

New Sports Complex Ribbon Cutting

by Chuck Fariello, PEPOA Vice President

On Saturday, June 20th, the official ribbon cutting ceremony of Penn Estate's newly renovated sports complex took place. This event marked the culmination of the complex's total restoration project. The ceremony opened with speeches by our Community Manager, Phyllis Haase and our Board President, David Montalvo. Both Phyllis and David captured in their words the efforts and the community spirit here at Penn Estates.



photos by Lisa Ortiz and Chuck Fariello

This complex project was in no way carried out by one or two individuals. It took a lot of planning, research and coordination by many. With guidance from our community manager, planning and input from the board of directors, assistance from our maintenance and public safety department and of course our contractor, Penn Estates now has a totally updated and modern outdoor recreational facility. The new complex features:

- Half and full basketball courts
- Tennis and pickleball courts
- Handball courts



- Volleyball court
- Exercise Stations
- New lighting and landscaping

As summer is now in full swing, I hope all of our residents and guests take some time to check out and utilize the complex!



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From Phyllis's Desk

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

Thank You, Papillion and Moyer!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and the members of Penn Estates Property Owners Association, we extend our sincere appreciation to Papillion and Moyer for their extraordinary generosity and community partnership.

Papillion and Moyer donated more than \$20,000 in professional services to assist the Association in completing our newly renovated Sports Complex. Their contribution played an important role in helping us bring this exciting project to completion while maximizing the Association's resources.

The renovated Sports Complex now offers recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and includes:

- Two new handball courts
- One full-size basketball court
- Two half basketball courts
- Two pickleball courts
- One tennis court
- Horseshoe pits

This project represents a significant investment in the quality of life for our residents and provides a modern, attractive space where families, friends, and neighbors can gather to stay active and enjoy the outdoors.

Community improvements of this magnitude are made even more meaningful through the support of businesses that believe in giving back. Papillion and Moyer's generosity demonstrates a true commitment to the Penn Estates community, and we are grateful for their willingness to partner with us on this important project.

Please join us in thanking Papillion and Moyer for their outstanding contribution and for helping make the new Penn Estates Sports Complex a place our community can enjoy for many years to come.

Public Safety Push-Up Challenge

Our Penn Estates Public Safety Department did an outstanding job at this year's Street Fair! Residents had the opportunity to explore an impressive display of department equipment, learn how it is used to help protect our community, and speak directly with our Public Safety Officers about their daily responsibilities. It was a great opportunity for members of all ages to ask questions and gain a better understanding of the services our department provides.

One of the highlights of the day was the Push-Up Challenge, where participants tested their strength in two age divisions. Congratulations to our winners:

- **Under 15:** Jordan Reis, age 8, who completed an incredible 42 push-ups!
- **15 and Older:** Nick Gold, age 19, who impressed everyone by completing 75 push-ups!

Visitors who stopped by the Public Safety booth also received fun giveaways, making the experience both educational and enjoyable.

A sincere thank you to our dedicated Public Safety team for taking the time to engage with our community and for their continued commitment to keeping Penn Estates safe. We also congratulate all of the participants who took part in the Push-Up Challenge and helped make this year's Street Fair such a success!

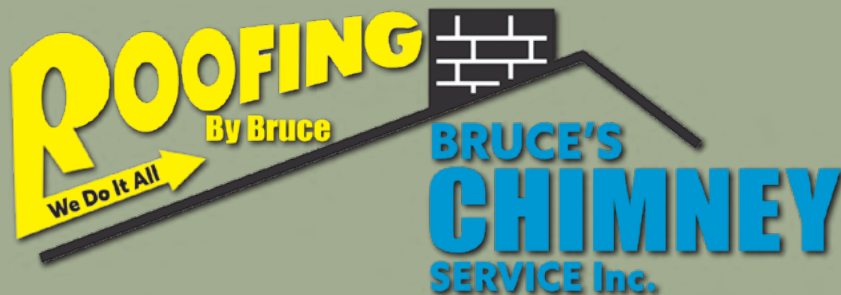
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Garden Club Continues to Grow

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee Member



I attended the first Garden Club meeting several months ago. I found it to be informative and welcoming. The primary presenter, Pat Krage, was well prepared, patient and responsive (even with the questions from a total brown thumb novice like me). I wasn't ready for the challenge of an outdoor garden as yet so I did not attend the next few meetings.

You can check out Chuck Fariello's article in the June/July issue of Harmony for a description of the successful



subsequent meetings. I did return for the meeting on creating a terrarium, an indoor garden of sorts.

Pat Krage, Maria Montalvo and the Recreation Committee provided all the component parts for a lovely small terrarium. First, Pat explained how terrariums and succulents are created and cared for. After that, we all added the first layer for drainage, then the soil, then the succulents, then the moss and decorative additions. Even I could not mess up the order of ingredients!



I learned a bunch about terrariums and about succulents. It was a great opportunity to meet other residents and to enjoy the general kindness of folks who like to grow beautiful things. If you are at all interested in plants and if the series is offered again, I highly recommend you signing up for the next gardening series.



photos by Lisa Ortiz





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American Water to Host Customer Information Session for Penn Estates Residents

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

Penn Estates Property Owners Association would like to inform our members that the water and wastewater utility serving our community is now owned and operated by American Water.

To help residents become familiar with the transition and learn more about their water and wastewater services, American Water will host a Customer Information Session for Penn Estates residents.

Date: Thursday, September 24, 2026

Time: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Location: Oak Room, Penn Estates

Representatives from American Water will be available throughout the evening to answer questions, explain customer services, discuss billing and account information, and provide details about future plans for the utility system serving our community.

Understanding the Role of Penn Estates

We would also like to clarify the role of the Penn Estates Property Owners Association regarding water and wastewater service.

Penn Estates Property Owners Association does not own, operate, maintain, or manage the community’s water or wastewater utility system. The Association is a customer of American Water, just like every homeowner and resident within the community.

Questions regarding water service, sewer service, billing, account information, service interruptions, infrastructure, or utility operations should be directed to American Water. Their representatives will be available during the September 24 information session to assist customers and answer questions.

We encourage all residents to attend this informative event, meet the American Water team, and take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about the services they provide. We look forward to seeing you there.

PEPOA Promotes Dylan Rivera to Chief of Public Safety

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

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

Chief Rivera’s promotion reflects his outstanding professional accomplishments, advanced emergency medical training, and unwavering commitment to protecting the lives and safety of the Penn Estates community. His leadership has been built on a foundation of service, preparedness, and a dedication to ensuring that officers are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond to emergencies with confidence and professionalism.

