

★ Happy 250th Birthday, America! ★



4th of July Fireworks over Retreat Mountain in Glen Lyon

Newport Township Public Business

By John Jarecki ~ The following is an account of Newport Township public business arranged in two parts. The first is a discussion of continuing projects. Items about these projects added since the last Newsletter are indicated by an asterisk. The second part is a discussion of items commented on or acted on by the Township Commissioners at special and regular monthly meetings in April, May, and June 2026.

Nanticoke-West Nanticoke Bridge

Since February of 2023 Luzerne County has had access to \$55 million from casino gambling revenue that the County Council intends to spend on improvements to County roads and bridges. The Council has for some time been considering using at least part of this money for the replacement or repair of the Nanticoke-West Nanticoke bridge. (The County closed the bridge in March 2025 because of structural problems.)

Community officials in southern Wyoming Valley and officers of

Earth Conservancy believe that full replacement of the bridge is necessary to ensure adequate access to undeveloped land in Nanticoke and Newport Township adjacent to the Dan Flood Industrial Park and to allow significant economic development of the area.

In April 2024 Luzerne County received an additional \$10 million in federal funding for the bridge through the State's Transportation Improvement Program. In August 2025 the Luzerne County Council selected Modjeski and Masters Inc., one of the world's leading bridge engineering firms, as the engineer for the project.

In February 2026 the Luzerne County Council voted to approve a contract with Modjeski and Master Inc. to study the rehabilitation and replacement options for the bridge and deliver a report within 24 months at a cost of up to \$1 million.

*In May 2026 Luzerne County announced that a study of bridge options has begun. An aerial mapping survey of the bridge site has been completed. It will be followed by a ground survey to

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determine the geographic context of the bridge, a determination of the proper boundaries of properties that may be affected by construction, a determination of the historical value of the bridge, and an ecological study of the effect of the bridge project on wildlife in the area.

Establishing Newport Township Zoning

In July 2025 the Commissioners approved Ordinance #5 of 2025 establishing a Newport Township Planning Committee to determine the means by which the Township can do its own zoning. At this time, Luzerne County provides zoning services. The Commissioners also appointed Paul Czapracki (later replaced by David Saraka), Mike Roke, and John Zyla to the Planning Committee.

In the 2026 Township Budget adopted on December 1, 2025, the Commissioners set aside \$50,000 for legal fees to be used in establishing this zoning program.

The Newport Township [Zoning] Planning Committee held a meeting on January 29, 2026. The Committee members approved adoption of a Zoning Ordinance for Newport Township similar to that of Bear Creek Township because they concluded that that ordinance met the needs of Newport Township.

At their regular February 2026 meeting, the Commissioners appointed Jason Tarnowski, Scott Brennan, and David Stashik as members of the Newport Township Zoning Hearing Board and Robert Tarnowski as an alternate member.

* In April 2026 the Commissioners voted to approve Newport Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and its Zoning Ordinance. The new land development and zoning procedures went into effect the following day. The Commissioners also voted to approve a schedule of Zoning Fees and a schedule of Subdivision and Land Development fees.

* In May 2026 the Commissioners voted to approve a meeting schedule for the Newport Township Planning Committee for 2026. Meetings will be held at 4:30 pm at the Municipal Building on the following dates: January 29, February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17, and December 15; they also voted to approve a meeting schedule for the Newport Township Zoning Hearing Board. Meetings will be held at 6:00 pm at the Municipal Building on the following dates: June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, and December 14.

April 6, 2026: Meeting Business: Commissioner Ronald Jones reported that the Township has installed the sign naming the Walking Trail at the Wanamie Recreation Park in honor of former Commissioner John Vishnefski, who oversaw recreation parks in the Township for many years.

Financial Oversight Consultant Jennifer Polito reported that for the first three months of 2026 the Township had income of \$543,203.97 and expenses of \$530,827.39 and that finances are in line with the 2026 budget.

Township Manager Joe Hillan included the following items in his report:

1) The Nanticoke Little League is celebrating its 75th Anniversary this year. They are requesting permission to hold a fireworks display on April 17 at the west end of the Wanamie Recreation Park. The Commissioners voted to give them permission.

2) The Newport Township Civil Service Commission has sent a letter to the Board of Commissioners with the results of the Civil Service test administered to 6 applicants for the position of Full Time Police Officer.

New Business: The Commissioners voted to award a contract in the amount of \$226,960 to Columbia Excavating LLC of Berwick for constructing the planned Railroad Street Playground in Glen Lyon. This award must first be approved by the Township Solicitor and the Township Engineer.

The Commissioners appointed Thomas Nalbhone as Acting Chief of Police and William Dubiak as Acting Sergeant of the Newport Police Department.

The Commissioners voted, on the recommendation of the Newport Township Civil Service Commission, to offer Daniel Kelley a full time position with the Newport Township Police Department.

May 4, 2026: Residents' Comments: Palmira Miller mentioned that the YMCA has a program of providing daily meals for school age children during the summer. The meals will be distributed weekly at the Wanamie Recreation Park.

A Glen Lyon resident mentioned that the house next door to her has multiple structural problems, such as a disintegrating roof that spews debris over the neighborhood, front steps separated from the front porch, and television antennas that may be in danger of falling on neighborhood children. Township Solicitor Christopher Slusser replied that the

Township could cite the owner for building violations.

Meeting Business: The Commissioners honored three residents for service to the Community: Lorrie Materewicz for her managing of the Newport Township Community Organization's Senior Box Program at the Pollock Apartments from 2017 to 2026, which provides meals to residents in need, and Jarrid and Sharon Bonham for their many years of service to Little League, Jarrid as Vice President and Sharon as Softball Commissioner.

Commissioner John Zyla administered the oath of office to newly appointed Full Time Police Officer Daniel Kelley. Officer Kelley said he spent 8 years in the military and then worked for the Luzerne County Sheriff's Department. He said he wanted a better position and joined the Newport Police Department to better the community and set an example for his children.

Cody Forgach, representing Senator John Fetterman, said that the Senator has advanced a proposal for funding police cruisers and equipment as part of a Township appropriations project. If all goes well, next year Newport Township would receive about \$185,000 through this program.

Commissioner John Zyla said that the Newport Township Lions Club has refurbished the Coal Car at the Sheatown entrance to the Township in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the nation. He asked the Township to send a thank you letter to the Club.

Commissioner Ronald Jones reported that the Township has made a number of improvements to the Wanamie Recreation Park, including resurfacing the restroom floor, replacing charcoal grills, and preparing the athletic fields for summer use.

Township Manager Joe Hillan included the following items in his report:

1) The Township is working on an amendment to Ordinance #5 of 2022 on vehicle weight limitations.

2) As of April 30, 1,480 refuse stickers have been sold at a cost of \$385. The price increases to \$420 starting on May 1.

New Business: The Commissioners voted to approve Resolution #6 of 2026 approving the admission of the Wyoming Valley West School District and Luzerne Borough to the Lower South Valley Land Bank.

The Commissioners voted to approve Resolution #7 of 2026 approving Newport Township's participation in the Lower South Valley Council of Governments' (LSVCOG) multi-municipal comprehensive land development plan and zoning update project.

June 1, 2026: Residents' Comments: A Township resident reported a lack of police presence on Kirmar Parkway and at the Wanamie Recreation Park. Another resident said that he agreed to a request by the Township Street Department to have snow, removed from roadways, to be put on his property. He then found that the Department failed to remove gravel picked up off the streets along with the snow and deposited on his land. Another resident said that a vacant lot near her property is overgrown with high grass and weeds, including poison ivy and Japanese knotweed, which have spread to her yard and are regulated by state law. The Commissioners said she should speak with Commissioner David Saraka, who is in charge of Building Code Enforcement. Another resident reported that access to the Alden Cemetery is now blocked.

Township resident Palmira Miller reported that in 2025 the Newport Township Community Organization's monthly food distribution distributed 84,715 pounds of food worth \$20,822. She also mentioned that the YMCA has a program to distribute food to children during the summer starting on June 30, 2026. About a hundred children have been signed up. For further information, call the Newport Township Municipal Building at 570-735-4735.

Township Manager Joe Hillan included the following items in his report:

1) As of May 29, the Township has sold 1,625 refuse stickers. The Township has sent reminder letters to residents who have not yet paid the 2026 fee. If the fee is not paid by June 26, the Township will file a citation at the Magistrate's Office.

2) On May 14 Eileen Rosen from the Department of the State Auditor General's Office conducted an audit of the Township's 2024 and 2025 Liquid Fuels Funds and found that all was in order.

3) On May 21 State Representative Alec Ryncavage notified the

Township that it was awarded a \$20,000 LSA (gaming) grant for the Newport Township Community Organization's (NTCO) Monuments project. This project's purpose is to set up three monuments on the grounds of the Municipal Building. One will honor all Township residents who served their county in the military. A second will commemorate the founding of Newport Township in 1773. The third is a stone symbolizing the "strength, resilience, and fortitude" of Township residents of the past, present, and future.

4) Construction of the Railroad Street Playground in Glen Lyon is scheduled to begin on June 22.

New Business: The Commissioners approved Resolution #8 of 2026 by which the Township approves the leasing to Newport Township of two high capacity trailers, which are owned by the Newport Township Consolidated Fire Company, for a period of 10 years at a cost of \$1.00 per year. The leasing makes these trailers available for use by the Township.

The Commissioners approved Ordinance #1 of 2026 regulating truck weight limits on Township roadways.

The Commissioners approved an asset purchase agreement between the Newport Township Sewer Authority, Newport Township, and the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority (WVSA) by which the Township will sell the Sewer Authority to the WVSA. The sale has not at this time been completed, and the sale price has not been disclosed.

The Commissioners appointed Len Sanguedolce as Conflict Counsel for Newport Township.

NTCO President's Report

By Stephen Phillips ~ As always, the Newport Township Community Organization (NTCO) deeply appreciates the financial support from the readers of this publication as well as the moral support they have provided throughout our 22 years of existence. These are our most recent contributors: Carol Sobotka, Lauren Gorney, Richard and Mary Ann Trynoski, Eleanor Pish, Jimmy and Jean Schinski, David and Joellen Kule, Richard and Janice Piestrak, Andrea Selecky, Vincent and Diane Floryshak, Richard Barski, and Gene and Arlene Domzalski. We also thank our donors who wish to remain anonymous.

In relation to an article which appeared in the Fall edition of the *Newport Township Community News*, we are pleased to report that Newport Township's Board of Commissioners has received a \$20,000 Grant from the Commonwealth's Gaming Share Funding Program. The State approved this sum on May 20. A local governing body is required to apply to receive these monies. The local elected officials strongly supported NTCO's request and applied on the NTCO's behalf.

To reiterate the information in the prior edition, plans call for the placement of three different items directly related to the municipality. One will note the establishment of the Township in 1773, another will pay homage to the military service rendered by Township residents throughout its history, and the third plaque will be installed on a stone donated by Don E. Bower Inc. taken from its Cedar Rock Quarry in Salem Township, symbolizing our beloved Township's strength, resiliency, and fortitude. A final plaque will be erected noting that your NTCO honors Newport Township and its residents, past, present, and future. This entity sought contributions throughout the area to aid in underwriting the cost of this endeavor. Major donations were obtained from the Earth Conservancy, the George A. Strish, Inc. Funeral Home, and the Dinelli Family Funeral Home Inc. The largest funding came via the assistance of State Representative Alec Ryncavage who strongly advocated for receipt of the State's funding on behalf of the Township. He played a key role in the project's success. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Township Board of Commissioners for its willingness to serve as applicant on our behalf.

The NTCO would also be remiss if it did not acknowledge the close working relationship and assistance which has evolved with all involved parties. Included are the Township, donors, and Mr. Bill Malig from Frank Grontkowski Monuments Inc. We have enjoyed Mr. Malig's aid and advice during the planning phase. It is hoped that we will obtain the funding during our nation's 250th year celebration year in order that we can schedule a public dedication.

