

WEST END

LIVING

Summer Fun for Everyone!

By Fred Jerant

Hey, parents! It won't be long until you start hearing the kid-version of "Summertime Blues": "There's nothing to DOOOOOO-oooooo!!!"

Fortunately, the City of Allentown offers numerous activity programs and facilities throughout the summer months, many of them specific to the West End. Brittni Kholi, Recreation Program Specialist in the Bureau of Recreation, walked us through many of them.

Romper Day

Now in its 111th year this citywide program keeps kids from 7 to 15 in ASD schools (including Muhlenberg Elementary, Union Terrace and Luis A. Ramos Elementary) active and engaged from June 23 to August 7. At numerous school and city playgrounds, they learn various games and dances -- such as maypole and flag drills -- and all schools face off in a season-closer mass competition at J. Birney Crum Stadium on August 4 at 7:00 p.m. (rain date August 5).

Kholi adds that Romper Day is a special program for her. She participated in it as a child,

spent six years as a playground instructor at Bucky Boyle Park, and now assists Romper Day director John Hrebik, who also served as participant and supervisor over the years.

Free movies

It's the next-best thing to an actual drive-in! Bring your lawn chairs or blankets, and enjoy FREE hit movies under the stars.

June 6: Wicked at Union Terrace. Glinda and Elphaba become friends -- until Elphaba finds her true calling as the Wicked Witch of the West.

June 20: Mufasa: The Lion King at Cedar Beach pool. Rafiki spins the tale of Mufasa's meeting with Scar, Sarabi, Rafiki and Zazu; his fight with a renegade pride of white lions; and how he became king of the Pride Lands.

July 25: Snow White at the Rose Garden. The latest retelling of the beloved fairy tale.

Additional films will be available

at other city locations. Find details here: https://allentownpa.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=30037

Get in the Swim

Cedar Beach pool is open from May 24 to September 1, from noon to 7:00 p.m. daily.

Adult lap swims are available Monday through Thursday from 8 to 10:00 a.m. \$2 fee.

Kholi adds that other programs -- including wrestling "skills and drills" sessions at Muhlenberg College, and a learn-to-swim program at Cedar Beach -- were not finalized at press time.

Check the dropdown menu here https://allentownpa.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=30016 for updates.

Listen to the Music

Parents can take a break themselves at one of the many free concerts in West Park this summer.

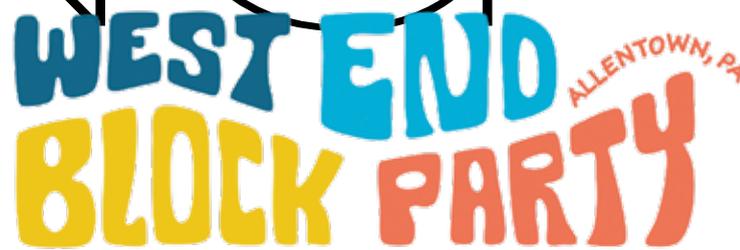
Details here: https://allentownpa.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=30041

May 18 -- Macungie Band 3 p.m.

May 25 -- Municipal Band 7:30 p.m.

May 30 -- Royalaires 7:30 p.m.

June 1 -- Pioneer Band 7:30 p.m.



SEE PAGE 15 FOR MORE INFORMATION

- June 8 -- Marine Band 7:30 p.m.
- June 14** -- Allentown Band Flag Day Concert 7 p.m.
- June 15** -- Municipal Band 7:30 p.m.
- June 20** -- Royalaires 7:30 p.m.
- June 22** -- Pioneer Band 7:30 p.m.
- June 27** -- Allentown Band Sousa Concert 7:30 p.m.
- June 29** -- Italian-American Band 7:30 p.m.
- July 6** -- Marine Band 7:30 p.m.
- July 11** -- Royalaires 7:30 p.m.
- July 12** -- Allentown Band 7:30 p.m.
- July 13** -- Pioneer Band 7:30 p.m.
- July 18** -- Macungie Band 7:30 p.m.
- July 20** -- Marine Band 7:30 p.m.
- July 27** -- Municipal Band 7:30 p.m.
- August 1** -- Royalaires 7:30 p.m.
- August 3** -- Allentown Band 7:30 p.m.
- August 10** -- Municipal Band 7:30 p.m.
- August 17** -- Pioneer Band 7:30 p.m.
- September 5** -- Royalaires 7:30 p.m.
- September 7** -- Allentown Band Salute to Bert Meyers Concert 3:00 p.m.
- September 13** -- Allentown Band Art-in-the-Park Concert 1:30 p.m.
- September 14** -- Marine Band Ray Becker Concert 3:00 p.m. ■



PHOTO BY BILL BASTA

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Cedar Beach Pool—Keeping Allentonians Cool since 1917

By Ron Epstein

With the coming of Summer and the warmer weather, people's attention turns to outdoor recreation.