A resident of the Pocono region since 2018, Chief Rivera graduated from Stroudsburg High School and completed the Criminal Justice Program at Monroe Career & Technical Institute. From the beginning of his career, he has demonstrated a strong commitment to public safety through continuous education, specialized training, and professional development.

Chief Rivera has completed his Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) training, equipping him with advanced lifesaving skills critical during medical emergencies. His ability to deliver immediate emergency care before the arrival of EMS has become an invaluable asset to both the Public Safety Department and the Penn Estates community.

In addition to his medical qualifications, Chief Rivera has earned instructor certifications in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training for individuals of all ages. These certifications enable him to train and certify fellow officers, ensuring that lifesaving knowledge is maintained throughout the department and that personnel remain prepared to respond effectively during critical incidents.

Recognizing that effective public safety depends on continuous training, Chief Rivera has also become a certified instructor in defensive tactics, including baton, handcuffing, and OC spray. His dedication to officer development has elevated the department’s overall readiness while fostering a culture of professionalism, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Throughout his career with PEPOA, Chief Rivera has progressed through the ranks—from Patrol Officer to Sergeant, and now Chief—earning each promotion through hard work, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. His advancement reflects not only his technical expertise but also the confidence placed in him to lead the department into the future.

As Chief of Public Safety, Rivera will oversee all department operations with an emphasis on emergency preparedness, officer training, professional standards, and community service. His leadership philosophy centers on ensuring that every officer is equipped to protect residents through sound decision-making, effective training, and compassionate service.

The Board of Directors and staff extend their sincere congratulations to Chief Dylan Rivera on this well-earned promotion. His dedication to emergency medical response, officer training, and public safety exemplifies the highest standards of professional service. We are confident that under his leadership, the PEPOA Public Safety Department will continue to grow as a highly trained, community-focused organization committed to protecting the residents of Penn Estates.



Harmony

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Out&About

Things to Do and See in the Poconos

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee

WOW! The Penn Estates recreation area is the place to be! I love the sounds and sights of people (especially kids) having a good time. Every time I drive by the recreation area these days, the pool and courts are full, and cars fill every space and line the roads.

Personally, I think the handball wall looks like something out of a science fiction movie. Will writing magically appear? Will it emanate strange alien sounds? No matter how it looks, it is being well used, so it must be a very wanted addition.

Thank you to Phyllis and the PEPOA Board for the work and research that went into creating that incredible space. There almost isn't any reason to look for events outside our very own community.

However, we do not have any farm stands within our gates. So, get out there and explore local produce. The strawberries were super yummy this year and tomatoes seem to be great this season as well.

The American 250th birthday celebrations seem to be popping up everywhere. During Revolutionary War times, the Liberty Tree was a symbol and meeting place for resistance. Seedlings from the last known Liberty Tree were planted across Pennsylvania. Pike County 250PA Liberty Tree can be visited at Kiel Monument in Milford Borough.

- As part of Bells Across America, you can see the Milford bell in the Milford Community House until December 31st.
- The Eastern Monroe Public Library is hosting art (in various mediums) in the theme of the colors of the American flag. That Red, White, and Blue Show will be at the library in Stroudsburg through September 13th.
- Lehigh Area Freedom 250PA will host a celebration parade and festival on 9/26.
- Songs and Stories in the Mausoleum will host a journey through 250 years of patriotic music and also some local history shows. That is from 2-4 on 9/27 at the Lehigh Cemetery.
- Honoring history but not specifically the 250th celebration, Grey Towers in Milford will hold an event on August 9th to celebrate Smokey the Bear's 82nd birthday. There will be a free ice cream social as well as concerts, activities and history presentations.

- Festivals and fairs abound!**
- Country Junction's Pickle Fest in Lehigh will be on August 8th from 11 AM to 4 PM.
 - The Pocono Pickle Festival will be on 9/26 in East Stroudsburg.
 - Mt. Pocono HarvestFest is on 9/19.
 - On 9/26, the Festival of Wood will be at Grey Towers in Milford.
 - The Coal Miner's Heritage Festival will be in Lansford on 9/6.
 - Downtown Stroudsburg and the Courthouse Square are the locations for many events throughout the year. Free Concerts in the Square continue on Thursday nights through August 6th.
 - Stroudfest is a yearly event in downtown Stroudsburg. This year it takes place on September 5th.
 - The Pocono State Craft Fair will be at Quiet Valley Historical Farm 8/22 and 8/23.
 - The Carbon County Fair in Palmerton runs from August 3 to 8.
 - The Wayne County Fair in Honesdale will be running from 8/7 to 8/15.
 - The most anticipated county fair in this area seems to be the West End Fair in Gilbert. That runs from August 23rd to August 29th.
- Have fun!

HEALTH & FITNESS

by Yolanda Sarrabo, CPT, BCS NASM, Contributor

Pushing Limits in Extreme Temperature or NOT!



The thing with mobility is this - it's a necessity to do daily. The body needs constant reminders for joint range of motion. Now with that said when we speak of exercise with temperatures at its peak; well, it takes a bit of caution and treading with care. Rather start this conversation with don't do it; let's talk about the reason why other than the obvious.

Heat Changes Your Aura - In hot conditions, your cardiovascular system is doing double duty: pumping blood to working muscles *and* to the skin's surface for cooling. This raises your heart rate at any given effort level, increases fluid loss, and — if humidity is high — reduces the effectiveness of sweat evaporation, your body's main cooling mechanism. That combination is why heat-related illness can escalate quickly, sometimes within 20–30 minutes of intense activity.

Warning Signs - We all have indicators that give us signs when enough is enough. Sometimes we ignore or don't fully embrace those signs. Here are 4 for the books in paying very close attention:

- **Irritability & Loss of Coordination.** Sometimes sudden frustration and being extra irritated, or finding that your balance is off may be due to high heat temperatures. This sign may be one of the most serious, as rising body temperature (if that is the case) could be a red flag for heat stroke.
- **Headache.** Sometimes you can't quite figure a headache, but it's something to address when you're thinking about exercise for the day. A headache may be a clear indicator that you're dehydrated.
- **Excessive Fatigue.** A drop in energy is expected with high heat, and it also directs how and if you should continue exercising. A heavy drop in energy signals your core temperature is rising faster than your body can manage.
- **Stomach Discomfort.** If you decide to do any core/abdominal exercises and find that you're experiencing cramping or nausea, that could be an indicator of heat exhaustion- slow down or stop.