Of major import has been the Township Commissioners' unanimous decision to adopt a Zoning Ordinance and a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance for the Community. No longer will the

Municipality be under the jurisdiction of Luzerne County's ordinances. Newport Township has chosen to become the architect of its own destiny. With the land available for future development within the Township and decisions made locally during the next decade and beyond, Newport Township very well may become a location for growth and expansion of its existing tax base, which will have a positive effect on current taxpayers. However a challenge lies within this opportunity. Let us hope that all requisite decisions are made wisely and well. It is imperative that we all work together to take advantage of the opportunities inherent in our Community.

We can disagree, but let us not become disagreeable.

Our opinions on numerous issues can be offered, but please do not make them in an argumentative manner. Please strive to look at both sides of an issue, and hopefully both sides can then come to a consensus. Mutual respect between local officials and the electorate can be a key element in helping to resolve any differences of opinion and assist in reaching a satisfactory compromise. This approach may serve as a major factor in aiding the Township in attaining its potential goals.

With the advent of the summer season, we continue to advocate that our readers and local residents join us in our effort to reduce the amount of littering that still continues throughout the Community. Littering has a negative impact on our efforts to attract new residents and businesses to our locale.

We continue to urge our residents to become members in any of our numerous volunteer organizations. Volunteerism is on the wane. Help us change this pattern.

We should all be proud of the Township's Recreation Park in Wanamie. Please take advantage of this facility and treat it with respect.

Please become a positive force for our Community. Cooperation is a key to success.



Mark your calendars! The annual National Night Out event sponsored by the **Newport Township Crime Watch** will take place on Tuesday August 4 at St. Faustina's Grove in Sheatown from 4 pm to 8 pm. This event promotes partnerships between the Newport Township Police Department and the community it serves. Children's games, face painting, basket raffle, food trucks, and displays by various groups will be available. Members of the Fire Department and Police Department will be on hand. Please join us for an evening of fun!



The 48th annual Golf Tournament sponsored by the **Newport Township Lions Club** will be held on Friday August 21 at the Wilkes-Barre Municipal Golf Course. Team sign-in is at 8:30 am with a shot-gun start at 9. Players and sponsors are encouraged to participate. Please call John Zyla at 570-735-1714 for more information. Proceeds fund community projects.

The All-Newport Reunion

The All-Newport Reunion will be held on Sunday October 11, 2026 at Holy Transfiguration Church in the Hanover Section of Nanticoke. This is an all-inclusive reunion open to anyone who attended the schools in the former Newport Township School District. Registration forms will be mailed in early July. The forms can be copied and shared with classmates who may not be on the mailing list. The cost is \$35.00 per person.

Please contact Heidi and Paul Jarecki, Class of 1967 at 570-733-2540 or hselecky@pa.metrocast.net with any questions.

John Jarecki, Class of 1964 maintains the mailing list and he can be reached at 570-736-6620 or jjarecki@pa.metrocast.net.

Hope to see you all there!



Pictured above is the Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by the **Newport Township Women's Activity Group** at the Wanamie Recreation Park on March 28. The day was cold and blustery, but the children didn't seem to mind!

At left is the **Newport Township Lion's Club** Coal Car Display in Sheatown, decorated to commemorate our nation's 250th birthday.



Pictured left is John Vishnefski on the Walking Trail in the Wanamie Recreation Park that bears his name. Pictured above is Newport Township's newest police officer Daniel Kelley being sworn in by Police Commissioner John Zyla. Shown below with all police officers are: standing, Solicitor Christopher Slusser, Police Officers Andrew Hashagan, Thomas Nalbhone, Daniel Kelley, William Dubiak, Earl Johnson, Joseph San Marco and Township Manager Joe Hillan. Seated are Commissioners John Zyla, Paul Czapracki, Ron Jones, and David Saraka.



Pictured left are Jarrid and Shannon Bonham with Township Manager Joe Hillan. At the April 4 Commissioners' meeting, they were recognized for their dedication to the Nanticoke Area Little League. Jarrid serves as Vice-President, and Shannon serves as the Softball Commissioner. At right is Lorrie Materiewicz of Glen Lyon with Joe Hillan. Lorrie was recognized for her many years of service to the community and as Director of the NTCO Senior Box Program at Ken Pollack Apartments in conjunction with the Weinberg Food Bank and the Commission on Economic Opportunity. Congratulations to all!





Paul Selecky At Age 5



As a Young Lawyer



As a Member of the Glen Lyon American Legion

A Son of Glen Lyon: The Honorable Paul R. Selecky Newport Township's First Judge, 1910–1960

By John and Christobel Selecky, with Juliana, Heidi, and Peter

"Be proud of Newport and make Newport proud of you."

Roots in the New World

Paul Rupert Selecky was born on June 14, 1910 in Glen Lyon, the youngest of eight children raised by Slovak immigrant parents. His father, Andrew Selecky, and mother, Julianna Fabry, were both born in Slovakia in the 1860s — then under Hungarian rule — and fled that oppression in the 1880s, making their way to Newport Township, where coal had recently been discovered. The area's existing farming community lacked mining expertise, and so the coal companies actively recruited skilled workers from among the waves of Slovak, Polish, and other European immigrants arriving in search of a better life.

Andrew, then 18, met the 16-year-old Julianna upon arrival, and the two married and settled on Market Street in Glen Lyon, where they built a home and raised their family steeped in Slovak tradition. They had eight children — John, Andrew, Juliana, Joseph, Catherine, Alois, Emma, and Paul. Paul, the baby of the family, would spend his entire life in the community his parents had chosen from across an ocean.

A Scholar from the Start

Paul's intellect was apparent from an early age. He skipped a grade in the Newport Township school system and graduated high school in 1926, first in his class two days after he turned 16 years old. He was awarded the American Legion Social Science Medal, in recognition of having the highest average in the class for the four years in all the subjects of social science, including Civics, European History, Modern Progress and American Problems. Too young to enroll directly in college, he attended Wyoming Seminary for a year — again, finishing first. He then made his way to Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his bachelor's degree graduating first in his class and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's most prestigious academic honor society.

To help pay for his college expenses, Paul worked in the coal mines — the same mines that had drawn his father to Newport Township a generation earlier. It was demanding and dangerous work, and one day that danger became terrifyingly real. An explosion triggered a rockslide bearing down on him. With no time to run, Paul grabbed two wooden planks, held them over his head, and crawled beneath them as the rocks crashed around him. He survived unharmed. His father Andrew, a foreman in the mines, was so shaken by the episode that he forbade Paul from ever working in the mines again.

He went on to the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where the pattern of excellence continued: he finished first in his class all three years and, upon graduation in 1934, was inducted into the Order of the Coif — the distinguished national legal honor society reserved for those who graduate in the top ten percent of their class. He returned home to Glen Lyon, passed the Bar, and began his legal career.

A Musical Prodigy

Along with his academic gifts, Paul possessed a remarkable musical talent. He played the violin, piano, and accordion with expert skill, performing at family gatherings and school events throughout his youth. On the violin he distinguished himself enough to win a formal award. In high school, he put that piano mastery to work in a distinctly cinematic way — providing live accompaniment for silent films at the local movie theater, as was common practice in that era.

College brought one of the more charming episodes of his early life. Paul wanted to attend University of Pennsylvania football games but couldn't afford the ticket price. His solution was typically resourceful: he tried out for the marching band. When the bandmaster asked what he played, Paul listed violin, piano, and accordion. The bandmaster smiled — none of those instruments had a place in a marching band — but he recognized Paul's genuine talent and offered him a spot playing the hand cymbals. Paul accepted without hesitation. The cymbals got him into the games, and for a time, the future Judge and State Commander of the American Legion could be found marching across a football field, crashing brass together with characteristic enthusiasm.

Family and Belonging

Pennsylvania law at the time required that a student of law find a Preceptor — an experienced attorney who would provide practical, hands-on training and supervision. Paul found his in Peter Jurchak, a lawyer in Wilkes-Barre, also of Slovak heritage who took him under his wing. Peter's younger sister Helen worked as his secretary, and in the course of Paul's time at the office, a courtship blossomed. Paul Selecky and Helen Jurchak — herself the daughter of Slovak immigrants — were married on October 24, 1936 and settled in Glen Lyon.

Together they raised seven children at their home at 28 West Main Street — a house that has remained in the family for over 85 years. Their first three children, Juliana, Paul, and John, were born before the war years; four more — Mary, Tom, Heidi, and Peter — followed afterward. Peter, their youngest, was born on November 2, 1957, just two months before his father was sworn in as Judge of Luzerne County Orphans Court and Juvenile Court.



Paul Selecky was sworn in as President Judge of the Orphans Court at the Luzerne County Courthouse on Monday January 8, 1958.

Service in Wartime

Paul Selecky served his country in the United States Navy during World War II. Like his father and brothers before him, he became active in the American Legion upon returning home. His leadership abilities quickly set him apart: he rose to become District (County) Commander and was elected State Commander of the American Legion in July 1953 — one of the most distinguished honors available to a veteran in Pennsylvania.

Servant of the Community

Those who knew Paul Selecky described him as a “human dynamo,” and his

civic record bears that out. In over twenty years of law practice, he filled an extraordinary range of roles: Solicitor for the Newport Township School Board, director of the County Legal Aid Society, counsel for several Slovak societies, and deputy attorney general for the State Liquor Control Board. He served as director of numerous charitable organizations, including the United Way, the American Heart Association, and the American Red Cross — where he chaired the blood program for the Nanticoke-Newport Chapter, organizing Bloodmobile visits and actively urging residents to donate.

As Solicitor to the Newport Township School Board, he used his position to benefit the community in ways that went well beyond routine legal duties. Concerned that the area’s large Polish-American population had little formal connection to their heritage, he championed the addition of Polish language and culture to the high school curriculum. He secured county and state approval, identified and helped accredit an already-employed Polish-speaking teacher, and saw the course through to its triumphant introduction — a milestone the community celebrated with pride.

He was equally alarmed by the rising death toll of young drivers on the roads. He helped establish one of the region’s earliest driver education programs for 16-year-old high school students and went further by negotiating with insurance companies to offer premium discounts to those who passed — an incentive that drove enrollment and spread the model to schools throughout the area.

Through the American Legion, he created an After Prom Party for high school students — a supervised, celebratory alternative that kept young people off dangerous roads on prom night. He also launched a Friday night Teen House, where young people from across the Township gathered to dance to a Wurlitzer jukebox spinning the sounds of Elvis, Fats Domino, Little Richard, and Jerry Lee Lewis. He was a visible presence at Newport Township Little League games — formed through the Lions Club in 1951 — passing the donation bucket to keep the league running. He was deeply involved in St. Adalbert’s Church and worked alongside parishioners at every summer picnic.

When he called on his own children to help set up, clean up, or decorate for community events, and they asked, “why us?” his answer was always the same: “If not you, then who?”

The Judge

By 1957, Paul Selecky’s reputation had grown well beyond Glen Lyon. He was asked to run for Judge of Orphans’ Court — a family court handling estates, adoptions, and the affairs of minors — as well as Juvenile Court in Luzerne County. His opponents dismissed him as a “green apple” at only age 47. His campaign answered simply and effectively: “A family man for a family court.” He won, and his portrait remains on display at the Luzerne County Courthouse to this day.

On the bench, Paul proved as innovative as he had been in civic life. He revolutionized the practice of law in the Orphans’ Court, establishing “Court Rules” that remained in use long after his death.

In Juvenile Court, he broke with tradition by presiding without his jurist’s black robe — reasoning that a young person’s courtroom experience was traumatic enough without adding the weight of formal ceremony. Many of his decisions there were guided less by strict legal interpretation than by personal warmth and genuine empathy for the young people before him. He was also called upon repeatedly to sit in Philadelphia when the courts there faced backlogs — a testament to his standing in the broader legal community.

