historians is a testament to their significant contributions in the field of history. Nell Irvin Painter is known for her research on the social impact on gender, race and beauty. Painter's study of African American history and culture was a significant impact on history. Then there is Annette Gordon-Reed who won a Pulitzer Prize for her work on Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings which most definitely gave her a placard in history.

Robin Kelley focused on American and African-American history which emphasized on the radical social movements within the African American culture. David Levering Lewis was active in the field of comparative history, imperialism in the 19th century of Africa, Muslim Iberia and the French Third Republic. He has won two Pulitzer Prizes for his biographies.

These historians have not only shaped the understanding of Black history but have also paved the way for future generations of historians. Their work continues to influence the study of history and the interpretation of the past.

Black History Month was first proposed by Black educators and students from Kent State University in February, 1969. The very first celebration was held at Kent State from January 2 through February 28, 1970. Approximately six years later Black History Month was being celebrated all across the states in educational institutions, centers of Black culture and community centers.

President Gerald Ford recognized Black History Month in 1976 urging Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." The Black community readily met with enthusiastic response to the creation and acceptance of Black History Month by creating history clubs.

No Free Meals for Wildlife!

Want to help? Focus on habitat over handouts

While feeding wildlife is done with the best intentions, it is harmful to our wild birds and wild mammals. Some specific risks of feeding wildlife include:

- Increased risk of disease
- Aggressive behavior
- Loss of fear of humans
- Harm to the habitat
- Natural food substitute

If you want to help wildlife in your area, improve the habitat. Plant vegetation that provides both food and cover. Things like mast-producing trees for food, conifer trees for cover and native plants that provide seed and nectar are all good.

Contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission Regional Office that serves the county in which you reside for additional assistance creating, preserving or enhancing wildlife habitat.







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Penn Estates Old Hollywood Themed New Years Eve Gala

by Leonardo Chamorro, Contributor

Happy new year to all our PE residents! This year we said goodbye to 2025 and rang in 2026 in grand fashion old Hollywood style. The decorations, red carpet and velvet ropes created the perfect atmosphere. The guests were dressed to impress in their 1920s Hollywood best. The music was magnetic, the food was delicious and the crowd was LIVE!!! We celebrated in true "roaring 1920s" style!

God bless our volunteers, our staff and all the PE neighbors who contribute to our incredible community in one way or another to make it a better place for all. Here's to a happy, healthy and prosperous 2026!

Photos by David Montalvo





*Penn Estates 2026
New Years Eve Party*



Photos by David Montalvo

Breakfast with Santa

Photos by David Montalvo



Our Yearly Tradition Updated

by Evelyn Infante, Contributor

Our Thanksgiving tradition of selecting a country from a hat and preparing a dish from that country for Christmas Eve, underwent a change. Those who wanted to participate drew a letter. We then had to choose a country that started with that letter. I drew the letter Y, so I opted for Yemen. Next, we decided on the category: appetizer, entree, or dessert. I pulled out “appetizer” from the hat.

New rule: Instead of everyone tasting all the dishes and voting for their favorite on a piece of paper that were then counted to select the winners, three judges were chosen. They did not have to submit a dish; their sole focus would be on tasting and scoring the dishes.

On Christmas Eve, after all the dishes were assembled on the dining room table, the judges evaluated them based on taste, presentation, creativity, authenticity, and technical skill. Each category was scored from 1 to 10 by each individual judge. The scores were then combined and reviewed to determine the winners for each course.

For an appetizer, I made Shafoot, a chilled Yemeni appetizer or side dish. It consisted of a savory, herby yogurt mixture poured over lahor, a spongy sour-dough pancake—not easy to make. There are various recipes for Shafoot. I chose one with mint and pomegranate, and instead of attempting to make lahor, I opted for pita. The dish was delicious. I decorated the plate like a wreath. It tied for the appetizer category, but unfortunately, the Honduran appetizer won. Overall, all the dishes were fantastic.





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Michael's Kitchen

by Michael J. Tyrrell,
Communications Committee Member

Game On!

Whether it's the Superbowl or other weekend sports events, here are some easy dips to enjoy while snacking in front of the TV. Also very handy to transport to a pot luck. Here's a good cheat: the buffalo dip freezes beautifully, so double the recipe and freeze half for a "dip emergency." Happy dipping!