Bottom Line - You have to know what is your green light and red light, and sometimes the greenlight may be questionable during summer training. It's okay to cut sessions or break them up in smaller increments with needed breaks. Tread safely and wisely. Cheers!

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

Poetry Corner

by James Ruffini, Communications Committee

A Beautiful Arrowhead in a Museum

by James Ruffini

Once encased in earth
Where you last fell,
Now in glass on a pedestal,
You have become the high priest
Of history –distinct, powerful,
Sharply handsome still.
Imagination flows strongly
With each pulse of the viewer's heart,
Releasing you as a new breed
Of hunter in art.

Above Trees
by James Ruffini

A score of birds
Twist and flow as one,
Like loose news
On a windy street.

Labor Day 2026

by **Sandy Black, Contributor**

Celebrated on the first Monday in September, Labor Day was born out of the late 19th-century labor movement as a holiday recognizing the contributions of workers and organized labor. At the time, American workers, many of them immigrants, faced long hours, low wages and dangerous working conditions.

The first Labor Day celebration was held in New York City on September 5, 1882. It saw over 10,000 workers march in a parade organized by the Central Labor Union. It was both a protest for better conditions and a symbolic acknowledgement that rest was essential for productivity.

By the late 1880s, Labor Day had spread to cities across the country. The push for a national holiday intensified after the Pullman Strike of 1894, when violent clashes between striking railway workers and federal troops left more than a dozen people dead. In the wake of this tragedy, President Grover Cleveland signed a law making Labor Day a federal holiday.

The holiday has since become more synonymous with parades, barbecues and the unofficial end of summer. Many people choose to rest on Labor Day, a powerful way to honor the spirit of the holiday. The labor movement fought for fair pay and a safe workplace, but also for the idea that every worker deserves time to recover and enjoy life outside of work.

Taking a day for yourself honors those who fought for work-life balance. Here are some self-care ideas for Labor Day:

- Spa day. A massage is a great way to start your day, but your self-care day could be as easy as a new facemask and your favorite boba tea.
- Read a book. Life can get stressful. Setting aside a day to read can be just what the doctor ordered.
- Explore a new hobby or craft. Have you been interested in learning to crochet? Are you wanting to learn how to cook a soufflé? A day off from work is the perfect opportunity to try something new.

If you are the outdoor activities person, here are some suggestions:

- Early morning hike. Start your day off on the right foot by getting out into nature. Avoid the midday heat, and get some exercise early in the day.
- Pack a picnic and spend the day at a nearby park. You have to eat anyway so why not opt for a change of scenery and have a picnic lunch instead?
- Rent kayaks or paddleboards. Getting out on the water can help calm tense nervous systems and restore a feeling of “zen”.
- Try geocaching. Part puzzle, part scavenger hunt, this activity is easy to do with just a smartphone to guide you.

Prefer to spend your day with friends and/or your family?

- Host a barbecue. Many of the quintessential Labor Day activities include getting together with family and friends. A barbecue can be easy to host, especially if you assign guests to bring side dishes and beverages.
- Organize a backyard movie night. Set up a projector to show the latest family-friendly flick and pop some popcorn to go along with it.
- Go apple picking. This is a fun group activity, especially if it ends with you baking some tasty treats everyone can take home with them.
- Surprise a neighbor with homemade treats. There is nothing that says “thanks for being a great neighbor” like fresh-baked cookies or eggs from your backyard chickens.
- Visit a state park. National parks get a lot of attention on holiday weekends, so you might be better off visiting a nearby state park.
- Check out what is in season at the farmers’ market. Summer is prime time for farmers’ markets, and they are a great way to learn about new fruits and vegetables you might want to try.
- Enjoy some live music. Community groups and restaurants often host live music events over Labor Day weekend. It is a low-key and kid-friendly way to enjoy a musical performance outdoors.
- Check out a Labor Day parade. Many small towns plan events on Labor Day weekend that include costumes, hot dogs and lots of American flags.
- Support a local small business. Try out that new coffee shop or food truck in your neighborhood and support those who might not have the day off.



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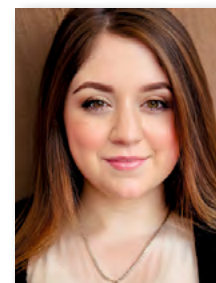
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Understanding the Path of a Social Security Disability Case Without an Attorney - part 1 of 3

Starting the claim: application, records, and proof from day one

by **Stephanie Joy, Attorney and Founder of Joy Disability**

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>.



This first installment explains how a pro se claimant should begin: filing the application, gathering personal and medical information, saving the re-entry number, and keeping proof of everything sent to or received from Social Security. For full original video version: <https://youtu.be/YlQ-gMXSpqw?si=WIIRkRCiVaMPVllf>

Penn Estates is home to so many, and some find themselves in a medical situation preventing them from being unable to work full time anymore. They need to know that they may be eligible for federal benefits outside of any local/state benefits they may be aware of. Applying for Social Security Disability Insurance, often called SSD or SSDI, or Supplemental Security Income, known as SSI, can feel overwhelming. The process has many steps, many forms, and several deadlines. A person who is representing himself pro se can still apply and appeal successfully, but it is important to understand the path ahead, the rules, the regulations and to keep careful records from the beginning.

The Application: The first step is filing the application. A person may start by contacting Social Security, visiting a local office, scheduling a telephone appointment, or applying online at ssa.gov. This attorney prefers the latter - as it gives the pro se claimant full control to ensure all information is included. However, the overriding point is to get your claim in at the most appropriate time.

- Online application for SSDIB: <https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/dib>
- Phone for East Stroudsburg SSA field office: 888-835-6169
- Fax for East Stroudsburg SSA field office: 833-950-2582
- Paper form for SSDI (not SSI) (downloadable PDF): <https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-16-bk.pdf>
- For SSI (Supplemental Security Income, a federal welfare benefit for disabled financially needy adults and children), you must speak to the SSA field office.

For many people, the online application is the most practical starting point, especially for Social Security Disability. SSI can involve additional financial questions, and some people may need help from Social Security to complete that part. Additionally, the SSA will generally require a conversation with you to confirm that financial information.

Data Gathering: Before starting, gather basic personal information, including Social Security number, date of birth, marriage information, minor children's information, work history, and citizenship, naturalization documentation or other immigration documentation if applicable. A claimant should also gather a complete list of medical providers. This means doctors, specialists, hospitals, urgent care centers, therapists, mental health providers, imaging centers, and any other source of treatment. Include addresses, phone numbers, dates of treatment, and upcoming appointments if known.