As the weather gets hotter, swimming becomes attractive as the city's pools reopen. An always-popular place to sunbathe and swim is Cedar Beach Pool, located east of Ott St. and south of Cedar Creek.

Built in 1917, just one year after Cedar Creek Park opened, the pool was owned by a private business and began as a simple pit, dug out next to Cedar Creek. The bottom of the pit was lined with sand, which extended outside of the pool to give it a beach look. Hence the name Cedar Beach.

A large wooden pool house {bath house} was built on the site along with a snack bar and other amenities.

The pool water, sourced from Cedar Creek, was drained at the end of each season, after which the sandy bottom was thoroughly cleaned. For many years Cedar Beach Pool was regarded as the largest pool of its kind in the United States.

The City of Allentown purchased the pool in 1932 and leased it to a

private operator until January, 1942 when a massive fire completely destroyed the bathhouse and the snack bar. Both were replaced with a temporary facility until 1950 when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ordered Cedar Beach Pool and Jordan Park Pool closed because of health concerns over a Polio outbreak; the Cedar Beach pool was believed to be a possible source. This was a time before a polio vaccine had been produced, and fears of that dreaded disease caused many recreational activities to be cancelled at times.

While closed, the pool was completely reconstructed, but in April of 1951, work began on a new concrete pool that was completed the following year. The new Cedar Beach Pool opened in June 1952, and for the next 60 years, it has served the area as the most popular pool in the valley.

Unfortunately, in 2014 it had to be closed again because of cracks that developed in the concrete. After four years of reconstruction, delayed by various problems including a cost increase, the Cedar Beach Pool was reopened to the residents of Allentown at noon on Saturday May 26, 2018, followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and to the general



PHOTO BY BILL BASTA

public on Monday May 28. Among the new amenities are new slides, climbing walls, a lap swimming area and a tot area.

Cedar Beach Pool is open daily from noon until 7 p.m., beginning each year the Saturday before Memorial Day, and running until and including Labor Day. Adult lap swimming --18 years of age and older-- is permitted 8-10 a.m., with a \$2 upcharge for each visit for non-season pass holders.

Getting In

Yearly admission:
Allentown residents--
Individuals aged 4 - 59: \$75.
Veterans/active military: \$25
Senior citizens, 60 and older: \$25
Family pass: \$200

Non-residents--
Individuals aged 4 - 59: \$150
Veterans/active military: \$50
Senior citizens, 60 and older: \$50
Family pass: \$400 ■

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WEA Cornerstone Partners commit to a year-long investment in our neighborhood and WEA activities. We are grateful for their support.

For more information on becoming a Cornerstone Partner, contact Michael Drabenstott at (610) 417-0503.



WEST END LIVING

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Admiring the **Architecture** in the West End

A variety of home styles makes the neighborhood a delight for house-peepers.

By Meghan Kita

Take a walk in the West End and you'll pass a wide variety of properties, from brick twins and rowhomes to 100-plus-year-old mansions to mid-century modern ranches that look straight out of "Mad Men."

The variety is partly a function of how the area built up over time: Allentown grew outward from downtown, so homes nearer to Center City tend to be older than those farther away, said Brandon Jones, Allentown's historic preservation secretary and a planner with the city's Bureau of Planning & Zoning.

Some of the oldest homes in the West End are also some of the largest: "Historically, the wealthier families moved westward to areas less dense than that of the downtown in search of larger lots, modern homes and privacy," Jones said. "The West End gave families the space to build much larger and modern single-family homes, with extensive setbacks from the street accompanied by large backyards."

The Hess Mansion (27th and West Livingston streets) is one example of this, along with many of the homes along Chew Street west of Ott.

Some of the neighborhood's larger lots were later split up to accommodate more housing — or "infill properties" — and that's one reason there can be so much variety from one home to the next. From the late 1940s through the 1960s, Jones said, several brick ranch homes and Cape Cods were built into older neighborhoods.

There was another wave of infill housing in the 1980s, said Erich Hornung, a project architect at David Hornung Architect Planner. He grew up in one of those homes on Broad Street near the Rose Garden ("a modern interpretation of the classical Palladian style,"

he said, that his father, David, designed) and now he lives in the Hamilton Park neighborhood.