A Life Cut Short, A Legacy Enduring

Paul R. Selecky was on the threshold of what promised to be a brilliant career on the bench when, in the early morning hours of June 3, 1960, he suffered a fatal heart attack — just days before his fiftieth birthday. The entire population of northeastern Pennsylvania was stunned. Hundreds came to mourn him. He was buried from his home in Glen Lyon, his funeral procession escorted by representatives of the many organizations and communities he had so faithfully served. He is laid to rest in Glen Lyon’s St. John the Baptist Slovak Cemetery, not far from the street where his parents had built their first American home.

Even in death, his generosity endured. Paul donated his eyes to the Lions Eye Bank program, so that a blind person might see — a final act of giving from a man who had spent his life in service to others. He left behind Helen and their seven children — whose ages at the time of his death ranged from two to twenty-two — as well as a community forever shaped by his energy, his vision, and his belief that every person had a responsibility to the place they called home. In Paul Selecky, the immigrant story found one of its finest expressions: a boy born to parents who had crossed an ocean seeking dignity and opportunity, who grew up to give both back to the community that had sheltered his family.

Primary Election 2026 Results

By Tom Kashatus ~ On May 19th, about 27% of Newport Township registered voters traveled to Wanamie, Ward #1 (Glen Lyon and Lee) at the Municipal Building or Ward #2 (Wanamie, Alden, Sheatown and Ridgeview)) at the Municipal Garage, to vote for their favorite candidates for the General Election in November. Contested offices were Pennsylvania Governor and Lt. Governor; Congressmen of the 8th and 9th Congressional Districts; Senator of the Pennsylvania 20th Senatorial District; Representative of the 119th District in the Pennsylvania General Assembly; members of the Democrat State Committee (three men and three women) and Republicans State Committee (four men and four women); and members of the Luzerne County Democrat Committee. Note: There was a time when most everyone could walk to their voting precinct.

Newport Township voters followed county and state trends to select the following for the “end game” in November: Stacy Garrity (R) will oppose incumbent Josh Shapiro (D) for Governor; Jason Richey (R) will oppose incumbent Austin Davis (D) for Lt. Governor; Paige Cognetti (D) will oppose incumbent Rob Bresnahan (R) for Congress in the 8th District; Rachel Wallace (D) will oppose incumbent Dan Meuser (R) for Congress in the 9th District; Jackie Baker (D) will oppose incumbent Lisa Baker (R) for Senator in the PA 20th Senatorial District; Lauren McCurdy (D) will oppose incumbent Alec Ryncavage (R) in the 119th District of the PA General Assembly. Successful candidates for the Republican State Committee were: Chris Huntzinger, Harry Haas, Stephen Urban, Bill Lewis, Margaret Phillips, Jenny Centrella, T. Lynette Villano, and Sandra Debias. Successful candidates for the Democrat State Committee were: Peter Butera, John Chermesky, Thomas Shubilla, Megan Kocher, Kristy Kruk, and Shannon Goshek.

Regarding the Democrat County Committee, there are 372 positions (one male and one female from each of the 186 precincts throughout Luzerne County) – 294 positions remain open on the ballot. At one time these positions were the grass roots of the political power structure in a municipality. These individuals were the “work horses” to get out the vote in years gone by. When Newport Township had nine voting precincts, there were 18 committeemen and women working year round to grow a political party. Today, with two precincts there are only four. And keep in mind that the Republican Party in Newport Township had their own grass roots power structure developed.

In Luzerne County, there are 91,204 registered Republicans, 84,117 registered Democrats, and 30,920 unaffiliated voters who are not allowed to vote in partisan contests – total 206,241. More information will follow in the Fall Newsletter.



On June 8, 2026, the newly created Newport Township Zoning Hearing Board held an organizational meeting, and Magistrate Donald Whittaker administered the oath of office to the members of the Board. Pictured above L to R: Meyer Messinger, Solicitor for Township Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development; Board Members Jason Tarnowski, Scott Brennan, and David Stashik; and Township Manager Joe Hillan.

Newport Township Now Regulates Its Own Land Development and Zoning

By John Jarecki ~ At a special meeting on April 21, 2026, the Board of Commissioners approved the Newport Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and the Newport Township Zoning Ordinance (ZO). These enable the Township to regulate its own land development and zoning as of April 22, 2026. Previously these functions were performed by Luzerne County.

Summary of the Ordinances

The SALDO ordinance regulates the division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels for purposes such as residential or commercial lot development; it also regulates the improvement of two or more contiguous parcels with multiple buildings or a single nonresidential building. The Ordinance specifies that a potential developer submit an application for subdivision or land development to the newly created Newport Township Planning Committee, which will then review the application and make a recommendation to the Newport Township Board of Commissioners to either approve or reject the application. The purpose of the SALDO ordinance is to provide adequate sites for land development and use, to maintain reasonable and accessible design standards, and to coordinate public improvements with private development and use.

The ZO ordinance is the means by which a municipality regulates the use of land and structures and the extent and character of development. This ordinance divides the municipality into districts with different types of use permitted in different districts either by right or by exemption. These districts are the following: Conservation, One-Family Residential, Two-Family Residential, Apartment Residential, General Business, Mixed Use, Industrial, and Non-Developable Special. The Ordinance specifies that a Zoning Officer receive and approve or reject applications for zoning permits and enforce the Ordinance in accordance with its literal terms. Zoning permits are required before construction or alteration of buildings or other structures. The Zoning Officer also issues Certificates of Zoning Compliance and initiates enforcement proceedings by sending a Notice of Violation to a property owner. The Ordinance also specifies that a Zoning Hearing Board has the power to decide appeals in which it is alleged that an error in enforcement has been made and to approve or reject applications for exceptions and variances to the provisions of the Ordinance.

Actions Taken by the Commissioners to Establish New Development and Zoning Regulations

At their July 7, 2025 meeting the Commissioners approved Ordinance #5 of 2025 establishing the Newport Township Planning Committee. They also appointed Commissioners Paul Czaprack, John Zyla, and Mike Roke to the Planning Committee.

At its meeting on January 29, 2026, the Planning Committee voted to recommend to the Commissioners a Zoning Ordinance similar to that of Bear Creek Township, because it seemed to meet Newport Township's needs. The Committee also recommended a meeting schedule for the

Planning Committee.

At their February 2, 2026 meeting, the Commissioners voted to replace Commissioner Paul Czapracki on the Planning Committee with Commissioner David Saraka because of Mr. Saraka's experience as the Zoning Officer of Edwardsville. They also voted to appoint Jason Tarnowski, Scott Brennan, and David Stashik as members of the Zoning Hearing Board and Robert Tarnowski as an alternate member of the Board.

At their April 6, 2026 meeting, the Commissioners voted to approve a schedule of land planning fees and a schedule of zoning fees.

On April 9, 2026, the Commissioners held a public hearing to get comments from residents on their proposed Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and their Zoning Ordinance (ZO). Two representatives of Hailstone Econometric LLC, a Scranton company that provides economic and developmental assistance to municipalities, described the two ordinances. Residents asked questions about the Ordinances but had no comments.

As mentioned above, the Commissioners approved the SALDO and ZO ordinances on April 21, 2026 and they went into effect the next day.

At their meeting of May 4, 2026 the Commissioners approved meeting schedules for the Newport Township Planning Committee and the Newport Township Zoning Hearing Board.

Summary of Land Development and Zoning Fees

Schedule of Fees for Subdivision and Land Development:

1. Major Subdivision: \$200 + \$20 per lot plus engineering and consulting fees. (Engineering and Consulting fees are costs incurred by the Township in reviewing plans and applications and in inspecting the work site. For major work, the builder must place \$1000 in escrow to cover at least some of these costs.)
2. Minor Subdivision: \$150 + \$10 per lot plus engineering and consulting fees.
3. Major Land Development: \$500 + \$20 per building plus engineering and consulting fees.
4. Minor Land Development: \$150 plus engineering and consulting fees.

Schedule of Fees for Zoning

1. Residential Zoning Permits (New construction, additions, accessory buildings): \$100.
2. Nonresidential Zoning Permits (New construction and use of property without structures): \$1250; (Use of existing structures, additions, accessory buildings): \$625.
3. Sign Zoning Permits: \$100.
4. Certificate of Nonconformity (Residential): \$125; (Nonresidential) : \$250 (A Certificate of Nonconformity is an official document issued by a local municipality certifying that a property, building, or land use legally existed before a new zoning ordinance was passed. It allows property owners to continue using their property in ways that are currently prohibited by new zoning codes.)
5. Application for a hearing before the Zoning Hearing Board (Residential): \$300 plus hearing costs; (Nonresidential): \$600 plus hearing costs. (Hearing costs are those incurred by the Township for advertising the hearing, administrative costs, and one half of the stenographer's fee.)
6. Amendments (Request to change the text of an ordinance or a zoning map): \$2000.

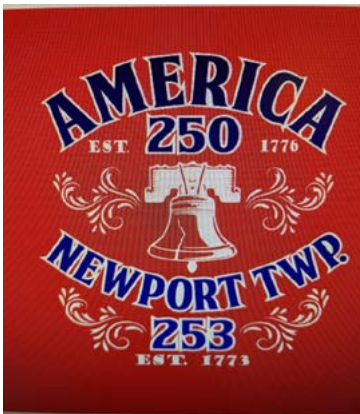
Please note that this article contains a summary of the SALDO and ZO Ordinances. You can read the full Ordinances by going to "www.newporttownship.org" and clicking on "Newport Twp. Govt." and then "Various Ordinances."

New Military Banners

Five additional military banners have been installed throughout the Township honoring Township veterans as well as those currently serving. They are as follows: Edward Padagomas Sr., Leonard A. Klotz, Joseph J. Bielecki, Robert Duliba, and Frank Domzalski. This project is sponsored by **Newport United**. Please call the Township Municipal Building at 570-735-4735 for more information.



On Memorial Day May 25, members of the American Legion Post 539, the VFW Post 8353, the Sons of the American Legion Unit 539, and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 539 conducted services at all Glen Lyon cemeteries. Pictured at top row are the ceremony participants at St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery who received a blessing from Rev. Vasyi Putera, Pastor. All participants returned to the Legion where they were served lunch by Auxiliary members. At left in the second row are members of the Legion Auxiliary and friends, standing L to R: Eileen Case, Heidi Jarecki, Mary Gleco, Tiffany Graham, Aubrey Griffin Linker, Sabrina Wildoner, Cory Linker, and Sherry Finogle. Kneeling are Faith Kropiewnicki, a future member, and Danielle Wolfe. Above right in the second row are officers of the VFW being sworn in by Tim Derr.



To celebrate our nation's 250 birthday, **Legion Auxiliary Unit 539** is offering these T-shirts with a local touch. The shirts are red with blue lettering and white decorative features. They can be purchased for \$15.00, sizes larger than 2x are \$18.00. Contact Heidi Jarecki at 570-733-2540 or hselecky@pa.metrocast.net. A limited number of garden flags also available for \$10.00. Shirts and flags printed by Newport Decal.

Pictured above: As worn and old flags were ceremonially burned, John Wildes and Patrick McMullen prepare to raise a new flag on Flag Day June 14 at the Glen Lyon American Legion on Newport Street. Photo by Tom Kashatus.

St. Adalbert's Pictorial History

The former St. Adalbert's Roman Catholic Church was officially closed on January 11, 2026 with a Mass officiated by the Bishop of Scranton, Joseph Bambera. The Church had a history spanning 137 years and served thousands of parishioners. An 80-page book celebrating its legacy is now available. The project is sponsored by the Altar and Rosary Society of the former Holy Spirit Parish with the support of St. Faustina Parish and Pastor Rev. Brian Van Fossen. The price is \$40.00 and is set at cost. Delivery will be made to Newport Township and Nanticoke only. All other orders will be mailed by the U.S. Postal Service. Please add \$10.00 for the first copy and \$2.00 for each additional copy. Make checks out to "The Altar and Rosary Society" and mail to Heidi Jarecki, 28 West Main St., Glen Lyon, PA 18617. This is a limited print run.

Thank you!

