BOSTON HERALD

Fork Lift  A Blog for Food, Fun, and Drink

Meet the Bay State native who is Godfather of the "extreme beer" movement
Sam Calagione is just 44 years old, but the Greenfield, Mass. native is already the Godfather of the “extreme beer” movement. The founder of Delaware’s cutting-edge Dogfish Head Craft Brewery arrives in Boston today for BeerAdvocate.com’s Extreme Beer Fest this weekend. Dogfish is the title sponsor. Calagione helps host a kickoff celebration tonight (5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.) at The Tip Tap Room on Beacon Hill with chef Brian Poe.

He went toe-to-toe with the Boston Herald this morning for 12 rounds of questions, discussing everything from the day he got kicked out of his Western Mass. high school to his brewing collaboration with the Grateful Dead. And, of course, he talked beer, from his very first homebrew — a cherry pale ale — to his most extreme beers, such as Chicha, made with Peruvian corn and human saliva.

Dogfish offers “Off Centered Ales for Off-Centered People” and is largely responsible for creating what we now know as “extreme beer.” Generally speaking, an extreme beer is one that is intensely hoppy or malty, extraordinarily high in alcohol, or made with unique and unusual ingredients.

Extreme beer really didn’t exist when Calagione opened Dogfish in 1995. Back then, most brewers were trying to replicate traditional European beer styles. Today, the extreme beer movement pioneered by Calagione is probably the biggest trend in the beer world, and a major reason why the craft beer segment surged 20 percent in 2013.

More than 250 extreme beers will pour at the festival this weekend.

Calagione himself is an extreme success story. He was kicked out of Northfield Mount Hermon High School near the end of his senior year “for an accumulation of offenses,” he said. So he went to Muhlenberg College and then to grad school at Columbia University despite the fact he never graduated from high school.

It seems all is forgiven: today, Calagione’s wife and high school sweetheart Mariah, Class of ’89, is on the Northfield Mount Hermon Board of Trustees.

1. The Boston Herald just dubbed you the Godfather of the Extreme Beer Movement? Is this the greatest thing that ever happened to you?
I love it! I’ll say this, when we opened 19 years ago our entire concept was to be the first American craft brewery that made culinary-inspired beers without stylistic boundaries. We took a lot of sh*t for it back then.

Early beer enthusiasts and even early craft brewers would laugh at us for putting chicory or maple syrup in our beer, or get mad at us and say we’re screwing with tradition or being disrespectful toward it.

So that’s why we started doing all our ancient series beers (such as Midas Touch). We said what we’re doing is really going back to the longest and oldest traditions of beer, dating back to ancient times, which is brewing with whatever ingredients grew in the ground around you.

We’ve sponsored the Extreme Beer Fest each year because, really from the get to, it was the most important international forum for exotic beers brewed outside of militant stylistic guidelines.

And, you know, it’s so appropriate that this festival is in Boston, the home of the Boston Tea Party, the place where locals rebelled by throwing British culinary tradition into the harbor.

2. **Give us the Reader’s Digest version of how you got into brewing.**
I started homebrewing in 1992 while taking graduate classes in writing at Columbia in New York City. I was working at a bar at the time to pay the bills, a first-generation beer bar called Nacho Mama’s Burritos.

It was there that I tried beers like Chimay Red and Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale for the first time. The next week I was home brewing.

There was one place in Manhattan that sold homebrewing equipment. I bought a kit and the pale ale recipe that came with it. On the way home, I passed a bodega selling all these drippy, juicy bug-covered cherries. I’m like, “Oh, wait! Those are cheap. I’m going to buy a sh*tload and throw them in my beer.”

So the first beer I ever made was a cherry pale ale. Even then, I was challenging beer convention. After I tried the beer, I stood up and said, “This is what I want to do with my life.”

3. **The name Dogfish has origins in New England. Tell us about it.**
I always forget how goofy it sounds. But Dogfish Head is a jut of land in Boothbay Harbor in Maine. My parents had a cabin up there facing Dogfish Head.

I always dreamed our beer would be sold coast to coast. So I wanted a name that was whimsical and irreverent, but not so tied to geography like calling it the Delaware Brewing Co. Dogfish Head fit. I never dreamed we’d make as much beer as we do today (about 175,000 barrels per year).