Hornung thinks of the West End in four distinct zones, with specific architectural standouts in each. His neighborhood has noteworthy bungalows and Craftsman-style homes.

The 19th Street Theater District, which has a predominance of half-duplex and row homes, includes a stretch of Allen Street between 22nd and 24th Streets with "a couple Gothic Tudors and one slightly Spanish revival design," he said.

The neighborhood north of Parkway Boulevard (from Cedar Crest Boulevard to Ott Street) "has the most dynamic historic styles and true-form design," Hornung said. "This zone really has some great architectural examples of Federal-style colonials and Gothic Tudors on Chew Street roughly between 27th and 30th Streets."

"West End North" (from Cedar Crest Boulevard to 19th Street north of Tilghman) has the most variety of styles, though Hornung said the architectural standouts include:

- 2231 and 2830 Highland Street (examples of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian style)
- 2840 Livingston Street (with elements of Frank Lloyd Wright's prairie style)
- 3030 Livingston Street (one of the more modern/contemporary homes in the West End)
- 712 and 745 N. 30th Street (Gothic architecture)

Hornung gathered this information for West End Living while on a bike ride, and that — the ability to walk or bike to almost anything he wants or needs to do — is what he loves most about the neighborhood.

"I'm surrounded by parks and close to everything I need," he said. ■



Gothic Tudor



Colonial



Mid-Century Modern



Gothic

ALL PHOTOS BY BILL BASTA

97 Native Trees Planted in Cedar Creek Park



PHOTO BY BILL BASTA

By Meghan Kita

On April 13, the Wildlands Conservancy, the Little Lehigh Watershed Stewards and Allentown’s Parks and Recreation Department held a tree-planting event in Cedar Creek Park near the 30th Street entrance. About 25 volunteers helped plant a variety of native trees, 97 in all, along the north side of the creek.

“The tree species are adapted to a riparian environment (i.e. area subject to flooding), are native to this area, are of different heights to provide variety and have characteristics which make them beautiful to look at throughout the four seasons. They will provide animal life food and shelter as well,” said Paul Younger, project manager for the Little Lehigh Watershed Stewards. “Trees in a riparian area help to soak up floodwaters, they hold the soil in place reducing sediment pollution, and they shade the creek to create a cooler temperature for native fish species as well as macro invertebrates and amphibians.”

Wildlands purchased all the



materials through a Riparian Forest Buffer Grant from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Sycamore, swamp white oak, river birch and sweetgum were among the species planted.

Anyone interested in future opportunities to volunteer for similar projects can visit wildlandspa.org and littlelehigh.org. ■

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West-Ender Named School Communicator of the Year

Melissa Reese, communications manager for the Allentown School District (and a resident of the West End Theatre District) was recently named School Communicator of the Year by the Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association. This accolade celebrates public relations professionals who demonstrate outstanding expertise, ethical conduct and a commitment to advancing the practice of public relations.

"We are incredibly proud of Melissa Reese for receiving this well-deserved recognition," said Dr. Carol D. Birks, Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer. "Melissa has demonstrated exceptional skill, dedication, and leadership in school communications. She is an integral part of our leadership team, shaping and enhancing the communication strategies that

serve as the foundation of our connection with the community."

Since joining the Allentown School District in 2017, Melissa's innovative approaches and dedication have helped to build bridges between the District and its broad community of families, educators, and local partners, and to improve educational opportunities for all students.

Some of her achievements include her leadership in communicating the District's Strategic Plan, "Lighting the Way: A Blueprint for Innovation and Excellence 2030," and her spearheading of the complete overhaul of the District's website.

Melissa and her husband have lived in Allentown since 2012, and became part of the West End community in 2017. "We live on Liberty St., across from