Warm Cheese Dip

(makes 4 cups)

- 8 ounces trimmed brie cheese
- 8 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, cut up
- 8 ounces light cream cheese
- ¾ cup light mayonnaise
- 8 sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- ¼ tsp garlic salt

1. Heat oven to 375°. Coat a small ovenproof baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Pulse brie, cheddar, cream cheese, mayonnaise, tomatoes, mustard and salt in food processor until smooth.
2. Bake in prepared baking dish for 20 minutes. Cool at least 10 minutes.

Reuben-Style Dip

(makes 4 cups)

- ½ lb diced corned beef
- 1 pkg (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup shredded Swiss Cheese
- 1 cup sauerkraut
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 tbsp ketchup
- 2 tsp spicy brown mustard
- Rye crackers (or party-size rye bread)

1. Heat oven to 350°. Grease a 1-quart microwave-safe casserole dish.
2. In a medium-size bowl, mix corned beef, cream cheese, Swiss cheese, sauerkraut, sour cream, ketchup and mustard. Spoon into prepared casserole dish.
3. Bake for 30 minutes until hot and bubbly. Serve warm with crackers.

Buffalo Chicken Dip

(makes 2½ cups)

- 2 large boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 1 lb total)
- 6 tbsp Frank's hot sauce
- 1 pkg (8 oz) cream cheese, cut into 1-inch chunks
- ½ cup blue cheese dressing
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- crackers for dipping (Keebler Club Crackers work well)

1. Place chicken breasts in a medium-size skillet and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium, cover and poach for about 6 to 7 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 170°. Remove to a plate to cool. Shred with 2 forks.
2. Place shredded chicken and hot sauce in a medium-size skillet and heat through. Add cream cheese and dressing and heat until well blended.

Buffalo Chicken Dip cont.

Add half of the cheddar cheese and stir until melted.

3. Place in a microwave-safe crock and sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. Serve warm with crackers. Reheat in microwave as needed.

Caesar Dip and Veggies

(makes 2½ cups)

- 1 lb cottage cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1½ tsp garlic salt
- ½ tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp hot pepper sauce
- ½ tsp anchovy paste
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 12 cups cut-up raw vegetables for dipping [such as carrots, sweet peppers, zucchini, radishes broccoli and cauliflower]

1. Puree cottage cheese, Parmesan, lemon juice, Worcestershire, garlic salt, salt, black pepper, hot sauce and anchovy paste in food processor, about 2 minutes. With machine running, gradually add olive oil and process 1 minute. Serve with raw vegetables.

Poetry Corner

by James Ruffini, Communications Committee Member

For Poet

by Al Young

Stay beautiful
 But don't stay down underground too long
 Don't turn into a mole
 Or a worm
 Or a root
 Or a stone
 Come on out into the sunlight
 Breathe in trees
 Knock out mountains
 Commune with snakes
 & be the very hero of birds
 Don't forget to poke your head up
 & blink
 Think
 Walk all around
 Swim upstream
 Don't forget to fly.

The Blackbird by Belfast Lough

translated from the early Irish

What little throat
 Has framed that note?
 What gold beak shot
 It far away?
 A blackbird on
 His leafy throne
 Tossed it alone
 Across the bay.

WHAT WE'RE STREAMING

Hidden treasures or secret pleasures?

Untamed

(streaming on Netflix)

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee

Untamed opens with lovely views of sheer mountain faces in Yosemite. (It is supposed to be El Capitan but the rock face was actually filmed at Mount Seymour near Vancouver.) If you have ever been to Yosemite, you know that no matter how beautiful and high definition the picture is on your television, no film can even approach the rare and majestic view of El Capitan from the Yosemite Valley.

That 3000-foot sheer rock face is as dangerous as it is awe inspiring. Twelve to fifteen deaths occur in Yosemite each year. Over 30 people have died while climbing El Capitan since the early 1900's.

So, the opening scene in Untamed is of a man climbing that rock face, with the aid of another man who has ropes anchored for the climber's safety. Suddenly, the climber is knocked away from the rock face by being hit by the dead body of a young woman, endangering the lives of both the climber and the belaying partner.

This six-episode series has several mysteries: who is the Jane Doe who fell, what happened to several people who have disappeared over recent years, who killed a certain young boy and a park employee and another man. The issues abound: deaths, grief, alcoholism, domestic violence, trust and betrayal and many varied secrets. And a surprise ending to boot.