4. **You once made a beer with the Grateful Dead. How’d that come about?**
Well, first we made a beer in tribute to Miles Davis. Turns out Phil Lesh from the Grateful Dead is a big Miles Davis fan. So Lesh checked in with (Davis’s) nephew, who became a friend of mine, and he told him it was a fun project.

So the band reached out to us and they were really into it. Lesh actually hosted the West Coast launch party.
with me. We called the beer American Beauty.

Ingredient wise it’s really interesting, made with honey-and-almond-flavored granola. We found a mom-and-pop place in Oregon that makes it.

We liked working with the Grateful Dead because there was a similar ethos between them and us: both of us grew in a grassroots way by word of mouth.

**5. We know it's like picking a favorite child, but what's your all-time favorite Dogfish beer?**
I love our beers equally, but some you like hanging out with more than others. I would say, right now, honestly I’m drinking the sh*t out of our Sixty-One, which is our 60 Minute IPA, plus one ingredient: California syrah grape must.

The other one I’m drinking a lot of is our Namaste. Been making it seven or eight years, but recently started putting it in six packs year round.

It’s a Belgian white beer and shandy hybrid, with dried organic orange peel and orange flesh. There’s some lemongrass in it as well. It’s a pretty refreshing session beer with 4.8 percent alcohol. By volume, it’s the beer I’m drinking the most right now.

**6. What does Sam Calagione drink when he's not drinking Dogfish?**
In the last week I’ve had Brawler from Yards in Philadelphia, Prima Pils from Victory Brewing Co. and I just had a can of Back in Black from 21st Amendment.

**7. Is Randall the Enamel Animal still on the loose, unleashing his fury on innocent palates at beer festivals around the country?**
Randall is our organoleptic hop transducer module. We use him to add even more hop flavor to our beers.

And, yes, he is still on the loose. In fact, Randalls were seen at over 45 events around the country in the last
If you go to the Extreme Beer Fest, we got Randall packed with Simcoe hops from the people at HopUnion. We’re using Randall to pump our 120 Minute IPA through these sweet Simcoes. It’s the world’s strongest IPA, with 17 percent alcohol.

8. Your social media platform is very dynamic: 323,000 Facebook followers, 170,000 on Twitter (@dogfishbeer) and 62,000 on Instagram. Any secrets? The secret is simple: the love of a good woman. My wife Mariah runs all our social media. You don’t know how thankful I am that my wife is awesome at her job.

We went to Northfield Mount Hermon High together and, unlike me, she actually graduated. We’ve been tongue kissing since the 1980s.

9. Was there a moment when you said, “Hey, we’ve made it!”? Looking back, I guess I didn’t realize our “we made it moment” at the time.

But we had been doing really big, strong beers over 15 percent alcohol for well over decade. We first brewed World Wide Stout (at various times the world’s strongest beer by alcohol volume) in 1999, and 120 Minute IPA soon after that. These are beers that taste way better at 3, 4, 5 years old.

I realize now that in my vintage beer stash that my oldest bottles go back only to 2004, 2005. We don’t have any from 2000, 2001 because we couldn’t afford to put them in my cellar back then. We had to sell every bottle we made to make sure we made payroll.

So I guess the “we made it moment” was when I was finally able to start hoarding my own vintage beer.

10. What’s the most extreme beer you’ve ever made? Probably our Chicha, because the starch in the corn is converted with human saliva.

Every Dogfish Head coworker had a bucket of corn next to their cubicle and for two days we just chewed on Peruvian corn and we made a 5-barrel batch of the beer flavored with strawberries. (The beer was sold only at Dogfish’s Rehoboth Beach, Del., brewpub.)

Every pint came with a written disclaimer that it contained human saliva. The beer was boiled, of course, so it was sterile. People drank it. We made it twice and we will make it again in coming years.

One of our most extreme beers with a New England theme that we make every summer and is one of our fastest-selling beers is called Choc Lobster. My buddy who is a lobsterman pulls lobsters from Dogfish Head Cove in Maine and ships them to us.