PHOTO COURTESY ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

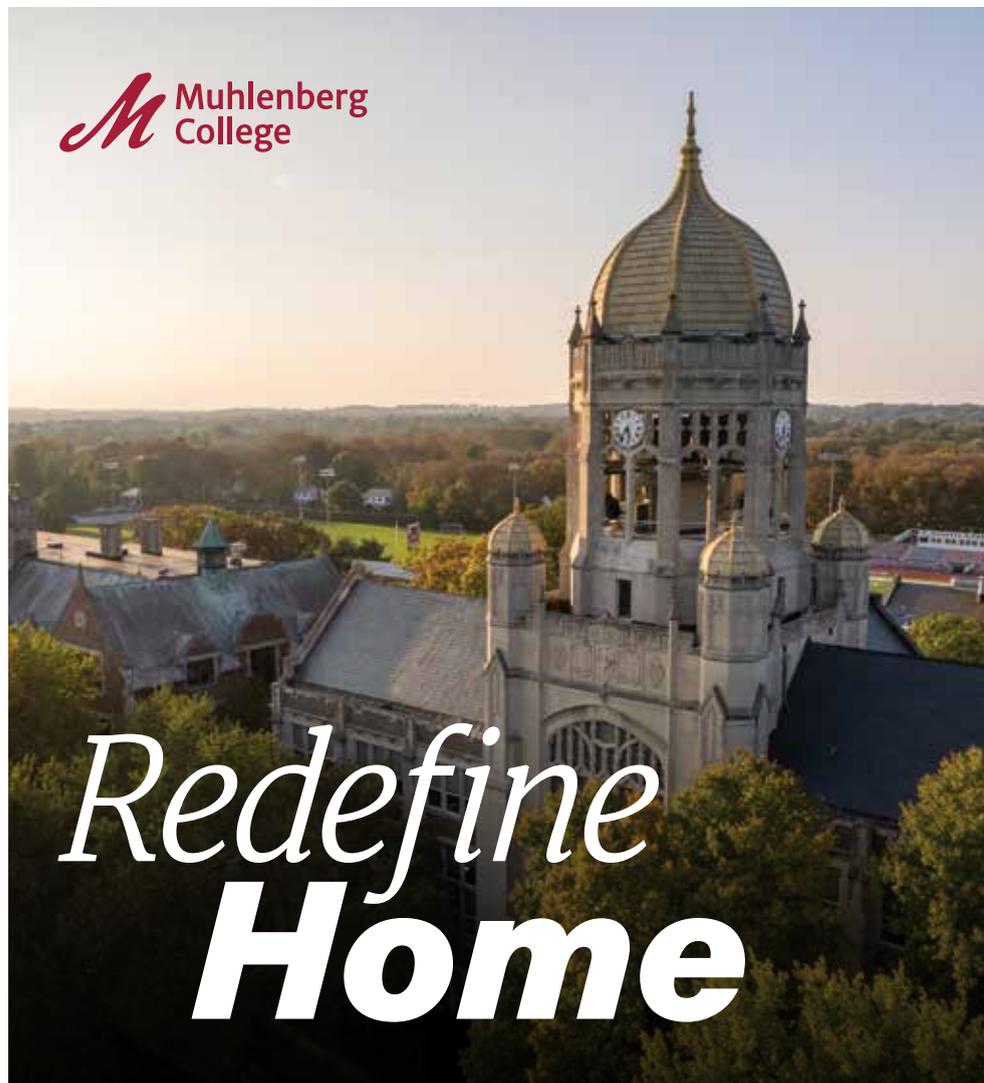
ended up coaching different high school marching band programs," she added. My husband also marched in drum corps.

"For both of us, spending the first weekend in August and usually some Saturdays in the fall at J. Birney Crum stadium is just what we do! [The stadium is home to the Collegiate Marching Band Festival.] "We didn't purposely pick our house because it was within walking distance to the stadium, but it is definitely an added perk!" she said.

Reese adds that some of her favorite haunts include the Tavern on Liberty, Udder Bar and the Fairgrounds Farmers Market. The neighborhood's walkability is important to them, because they regularly explore the Muhlenberg campus and other areas while walking their dog. ■

Muhlenberg College," she said. "Our favorite thing since moving here is being able to watch the entire St. Patrick's Day parade from our porch. My husband and I have run the 5K a few times, but we have friends who participate every year; when the race is over, they come to our house and we all watch the parade from our porch."

"In high school and college, my now-husband and I both separately participated in and



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CHALLENGE | SUPPORT | IMPACT | BELONGING

Community DJs Keep Muhlenberg's WMUH Broadcasting Through Summer

By Meghan Kita

During the academic year, if you tune your radio to 91.7 FM, you're likely to hear a Muhlenberg College student playing their favorite songs and offering commentary. But during summer break, winter break and other times students are off campus, WMUH turns to community DJs to fill the airtime.

Community DJs have been on the air since 1981, said Paul Krempasky, the station's general manager. That's around when the station's power increased from 10 watts to 440 watts. The greater reach meant a new license, which required the station to broadcast 24/7.

"[Having DJs from the

community also] brings a wider spectrum of programming," said Krempasky, including Jhankaar, Music of India; Latin Sunday; and a polka show. "If we can find people who have a specialty that differentiates us from the other commercial and non-commercial stations, I think that's great for the listener."

But you don't need to specialize in one genre to be a community DJ. Just ask Krempasky, who's been a community DJ himself since 1984: "To be a DJ, you have to have an interest in music, an interest in sharing your interest, and you gotta have free time," he said. "We can train everything else."