Return of the Ramblers

By John Kashatus

Foreword

When the Boston Braves moved to Milwaukee in 1953, it was the first Major League franchise change in fifty years. During the 1960's, semi-pro baseball franchises in the Wyoming Valley were changing yearly. There were three local semi-pro baseball leagues, the Central, the Suburban, and the Wyoming League. The latter, once considered the best semi-pro league, disbanded in 1965 with some franchises joining the remaining Central or Suburban League. In 1968, Sheatown and Glen Lyon withdrew their franchises from the Central League, which increased to ten teams as members of the Suburban League came on board. Local sand-lotters filled the rosters, but some were leaving the Valley for better job opportunities. They returned to play baseball on the weekends.

The Quest

In 1969, following an inactive season and a prior sub-par season, the Sheatown Ramblers reorganized and re-entered in the expanded Central League. The roster included former Ramblers, veteran players from Glen Lyon and Mountain Top and a couple of free agents. Donald Bozinski, assisted by Jack Ward, returned to manage the team. With added support from chief sponsor Edward Michno, President Leonard Blihar and scorekeeper John Blihar, the Ramblers were well prepared for reentry into the league. West Side Park, which was in excellent condition, became their home field. On opening day in May, when Syl Bozinski, President of the West Side Club, threw out the first pitch, the Ramblers were off and running.

The Ramblers won their first three games, verifying their credibility to the other teams: White Haven ('68 Champs), Shantytown, ('68 Pennant Winner), Hilldale,¹ Ashley, Heights, Hazleton,² Hunlock Creek, Georgetown, Ashley and Swoyersville. The League was competitive with five teams tied in first place after a month. Hilldale went on a winning streak to gain the top spot, but Sheatown remained close behind. Right hander Ray Niemiec, who pitched for Glen Lyon's championship team in 1966 and lefty Ted Sokolowski, who pitched the Nanticoke Area Trojans to the District 2 Championship in 1968 alternated mound assignments. Don Engle, another lefty with loads of experience, played first base and pitched on occasion.

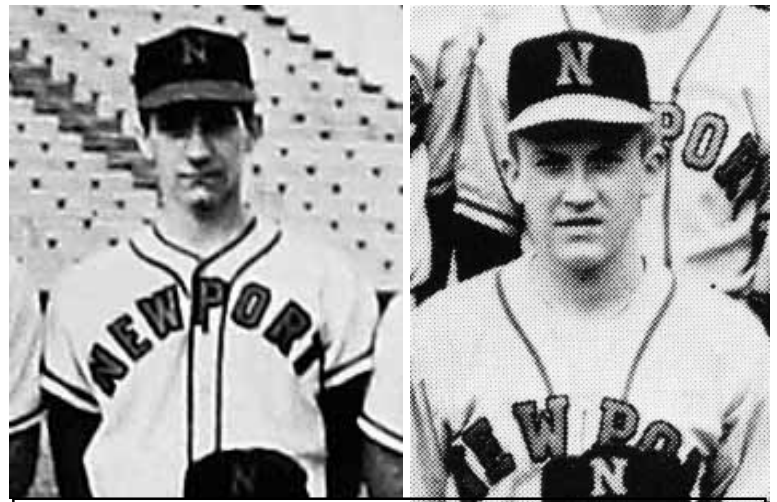
As the season progressed, the Ramblers were one game behind and had to make up two rain outs. Niemiec, injured in a car accident at mid-season, returned in August and won three games. This included sharing the mound duties with Sokolowski in a 31-4 slugfest win over the Heights at West Side Park. Demonstrating an offensive onslaught, the Ramblers ripped 31 hits. The "hit parade" leaders were Dave Kaschak (6), Mike Williams (6), Charlie Fick (5), Irv Post (5), and George Gegaris (4). Throughout the 18-game season, the baseball club had many talented players who contributed week after week, namely: Matt Himlin, Bob Corba, Rick Nessler, Joe Skirchak, Bernie Dalmas, John Rogers and Frank Calaguire. The Ramblers continued their winning ways, defeating Shantytown in a rained out make up game and became the front runner when Ashley upset Hilldale. Sheatown finished the regular season with a 15-3 record, winning the Pennant and the top seed in the playoffs. The Ramblers won the best of three series with Hilldale, taking the first game 3-1 on a 4 hitter by Ted Sokolowski. They clinched the championship the following week with an 11inning, 7-6 squeaker. Niemiec was the winning pitcher in relief. A bottle of uncorked champagne was passed around by the winners during the post-game celebration. Not only did the Sheatown baseball team return, but the Ramblers emerged to be the best in the top league of the Wyoming Valley.

Repeating Becomes a Possibility

There was one notable change in the Central League in 1970, Hunlock Creek withdrew, leaving the league with nine teams. The national pastime was at a high popularity level, while the local sandlot fan base had been waning, but not the talent. A few high school prospects attracted professional scouts, Randy Gumpert (Yankees), Paul Bordi (Pirates) and Elmer Valo (Phillies), who made frequent visits to the Wyoming Valley. Although these scouts did not find a "Roy

1. Hilldale's roster included a future Major Leaguer, Ed Ott from Muncy, PA.

*2 Hazleton's roster included a future Major League manager, Joe Maddon.



At left is Ted Sokolowski as a member of the 1968 Nanticoke Area High School baseball team and at right is Ray Niemiec as a member of the 1964 Newport High School baseball team. Newport and Nanticoke High Schools combined their sports teams for the 1967-1968 season.



Ted Sokolowski delivering a pitch

Hobbs," knowing they were around gave a glimmer of hope to baseball dreamers.

Manager Don Bozinski gathered his ballplayers for another run at the Central League crown. Although there were a few roster changes, the nucleus stayed. Key additions were Jerry Uram, who played third base, and Joe Skvarla, who shared the catching duties. Making brief appearances were Al Cihocki, Tom and Steve Bilko, sons of two former Major Leaguers. Zehnder Low pitched a couple of games during mid-season. The Ramblers started the season continuing a fifteen-game winning streak dating back to the 1969 season. Mid-season losses and Hilldale's 15-1 record kept reality in perspective – the pennant was no longer possible, but the championship was! Sheatown completed the regular season with a 10-6 record, one game behind second place White Haven.

The Ramblers lost the first playoff game at Hilldale 6-3 but bounced back as Ted Sokolowski was “masterful” in tossing a 4-hit (5-0) shutout to even the series before a large crowd at West Side Park. The offense was provided by the hitting of Skvarla, Post and Gegaris. The series final was decided at Hilldale, which had to forfeit due to using ineligible players. White Haven eliminated Swoyersville in the semi-finals and became the last “hill to climb.” The stage was set for the championship finals.

The first game of the series was slated at White Haven, but Sheatown had to forfeit, having only eight players. The second game at West Side Park was rained out after seven innings, with White Haven winning 2-0. Ray Niemiec, who gave up 3 hits, was out-dued by Josh Grobelny, who scattered 5 hits to lead White Haven to its second championship in three years.

Postscript

The semi-pro players of the ‘40’s and ‘50’s were usually residents of the community’s team along with a few “out-of-town guys.” The rosters might also include a talented high school or college player. During the ‘60’s and ‘70’s, the team rosters included a lot more of the younger players and a few “old guys.” Family obligations and job responsibilities, plus the long-distance travel by those commuting semi-pro players reduced the “player pool” as the weekend convoy to Northeastern Pennsylvania ended. Television, beach, and summer vacations lowered interest in the local Sunday baseball leagues. The Central League continued for more years, as did the Tri-County and the Beaumont League. Under new manager Hank Rominski, the Nanticoke Ramblers³ reappeared with a franchise in the Tri-County League in the 1980’s. The team became the Honey Pot⁴ Ramblers in 1987. They won three pennants and five consecutive championships from 1987 through 1991.

In June of 1991, at a semi-pro game in Mifflinville, the Ramblers lost 2-1 to Montoursville’s Mike Mussina, prior to his signing a contract with the Baltimore Orioles. There were over a dozen scouts to see the future Hall of Famer. The Rambler’s pitcher, Scott Francis, signed a professional contract with the Braves a few weeks later. Kevin Ward, present day Trojan Baseball Coach, had two hits for the Ramblers.

3. During the era, the Ramblers used Major League Field and Ted Hiller Field in Honey Pot as their home venue.

4. A memorable side story.

Sources: George Gegaris, Ted Sokolowski, Irv Post, Dave Kaschak, John Koslowski, Doc Gorski, Kevin Ward, Scott Francis, Internet, Times Leader, and the Librarian.

West Side Park

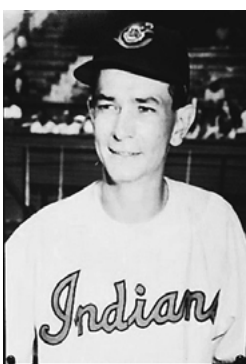
Although the baseball field is in Nanticoke, Newport Township baseball teams shared in its past glory. It was the home field of West Side A.C. (Athletic Club) Central League Champions in 1965. West Side Park was the venue in 1966 when Glen Lyon defeated Ashley for the Central League title. In 1967, the Ashley All-Stars, on their road to Wichita, played Ewing, New Jersey, and Mansfield, Ohio, with a few thousand fans in attendance. West Side Park became the home field for the Nanticoke Area Trojans when the new jointure fielded its first team in 1968 and for the following two years. In those three years, Trojan baseball teams won three consecutive Division Titles, two Wyoming Valley League Championships, and the District 2 Title in 1968. The members of the West Side Club kept the field at the highest level during that era and many years afterward. The Sheatown Ramblers left Kelly Field and moved to West Side Park in 1969 when the franchise returned to the Central League after a one-year absence. A clay/dirt infield surface provided flexibility for usage; teener’s league, softball, and Little League players were able to practice or play games at the facility.

Editors’ Note: For an article by Tom Kashatus on the beginnings of the Sheatown Ramblers in 1950, please see *The Newport Township Community News*, Summer 2011, # 26, p. 9.

Greater Nanticoke Area Wall of Fame Class of 2025

On May 16, 2026, a ceremony took place to honor the Greater Nanticoke Area Wall of Fame Class of 2025. The selections were made by the GNA School District Athletic Recognition Committee, which was established in 2017. The purpose of this committee is to acknowledge and recognize the outstanding student-athletes of the past, present, and future from what is now the Greater Nanticoke Area School District. These athletic standouts represent the proud

traditions of Harter High School, Newport Township High School, and Nanticoke High School, whose legacies now live on through Greater Nanticoke Area. This year, seventeen outstanding individuals have met the criteria and earned selection as Wall of Fame inductees. In upcoming NTCO Newsletters, we will feature each of the four inductees from Newport Township. The first is Stanley Pawloski. Text taken from the Induction Ceremony.



Stanley Pawloski, a 1949 graduate of Newport Township High School, is remembered as one of the finest multi-sport athletes to emerge from the Wyoming Valley. A standout in football, basketball, and baseball, Pawloski built a reputation for toughness, skill, and determination, qualities shaped by his upbringing in the anthracite coal region of northeastern Pennsylvania.

On the football field, Pawloski was a stellar halfback during his junior and senior years, earning recognition at both the local and state levels. On the basketball court, he was a high-scoring forward who led Newport Township to back-to-back Class A championships while earning

First Team All-Scholastic honors in the highly competitive Wyoming Valley Conference.

While he excelled in multiple sports, baseball was Pawloski’s true passion. A gifted infielder, he developed into the top fielding and hitting player in the Wyoming Valley Conference by his senior year and was widely regarded as a “can’t-miss” prospect. His talent was further sharpened in the rugged anthracite summer leagues, where he competed against seasoned adult players and consistently stood out.

On June 9, 1949, the night of his high school graduation Pawloski signed a professional contract with the Cleveland organization for \$4,500. Just 24 hours later, he made his professional debut with the Stroudsburg Poconos of the Class D North Atlantic League, launching a career that would span seven seasons in the minor leagues. Along the way, he earned multiple All-Star selections and gained recognition as one of the organization’s top prospects. Pawloski’s perseverance and dedication were rewarded in 1955 when he reached the Major Leagues with the Cleveland Indians. Appearing in two games, he recorded his first and only major league hit and played flawless defense, fulfilling a lifelong dream and becoming one of the last players from the coal region to reach baseball’s highest level. Following his playing career, Pawloski built a successful life off the field, dedicating himself to his family and career while remaining a proud representative of his hometown roots. His journey from the coal fields of Newport Township to the Major Leagues stands as a testament to hard work, resilience, and the enduring impact of athletics on opportunity and achievement.