Medical Evidence: Do not leave out medical care simply because it happened at an emergency room, urgent care clinic, or hospital. Do not leave out mental health treatment. Do not leave out older treatment if it relates to the medical problem that now keeps you from working. For example, a surgery from two years ago may still matter if the same body part or condition later caused you to stop working.

Re-Entry Number: When an online application is started, and you have matched yourself with the SSA's account for you, the site will issue you a re-entry number. Save it; print it; write it down - keep it somewhere safe. That number will allow you to return to the application later. It may also help establish a protective filing date, which can matter for back benefits. Waiting too long to file can cause older months of possible benefits payment to fall off the board, forever uncollected by you, should you prevail on your claim.

(continued on page 14)



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Vacation made

Michael's Kitchen

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Communications Committee Member

All-American Sandwiches! Hot or cold, open-faced or closed, they're the greatest thing since sliced bread. Here is a tasty collection of favorites from coast to coast.

New Orleans Muffaletta

(makes 8 sandwiches)

- 1 jar (4 ¾ ounces) pimiento-stuffed olives drained and chopped
- 1 large tomato, seeded and chopped
- 1 rib celery, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 medium-size round Italian bread (about 9 inches in diameter, 1 ¼ pounds) cut horizontally in half
- ¼ pound each sliced Genoa salami, sliced provolone cheese, sliced spicy Italian ham, and sliced mozzarella

1. Mix olives, tomato, celery and garlic in bowl. Whisk vinegar, seasoning, salt pepper and oil in another bowl. Add to olive mixture. Refrigerate at least 1 hour.
2. Spoon 1 cup olive mixture over bottom half of bread. Layer on salami, provolone, ham and mozzarella. Top with remaining olive mixture. Cover with bread top. Wrap loaf in plastic. Place on baking sheet and weigh down with heavy pot. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour. Cut into 8 wedges.

New England Lobster Roll

(makes 4 rolls)

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 ½ teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ¾ teaspoon chopped fresh tarragon or ¼ teaspoon dried
- ¼ teaspoon hot sauce
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 lobster tails, cooked, shelled and meat coarsely chopped (about 2 cups)
- 4 soft frankfurter rolls

1. Whisk mayonnaise, lemon juice, mustard, oil, tarragon, pepper sauce, salt and pepper in medium-size bowl. Mix in lobster and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
2. Gently open each roll.; lightly toast. Fill each with lobster mixture.

Carolina Pulled-Pork Sandwich

(makes 12 sandwiches)

- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter
- 1 ½ cups chopped onion (1 large)
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoons dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 cups ketchup
- ¼ cup dark-brown sugar
- ¼ cup apple-cider vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 whole 5-pound Boston pork butt
- 12 soft hamburger rolls

1. Melt butter in saucepan. Add onion and garlic; cook until softened, 5 minutes. Add mustard, paprika, cumin and cayenne; cook 1 minute. Add ketchup, sugar, vinegar and water. Simmer, covered, 30 minutes. Uncover; simmer 30 minutes. Add salt and pepper.
2. Heat oven to 350°.
3. Heat oil in large oven-proof Dutch oven. Add pork; brown 10 minutes.
4. Bake, uncovered, in 350° oven 30 minutes. Pour 1 cup of barbecue sauce over pork. Cover and lower temperature to 250°. Bake 3 to 3 ½ hours, basting meat occasionally, until instant read thermometer inserted in middle of roast registers 170° to 180°.
5. Let cool slightly. Trim off excess fat. Pull meat apart using two forks.
6. Mix pulled pork meat with rest of barbecue sauce in a large bowl. Serve on buns with Hearty Coleslaw (recipe follows)

Hearty Coleslaw

(makes 12 servings)

- 2 ½ pounds green cabbage, finely shredded (about 10 cups)
- 2 large carrots, finely shredded
- 1 ½ cups mayonnaise
- ½ cups sour cream
- ½ cup low-fat buttermilk
- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon celery seeds
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

1. Mix cabbage and carrots in bowl.
2. Whisk remaining ingredients in another bowl. Fold into cabbage mixture. Chill at least 3 hours.

New York Reuben

(makes 4 sandwiches)

- 4 slices deli-style seeded rye bread
- 1 refrigerated bag (1 pound) sauerkraut
- 4 tablespoons Thousand Islands dressing, plus extra for serving
- ½ pound thinly sliced corned beef (about 12 slices)
- ½ pound thinly sliced Swiss cheese (about 8 slices)

1. Heat broiler. Coat broiler pan with nonstick cooking spray. Toast bread.
2. Gently heat sauerkraut in small saucepan. Drain.
3. For open-faced sandwiches, spread each slice of bread with 1 tablespoon dressing; top each slice with corned beef, sauerkraut and cheese, dividing equally.
4. Broil sandwiches 4 to 6 inches from heat for 3 minutes or until tops are lightly browned.
5. Serve immediately with extra dressing on the side.

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Covid-19 – Five Years Later

by Sandy Black, Contributor

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped nearly every aspect of daily life, from how people worked and learned to how they related to each other and their institutions. Global GDP fell 3% in 2020, the sharpest downturn since the Great Depression, but the economic damage was only one layer of a transformation that touched mental health, education, trust in government, and the basic structure of the workplace. Many of these changes have proven lasting.

The economic shock and those who bore it reflected the 3% contraction in global GDP in 2020 which reversed what had been 2.8% growth the year before. That swing hit hardest in the world's poorest countries. An estimated 68 to 100 million people were pushed below the extreme poverty line of \$1.90 per day in 2020 alone, with projections climbing as recessions deepened beyond initial forecasts. Wealthier nations recovered faster through stimulus spending and vaccine access, widening the gap between rich and poor countries at a pace that development economists had not seen in decades.

A generation of our young people lost learning skills. Seventy percent of 9-year-olds in the United States still remember having to learn to be taught remotely during the 2020-2021 school year. The results showed up clearly on national assessments: by 2022, average reading scores for that age group had dropped 5% and math scores had dropped 7% compared to 2020. The math decline was the first ever recorded on that assessment. The reading drop was the largest since 1990.

Lower-performing students lost more ground than higher-performing ones, meaning the pandemic did not just lower achievement overall; it stretched the gap between kids who were already struggling and those who were not. Scores declined at every performance level, but the bottom fell further and faster. The long-term consequences of that widening gap are still unfolding in classrooms today.