We crush up about 40 or 50 Maine lobsters and use them to make a porter with cocoa nibs. We add the lobsters right to the boil. Then when we drain the kettle, we pull out the lobster meat and use it to make a pretty awesome lobster mac ‘n cheese that turns brown from the porter.
11. Will you finally admit the ad agency from "Mad Men" is behind all those clever Dogfish beer names and concepts?
Hey, those f*ckers drink too much liquor and not enough beer!

I do have to say that my proudest days of work are still like they were 19 years ago, when I have a new idea for a beer and go to the pub and make it on our 2-barrel test system. I still come up with the ideas. But I’m also proud to say that I’m now the least talented technical brewer at Dogfish Head right now.

The reason we’re successful is because we have two dozen brewers and lab workers and 200 coworkers who are really responsible for our success every day. I love watching those 200 people come together.

12. What’s next for Sam and Dogfish?
Well, probably in the next month I’ll be announcing our newest music collaboration beer that’s going to have a really unique component: brewing equipment that will actually play the instruments in some original music made for this collaboration.

I can’t say who it is. But it’s an indie rock artist. I will hint that for the first time we got to work with a female musician and that she’s a wicked hop head.
Pennsylvania urged to raise minimum wage
Advocates state case to legislators

March 22, 2014 11:36 PM
By Kate Giammarise / Post-Gazette Harrisburg Bureau

HARRISBURG -- Ask Marquis Foster, a baggage handler at Philadelphia International Airport, what a bump in the minimum wage would mean for his bottom line and he is unequivocal.

"It would help a lot ... it would help me buying food and gas," said Mr. Foster, 21, who lives with his mother in Philadelphia and commutes twice a day to work two split shifts at the airport.

Nationally, Democrats are pushing the issue of raising the minimum wage -- a politically popular cause in an election year. In Pennsylvania, it's no different.

A coalition of labor leaders, religious groups and other activists gathered in the state Capitol last week to announce it intends to push for legislation to raise the state's minimum wage from $7.25 an hour to $10.10.

"If we are serious about growing this economy, it's simple economics," said Rick Bloomingdale, president of the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO. "And even Henry Ford, who was not the most union-friendly guy in the world, understood that you had to pay your workers a decent wage so that they could buy his car, so that he could make money."

There are 21 states with a higher minimum wage than Pennsylvania, including several adjacent states, such as New York and New Jersey.
Republican Gov. Tom Corbett has expressed concerns about such an increase, and a host of business groups stand in opposition, saying it would hurt small businesses, mean fewer people would ultimately be hired and that many minimum wage workers aren't supporting families.

"Some people will get a raise. ... But you're giving that at the expense of other people," said Gene Barr, president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry.

Even a small increase represents "tens of thousands of dollars for a small-business owner to have to find somewhere," said Melissa Bova, a lobbyist for the Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association.

Among economists, no consensus exists on whether a modest increase in the wage would cause job losses or not, said James Craft, a professor at the Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh.

But what's certain is the value of the minimum wage continues to erode and lose purchasing power due to inflation. Raising it could boost consumer spending, he said, and "it might well have a modest, if not meaningful, effect on consumption."

However, such a raise could also lead to increased automation in certain service jobs, such as replacing fast food workers or waitstaff with touch screens customers use to order, which could ultimately hurt employment. "It's really an up-for-grabs situation in terms of the clear economic impact," he said.

Raising the wage won't change broader, structural problems in the economy and in labor markets, said Lowell J. Taylor, a professor of economics at the Heinz College at Carnegie Mellon University. "It really doesn't impact the big problem," such as stagnating wages for workers, especially those with moderate skill levels.

Other economists have suggested there are better ways to aid the working poor, such as with the more targeted Earned Income Tax Credit, which would solely aid low-income workers and not, for instance, the teens from upper-income families who would also benefit from raising the minimum wage.
Broad support for a raise

Still, raising the base wage is a popular proposal. A Quinnipiac University poll in February found broad support for it in the state. The poll found 38 percent of Pennsylvania voters would support increasing the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, 16 percent support increasing it to something less than $10.10, 14 percent support increasing it to more than $10.10.

Twenty-eight percent of voters were opposed to any increase.

Results are similar in other states, said Tim Malloy, assistant director of Quinnipiac's Polling Institute. "A pretty large majority of Americans believe the minimum wage is too low."