Community DJs come from all over the Lehigh Valley



PHOTO BY BILL BASTA

Paul Krempasky, general manager of WMUH, lives in the West End.

and sometimes beyond. (One Muhlenberg College alumnus sends in pre-recorded shows from Austin, Texas.) However, the West End is the home of both the radio station and its current general manager.

Krempasky, who's also president of the West End Alliance, which publishes West End Living, has lived on Greenleaf Street since

2020. He previously spent 14 years living on Washington Street, right across from Muhlenberg Elementary. You'll often see him riding his Vespa to the station in Muhlenberg's Walson Hall.

Readers who are interested in learning more about becoming a community DJ for WMUH can contact wmuh@muhlenberg.edu. ■



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building equity. However, if you want to accelerate the process, you can take these steps.

- Pay Down Your Principal
- Own Your Home Five Years or More
- Renovate

How to Use Your Home Equity

Once you've built up equity, how can you use it? You could simply sell your home for a profit, or you can use one of these methods to draw on the equity while staying where you are.

■ **Home Equity Loans.** A home equity loan works like a second mortgage. Say you have \$50,000 in equity. You might qualify for a home equity loan of \$35,000. You receive the loan in a single payment, which you can use however you want. You then pay back the loan in monthly installments, with interest, just like your mortgage.

■ **Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC).** A HELOC works similar to a credit card, with your credit limit based on the equity in your home. As you repay the outstanding balance, your available credit is replenished. You also have the flexibility to draw as much or as little as you need during the draw period. You can use a HELOC to finance home renovations or take advantage of the low interest rate to consolidate and pay off high-interest credit card debt.

■ **Cash-Out Refinance.** In a cash-out refinance, you refinance your mortgage for an amount that is equal to more than your current mortgage balance. The "cash out" amount goes to you in a lump sum payment and is yours to use as you see fit. You then repay the refinanced total in monthly payments with interest, like you do for your original mortgage.

Work with a lending partner to evaluate your borrowing options. QNB Bank is here to help. To get started, call us at 215-538-LOAN (5626) or visit our website at QNBbank.com. View our current home equity loan specials at QNBbank.com/loan-sale. ■

Your home is more than the place you live. If you own a home, building home equity — the value of your home minus what you owe on your mortgage — is an important long-term strategy for building wealth. That's because home equity is a resource you can borrow against to pay off debt or make investments that help your money grow. With this in mind, you may be wondering how much equity you have in your home, how you can access it, and how you can use it to build your financial future.

What Is Your Equity?

Equity is the difference between what you owe on your mortgage (the principal) and what your home is currently worth. The simple math equation looks like this:

$$\text{Current Value of Your Home} - \text{Principal Balance of Mortgage Loan} = \text{Equity}$$

If your home is worth \$250,000 and you owe \$150,000 on your mortgage, you have \$100,000 in equity.

Because homes generally increase in value over time, the more that you pay down your mortgage, the greater the equity. Over time, there are many ways that you can take advantage of the equity in your home.

■ Equity is considered an asset and counts toward your total net worth.

■ When you sell your home, your equity allows you to make a profit.

■ Equity can be cashed out in a loan refinance or borrowed against as collateral. You can use the available funds to pay down debt, renovate, or buy a second home or income property.

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GREAT HERON INSURANCE

Feast With Food Trucks at the Fairgrounds

By Meghan Kita

Wednesdays this summer will be tastier than ever, with a multitude of food trucks gathering in the MainGate Nightclub parking lot each week from 4 to 8 p.m. The first event, on April 30, included The Sticky Pig BBQ, Take a Taco, Puerto Rican food from La Frikitona and a dozen other vendors.

“We’re excited to bring together a diverse group of food vendors and create an event that’s all about bringing people together to enjoy delicious food and have a good time,” said Melissa DeFrain, an administrative coordinator with The Great Allentown Fair who’s one of the Food Trucks at the Fairgrounds coordinators.

“We’re hoping to foster a sense of community by giving local food trucks and vendors another place to showcase their talents. This event is about more than just food — it’s about creating a space where people can gather, meet new people and celebrate the unique flavors and cultures that make our community so special.”

Customers planning to drive should enter through Gate 8 off of Liberty Street to park on the infield. The event will be held Wednesdays through October 8 except on three dates affected by the Great Allentown Fair (August 20 and 27 and September 3). Up-to-date information on which vendors will be present each week can be found at facebook.com/FoodTrucksattheFairgrounds. ■



PHOTOS BY BILL BASTA



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Boutique to Go Fashionable and Affordable

By Fred Jerant

Fashion-forward women might be tempted to visit trendy spots in Manhattan for stylish garb – but it’s easier (and less costly!) to stop in at Boutique to Go at 522 N. 19th St. Now beginning its 18th year, Elena Pascal’s shop continues its mission of offering wonderful fashions at good prices.