In the first year of the pandemic, global rates of anxiety and depression rose by 25%, according to the World Health Organization. Lockdowns, grief, financial stress, and uncertainty about the future all fed that increase. But the mental health toll didn't arrive out of nowhere. It accelerated trends that were already building, particularly among young people.

About half of U.S. adults now report experiencing loneliness, with some of the highest rates among young adults, who are nearly twice as likely to feel lonely as people over 65. The rate of loneliness among young adults had been climbing every year since 1976, and the pandemic supercharged it. Income plays a role too: 63% of adults earning less than \$50,000 a year are considered lonely, compared to 53% of those earning more. People with disabilities, poor health, or financial insecurity report the highest levels of isolation.

Healthcare workers hit a breaking point. Burn-out in healthcare was a known problem before 2020. The pandemic made it dramatically worse. A survey of more than 20,000 U.S. healthcare workers in

2020 found that 49% reported burnout and 43% felt overworked. Among physicians specifically, the burnout rate climbed from 38% in 2020 to nearly 63% in 2021. That was a stark jump from the 44% who reported burnout in 2017.

The consequences went beyond exhaustion. By 2021, only 57% of physicians said they would choose medicine again if given the chance, down from 72% just a year earlier. Nurses were hit similarly hard: a 2022 survey found 45% of registered nurses experienced burnout multiple times a week. As of 2023, more than a quarter of all healthcare workers and 41% of nurses said they intended to leave their jobs within two years. Exit rates from healthcare remain higher than they were before the pandemic.

Burnout rates have improved slightly since their peak. A 2024 survey found physician burnout had dropped to 49%, down from 53% in 2023. But the staffing losses that accumulated during the worst years have left gaps that the system is still working to fill.

Before the pandemic, about 9 million Americans worked from home, roughly 5.7% of the workforce. By 2021, that figure had tripled to 17.9%. It has come down since then, settling at 13.8% in 2023, which translates to more than 22

(continued on page 14)

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Short-Term Rental Homes Can Be Wonderful - With a Caution

by **Stephanie Joy, Contributor**

Families in Penn Estates, just as everywhere else, do not stay the same forever. Children grow up. Schedules become complicated. Young adults begin building their own lives. Older relatives may not travel as easily as they once did. For many families, wanting special family time, the challenge is not simply finding somewhere to sleep. The challenge is finding a place where everyone can actually be together when not sleeping or eating at a table.

That is one reason short-term rental (STR) homes have become such a valuable option for family travel. For larger families, blended families, extended families, or families traveling with older children and young adults, a house can offer something that even a nice hotel often cannot: shared space, privacy, a kitchen, room to breathe, and a place to make memories.

Farmhouse near Knoebels - Our most recent family trip was a terrific three days in Danville, Pennsylvania, at an old, renovated, beautiful farmhouse set on many acres. It had a fishing pond where we could fish with a license, big spacious lawn areas, and plenty of woods to explore. We needed four bedrooms, and it had four bedrooms. It also had two living rooms, an enclosed porch, and a brick patio that felt almost like a courtyard. We spent much of our time there. Of note, it was 5 minutes or so from Knoebels Amusement Park, a place we already had many memories from over the years, and planned to add to.

The dining room was not just a place to eat. It became the place where we played family games in the evening. That is the sort of simple family time that can be hard to recreate in a hotel. Renting three or four hotel rooms likely would have cost about the same unless we went with very inexpensive rooms that may have allowed for less comfort. But even then, hotel rooms would not have given us a fully renovated farmhouse with an incredible history (graciously shared by the owners), nearly museum-interesting pieces around the home, a pond, a lawn, woods, a patio, two living rooms, and a dining room table where everyone could gather.

The Jersey Shore - Last summer we rented an STR home at the New Jersey shore in Egg Harbor. It was a waterfront property on one of the smaller inlets (water roads), not directly on the open ocean, but with a wonderful dock and a backyard area leading down to the water-edge deck and water itself. We had beautiful weather. We used the deck and backyard, played cornhole, sat at the picnic table overlooking the water, swam in the water, and enjoyed peaceful evenings together.

We were also a short drive from beaches and boardwalks, which gave us the best of both worlds: the activity of the shore and the quiet of a private home. In fact, we are returning to that same wonderful home for another week this August.

There is a saying many parents understand deeply: our kids are not here forever. When children are entering adulthood, family time becomes more precious, not less. They have jobs, school, relationships, plans, and responsibilities. When the opportunity arises to spend a few days or a week together, it is worth taking seriously. And adult children of parents, at some point come to understand similarly that their elders, parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, are not here forever.

Again, if we had rented three or four hotel rooms to accommodate older and younger adults, privacy needs, and everyone's different schedules, the bill likely would have been far higher. The space would have been much smaller, and our ability to spend time together as a group would have been limited. Unless we went out to dinner every night, we would not have had a comfortable place to gather. Playing games would have meant squeezing into someone's hotel room, which is not the same as spreading out around a real dining room table.

Penn Estates STRs – can be great for residents - Another time, about a year and a half ago, we rented an STR home right in Penn Estates to house ourselves and visiting family. That may sound unusual because it was close to home, but it was exactly what we needed. Like many households, ours is busy and chaotic. We

(continued on next page)

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Short-Term Rental Homes cont.

work, raise family, manage everyday responsibilities, and have pets. The relief of not having to prepare our home for guests for several days was immeasurable.

In that situation, too, the cost of multiple hotel rooms would have been more than the cost of the STR home. More importantly, we had space to spend time together. We could play games, cook our own meals, and avoid being shoved into separate hotel rooms. Not having to eat out for every meal also saved money.

Cautionary Tips to Avoid Expensive Risks – the Costly Maryland Incident

For all the benefits, however, STR homes do not come without risks. It would be unfair to discuss only the good experiences and leave out the hard lesson we learned during a Maryland two-night rental over Thanksgiving week that we used to sleep at while spending days at our relatives' home.

In that case, on the eve of the expiration of an apparent two-week host-damage-claims opportunity, the host alleged damages that we did not create and that the host's own evidence indicated had pre-existed our stay. We were not impressed with what seemed to be a clear lack of consideration of the evidence by the STR company. Instead, the claim appeared to be resolved without sincere consideration, rather automated, by the STR company splitting the demand in half and charging our daughter's credit card automatically. It was an unfortunate awakening.

To be fair, I believe most hosts are honest and reasonable, just as most guests are honest and respectful. But even one bad experience can teach an important and costly lesson. And that important lesson is what we have taken from it, while putting the bad taste in our mouths behind us.