Editors’ note: For an article by John Kashatus on Stanley Pawloski, please see *The Newport Township Community News*, Spring 2017, #48, p. 18-19.

Well Folks... Spring Is Here!!

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Nature’s fertilizer for gardens that make the neighbors jealous.



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Obituaries

By Tom Kashatus ~ These obituaries are in reference to individuals who have ties to Newport Township and/or Newport Township High School. They are published in abbreviated form due to limited space; thusly, a more complete obituary can be found on our website, www.newporttownship.com. There is also a link leading to the original newspaper obituary or that of the funeral home. Your comments are always welcome and if someone is missed, please notify this writer at tomkashatus@gmail.com or call 570-736-6981.

CHERNESKI, Louis John, 87, of Mountain Top, passed away on March 1, 2026. Louis was born in Dorrance on December 23, 1938; he was the son of the late John and Sylvia (nee Marciocchi) Cherneski. He was raised in Dorrance, attended elementary and middle school there, and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1957. Louis was a farmer and hard worker; he was Plant Manager for Miles Homes of Mountain Top from start-up to closing. He is survived by his wife, Linda (nee Searfoss) Cherneski.

KUBASEK, Barbara J. (nee Hmelak), 79, of Mocanaqua, passed away March 16, 2026. Barbara was born in Mocanaqua on October 31, 1946; she was the daughter of the late John and Stella (nee Czyzewski) Hmelak. She was raised in Mocanaqua, attended schools in Mocanaqua and Shickshinny, and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1965. She was employed by Country Cousins Shoe Factory and later retired from the Red Robin Restaurant in Wilkes-Barre. She was a lifelong member of the Mocanaqua Polish Falcons Nest #163. Barbara is survived by her husband of 47 years, Thomas S. Kubasek.

PAWLOWSKI, Marlene Marie, 87, of Lake Nuangola, formerly of Newport Township, passed away March 16, 2026. Marlene was born in Glen Lyon on July 8, 1938; she was the daughter of the late Theodore and Marcella (Lipsky) Pawlowski. She was raised in Glen Lyon and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1956. She attended Mount Holyoke College and received an MA Degree in City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania. Marlene operated her own business as a City Planning Consultant in Wilkes-Barre and became a strong advocate for women's rights and a role model for female entrepreneurs. She was a dedicated volunteer for the SPCA and the Northeastern Philharmonic. She is survived by her siblings, twin sister Eileen Birk, Janet Wedge, and Ron Pawlowski.

LEVANDOSKI, Emily Marie (nee Smetana), 95, of Kensington, MD, passed away on August 13, 2025. Emily was born in Glen Lyon; she was the daughter of the late Peter and Appolonia "Pearl" (nee Dzwilewski) Smetana. She was raised in Glen Lyon and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1948. She then graduated from Wilkes College with a degree in Medical Technology. Emily worked as a Lab Technologist and nurse for the next 30 plus years. Emily was predeceased by her husband, John; sister, Janet Stashick; and brother, Robert Smetana. She is survived by her daughters, Gail Shuck and Cheryl Triau; and brother, William Smetana.

PAWLUSH, MaryAnn (nee Larish), 84, of Mocanaqua, passed away March 31, 2026. MaryAnn was born in Rohrsburg on April 1, 1941; she was the daughter of the late Joseph and Sophie (nee Lapinski) Larish. She was raised in Mocanaqua, attended school there and in Shickshinny, and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1959. She had been employed for many years at Country Cousins Shoe Factory prior to retiring. She was predeceased by her sister, Carol Killian; brother, Joseph Larish; and former husband, Lawrence Pawlush. MaryAnn is survived by her partner of 40 years, Lynn Titus; her children, Cheryl Boberick, Daryl, Denise, Larry, Michele Fountain, Renee Pawlush Smith, Daniele Wadas; sister, Linda Milakovic; and brother, Richard Larish.

DULIBA, Robert John "Bob" Sr., 91, of West Pittston, formerly of Newport Township, passed away April 4, 2026. Bob was born in Glen Lyon, the son of the late Michael and Mary (nee Kracefski) Duliba. "Bugsey" was raised in Glen Lyon and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1952 where he excelled in football and baseball. His baseball talent led to being drafted into Major League Baseball (MLB) for several years; an enlistment in the US Marine Corps; and upon honorable discharge, a return to MLB as a pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals, Los Angeles Angels, Kansas City Athletics, and Boston Red Sox. After MLB he attended Wilkes University on 12

the GI Bill, earned a degree in History and Education, taught school at Wyoming Area, and coached baseball at Wilkes University, King's College, and Wyoming Area. Bob is survived by his wife of 38 years, Mary Ann (nee Noss) Duliba.

PIAVIS, Robert Walter, Jr., 65, of Lily Lake Road, Slocum Township, passed away on April 22, 2026. Robert was born on April 22, 1961; he was the son of Patricia (nee Domzalski) Piavis and the late Robert Piavis Sr. He was raised in Glen Lyon, attended Newport Township schools, and graduated from John S. Fine High School. Bob had been employed as a Pharmacist for CVS Pharmacy. Besides his father, Robert Sr., he was predeceased by his brother, Brad. Besides his mother, Patricia, he is survived by his wife, Charmaine (nee Maga) Piavis; children Aaron and Kelci; and brother, David Piavis.

SCHMID, Laverne C. (nee Kaminski), 90, of Slocum Township, formerly of Newport Township, and Providence Place Senior Living in Drums, passed away on April 23, 2026. Laverne was born in Alden on July 13, 1935; she was the daughter of the late John and Celia (nee Buczek) Kaminski. She was raised in Alden and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1952. She earned a nursing degree from Nesbitt School of Nursing and dedicated her professional life to caring for others as a Registered Nurse at Berwick Hospital. Besides her parents, Laverne was predeceased by her husband of 64 years, Joseph Schmid. She is survived by her children, Joseph, David, Steven Schmid, and Diane Hochreiter; and brothers, Terrance and Edward.

AMBOSIE, Dale C., 88, of Mountain Top, Wright Township, and formerly of Nuangola, passed away April 24, 2026. Dale was born in Nuangola Borough; he was the son of the late Adolph and Susan (nee Engler) Ambosie. He was raised in Nuangola and attended Newport Township High School with the Class of 1956. Music was a cornerstone of Dale's life as he served as the leader, base player, and singer of his family band for many years. He was a true "jack of all trades" as he was a gifted electrician, carpenter, plumber, and cabinet maker. He was a fixture in his community, being a familiar face at the American Legion and VFW in Slocum Township and The Crossroads in Mountain Top. He is survived by his wife Ruth (nee Paisley) Ambosie; and sons, Dale, Darron, and Dean.

NATALINI, Richard Anthony, 88, of Newport Center/Sheatown, passed away March 17, 2026. Richard was born in 1937, the son of the late Anthony and Irene Natalini. He was raised in Sheatown and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1955. He continued his education for a Registered Nurse Degree at Martland Medical Center of Newark, now the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Also he was a graduate of Easton Hospital School of Anesthesiology earning a CRNA Degree. He worked at Nanticoke State General Hospital as Chief Nurse Anesthetist. He was a Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation Instructor, served on the Education Board of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, and worked for the South Vietnamese government for a short time. Richard was predeceased by his wife, Constance (nee Czarniecki) Natalini. He is survived by his son Anthony; and daughters, Kathy Fendt and Gail Trela.

ROMINSKI, Hedwig "Hedy" (nee Sowa), 98, of Sheatown, passed away April 28, 2026. Hedy was born in Sheatown, the daughter of the late Michael and Katherine (nee Bobowska) Sowa. She was raised in Sheatown and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1945. She was a devout member and volunteer of Holy Trinity Church (now St. Faustina Parish) and community organizations and affairs. Hedy was predeceased by her husband of 56 years, Hank Rominski; and siblings, Helen, Joseph, Stanley, Edward, Anna, Walter, Theresa Sowa, and Marie Kowalski. She is survived by her children, Helen Lopez, Catherine Kirby, Rosemary Sturgeon, Joanne Uffner, and Paul.

VANDERMARK, Gloria Jean (nee Barkovitz), 86, formerly of Plains Township, passed away on April 22, 2026. Gloria was born in 1940, the daughter of the late Joseph and Sadie (nee Moses) Barkovitz. Besides her parents, Gloria was predeceased by her husband, William "Billy" Vandermark, who graduated from Newport High School with the Class of 1956, brother-in-law, Harold Vandermark, sister-in-law, Eileen (nee Vandermark) Ferlick (husband, Frank Robert Ferlick), all Newport graduates. She is survived by her daughters, Karen Reidy, Susan Witzel, Marla Vandermark, and Sarah Vandermark; brother, Joseph Barkovitz; sister, Rose Marie Haydu; and brother-in-law, Edward Vandermark.

RINEHIMER, Floyd, 88, of Dorrance Township, passed away on April 30, 2026. Floyd was born in Dorrance on August 6, 1937; he was the son of the late George and Edith (nee Stein) Rinehimer. He was raised in Dorrance and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1955. He spent his entire life on the family dairy farm. He was very active in the church council of Saint James Lutheran Church of Hobbie and was an avid Phillies fan. Besides his parents, Floyd was predeceased by his son, Floyd; and siblings, George, Edsel, Arthur, Emily, Helen, and May. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Shirley (nee Wenner) Rinehimer, daughter, Shelly Pfromm; sons, Kevin Rinehimer and Gary Rinehimer; and daughter-in-law, Joan Rinehimer

VANDERLICK, John Allen Sr., "Big John," 67, of Newport Township, passed away on April 22, 2026. John was born in Nanticoke on March 14, 1959; he was the son of the late Charles and Betty (nee Hughes) Vanderlick. He was raised in Nanticoke and Glen Lyon; he attended schools of Greater Nanticoke in Newport Township and Nanticoke. John retired from the Norfolk Southern Railroad after 20 years as a Ballast Regulator and received recognition for accident free service. John is survived by his wife of 47 years, Helen Vanderlick; and children, April, John, and Crystal Coleman.

BERZANSKI, Sandra "Sandi," 75, of Hanover Township, formerly of Newport Township and Nanticoke City, passed away May 16, 2026. Sandi was born in Nanticoke State Hospital on June 26, 1950; she was the daughter of the late Edward and Theresa (nee Sokolowski) Gawet. She was raised in Alden and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1968. She was employed by RCA in Mountain Top and retired from the Social Security Administration in Wilkes-Barre. In retirement, she was a volunteer at Saint Jude's School in Mountain Top, and she was a member of Saint Faustina Parish of Nanticoke. Besides her parents, Sandi was predeceased by her mother-in-law, Cecelia Berzanski. She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Xavier Berzanski; daughter, Xann Pray; and sister, Kim Savner.

BUTKIEWICZ, Edward John, 84, of Marlborough, MA, formerly of Newport Township and Nanticoke City, passed away on April 24, 2026. Edward was born on June 26, 1941; he was the son of the late Edward and Blanche (nee Kaszowicz) Butkiewicz. He was raised in Glen Lyon and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1960. He enlisted in the US Army and upon discharge, continued government service mainly in Germany. Upon returning home, Edward furthered his education by attending LCCC, Wilkes University, and Penn State Lehman. He became an educator with Greater Nanticoke for 30 years before retiring and continuing public service as a Nanticoke City Councilman and later Mayor, advocating for the disadvantaged. Edward is survived by his wife of 59 years, Audrey Ann (nee Grebeck) Butkiewicz; and daughters, Leah Amato and Lynann Dunn.