“We have always specialized in unique fashions, including handbags, jewelry, and apparel created by designers from around the world,” Pascal says. “Recently, though, we have been spotlighting creations by U.S., Canadian and Israeli designers.”

Nestled in the heart of the West End Theatre District, the store has stayed true to Pascal’s vision. “I never wanted to run a ‘mall’

business,” she said, “because those are too boring.

I’m originally from the West End, and it’s wonderful being located across from the Civic Theater. Years ago, I acted there with Ralph Senderowitz; now it feels like home to me.”

Pascal stresses that the establishment continues to offer a broad range of apparel and accessories, such as distinctive jewelry, handbags, and gifts.

Although the store maintains an extensive inventory, Pascal adds that trunk shows (in-store presentations of merchandise from U.S. and Canadian vendors) remain a staple.

“We also present fashion shows at

off-site locations,” Pascal says. “For example, we were recently invited by Randall’s to stage an event at Randall’s restaurant (in Orefield). We did it in the style of the Hess’s Patio shows, and it went over very well,” she said.

Additionally, the store offers an ongoing series of special events, such as guest speakers on a range of topics, bingo games with prizes of merchandise or gift cards – even an Easter egg hunt!

Boutique to Go offers customer benefits that internet stores can’t touch, such as personalized service, the capacity to see, feel and try on the merchandise before purchasing, and a pricing

structure that e-commerce stores have difficulty matching.

“Depending upon the individual piece, our pricing runs between \$50 and \$300, and we can beat internet stores on most of it,” Pascal says. “And we maintain the same structure for special orders as well.”

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Allentown, PA 18104

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boutique2go@yahoo.com

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Caregivers in the African Country of Malawi



St. Luke's Allentown nurses who volunteered in Malawi (L-R), Emily Steward, Kathleen Grant, Gisele Commins, Lisa Reph.

Four nurses from St. Luke's Allentown Campus left their homes, families and workplace last month to volunteer 8,000 miles away as caregivers in the African country of Malawi.

Led by Kathleen Grant, RN, ICU manager, the group also included Lisa Reph, RN, ICU; Gisele Commins, RN, ICU nurse educator; and Emily Steward, RN, infection prevention.

In addition to their personal luggage, they took 14 50-pound suitcases filled with medical supplies, medications, shoes and toothbrushes. Malawi, located in Southeast Africa with a population of 21,600,000, is one of the world's poorest countries. People there live on about \$2 a day, many relying on subsistence farming and fishing.

The group of St. Luke's nurses arrived in Malawi on March 12 after 30 arduous hours of air and overland travel. They immediately

purchased medications at the local pharmacy for treating malaria, HIV/AIDS, infections and other ailments. Next, they set up pop-up clinics in vacant buildings in Zomba, the country's former capital, and two nearby villages.

During their nearly two weeks there, they treated more than 7,300 patients—mostly women and children—alongside local and other volunteer doctors and nurses. It's not unusual for patients to walk several hours through the forests and fields to a clinic, explained Grant. Each morning, a line of hundreds of women and kids waited outside the clinics in hope of receiving treatment. Following an eight-hour day of diagnosing illness and providing care, St. Luke's team reviewed the data they collected, discussed the cases they treated and prepared for the next day's patients.

"We took care of some of the

poorest people on earth," said Grant, who has made several mission trips to developing countries since 2005. They treated the sickest patients first and sent those critically ill by the region's sole ambulance to the regional hospital in Zomba.

They treated malaria, skin infections, dysentery, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy-related complications, skin wounds and abscesses and other conditions rarely seen in the U.S. The team also provided dental, vision and foot care.

They educated the patients on healthy behaviors in hopes of avoiding repeat illnesses. Though many conditions are easily prevented or treated in the developed world, they're common in Malawi.

Each nurse used vacation time and paid for her own travel, lodging and vaccination expenses to make the trip. They collaborated with local members of Villages and Partnerships, a non-profit, faith-based organization located in New Jersey which has served in Malawi since early in the 2000's.

To raise funds for the trip, Grant and her colleagues held

fundraisers at St. Anne's School in Bethlehem, which Grant's children attend, Union Evangelical Lutheran Church in Schnecksville and others in their local communities, through family and friends and at St. Luke's Allentown Campus. On average, each nurse spent \$1,500 of her own money for the trip.