TIPS to Protect your Experience - Here is what we learned -- upon entering an STR home, immediately inspect the entire property. Search high and low. Look at every room, every corner, every wall, every floor, every appliance, every piece of furniture, and every area where damage might be alleged later.

Take pictures and videos of anything that looks damaged, worn, cracked, stained, broken, loose, or questionable, even if the damage appears old. I know this seems like a huge inconvenience when you are probably exhausted and just want to relax. But I wish we had done it at that Maryland home. I am a lawyer, I should have known better.

Ideally, more than one person should document the same concern. Two people taking pictures is better than one. Multiple sets of eyes are better than one set of eyes. If there is a scratch on a table, photograph it. If there is a cracked tile, photograph it. If a chair is loose, photograph it. If a wall has a mark, photograph it. If something seems minor, document it anyway.

At the farmhouse we just rented, I photographed a loop thread sticking out of the carpet. Yes, just one, but it was there. So, I took a picture of it.

When leaving, take a full video of the entire place, crevices and all, to show the condition of the home at departure. Walk through each room. Show the floors, counters, furniture, bathrooms, kitchen, bedrooms, outdoor spaces, and anything else that could later become an issue. Take close-up pictures again of any pre-existing damaged areas to show that they were not worsened during your stay.

The goal is prevention. Families should protect themselves from very expensive, inaccurate, mistaken, or fabricated complaints. At the same time, if you do cause damage, honesty is the best policy. Consider reporting it, documenting it, and being clear about what happened. Taking pictures protects both sides. It helps show what damage was caused, what damage was not caused, and what condition the property was in when you arrived and when you left.

STR homes are not perfect, but they can be a blessing for families. They can make travel more affordable, more comfortable, and more personal. They allow families to cook together, play games, sit outside, linger over coffee, and enjoy each other without being divided into separate hotel rooms.

For families trying to make memories while their children are growing, leaving, returning, and becoming adults, that kind of space can be worth far more than the price of the rental.

Similarly, for families wanting to make memories with aunts, uncles, and grandparents, the same kind of space can be a winner. Just enter with gratitude, leave with care, and **document everything**. I look forward to my next STR stay!



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Senior Moments

by Sandy Bonet, contributor

Why Recovering from Major Surgery is a Different Adventure After 70

If you've ever talked to someone in their thirties about recovering from surgery, you might hear stories that sound suspiciously like athletic achievements. "I had my hip repaired on Tuesday and was back at work the following Monday."

"I only needed pain medication for two days."

"I was walking five miles a week later."

Good for them.

Now ask someone in their seventies or eighties the same question. You'll likely hear something more like: "Well, the knee healed nicely. Unfortunately, my shoulder got jealous from using the walker, my back complained about sleeping in the recliner, and I'm still trying to remember where I put the TV remote."

The truth is that recovering from major surgery changes with age—not because older adults are weak, but because the body becomes a much more complicated organization. Everything still works, but the departments no longer communicate as efficiently as they once did. Healing is less like a sports car racing down an open highway and more like a carefully driven vintage automobile making excellent progress while stopping occasionally to admire the scenery.

The Body's Repair Department Works More Slowly

A young body often approaches healing with unreasonable enthusiasm. It sends cells rushing to the surgical site as though they have just received an urgent group text. Wounds close, tissues repair themselves, and energy begins to return.

The older body still has a repair department, but the staff may not move quite as quickly. With age, circulation, immune function, and cell regeneration can become less efficient. Healing may therefore take longer, and the risk of infection or other complications may be higher.

Think of it as the difference between renovating a new apartment and repairing a historic house. The historic house may be beautifully built, full of character, and worth preserving—but once you open a wall, you may discover three previous renovations, some mysterious wiring, and a pipe that apparently dates from the Roosevelt administration.

Bed Rest is Not as Restful as it Sounds

After surgery, rest is essential. Unfortunately, too much rest can create problems, particularly for seniors. Older adults can lose muscle strength surprisingly quickly when they spend several days in bed. A short period of inactivity may make standing, walking, or climbing stairs more difficult. This is why your medical team keeps encouraging you to get up and move soon after an operation and as soon as you return home.

But for you, just rolling onto one side may already feel like an advanced gymnastics routine. So being asked to stand, let alone walk, sounds absurd. But movement helps maintain strength, improve circulation, prevent blood clots, and keep the lungs working properly. Without it, there is a good chance you may not regain the muscle strength you had before.

Seniors Often Bring Other Conditions to the Party

Younger patients are more likely to enter surgery with a relatively short medical history. Seniors may arrive with diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, breathing problems, or other chronic conditions.

These conditions do not politely take a vacation during recovery. They all require attention at the same time.

The medical team may need to balance blood sugar, blood pressure, pain control, heart function, breathing, and wound healing. It is less like solving one problem and more like conducting an orchestra in which several musicians have brought different versions of the sheet music.

This is one reason a senior's recovery plan may be more detailed. Doctors are not being fussy. They are trying to make sure the entire person—not merely the recently repaired part—recovers safely.

Medications Can Complicate Matters

Many seniors take several prescription medications. Add anesthesia, pain medicine, antibiotics, and perhaps a blood thinner, and the medication list can begin to resemble the cast of a historical drama.

Older bodies may process drugs more slowly, increasing the possibility of side effects. Pain medicines can cause drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, confusion, and constipation. Constipation deserves special mention because it is one of surgery's most reliable supporting actors. It appears frequently, creates unnecessary tension, and receives far more discussion than anyone expected.

Careful medication management is especially important after discharge. Written schedules, pill organizers, and help from a family member or caregiver can prevent mistakes. "Take as needed" sounds simple until several bottles say it and nobody remembers what was taken at two in the morning.

Falls are a Greater Concern

After surgery, weakness and dizziness can make anyone unsteady. For seniors, however, a fall may have more serious consequences. Balance problems, reduced muscle strength, poor vision, and certain medications can all add to the risk.

Preparing the home can make recovery safer. Loose rugs can be removed, pathways cleared, lighting improved, and frequently used objects placed within easy reach. Grab bars and shower chairs may also help.

This does not mean the home must be converted into a medical facility. The goal is simply to prevent a recovering patient from attempting an obstacle course while carrying a cup of tea.

Good Nutrition Becomes Essential

The body needs protein, calories, vitamins, minerals, and fluids to heal. Unfortunately, surgery may reduce appetite just when good nutrition matters most.

Food can taste different after anesthesia. Nausea may linger. Fatigue can make cooking feel like an unreasonable demand. Large meals may be unappealing, so smaller meals and nutritious snacks can help.