SHEMANSKI, Jacquelyn (nee Bigos), 87, of Dahlonaga, GA, formerly of Newport Township passed away November 5, 2024. Jacquelyn was born in Glen Lyon on January 8, 1937. She was the daughter of the late Frank and Stacia (nee Zaborowski) Bigos. She was raised in Glen Lyon and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1954 and Kean College of New Jersey with a B.S. Degree and M.A. Degree in Education. She taught at Woodbridge Township schools before retiring after 22 years. Jacquelyn was survived by her husband of 68 years, Joseph Shemanski (now deceased); daughter, Cynthia Blank; son, Joseph; sisters, Christine Drugotch (now deceased) and Jean Baker; and brother, Frank.

SHEMANSKI, Joseph John, 92, of Dahlonaga, GA, formerly of Newport Township, passed away March 27, 2026. Joseph was born in Wanamie on January 7, 1934. He was the son of the late Joseph and Blanche (nee Shershen) Shemanski. He was raised in Glen Lyon and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1951 and Bloomsburg College with a B.A. in Education. He received an M.A. Degree in Education from Kean College in New Jersey. He taught at Woodbridge Township schools in New Jersey for 37 years. Besides his parents, Joseph was predeceased by his wife of 68 years, Jacquelyn (nee Bigos) Shemanski; and sisters, Stephanie Stogoski and Theodosia Raber. He is survived by his daughter, Cynthia Blank; and son, Joseph.

RUSHIN, Gerard Joseph "Jerry," 91, of West Spring Creek, PA, formerly of Newport Township and Corry, PA, passed away May 4, 2026. Jerry was born in Alden on July 29, 1934; he was the son of the late Andrew and Sophia (nee Olshefski) Rushin. He was raised in Alden

and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1952. He received a BS Degree in Health and Physical Education from East Stroudsburg University and a Masters Degree in the same from Ithaca College. He began his teaching and football coaching career at Sayre High School, later doing the same at Corry, PA, and also at Corry, became Athletic Director until retirement in 1996. Jerry and his wife, Alice, were also co-owners, along with Mike Comitz, of Mike and Jerry's Pizza Shop in Corry. Jerry was a member of the Corry Rotary Club and an active Third Degree Knight of Columbus Council 425. Jerry was predeceased by his son, Mike; brothers, Paul, Budd, and Jack; and sister, Jane Lucke. Jerry is survived by his wife of 70 years, Alice "Bunny" (nee Hennings) Rushin; children, Gerard Jr., Steve, Tony, and Mary Grena.

SHAMPACK, David, 71, of Wanamie, formerly of Wilkes-Barre, passed away May 7, 2026, at home. David was born in Wilkes-Barre, the son of the late George and Virginia (nee Stevens) Shampack. He was raised in Wilkes-Barre, and graduated from Elmer L. Meyers High School. David worked as a carpenter in the local construction industry for many years. David was predeceased by his son, Jason. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Joan Shampack; son, Mark; and daughter, Lauren.

SEPKO, Barbara J., (nee Sorber), 91, of Hanover Twp., formerly of Newport Township, passed away May 11, 2026, at home. Barbara was born on October 31, 1935, in Newport Township where her parents worked and lived at Retreat State Hospital. She was the daughter of the late Russell and Margaret (nee Hopper) Sorber. She was raised at Retreat and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1952 and Wyoming Seminary Dean School of Business thereafter. Barbara and her husband John owned and operated Sepko Electric and Sepko Apartments in Hanover Township. Barbara was predeceased by her husband, John and is survived by her children, Kimberly Sepko, Paul Sepko, and Cynthia Dinoski, all of Hanover Township, and John Richard Sepko of California.

ROBACHESKI, David, 68, lifelong resident of Alden, passed away May 21, 2026. David was born in Nanticoke on October 8, 1957; he was the son of the late Lawrence "Robey" and Helen (nee Baron) Robacheski. He was raised in Alden and was a graduate of John S. Fine High School with the Class of 1975. He had been employed by Strick Corporation for many years and later as an auto mechanic prior to retiring. Besides his parents, David was predeceased by his sister, Christine Stewart. He is survived by his brothers, Lawrence J. Robacheski Jr. of Slocum Township and Kenneth Robacheski of Nanticoke, Hanover Section.

SKORDINSKI, Eugene A., 84, of Sheatown, passed away on May 25, 2026. Gene, a lifelong resident of Newport Township, was born in Glen Lyon, the son of the late John and Amelia (nee Howanitz) Skordinski. He was raised in Glen Lyon and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1960. After high school, he attended typographical school in New York City and began his career as a printer with Llewellyn & McKane, Inc. of Wilkes Barre. He later worked for the *Sunday Independent* Newspaper and Wilkes-Barre Publishing Company where a labor dispute developed and Gene became one of the founding members of the *Citizens' Voice*. He retired after a 42 year career in the publishing business. With the *Citizens' Voice*, Gene worked in the photography, circulation, and advertising fields. He was a member of the International Typographical Union and the Communication Workers of America. From 1963 to 1969 he served as an artilleryman in the National Guard with Battery B of the 109th Field Artillery in Nanticoke. Gene was predeceased by his brother, Myron. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mary Ann (nee Modla) Skordinski; daughter, Marianne Eugenia Bohinski; and sons, David and Matthew.

GORGAS, Adeline (nee Kogoski), 95, of Alden, passed away May 25, 2026. Adeline was born on August 29, 1931, the daughter of the late Benjamin and Helen (nee Sklaney) Kogoski. She was raised in Alden and graduated from Newport Township High School with the Class of 1950. She was the heart of her family. Adeline was predeceased by her husband of more than 50 years, Stanley Gorgas Jr. She is survived by her children, Lisa (nee Gorgas) Schwartz and Stanley J. Gorgas III; and niece, Doreen Golanoski. Interment was at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery with her husband, Stanley Jr.

PENKO, Lillian, 83, of Nanticoke, formerly of Fairmount and Newport Townships, passed away on May 6, 2026. At the time she had been living with her daughter, Christine, in Alden and Wanamie. Lillian was born on June 16, 1932 in Fairmont Springs; she was the daughter of the late Peter and Lillian (nee Raski) Wieniesky. Lillian was a graduate of Harter

High School in West Nanticoke. Lillian was a horticulturist, loved gardening, farming, hiking, picking mushrooms, blueberries, etc. Lillian was predeceased by her husband, Edmund Penko; sons, Edmund, Mark, and Joseph Penko; sisters, Julia Kashnicki and Frances Fromel; brothers, Victor Wiesneski and Louis Tapia; and life partner, Joseph Yench. She is survived by her daughters, Patricia Pipan, Christine Ziomek, Linda Penko, and Renee Amos, son, Robert Penko; sister, Mary Ann Andrukitis; and daughter-in-law, Diana Penko.



About 25 people from across the region participated in the seven-mile **Pilgrimage** on June 13. The route took them from St. Mary's Church in Mocanaqua to Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Rite Church on East Main Street in Glen Lyon. Led by Raphael Micca, they offered prayers, songs, and petitions along the way. Upon arrival, they were greeted by Rev. Brian Van Fossen, Pastor of St. Faustina Parish in Nanticoke, shown above. Mass was then offered by Rev. Vasyi Putera, Pastor of St. Nicholas. The participants were served lunch before returning to their cars in Mocanaqua.



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The History of Kirmar Park XVIII: February 1919 – September 1919

By Heidi Jarecki ~ Kirmar Park was once situated between Alden and Wanamie on West Kirmar Avenue. It was closely affiliated with the People's Railway, a trolley system that ran from Glen Lyon to Nanticoke. The Park was a popular venue for dances, sporting events, and picnics. Dating from 1896, the Park consisted of two pavilions, a baseball field, and at one time, a bowling alley and skating rink. This article continues the history of the Park which began in the Spring 2022 issue of the *Newport Township Community News*.

With the worst of the Flu Pandemic of 1918 over, and men and women in the Armed Forces slowly returning from Europe, social and sporting events at the Park gradually resumed. Basketball was as popular as ever, and even though the Pennsylvania State League suspended play for the 1918-1919 season, managers for the Nanticoke, Hazleton, Plymouth, and Wilkes-Barre teams conducted independent basketball games for several weeks beginning on January 23. The Nanticoke team, whose home court was Kirmar Park, was dubbed the "Professionals." There was quite a bit of wheeling and dealing among players, some of whom played for multiple teams. The fierce rivalry between Nanticoke and Wilkes-Barre remained intact.

These local teams were able to line up games with teams from across the state, Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. The Wilkes-Barre Coal Barons were victorious against the Harrisburg Independents on Saturday February 1, the score being 45 to 26. On Wednesday February 5, they played against the Westinghouse Club from Wilmerding. Wilmerding is a borough in Allegheny County, 12 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. At the start of the twentieth century, it had extensive foundries and machine shops of the Westinghouse Air Brake Company. The Westinghouse Club was victorious, 30 to 29. It was the second loss for Wilkes-Barre in this young season. During the game, the referee refused to call a foul on Westinghouse and this angered the Barons fans. The police came to his rescue and prevented trouble.

The following night, the Westinghouse Club traveled to Kirmar for a game with the Professionals. Before that game, two amateur teams, the Colgates and the Jaspers of Nanticoke who were bitter rivals, played a championship game, a side bet of \$50.00 (\$969.00 in today's money) providing incentive. The Westinghouse Club was under the management of Roy Steel, other players were Dolan, Ross Steel, Jack Adams, Campbell, and McAvoy. Playing for the Professionals were Harris and Coopey at forward, Leary at center, and Schimmel and Schaub at guard. The Nanticoke team pulled off a victory, 27 to 24. The outcome likely surprised the Westinghouse Club as they had racked up 12 straight victories. Dick Leary was high scorer with 13 points. The game was witnessed by "one of the biggest crowds of the season." In the amateur game, the Colgates pulled off a victory by the score of 12 to 9. "It was not until the last three minutes of play [when] a field goal was made." The bet of \$50.00 was split 2 to 1.

On Friday evening, February 7, the Newport Township High School team played against Larksville High School at Kirmar Park. Between halves, the Wanamie Reserves played against the Wanamie Juniors. The results of both games could not be found.

On Thursday February 13, the Professionals played Johnny Beckman's Bridgeport, Connecticut Blue Ribbons at Kirmar Park. Johnny Beckman had starred with the Nanticoke Nans the previous season. "Beckman has gotten together a great aggregation and has been defeating some of the strongest teams in the country on his trip." Before the game, the Bliss Colliery Team played the Truesdale Colliery Team. The Blue Ribbons pulled off a victory, 24 to 19. 16

Dancing followed the game with music provided by Beeneck's Jazz Band. Beckman's team went on to defeat Wilkes-Barre on Monday February 17 by the score of 24 to 16. The results of the game between the collieries could not be found.

Also on February 13, the following post-war appeal appeared in the *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*, reminding citizens of the massive reconstruction work that was needed in Europe: "The call to arms on the sixth of April 1917 was not more vital to the safety of the world than is the call of today to American women. We are facing a grave danger, danger of a 'slump' in our morale as we enter upon the great and difficult tasks of reconstruction. Upon the continued devotion and patriotism of our women depends the hastening of a real and lasting peace. Never have there been as many millions of hungry people in Europe looking to us for food. Never has the world demand for raw material and the necessity for conservation and economy been so great. Never has the world so needed the courage and the faith and the strength of its women. The nations of Europe, bleeding and hungry after four years of war, must rest and relax while America keeps watch. Don't be impatient for your soldier boy to come home, for there still remains much to be done. When the glamor of the war shall have passed, we must face its stern necessities. The boys over there and those in the camps and cantonments here have never wavered in their faith or faltered in their duty. Now that they are without the stimulus of action, they deserve and must have the sustaining knowledge that we too will continue at our task until 'honorably discharged.' Don't be a peace-time slacker."

When Nanticoke played an away game with Pittston on Friday February 14, center Dick Leary was injured with a broken shoulder blade and would be out for several weeks. In his place, "giant" George Haggerty was signed as his replacement. Chet Rogowicz, a Newport Township native, would be on the bench.

Plans for the four-day fair at Kirmar Park sponsored by St. Michael's Church on West Main Street in Glen Lyon were completed. The Fair took place between February 17 and the 20th. Entertainment began at 7 o'clock each night with a costume ball on the last evening.