There tends to be support for raising the wage among independents and moderate Republicans, as well as among Democrats, said Chris Borick, a professor of political science and director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Allentown.

There are several reasons why, Mr. Borick said. It's a policy issue that's easy for the average person to understand, it rewards working and isn't viewed as "welfare," and the wage hasn't increased in a number of years. "With income disparity becoming a bigger and bigger concern in the general public, this seems like a practical policy tool. ... It's a good political issue for Democrats."

Democrats from President Barack Obama to members of Congress and candidates for governor of Pennsylvania have been campaigning for an increase. Gubernatorial candidate and state Treasurer Rob McCord has called for the highest wage increase, to $10.70 an hour.

In 2012, the full-time annual income for a person in Pennsylvania making the minimum wage was $15,080 or just above the 2012 federal poverty threshold for a two-person household ($14,937), according to a state report released earlier this month about the minimum wage in Pennsylvania.

"If the minimum wage remains unchanged at $7.25 in 2014, the earnings of an individual working full time at that wage almost certainly will dip below 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold for a two-person household," the report stated.

In Pennsylvania, the General Assembly last voted to raise the state minimum wage in 2006, from $5.15 an hour to $6.25 effective Jan. 1, 2007, and to $7.15 in July 2007. In 2009, the federal minimum wage increased from $6.55 an hour to $7.25, which also increased the wage
In Pennsylvania.

In 2013, there were 190,800 Pennsylvania workers earning minimum wage or below, according to the most recent statistics available from the state Department of Labor & Industry. Demographically, these workers tend to be more female (65 percent are women), younger (58 percent are under age 25) and less educated (60 percent have a high school diploma or less) than the workforce at large. State statistics also show 81 percent have no children, and 19 percent of minimum wage workers have at least one child.

Increasing the wage, especially to $10.10, could lift the wages of as many as more than 1 million Pennsylvania workers. However, said Mark Price, a labor economist at the left-leaning Keystone Research Center, it would impact not just those at minimum wage level, but could ripple upward, impacting those making a few dollars above the minimum wage level as well.

Mr. Price said such increases do not automatically result in job losses because employers absorb the change in different ways.

"A rise in wages can lead some employers to raise prices, it can mean lower profits, it can lead to a boost in productivity, it can lead to a reduction in other costs like the costs associated with training thanks to lower employee turnover," he said.

There are multiple minimum wage proposals in both the state House and Senate, though they vary by amount and how quickly they would take effect.

A news conference last week highlighted two bills from state Sen. Christine Tartaglione, D-Philadelphia. Her legislation would increase the wage to $10.10 an hour, provide an automatic cost-of-living adjustment, eliminate the separate minimum wage for tipped workers (currently $2.83 an hour), allow municipalities to set their own minimum wage and increase fines for employers who engage in "wage theft."

With Republicans controlling both the state House and Senate, a bump in the state's minimum wage seems unlikely, at least any time soon. The issue is not a legislative priority between now and June 30 -- when the state must pass its budget -- said Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi.

However, when the General Assembly last voted to raise the wage, in 2006, both chambers were Republican-controlled, as they are now.
"It is a national discussion that members of our caucus are following closely," Mr. Pileggi said. "Certainly, every few years, this issue comes up."

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Will charges affect Sen. Washington in May primary?

Jessica Parks, Inquirer Staff Writer
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PHILADELPHIA The last time State Sen. LeAnna Washington had to compete in a primary, she swept away the competition, winning 86.3 percent of the vote. This year's contest, experts say, won't be so easy.

Even before she was charged with felony misuse of public resources, Washington had two Democrats lined up to challenge her in the May 20 primary.
State Sen. LeAnna Washington (D., Phila.)

“Somebody has got to represent the community who is fully committed to the job,” said Art Haywood, a lawyer and Cheltenham Township commissioner who is seeking the nomination. Washington, he said, “has not been effective.”

The other challenger, Brian Gralnick, 34, a community organizer, echoed Haywood’s criticism and said he had a good shot at beating Washington because "she has never had a real primary challenge in a real race."

Washington was elected to the Senate in 2005, and to the House in 1993, through special elections.