While this was Grant's second mission trip to Malawi, and her sixth overall to India, Africa and Costa Rica, she said she continues to be struck by poverty and disease there. But, she said, this is balanced by the sense of fulfillment and gratitude and deep religious faith apparent among their patients.

"Through a local translator," Grant recalled, "a woman thanked us for our service said she hoped God would continue to bless us. The translator responded, 'God is who sent us here.'

"That was a full-circle moment for us as to why we were there. ... It's why I went into nursing: to help people who are less fortunate than me."

She's already looking forward to her next medical mission to Zomba, planned for March 2026. ■

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West End Taproom Welcomes New, Local Chef

By Paul Kita

Chef Tim Howells makes a fantastic pizza, but he also might be able to predict the future. Before the West End Taproom opened in May 2024, before it replaced the prior restaurant, Greenhouse Enoteca, which opened in February 2019, way back when the property was a flower shop, Howells always thought it would make a great restaurant.

“That corner house is literally where I grew up in high school,” said Howells, as he pointed out the front windows of the 2114 W. Tilghman St. restaurant, toward 21st and Tilghman Streets.

Howells grew up in Allentown, where he attended Allentown School District schools and fostered a love of cooking while watching Martin Yan and Julia

Child on PBS. He graduated from Northampton Community College in 2002 and has worked in or around the Lehigh Valley for more than two decades, with positions at Manor House Inn, Glasbern Inn and Saucony Creek Brewing Company.

Before signing on with the West End Taproom in March, Howells operated Trè on the Farm at Eight Oaks Farm Distillery in New Tripoli, where his rotating menu featured beef and kimchi tacos, a shrimp burger and bacon ranch popcorn. He also operates two food trailers, Trè Wood Fired Pizza and the BBQ-centric Fire & Smoke by Trè.

Howells is bringing his same culinary creativity to the West End Taproom — and its custom Kuma Forni pizza oven. In addition to firing off a range of incredible pies (try the Blanco), Howells is



Chef Tim Howells

cooking a variety of menu items in the gas-assisted, wood-burning oven. “We do our bacon beer cheese dip in there. We par-cook our wings and our cheesy garlic bread in there. We did a shishito pepper special where we threw those in the oven,” he said.

The menu also includes a formidable bacon cheddar burger (with onions braised in Funk Brewing Company’s Iron Menace

lager), loaded animal fries (with locally sourced potatoes) and a truffle Caesar salad (if you’re looking for something a little lighter).

Howells runs the bar program, too. “We’re working on expanding our cocktail and mocktail menus, incorporating more seasonal fruit and we’re making our own syrups in-house,” he said. And that’s in addition to the taproom’s usual lineup of Funk beer.

In the little downtime Howells has (he also recently became a dad), when he’s in West End Allentown he likes riding his bike around the neighborhood, sitting

outside with his dogs and eating at The Tavern on Liberty or Ringer’s Roost.

West End Taproom, 2114 W. Tilghman St.

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: 4 to 9 p.m.

Wednesday: 4 to 9 p.m.

Thursday: 4 to 9 p.m.

Friday: noon to 10 p.m.

Saturday: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■



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Otherworldly Vegan Paranormal Pizza at Jay's Local



Joey Kubushefski (left) and Marc Kubushefski (right)

By Fred Jerant

In the mood for some different dining? Then consider stopping by Jay's Local to sample an Italian favorite with a decided twist – 100% vegan pizza, dished up by the owners of Bethlehem's Paranormal Pizza.

Owners of the brick-and-mortar version, Marc and Joey Kubushefski, lost their building to fire in early 2023. But while they prepare a new permanent space, their devoted fans can grab a pie at Jay's.

"One of our missions is to support the other small businesses that make the Lehigh Valley such an exciting place," said Jay's Local owner Lyell Scherline. "We've had many pop-ups here, and Paranormal seemed like a good fit – lots of people have food allergies or restrictions, and vegan pizza isn't available everywhere. It's a great way to introduce this option, and we hope it leads to some cross-pollination – Allentown residents will eventually be able to go their Bethlehem shop, and we bring Paranormal's customers to Allentown."

"Our original building was a total loss," said Marc Kubushefski. "And

restoring it presented too many challenges. We started renovations on the new location in April, and we hope to be open by autumn this year. We'll be using the kitchen at Jay's Local until then."

Paranormal offers a variety of round and Detroit-style pizzas, made from their scratch-made sauce, sourdough-based crust and plant based cheeses; as well as garlic knots, and other treats. Kubushefski stresses that everything is plant-based – oat-milk based cheese, seitan "chick'n" and similar products.