When I started to write this article about the series Untamed, it dawned on me that I often choose shows where the main character is intelligent and insightful but is certainly a curmudgeon. For example, Wednesday surely meets the definition (even if she isn't an old man). And then there are: the character of Jackson Lamb on Slow Horses, Morck in Department Q, the Jackal and even Joe Leaphorn (to a degree) on Dark Winds.

Oh, my goodness would Freud have a field day with this! Okay, so now we know that one reason I like Untamed is that the lead is a curmudgeon.

There are so many reasons to love this show. Yosemite was one of my favorite places to camp and hike when I lived in California. There is a plucky female character, a rookie ranger who sometimes saves the day. There are twists and turns. There is the battle between good and evil, even though you are not always sure which is which.

There are psychological reasons for the characters to be who they are, particularly due to past trauma and/or unresolved grief. What is there not to like?!?! Give it a try. You may agree with the 83% rating on Rotten Tomatoes critic's review.

Dark Winds

by Sandy Bonet, Contributor

Dark Winds is one of those rare television series that quietly arrives, draws you in, and before long you realize you've been swept into something deeply compelling. Based on Tony Hillerman's beloved Leaphorn and Chee novels, the show takes viewers to the Navajo Nation of the early 1970s, a place where the landscape is as much a character as any of the people, and where each mystery comes layered with history, culture, and humanity.

Immersive Setting and Atmosphere - One of the greatest joys of watching Dark Winds is its sense of place. The sweeping desert vistas, red rock formations, and stark skies aren't just beautiful backdrops; they immerse you in the world of the Navajo Nation. The cinematography lingers, allowing you to breathe in the space, and the pacing of the show reflects that same patience. This isn't a series that rushes. It unfolds like a good book, drawing you deeper with each scene.

For viewers tired of cookie-cutter police dramas set in big cities, Dark Winds feels refreshing. It's a detective story, yes, but one told through a lens we rarely see on television—grounded in Navajo traditions, beliefs, and daily life.

Characters You Care About - The true heart of the series lies with its characters, especially Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn, played by Zahn McClarnon (Hunkpapa Lakota). McClarnon gives a powerful performance, balancing stoicism with quiet vulnerability. He's a man carrying grief, wisdom, and determination, and he makes Leaphorn unforgettable.

Alongside him is Officer Jim Chee, portrayed by Kiowa Gordon (Hualapai Nation). Chee is enigmatic, torn between his role as an FBI informant and his ties to his people. Gordon brings complexity and charisma, making Chee's moral struggles feel both relatable and compelling.

Rounding out the trio is Bernadette Manuelito, played by Jessica Matten (Métis Nation of Canada). She adds strength and warmth to the series, grounding it further in community focus. Her character expands the story beyond the male leads, while Matten's presence underscores the importance of Indigenous women's voices in narratives like this.

Stories that Hook You - At its core, Dark Winds is a crime drama, but it's more than just solving cases. Each mystery connects to broader themes—colonialism, trust, betrayal, spirituality, and identity. The writing respects the intelligence of the viewer. It doesn't hand you easy answers; instead, it invites you to sit with the questions.

The plots—ranging from heists to conspiracies—are gripping in themselves, but what makes them enjoyable is how seamlessly they're tied to the characters' personal journeys. You're not just watching crimes get solved; you're seeing how those events ripple through lives and culture.

Representation That Matters - Another reason Dark Winds stands out is its commitment to authentic Indigenous representation. Not only are the lead actors themselves Native, but the series also brings in Native writers, directors, and crew members to shape the storytelling. This gives the show a depth and cultural accuracy rarely seen on American television.

The result is more than entertainment—it's representation that feels real, lived-in, and respectful. For Native viewers, it offers the joy of seeing their culture reflected with dignity and nuance. For others, it opens a window into a world too often overlooked in mainstream media. That authenticity enriches the show and makes it not just enjoyable but meaningful.

A Joy to Watch - What makes Dark Winds especially enjoyable is its balance of intensity and humanity. It's a show that takes itself seriously, but never in a way that feels heavy-handed. The suspense keeps you engaged, while the emotional depth keeps you invested. Every episode feels like time well spent—you get the thrill of mystery, the pleasure of rich character work, and the beauty of cinematic storytelling all in one package.

Final Thoughts - Dark Winds is one of the best dramas to appear in recent years. It manages to be both familiar and unique: familiar in its detective framework, but unique in its voice, its cast, and its respect for Indigenous culture.

For anyone who loves mysteries, strong characters, or simply wants a show that offers something different from the usual lineup, Dark Winds is a must-watch.