On Friday February 21, Nanticoke played the first of two games on successive nights with Wilkes-Barre at Kirmar Park. A *Times Leader* writer commented, "The Leary clan has been playing a speedy schedule during the belated season and should prove worthy opponents [of the Wilkes-Barre team]." The Nanticoke team signed Chris Leonard, who also played with Pittston. Leonard, known as "The Dog" for his tenacious defense, later went on to play for the famous Original Celtics. "Nanticoke sports [fans] are making all kinds of wagers that their team will win both games, and they anticipate less trouble winning on the [Wilkes-Barre] floor than they do at Kirmar Park." The last-minute signing of Stanley "Bucky" Harris who was employed in Baltimore gave the Barons an advantage. He was expected to be in the lineup for the first game. Joe Berger and "Chief" Muller played at forward, Malone at center, and Bucky Harris and Frankie Foster at guard. For Nanticoke, Harris and Coopey played at forward, Leonard at center, and "Butch" Schaube and Schimmel at guard. Schaube had played with Hazleton the previous season. The Barons edged out a victory, 22 to 21. Despite inclement weather of heavy downpours, the game was well attended. The second game the following night was played at the Wilkes-Barre Armory. Leo Malone, a new addition to the Wilkes-Barre team, would be in the lineup. 1800 fans witnessed the game, which was won by the Barons with the score of 32 to 25. "The game was hard fought from start to finish, but the superior teamwork of the Barons was evident in the second period and with a commanding lead, [the win] was never in doubt." With the loss, Nanticoke challenged Wilkes-Barre to a series of five games and offered to play for a purse of from \$500.00 (\$9,700) to \$1000.00 (\$19,400). Those were enormous sums in those days, and one sports-writer wrote, "The series will never be played under such conditions—a thousand dollars will not be staked on five games, I am certain. Money matches will kill basket ball [sic], not the fact that a series is played for such a purse from a victor's or vanquished standpoint, but because of the reactionary effects upon the followers of the game. Basket ball [sic] staged for money will soon play its own funeral march. The Nanticoke fans want a series of five games to establish their superiority, and George Keller (the Barons' manager) is equally as anxious to grant this opportunity, satisfied his team is the peer of them all. But no money will be placed at stake." Another commented, "This savors too much of commercializing the game and just as much interest can develop without the side bet proposition."

On Monday February 24, the second game for the championship of Nanticoke's amateur teams was played at Kirmar between the Colgates and the Jaspers. In the first game played several weeks before, the Colgates were victorious. Even though the Jaspers were favored to win the second game, the Colgates were victorious once again, 26 to 21. A dance followed, with music by Beeneck. Admission was 25 cents.

It was announced on February 25 and 26 that George Haggerty and Johnny Beckman had signed contracts to play with the Nanticoke team. Lou Coopey suddenly retired from the game and gave no reason for quitting. Local fans regretted his leaving and hoped he would reconsider. Haggerty and Beckman would get into the lineup on Thursday February 27 when the team played the St. Columba team who were leaders in the American League of Philadelphia. The St. Columba basketball team was a historic youth and parish squad that competed in the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Athletic Leagues across the Philadelphia region. The broader "American League" refers to amateur or parish-specific regional leagues within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia League. Tommy Dunleavy who had previously played for the Barons was now captain of St. Columba. He was described as "one of the cleanest players in basket ball [sic] and as a result he made friends all over the State League circuit." Another player for St. Columba was a former star at the University of Pennsylvania. After much hype in the papers, Nanticoke beat St. Columba by the score of 26 to 21. Beckman was high scorer with 11 points. Both Beckman and Haggerty were given a standing ovation when they stepped into the cage. Attendance at Kirmar was reported at 1,100. St. Columba then traveled to Wilkes-Barre and Pittston. Wilkes-Barre was victorious.

Hanover Township High School played Newport High on March 1 at Kirmar Park and came away with a victory, 27 to 14.

The Barons and Nanticoke agreed to a seven-game series that would decide the basketball championship of Wyoming Valley. As reported, "George Keller will not sanction playing the series for money and there will be nothing involved in the contest only the honor of winning." There was no further mention of a purse. The first game would be played Thursday March 13 at Kirmar, and the second the following Saturday at Wilkes-Barre. It was expected that Dick Leary would be ready to play. Each club registered eight players. Pittston, believing it was snubbed, would challenge the winner of the series, and the Barons agreed to a game. The Nanticoke team declined.

On Monday March 3, the ladies of St. Michael's Church in Glen Lyon conducted a ball at Kirmar Park. Ash Wednesday fell on March 5. This date marked the traditional start of the Christian season of Lent, beginning 46 days before Easter Sunday which occurred on April 18 that year. Ash Wednesday in 1919 occurred during a period of global readjustment, just months after the conclusion of the War. Churches reported well-attended services with communities embracing post-war reflection.

With the seven-game series two weeks away, three games were planned the first week in March among Pittston, Nanticoke, and Wilkes-Barre "in a three-cornered combat." It is doubtful these games took place.

On Friday March 7, the Downey Shipyard team arrived at Kirmar Park for a game with Nanticoke. The 1918-1919 Staten Island Downey Shipyard basketball team was an elite independent semi-pro squad. Built with top-tier professionals, the roster included legendary hoop figures who later defined the game in the 1920s. Notable team members included Joe Dreyfus, a standout, clever defensive guard who later starred for teams across several leagues; and Gary Schmeelk, a New York-area basketball pioneer who suited up for the Shipyard before moving to the Pittston and Schenectady professional leagues. Before the game, Loomis Colliery played Bliss Colliery. Nanticoke pulled out a victory by the score of 29 to 23. "At halftime the visitors were leading by six points – a comfortable lead in many matches. 'Butch' Schaube of Hazleton, playing guard for the Nans, was taken ill. His place was filled by Rogowicz. With new cream in the lineup, the Kirmar Park five opened an offensive. Between Schimmell and Johnny Beckman, with the aid of Merle Harris, the Nans went over the top and added six points for good measure." Dancing followed the game. Downey played Wilkes-Barre the following evening and lost to the Barons by 20 points.

Wilkes-Barre and Nanticoke agreed that Herman Baetzel of Philadelphia would officiate the first two games of the best-of-seven series. The first game was played on Thursday March 13 at Kirmar. Dick Leary was still feeling the effects of a broken shoulder and would

not play. Leonard would play center. In front of a crowd of 2,000 fans, the Barons edged out Nanticoke by the score of 25 to 24. "With only six minutes to play and the Barons leading by 10 points, Nanticoke staged a spurt that brought their admirers to their feet, wildly swinging coats and hats in the air and cheering lustily for a victory.

Fighting with the dogged determination as if their very lives depended on the result, the Barons smothered the ball at every opportunity, thereby preventing Nanticoke from scoring a foul goal which would send the game into an extra period."

The second game on Saturday March 15 at the Wilkes-Barre Armory was highly anticipated, and predictions were rampant. It was announced that Dick Leary would be in uniform but would not play. "Fighting desperately in the last ten minutes of play after being hopelessly out-classed in the early stages of the game, Nanticoke before a crowd of 2,200 cheering fans won over the Barons by the score of 19 to 16, thereby tying the series. Spurred to action by the cheering of their admirers, the Barons made a truly wonderful but belated finish."

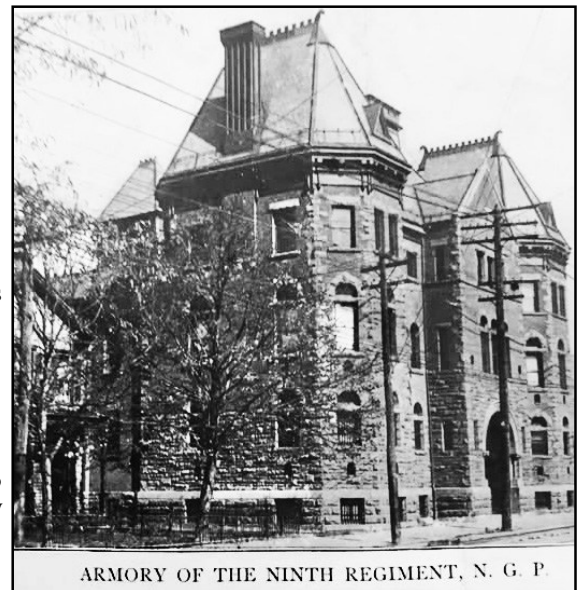
Referee Ward Brennan took over officiating duties for the third game on Thursday March 20 at Kirmar Park. It was expected that Dick Leary would finally play his first game in six weeks. However, that was not the case, and Nanticoke would lose, 28 to 23. 1,700 fans packed the Kirmar pavilion. Johnny Beckman suffered a fractured rib in the first period. He continued playing, but it was evident the injury hampered his play. Nanticoke trailed by two at the half, and the game was tied at the end of regulation. In the extra period, "the Nans lost their heads. The Barons played with plenty of cooperation and when the final gong had sounded, they had a five-point lead."

Confident they would win the series with Nanticoke, the Barons agreed to play Pittston for the championship of Wyoming Valley. "When the announcement was made that Wilkes-Barre and Nanticoke would battle for the title, [Pittston Manager] Tom McLachlan lost no time in registering a protest and he openly issued a challenge to both teams. Keller [of Wilkes-Barre] accepted and yesterday he conferred with the Pittston Manager when the date of the first game was announced as next Saturday night, March 29."

The fourth Wilkes-Barre-Nanticoke game took place on Saturday March 22 at the Wilkes-Barre Armory. "It is expected Dick Leary will get into the Nanticoke lineup tonight. Dick has been kept on the bench through the series because of injuries to his shoulder. Early reports from Nanticoke today had it that the New Englander would be in the cage prepared to take his place at center."

That same evening, the Nanticoke Colgates and the Planters Peanuts Five of the Industrial League would play the first of a three-game series for the county amateur title at the Armory. The Industrial League was formed in January 1919, and consisted of teams representing Planters Peanuts, Sheldon Axle and Spring Company, Hazard Rope Company, and the Vulcan Iron Works. The League played its games at the Wilkes-Barre YMCA and had a large following. This game began at 8:00 with the big game at 8:45. Ward Brennan officiated.

As reported, "Nanticoke for the third time in four starts went down to defeat at the hands of the [Wilkes-Barre] quintet at the Armory Saturday night before a crowd of 1,800 fans. The Barons by far outclassed the Kirmar Park tribe who never had a chance for victory. Handicapped no doubt due to an injury sustained by 'Johnny' Beckman at Kirmar Park



ARMORY OF THE NINTH REGIMENT, N. G. P.

Wilkes-Barre Armory at Ross and South Main Streets

Thursday night, the Nans went into the game with less determination than in their previous contest at the armory and they rapidly fell before the speedy work of Keller's crew." The final score was 39 to 28. Leary did not play, and Rogowicz "[did not play] up to expectations." In the first game, Planters Peanuts defeated the Nanticoke Colgates by the score of 22 to 20 in overtime. The results of the remaining games in the series could not be found.

On Monday March 24, the *Times Leader* reported: "'Johnny' Riley, the Warrior Run welterweight, who recently was mustered out of the army service will get back into the boxing limelight at the Nesbitt Theatre tonight when he tackles 'Johnny' Schwartz, a fast New Yorker in a ten-round bout. Riley has been training at Kirmar Park for the last two weeks and he is in excellent shape for the scrap." Time would tell if boxing matches would soon be held at Kirmar Park.

The fifth game of the series went back to Kirmar Park on Thursday March 27. The Barons were so confident of a win that they began arrangements to play Pittston in a five-game series, the first at the Armory on Saturday March 29. To win over the Barons, Nanticoke planned to use Leary. "Last Saturday night, Beckman was a pretty sick boy and it may be that he will not be fit for the grueling game that is promised Thursday night." Indeed, Wilkes-Barre was heavily favored, but Nanticoke said, "Not so fast!" and shocked the Barons with a win 35 to 22. Bad weather kept the crowd down to 800 spectators. "Leary did it. The tall New Englander got back in the line-up just in time to prevent Nanticoke from losing the fourth and deciding game of the championship series. He was high scorer with 17 points. Beckman may have suffered from a broken rib, but the Newark speedy boy failed to show any ill effects from the injury last night. The best way to sum up the game is to say the Barons were never in it."