Gralnick and Haywood are pushing for greater funding for Philadelphia schools, improvements in senior services, and a raise in the minimum wage.

Washington and her campaign organizers could not be reached for comment.

Gralnick said he had considered public office for a long time, but decided to jump into the Senate race after The Inquirer reported that Washington was under investigation and had been absent for about one-third of the 2012-13 legislative session.
Washington was charged March 12 with using Senate staff and resources to work on her campaign fund-raisers from 2005 to 2013. A grand jury report estimated the cost to taxpayers was $30,000 to $100,000.

The senator has vowed to fight the charges.

The Fourth Senate District spans Northwest Philadelphia, including Germantown and Mount Airy, and southeast Montgomery County, including Abington, Cheltenham, and, through this year's redistricting, Springfield Townships.

All four of the candidates live in Cheltenham, including Washington, who moved in November from a single-family house in the Cedarbrook section of Philadelphia to a penthouse apartment in Wyncote.

Political experts say the charges make Washington's road to reelection look bumpy, but not impassable.

"We've seen elected officials under indictment win elections because they're very popular with their constituents," said Chris Borick, a political science professor at Muhlenberg College.

"Just because someone is facing criminal charges does not mean they are not going to win an election," said Ellen Kaplan, director of the election-watchdog group Committee of Seventy. "It's very difficult to topple incumbents."

Washington still has the backing of many colleagues and Democratic leaders in Harrisburg and Philadelphia. She

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Jessica Parks earned praise as the only legislator to turn down the infamous 2005 pay raise, and for advocating against child abuse and domestic violence, as a survivor of both.

Borick said a personal connection to voters was key to overcoming a scandal such as Washington's.

"As a follower of state politics," Borick said, "she isn't a household name and a presence in the Senate by most measures."

Said Gralnick: "She's not visible in the district, nor is her staff. I've been very active in this community over 10 years, and rarely have I seen her."

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Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen Kane may be “a prosecutor, not a politician,” as her campaign slogan claimed, but she is learning anew that it can be hard to separate politics from law enforcement.

Kane’s decision to drop a criminal investigation that captured at least five Philadelphia Democratic officials taking money or gifts not only raised legal questions, but also questions about her possible political motivations.

At the least, some political strategists and analysts said Tuesday, the move could lead to the perception that Kane went easy on fellow Democrats to help herself.

Kane has said the case was flawed on a number of levels and was moribund when she took office last year. She also pointed out that 10 of the 11 public corruption cases brought by her office have involved Democrats.

The long-term risk to Kane is damage to her reputation as a reformer, analysts said.

“It’s a strange case that doesn’t mesh with her image,” said Christopher Borick, a political scientist and pollster at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. “Isn’t she supposed to be different, and go after the culture and longtime ways of doing business in politics? This is an awkward situation for her, to say the least.”

The decision looks like an “assist” to Democrats, Borick said. Philadelphia is the linchpin for the party’s statewide victories, and good relations with the city would, theoretically, help Kane later.
On the other hand, Kane has never been close to the Democratic establishment. Party leaders did not even want her to run for attorney general in 2012. Then-U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy was the chosen one in the primary.

In 2012, she earned more votes than President Obama in Pennsylvania, becoming the first Democrat and the first woman to be elected to the state’s top law enforcement post.

Kane swept in on a promise to bring change to Harrisburg, and she repeatedly questioned whether Gov. Corbett, a former attorney general, played politics with the Jerry Sandusky child sexual-abuse investigation. She has launched a review of that probe, which is pending.

From the start of her political career, Kane has been labeled a rising star of the party, mentioned as a potential candidate for governor or U.S. Senate. Some Democrats encouraged Kane to run this year for the nomination to take on Corbett.

Most Democratic strategists interviewed said that Kane had a strong second-day response to the furor over the dropped investigation, including a Monday news conference in which she detailed the weaknesses of the case.

But they were more critical of her initial response when The Inquirer disclosed the canceled investigation. In that early statement, Kane labeled criticism of her decision-making “nothing more than the Good Ole’ Boys club playing political games to discredit me.” She also said racism tainted the investigation, saying African American officials had been targeted.