Gentle encouragement is helpful. Turning every meal into a negotiation between two hostile governments is not.

Independence May Temporarily Change

For many seniors, the hardest part of recovery is not pain but the temporary loss of independence. Someone who normally drives, cooks, shops, and manages the household may suddenly need help bathing, dressing, or getting out of a chair.

Support should preserve dignity whenever possible. Help with tasks that are difficult or unsafe but allow the recovering person to do what they can. There is a meaningful difference between assisting someone and taking over their entire life because they needed help putting on a sock.

Recovery also requires patience from everyone involved. The patient may be frustrated. Family members may be worried. Neither group is at its most charming when tired.

Recovery is a Scenic Route

Younger patients may bounce back quickly. Seniors are more likely to bounce back carefully, perhaps after checking whether the floor is slippery.

Progress may come in small stages: walking to the mailbox, taking a shower without assistance, preparing breakfast, or sleeping through the night. There may be good days followed by unexpectedly tiring ones. This is often normal. Healing rarely follows a perfectly straight line.

Age is only one factor in recovery. Overall health, physical condition before surgery, the type of operation, nutrition, rehabilitation, and social support all matter. A healthy, active 75-year-old may recover more easily than a sedentary 45-year-old.

The key is not to underestimate older adults—or to rush them. Seniors can recover remarkably well when they receive appropriate medical care, adequate time, sensible assistance, and plenty of encouragement.

After all, anyone who has survived decades of work, family responsibilities, tax forms, changing fashions, and learning new television remotes has already demonstrated impressive resilience. Surgery recovery is simply another challenge—one best approached with patience, determination, comfortable shoes, and a good sense of humor.

WHAT WE'RE STREAMING

Guilty Pleasures or Hidden Treasures?

PBS and America Past and Present

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee member

I remember visiting Philadelphia around our country's 200th birthday celebration. It was glorious. It seemed that everyone was proud of our country and of who we were becoming, even while acknowledging the dark sides of our history in this land.

Life is much more complicated now. We even have two different organizations planning the 250th birthday celebrations: America250 and Freedom250. If you are not familiar with this, you can research both and their differences online.

During this time in our divided nation, I believe that PBS has been presenting some amazing and balanced programming related to America past and present. There is a "book club" with recommendations for fiction and nonfiction books that put a human face on our history. (David McCullough's book "1776" is one such recommendation.)

There are shows on the American Revolution, on the roles of different minority groups during the revolution, on cities related to that history (ex. Philadelphia, Williamsburg), music and the arts relating to America's history, etc. I just watched a fascinating PBS program and interview of Bruce Springsteen and the opening of the Bruce Springsteen Center for American Music at Monmouth University in New Jersey.

There are also some programs about our American past that are pertinent to our times but are not on the official PBS programming for the Semiquincentennial celebration. Four of the programs that I fully recommend are by Ken Burns, who is well known for his historical programs. One is "Defying the Nazi's: the Sharp's War". This is a true story about an American couple (the husband was a Unitarian minister) who traveled to and lived in Germany, helping Jewish families and children escape death, while risking their own lives.

"The US and the Holocaust" is another Ken Burns series: "The Golden Door" (beginnings to 1938), "Yearning to Breathe" (1938-1942), and "The Homeless: Tempest-Tossed" (1942-). Ken Burns typically uses old newsreels, newspaper articles from the past, historical documents, and interviews with people from that time (or their descendants.)

True to form, there were old movies and news headlines and (more touchingly) interviews with survivors in all of the above programs. Some of it was hard to watch. All of it was touching. Images and ideas still come to mind unbidden weeks after watching the series. I knew much of the history in a piecemeal fashion before. Ken Burns has an amazing ability to connect the threads into a coherent and compelling story.

One piece of history that I had heard before was that Hitler took some of his ideas from our American past: our treatment and genocide of Native American tribes, our Jim Crow laws and the eugenics movement in the US. I am still shocked by this fact.

I was also shocked by the statements by many of our revered historical figures who were antisemitic and/or anti-immigration and/or pro the eugenics movement. I knew about but remained shocked by the forced sterilization in our country based on the eugenics movement.

(There were over 70,000 documented cases of forced sterilization in the US in the 20th century. The 1924 immigration law severely limiting certain groups from entering the US prevented Anne Frank and her family from immigrating here despite years of applying. Much of the basis for that law was in the eugenics movement. In the 1970's, poor people in some southern states had their welfare and food stamp benefits withheld if they did not agree to "voluntary sterilization". There have been whistleblower reports of sterilization of women without consent in our detention centers as recently as 2020.)

There is a fascinating interview of Ken Burns by Steven Spielberg on the PBS website about his series. Ken Burns noted that he began this series in 2015, before our country was this divided. But he says that the message is even more pertinent to our current times. "If you feel powerless in the face of a

system you think is rigged against you, ...you may be susceptible to scapegoat others... But, you know what, we are all in this together.... And what I learned is there is only "us" and there is no "them." Any time anyone tells you there is a "them," run away. Successful demagogues always begin with othering people."

Bruce Springsteen says that it is time to be a patriot, a critical patriot. It is time for us to own our past, create the future we want and be an "us."

Bend it Like Beckham

by Paul R. Quillin (available on many steaming on line sources)

"Bend It Like Beckham" is a 2002 sports/comedy/drama and is available for streaming. The lead, Jesminder "Jess" Bhamra, an 18-year-old Punjabi Sikh is played by Parminder Nagra. Her friend, Juliette "Jules" Paxton, a native Brit is played by Keira Knightley. Jess and Jules both live in Hounslow, a large town in West London, England. Jonathan Rhys Meyers plays "Joe", the coach of the Hounslow Harriers soccer team.

The "bend it..." phrase refers to the unique talent used by David Beckham to successfully direct his kick of a soccer ball. It's used here to describe the bending of rules and social norms that help guide Jess through the goalpost of ambition.

This was a tremendously successful movie and set the record in India for the most tickets sold during a single weekend for a foreign movie. In the UK it grossed over 11 million pounds (about \$16.5 million in 2002), making it one of the highest-grossing Black/Asian-themed British films. David Beckham was a big fan of this movie and he allowed the filmmakers to use his name and likeness because he wanted to support girls' soccer and encourage families to come to the matches.

Jess is passionate about soccer, but her parents do not support her interest, preferring that she focus on her studies. However, she occasionally plays in the park with boys, including her best friend, Tony. Jules Paxton, a member of the Hounslow Harriers, a local women's amateur football team, notices Jess's football skills and befriends her, inviting her to try out for the team. The coach, Joe, a young Irish former player whose own career was curtailed by injuries, accepts her into the team.