By the end of each season, you're not just entertained, you're eager for the next chapter. And that's the mark of a series that isn't just good but also truly rewarding.

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Friendsgiving 2025

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee

This is the time of year to give thanks for all our blessings, especially family and friends. Each year the community manager creates an early Thanksgiving gathering for Penn Estates residents, which benefits the Olsen Family Fund. Yes, I say “community manager” [not “Penn Estates”] because Phyllis Haas is the chef and the primary host of the evening. She did have help from others for decorating and for bringing food from the kitchen to the buffet.



I have been to several years of this event and have never seen so many residents in attendance. Both the downstairs and upstairs areas were filled! There were singles and couples and families enjoying the



food and each other. I loved watching children having fun playing together.

When asked, Phyllis said that she cooked 258 pounds of turkey! It is beyond me how she kept so much turkey tender and juicy! Everything from salad to desert was fresh and yummy. Thank you, Phyllis, for a lovely evening...and a delicious feast!





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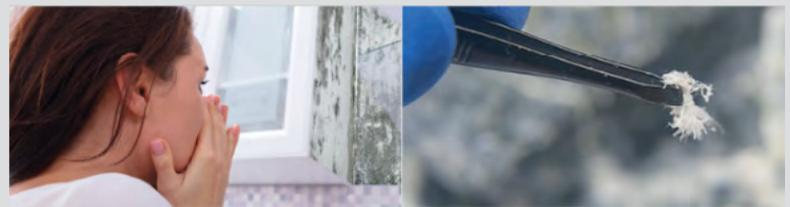


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Nature Corner

Eastern Hemlock

The Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) is Pennsylvania's official state tree (designated in 1931), characterized by its shade-loving nature, deep green needles, and preference for cool, moist ravines. It is a long-lived, large evergreen often reaching 33–197 feet, with a slow-to-moderate growth rate, typically maturing over several centuries to over 500 years. The species is currently under threat from the invasive insect, hemlock woolly adelgid.

Eastern Hemlock naturally occurs as far north as the southern portions of Canada from Nova Scotia west through Ontario and into the lake states of Wisconsin and Michigan. It extends south through the mid-Atlantic states and continues south along the Appalachian Mountains into Tennessee, North Carolina, and the northern reaches of both Georgia and Alabama.

Eastern Hemlock is an evergreen conifer and so retains its needles year-round. Its short, shiny, dark green needles are flat with two parallel white lines along the underside. The bark on mature hemlocks becomes a reddish-brown with wide, flat ridges. Hemlock bark was the primary source of tannin for the



leather industry in colonial America, which led to widespread harvesting of hemlock simply for its bark. Synthetic tanning agents replaced hemlock in the early 20th century.

Hemlock is an important component of the forest when it comes to wild-life habitat, and numerous mammals both large and small feed on it. Deer and moose will browse the new growth and needles, while squirrels, chipmunks, voles, and other rodents will eat the seeds. Porcupines are known to clip off branch tips while feeding in the canopy. The Black-throated Green Warbler and the Blue-headed Vireo depend on forests that contain hemlock.

Key Characteristics & Growth in PA:

- **Appearance:** Known for horizontal branches with drooping tips, short (½–1 inch) flat needles, and gray-brown bark.
- **Growth Rate & Size:** Considered a slow-growing, long-lived, shade-tolerant tree that can survive for 500–800 years. While they can grow over 100 feet tall, they are more typically found at 40–60 feet, though much taller specimens exist in older stands.
- **Habitat:** Thrives in cool, moist, shaded environments, particularly along streams, rocky ridges, and north-facing slopes.
- **Ecological Importance:** Provides essential, year-round shade to keep headwater trout streams cool, and offers critical habitat for birds like the Blackburnian warbler.

History & Uses

- **Historical Significance:** Known as the “Keystone State” tree, its bark was historically vital in the 1800s for providing tannin for the leather tanning industry.
- **Usage:** Used in construction for framing, roofing, and railroad ties, as the wood is known for its resistance to rot.

Threats

- **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid:** The primary threat is this invasive insect (*Adelges tsugae*), which feeds on the needles and kills trees within a few years of infestation.
- **Other Threats:** Drought and wind can affect their shallow root system.

Old Growth Locations

- **Heart's Content Scenic Area:** Located in the Allegheny National Forest in Warren County, PA - this area contains some of the oldest, untouched hemlock stands in the region.

The Sharon Bradley Team



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