“She undercut the credibility in her argument and made it political” by using those terms, said Larry Ceisler, a Democratic communications consultant in Philadelphia. Ceisler doubts Kane would suffer in a future Democratic primary, but might with a broader electorate.

“But she has picked up her first significant piece of baggage,” he said.

Charlie Gerow, a Harrisburg-based Republican strategist whose firm is advising Corbett, said it was too early to “war game” how Kane’s decision might play out.

“At this point, there are still more questions than answers,” Gerow said. “I don’t think this story is over.”

Among those questions: Kane would not name the federal authorities who agreed with her that the case was unwinnable, and the FBI said it had never made that determination. Neither has the attorney general disclosed what led her to say that the sting operation had been tainted by racism.

Gerow said he thought that Kane’s news conference was “perfunctory” and that she seemed defensive and even angry.

So far in office, Kane has taken bold stands that have played well politically.
She stopped Corbett’s plan to privatize the state lottery, for instance, with a legal opinion that such a plan required legislative authorization. She also declared last year that she could not in good conscience defend the state’s law prohibiting marriage between people of the same sex against a legal challenge. She stage-managed that announcement before a cheering crowd at the National Constitution Center.

Kane also filed criminal charges against XTO, the natural gas arm of ExxonMobil, for a wastewater spill in Lycoming County, going far beyond the fines federal authorities imposed. That sent shudders through the Marcellus Shale gas industry but cheered environmental activists, a Democratic constituency.

Corbett declined Sunday to comment on Kane’s decision to shut down the probe, saying he would “let the reporting speak for itself.”

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Pennsylvania is a big state, but from wherever Republican Gov. Tom Corbett stands, the view is bleak. To the east is New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a GOP star and presidential contender despite his recent troubles over a bridge scandal. On the western border, Ohio Gov. John Kasich suffered a blow when voters repealed his law limiting public-sector unions, but he's still been mentioned as a 2016 possibility along with other GOP governors such as Bobby Jindal of Louisiana and Scott Walker of Wisconsin.

Then there's Corbett, whose 36% approval rating makes him the most unpopular governor in the 13 states the Quinnipiac Poll surveys. Political handicappers rate his race for re-election a tossup or worse: The Rothenberg Political Report, a nonpartisan newsletter, gives Corbett the worst odds of all Republican governors up for re-election this year, rating his race "Lean Democrat." Corbett could be the first Pennsylvania governor not to win re-election since the state began allowing two-term governors in 1968.

"I think that even the Green Party candidate could probably beat Governor Corbett one-on-one this year." says Michael Morrill of Keystone Progress, a liberal advocacy group. A sure sign that the Democratic Party thinks Corbett is beatable: There are seven contenders for the Democratic nomination to oppose him.

Corbett's troubles started early; when faced with a $4.2 billion deficit, his budget cuts forced teacher layoffs and reduced county social services programs. He imposed a limit on assets for people who received food stamps. This year, he proposed expanding Medicaid to cover the uninsured but wanted to require that recipients prove they were searching for work. He has since backed off the proposal.

"He proposed cuts to very popular programs," says political scientist G. Terry Madonna of Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa. "His job performance (approval) drops and he doesn't recover."

To be sure, other Republican governors elected in the 2010 Tea Party wave have faced trouble. Walker faced a recall — he survived — and Florida Gov. Rick Scott is also in a tough re-election race against his predecessor, Charlie Crist.
But Corbett has suffered in comparison because he has not been able to score significant conservative wins despite having a Republican-controlled legislature, says Grover Norquist, the anti-tax campaigner who got Corbett to sign a no-new-taxes pledge.

Both a pension-reform plan — which next-door New Jersey passed after Christie’s forceful advocacy — and a move to privatize state-run liquor stores have stalled in the legislature.

Norquist calls them "lost opportunities" and says Corbett should have pushed the legislature harder, or worked to replace members who didn't cooperate.

"You have this Bulgaria 1956 retail system for liquor," Norquist says. "All they (the stores) lack is the picture of El Supremo."

Corbett did pass a transportation bill to rehabilitate roads and bridges, but he relied on a hike in the gas tax to do so, despite signing a no-new-taxes pledge in 2010 like Kasich and Walker.