While their current menu is necessarily limited, the brothers cook up some ambitious weekly specials, too. Take, for example, their General Tsao's pizza. Their version is made from "chick'n" broccoli, sesame seeds, green onions and their version of the General's sauce. And the Lone Gunmen pizza features olive oil, garlic, oregano, crushed red pepper, broccoli, seitan chick'n, and their signature hot agave drizzle.

Their basic pizzas range in price between \$20-\$24 for a 16-inch round pie; specialty pies and additional toppings will have additional charges.

PHOTOS BY BILL BASTA



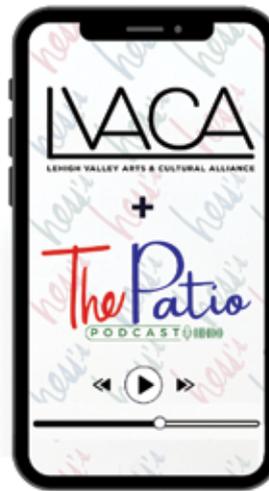
"We offer slices on Sunday only," he adds. "A plain slice is \$3.75, and one with 'pepperoni' costs \$4.50. We make them by cutting an 18" pizza into six slices, so each one is a generous serving."

Paranormal Pizza at Jay's Local
2301 Liberty St.
Allentown, PA 18104
Fridays from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with a limited menu

Sundays noon to 6:00 p.m. with the full pop-up menu.
(484) 357-8727
Paranormalpizza18018@gmail.com
Instagram: paranormalpizzacompany
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Paranormalpizzaco>
Web: paranormalpizza.com (order through that site for pick-up at Jay's). ■

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St. Pat's 5K Raised Almost \$18,000 for West End Improvements

By Fred Jerant

The 2025 St. Patrick's Day 5K was a record-breaker, said race director Michael Drabenstott. "With 922 entrants, it was the largest field ever. Nearly one-third of the entrants were from the City of Allentown, including many from the 18104 zip code, and the event has become practically a 'must-do' race for the neighborhood."

Drabenstott added that the runners displayed the joyous spirit of St. Patrick and the neighborhood, wearing all sorts of outfits – even some dressed top-toe in green.

This was the 15th iteration of the race (it was paused in 2020 and 2021 because of the Covid-19 pandemic). Alex Price, of Bethlehem, again took first place with a time of 14:35 – just a few seconds shy of his all-time record of 14:33, set in 2024. The fastest female at 19:16 was Jem Berney, a psychology major and cross-country athlete at Muhlenberg College.

The field also included four "legacy runners" who have participated in all 15 runnings of the annual race: West Ender Karen Kulikowski, Nick Miller, Patrick McGinley, and Steve Yeakel.

The race took in a total of

nearly \$18,000. "That's the most we've raised since 2016 or so," Drabenstott said, "and all of it will help fund numerous beautification and promotion projects in the West End neighborhood by the West End Alliance."

The race committee – co-director Will Velekei, and members Justin Christein and Heather Walke – extends its gratitude to cornerstone partners QNB, St. Luke's University Health Network and Muhlenberg College; to the more than 30 volunteers who pitched in to help with manning water stations, helping at the start/finish lines, and handing out bibs and merchandise from March 21-23, and volunteer T-shirt designer Andy Hall.

"The race is a really big thing for the committee," Drabenstott said. "And it's a great opportunity to bring happiness and joy to hundreds of people in the neighborhood. We feel privileged to have the opportunity to do something like this. It's become a cherished tradition for the West End and the entire Lehigh Valley running community."

Runners, mark your calendars – next year's 5K is set for March 22, and has a goal of 1,000 participants! It will again precede the festive Allentown St. Patrick's Parade. ■



ALL PHOTOS BY JOHN R. HOFMANN SR.

Use of Hand-Held Devices Ban Going into Effect

Law prohibits use of hand-held electronic devices while behind the wheel on the roadway. This includes when drivers are temporarily stopped because of traffic, red lights, construction or other delays. Here are some important details about the law to ensure safety:

- Hands-Free devices (such as Bluetooth) are permitted
- Law goes into effect on June 5, 2025.
- Warnings will be issued for first year with fines beginning June 2026
- Penalty: \$50 fine PLUS court costs & other fees

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Registration fee July 2025: \$12.

July 2025). To take advantage of this rate, when it is time to renew your registration, use the card PennDOT mailed to you along with the MV-371. My office can mail you that form or assist in processing the request online. Give my office a call (610-821-5577) to request the form or to the processing through my office.



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