The sixth game was played at the Wilkes-Barre Armory on Saturday March 29. The weather forecast for the day predicted "freezing temperatures and northwest gales, diminishing tonight." Before a crowd of over 2,500 fans, the Nanticoke team pulled off an amazing win by the score of 23 to 18. Every game has a hero, and this time it was Merle Harris. "Nanticoke took the lead from the go-off and was never headed. A final spurt was made by the Barons in the last three minutes, but [it was] not sufficient to bring victory and the honor of the series to the Kellar organization. Saturday's victory was made possible by the splendid work of Merle Harris. The Pittstonian was in the contest every minute, and when the final gong was sounded, the score sheet credited him with five goals from the field and one from the foul line." The win forced a seventh game. "Following the game the two managers in the presence of local sport writers flipped a coin and decided the [Armory] floor for the seventh and deciding game, which will be played on Saturday."

The game between the Harrisburg Independents and Nanticoke scheduled for Thursday April 3 at Kirmar was postponed and likely never took place. April 5 came quickly and 3,000 fans were expected to cram the Armory. The Barons won, 26 to 15. As reported, "The Nans were bewildered in this match. Schaub was apparently slow on the floor. Beckman in flashes broke away from Bucky Harris. Foster played Merle Harris close, but at times the Pittstonian took the long chance in scoring. Dick Leary and Leo Malone staged a merry scrap at center with Leo having the possible edge in outjumping, however, he was outplayed in floor work. Schimmel broke away from Berger on one occasion, but this was the only time he proved dangerous." The loss was a bitter one for Nanticoke and would provide incentive going into the next season.

Having changed the format to a three-game series, Pittston and Wilkes-Barre battled it out. In the first game, Pittston was dominant, winning by the score of 34 to 14. The second game was a repeat, Pittston winning by a 30 to 16 score. They claimed the Championship of Luzerne County and the abbreviated season ended.

The last basketball game at Kirmar Park for 1919 was on April 10, when the Happy Five won over the Record Breakers by the score of 33 to 22.

During the remaining weeks in April, the pavilions and grounds at Kirmar Park were prepped for summer events and dances. The popular Two Jakes Dance returned on May 1, with music by Beenick's Jazz Orchestra. Sponsored by Dick "Jake" Ginger and Adam "Jake" Yankoski, it was well attended.

Over the course of two weeks in April and May, Nanticoke and Plymouth High Schools could not agree on where to play the final

basketball game of a three-game series that would determine the scholastic championship of Luzerne County. As reported on May 8, "The third game was decided to be played on a neutral floor. Wilkes-Barre Armory was chosen, but when the week came for the game to be played, the Nanticoke players refused to play, stating that the third game should be played at Kirmar Park or nowhere." It could not be determined if the game was ever played.

The next event at the Park was a dance sponsored by the Moose Baseball Club of Nanticoke on Monday May 26. Rowley's Orchestra provided the music. Among the players on the Moose team were: J. Augustine, catcher; W. Augustine, pitcher; Leo Krynick, W. Williams, Warakomski and Leski, infielders; Berney, Schimmel and Tesa, outfielders. The ad for the dance read, "Don't forget and help the boys out."

A dance sponsored by the Arrow Club was held on Saturday May 31, with a second dance on Wednesday June 11, and every Wednesday thereafter, with music provided by Tresten's Orchestra. On Thursday evening June 26, the Nanticoke Clerks sponsored a dance from 8:30 to 12 midnight.

Beginning on Tuesday July 22, the Victor Social Club held a series of dances at Kirmar. "All previous series of dances conducted by this club always proved popular and a repetition of the affair is looked forward to by both members of the club and the patrons of the dance. In order to introduce this initial dance, the ladies will be admitted free of charge." Music was provided by Sheeder's Jazz Band. As the weeks progressed, "The popularity of these dances is attested by the large numbers that are in attendance, and each function is drawing larger crowds. The floor at this park is the best in this locality and can accommodate a large number." The Club offered special features, such as fans for the ladies, and moonlight and confetti dances, continuing through September.

Though the war was over, there were still dangers to the troops who remained in Europe. On Friday July 25, a telegram from the War Department was received by Mrs. Sobolewski of Enterprise Street in Glen Lyon informing her of the death of her brother Frank Tesar on July 9. Frank had been serving with the American Expeditionary Forces in France when he was gravely injured with burns and shots due to an explosion. He was born in Poland in 1894, and "was popular in Glen Lyon."

On Saturday July 26, employees of the General Cigar Company held their annual outing at Kirmar Park. All proceeds were donated to Nanticoke State Hospital.

Kirmar Park helped generate other businesses in the Township, such as the Power House Hotel. Originally known as George "Shorty" Womelsdorf's Hotel, it was located directly across from the Park and consisted of a three-story frame dwelling with 25 rooms. It included a large barn on a spacious lot and an attached shed. This is likely where guests who patronized the Park found lodging when they couldn't make it home. Shorty had been the proprietor for over thirty years and was well known in the Township. He passed away on Saturday April 17, 1915, leaving behind his wife, daughter and son. The hotel was put up for sale in 1919.

In August, a welcome home committee was organized in Nanticoke Borough to plan the welcome parade for the returning troops. "The day of August 21 will be the greatest day that Nanticoke ever had. There should be neither cost nor time considered any of the hampers for this cause."

On Monday September 1, the Sophomore baseball team of Nanticoke High School played the Sophomore-Junior team of Newport High School at Kirmar Park. The increasing popularity of baseball led many teams to build fields in their respective towns, leaving Kirmar's field rarely used. "As both teams are confident of winning, a good game is anticipated."

On Saturday evening September 27, a picnic was held at Kirmar Park by the Little Mothers' League of West Nanticoke, Nanticoke, Hanover, Alden and Glen Lyon. The Club was organized by the Nanticoke Visiting Nurse Association.

To be continued....

Sources: The Wilkes-Barre Times Leader; www.archives.com; Facebook; www.newspapers.com; www.probasketball.com; www.wikipedia.com; various websites. The author wishes to acknowledge the archives of the Wilkes-Barre Times Leader without which the History of Kirmar Park could not be written.

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Pictured far left is the lobster dinner sponsored by **St. Andrew's Episcopal Church** in Alden. Patrons enjoyed lobster tail, french fries, coleslaw and cake. Pictured near left is Donna Burd with sausage and peppers at the "Bazaar" event sponsored by the **American Legion Auxiliary Unit 539**, at which patrons could sample a variety of foods offered by different cooks. Both events were held on March 21.

At right is the Bingo event sponsored by the **American Legion Auxiliary Unit 539** at the Legion Hall in Glen Lyon on Sunday May 31. It included bonus games, a basket raffle, instant bingo, and a bake sale. Food and drinks were available for purchase. About 80 people attended. The Legion Auxiliary is planning future bingo events. Stayed tuned!



Pictured above is Jackson Hull accepting the scholarship sponsored by the **Newport Township Crime Watch** at Senior Awards Day at Greater Nanticoke Area High School on Friday June 5. The Classroom Citizenship Award was presented by Jane Straub, Crime Watch Secretary. Jackson plans to pursue a career in criminal justice. Over 70 awards were made, including those at the Wilkes-Barre Area Career Technical Center. Sponsors include the Kashatus Family and the Newport Township Lions Club. The NTCO salutes all 2026 graduates!



Above is Dr. Vincent Floryshak awarding the **Floryshak Family Glen Lyon Community Grant** to Jenna Samuels at Senior Awards Day on June 5. Jenna will attend King's College in the fall and plans to major in Sports Management and Data Analytics.



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Have Newsletter, Will Travel

This past winter, Jerry and Val Malishchak of Wanamie took the Newsletter with them on their adventure to Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand. Pictured left, they are standing on the grounds of the Angkor Wat, an enormous Buddhist temple complex located in northern Cambodia. It was originally built in the first half of the 12th century as a Hindu temple. Spread across more than 400 acres, Angkor Wat is said to be the largest religious monument in the world. Pictured right, Val and Jerry visit an outdoor farmer's market in Vietnam. Thanks for taking us along!





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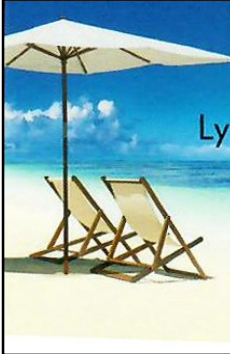
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Effective January 1, 2026 the price of each subscription to the *Newport Township Community News* is \$15.00 per year. Subscribers are reminded to submit payment when they receive their Winter issue, if they have not already done so. Donations are gladly accepted. Please make your checks out to the NTCO. Also, let the editors know if you haven't received the latest issue.

Thank you!

Editors Heidi and Paul Jarecki



NTCO NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENT

Contact Joe Maloney for more information at
570-736-6828

- \$30.00 One-tenth-page or Business Card Size Ad
- \$50.00 Quarter-page Size Ad
- \$85.00 One-half-page Size Ad
- \$150.00 Full-page Size Ad

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

We would be honored and proud to have you as a member of the Newport Township Community Organization. Your membership will show approval of and help support our many projects to benefit your hometown! Membership is \$5.00 per year per person based on the calendar year January through December or a lifetime membership is available for \$50.00. Send application with fee to NTCO, 113 Railroad Ave., Wanamie, Nanticoke, PA 18634.

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NTCO NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

NTCO will make available printed copies of its quarterly newsletter to those living outside the area. An annual fee of \$15.00 covers the cost of mailing via the US Postal Service. Send your check payable to "NTCO" to Heidi Jarecki, 28 W. Main St., Glen Lyon, PA 18617; email: hselecky@pa.metrocast.net

If you have internet access, please furnish your email address to Thomas Kashatus at tomkashatus@gmail.com to be entered into our data base. You will then be notified of new publications on NTCO's website at <http://www.newporttownship.com>. Photographs on internet publications are viewable in color. Hard copies are printed in black and white.

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Volunteers Needed!

The NTCO strongly encourages residents to get involved in whatever community activity best fits their interests and talents. There are several organizations to choose from: The Women's Activity Group, Little League Baseball, The Lions Club, The Newport Township Crime Watch, the VFW, the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, The Newport Township Community Organization, The Fire Department, the Fire Police, and Emergency Management. In addition to performing charitable and protective services, the groups also provide social opportunities as well. Join us!

Pulaski School Miniature Now Available



The NTCO is proud to make available its newest commemorative miniature, the Pulaski School. It measures 3 1/4 inches high and 7 1/4 inches wide and was designed by the Cat's Meow Village. For a donation of \$20.00, it will be yours; \$30.00 if mailed by priority mail. Please make your check out to NTCO and mail to Heidi Jarecki, 28 West Main Street, Glen Lyon, PA 18617. You may call 570-733-2540 with any questions.

The Pulaski School located on South Market Street in Glen Lyon was being renovated into apartments when it burned to the ground on the evening of December 23, 2024.

All previous miniatures are sold out. Please let us know if there is interest in re-stocking the items. Thank you!

MONTHLY FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The Newport Township Community Organization and the Weinberg Regional Food Bank are working together to host a Food Distribution for those in need.

With the cooperation of the Township Board of Commissioners and Township Manager Joe Hillan, outdoor distributions take place in a drive-through format on the second Saturday of the month between 11 am and 12 noon. Seasonal fruits and vegetables, along with milk, canned goods, rice and pasta are among the foods available. The distributions take place in the Municipal Garage adjacent to the Municipal Building on Kirmar Parkway in Wanamie when available. Alternate site is the parking lot in the Wanamie Recreation Park. All recipients must pre-register at least five days before the event.

Palmira Miller chairs this event for the NTCO. She can be reached at 570-592-7876.

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