Although Jess's parents forbid her to join the team, she continues playing in secret, claiming to have a summer job when she is actually at practice. When Joe learns that Jess is on the team without her parents' consent, he pleads with her father to allow Jess to play, but he refuses, not wanting Jess to suffer as he did when he was excluded from a cricket club because of anti-Indian sentiment.

Jess's older sister Pinky agrees to cover for her while she travels with the team to play a match in Hamburg, Germany. After the game Jess, Jules and Joe go out to a nightclub where Jules catches Joe and Jess about to kiss. This strains the two girls' friendship, as Jules is also attracted to Joe. Furthermore, Jess's parents discover she is still playing football after her father sees a newspaper article about the Hamburg match with Jess on the front page.

After returning, Jess is grounded and later visits Jules's house to try to mend their friendship but is rebuffed. In one of my favorite scenes Jules's mother, over-hearing parts of their argument, mistakenly (and hilariously) assumes they are in a lesbian relationship. Her suspicions are magnified when she catches Jules hugging Jess after Jess scores the winning point in a game!

Well, the Harriers qualify for the final of the league tournament, but the championship match, with an American Talent Scout in attendance, is scheduled to be held on the same day as Jess's sister Pinky's wedding, so it looks like Jess is going to have to resign herself to missing the game.

OK - I am going to stop right here hoping I've piqued your interest. Hint: it's all great! Additional Hint: didya notice the underlining?

Enjoy!

Social Security Disability

(continued from page 7)

Stay Organized: Keep a disability file. A box, folder, binder, or electronic folder is fine, keep it organized so you can find things. Print or save confirmation pages, application summaries, re-entry numbers, denial letters, appeal confirmations, medical lists, and anything mailed to or received from Social Security.

Application Processing by SSA: After the application is submitted, Social Security may mail forms for signature. These may include an application summary to review and correct, a medical release form, and other authorizations. Read everything. Sign what must be signed.

Keep Mailing Proofs: If mailing documents back, use a trackable method such as certified mail, return receipt requested, or another delivery service that proves receipt. If Social Security later says something was not received, proof of delivery may matter.

The local Social Security field office generally handles intake and technical processing. The field office does not generally make the medical disability decision. This would be done by the DDS, and for Penn Estates residents, that is in Wilkes Barre. Once the application is complete enough to move forward, the case goes to the state Disability Determination Services (DDS) agency, often called DDS. That is where the medical development begins.

Next installment: Part 2 moves from the field office to DDS, where the medical development begins. It covers the Function Report, Work History Report, medical records, consultative examinations, the first medical decision, and Reconsideration if the first decision is a denial.

Stephanie O. Joy is a Social Security Disability Lawyer and founder of Monroe County based SSD Practice, Joy Disability Law, 2005-2026. For free consultation to review whether you can and should file for SSDI (or SSI) fill out the free evaluation form at <http://joydisability.com>



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Covid-19 Five Years Later

(continued from page 8)

million people. That's still more than double the pre-pandemic rate. The shift wasn't evenly distributed. Remote work concentrated among higher-income, college-educated workers in knowledge industries, while lower-wage workers in service, retail, and manufacturing largely continued commuting. This created a new kind of workplace inequality, where flexibility itself became a benefit available mainly to those who already had more of it.

Consumer behavior changed fast during lockdowns. Before the pandemic, 54% of shopping happened in stores, 34% blended online and in-person browsing, and just 10% was entirely online. During the pandemic, in-store shopping collapsed to 22% while online-only purchases jumped by 33%.

The post-pandemic picture is more nuanced than a simple shift to online. In-store and blended shopping have settled at roughly equal shares (40% and 41%), with purely online purchases at about 15%. Most consumers tried online shopping during the crisis but didn't stick with it exclusively. The lasting change is that blended shopping, where people research online and buy in person or vice versa, went from a secondary habit to the dominant one.

In 2020, life expectancy in the United States dropped by nearly two full years, the largest single-year decline among 27 countries studied. Lithuania, Spain, and Bulgaria saw comparable drops. By 2023, U.S. life expectancy remained about a third of a year below its 2019 level. Some countries recovered fully; the United States was not among them. The gap reflected not just direct deaths from the virus but the downstream effects of delayed medical care, rising drug overdoses, and chronic disease management that fell behind during the crisis.

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Father's Day Brunch

by Evelyn Infante, Contributor

On Sunday, June 13th, Penn Estate's Recreation Committee organized a Father's Day Brunch. Similar to the one held for Mother's Day, it was well-attended. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the delicious food and the festive atmosphere.

The decorations were as lovely as those at the Mother's Day Brunch, and the food was equally impressive. We savored French toast, scrambled eggs, sausage, mini turkey sandwiches, mozzarella on



tomato, fruit, and pastries. To add to the culinary delight, we even had cornbread baked by one of our neighbors.

It was another enjoyable morning, and we extend our gratitude to our dedicated and imaginative Recreation Committee for making it possible.

Cardio and Chair Yoga Classes

by Evelyn Infante, Contributor

Penn Estates offers an array of free benefits, including cardio fitness and chair yoga classes. As someone who has always prioritized exercise, I was thrilled to discover these classes.

I understand that everyone faces their own unique challenges, but the key is to stay active, especially as we age. Staying active is even more crucial for me now that I'm a senior, but despite my arthritis, I'm determined to keep moving.

Don't worry about keeping up; everyone works out at their own pace. There's no judgment here; it's a friendly and supportive group of neighbors coming together to stay active. I've been attending these sessions since May and have thoroughly enjoyed them.

Cardio classes are every Monday and Friday at 10:00 a.m. Chair Yoga classes are on Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. We meet in the Oak Room. Come join us!



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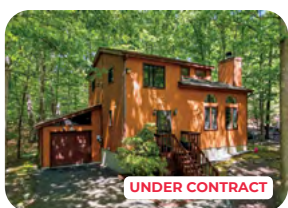
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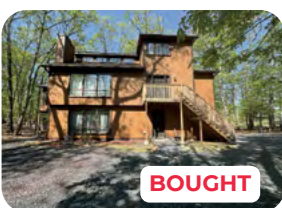
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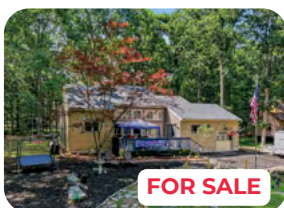
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