"Some of his problems really do start at home, in his own party. There’s a palpable sense of disappointment," says Christopher Borick, director of the Polling Institute at Muhlenberg College in Bethlehem, Pa. "It’s hard to get a lot of momentum in the state when you have liabilities in your own party."

Republicans say that it is too early in the re-election campaign to worry about Corbett’s poll standing and that when faced with a choice between Corbett and a Democratic opponent — the primary is May 20 — voters will re-elect the incumbent.

"The governor has always said he wasn't sent here to make popular decisions, especially with what he was walking into," campaign spokesman Billy Pitman says. "A lot of tough decisions needed to be made, which is exactly what he's been doing."

The Republican Governors Association promises it is "all in" to help Corbett's re-election, says spokeswoman Gail Gitcho. "Once you have an opponent, that would probably be a time when you take a look at his poll numbers. It's just so early and the Democrats in Pennsylvania are going to be spending money to beat each other up."

The campaign is highlighting the state's below-average unemployment rate, balanced and on-time state budgets, and business tax cuts. Corbett has shown signs of moving to the center. In his new budget, which is before the Legislature, Corbett included an increase for education. He diverted federal heating-aid dollars to help avoid a cut in food stamps.

"Just got to do a better job of getting the message out with voters," Pitman says. "The governor's never been a typical politician that he beats his chest and touts what he's done. We're going to be doing that a lot more on the campaign trail."
Tom Wolf's TV campaign ads make him a familiar face in Bethlehem

York businessman, one of four Dems running for governor, has spent millions on commercials.

By Steve Esack, Call Harrisburg Bureau

9:30 PM EDT, April 1, 2014

Tom Wolf came to life Tuesday for Bruce Haines in Bethlehem.

For months, Haines has seen campaign ads for Wolf, one of four Democrats running for governor in the May 20 primary election. Haines especially likes two commercials in which Wolf, a wealthy York County businessman and former state Revenue secretary, talks to youngsters about his education plans and another where he touts how his kitchen cabinet company makes products in America.

"His ads are pretty regular," said Haines, owner of Aardvark Sports Shop on Main Street.

So when Haines came out of his office, he quickly recognized the balding man with the salt-and-pepper beard standing in his running store as Wolf. Haines and Wolf talked briefly while Bethlehem Mayor Bob Donchez, Northampton County District Attorney John Morganelli, Lehigh County Executive Tom Muller and other Democrats stood by quietly.

My daughters ran track; I threw javelin in college, Wolf told Haines. We have javelin boots, Haines replied. No, Wolf, 65, replied with a chuckle.

When the exchange was over, Wolf and his escorts went to meet other potential voters, and Haines was left with the impression the ads captured Wolf's persona.

"He seemed like the same guy," said Haines, a Democrat. "He struck me as fairly genuine, but maybe I'm naive in saying that. He's a politician."

The other Democratic candidates are state Treasurer Rob McCord, Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz and former state Environmental Protection Secretary Katie McGinty.

Schwartz is the only candidate not to air TV commercials so far. McGinty was the first candidate to run commercials via a small cable buy in January.

Wolf's ads began in February — and have not stopped. He's paying for the commercials with some of the $10 million of his own self-made fortune he has dedicated to winning the primary to face incumbent Republican Gov. Tom Corbett in November.
McCord began airing ads about March 21.

The campaigns estimated each other's ad buys at Wolf, $4.7 million; McCord, $1.2 million; McGinty, $488,000. Corbett also is running commercials.

A month ago, various polls showed Wolf had gone from last place to first place to become the primary front-runner largely on the strength of the commercials. Interviews with Haines and other potential voters Wolf met in Bethlehem mirrored that result.

Haines said he has not decided whom he will vote for in May, but he could not remember McCord's name although he said he saw the commercials. Haines had a favorable view of Schwartz from her years as an elected official but did not know McGinty was in the race.

Another Democratic voter, Mike Ditty, from Effort, Monroe County, said he and his friends were talking about Wolf at lunch and were happy to meet him on Main Street.

"I'm not exaggerating," Ditty said. "We pulled his picture up on our phones."

The interactions with voters in Bethlehem show the commercials have connected with the electorate, Muhlenberg College pollster Chris Borick said. After waiting so long, Wolf's foes may have a hard time catching up without spending more than they wanted, he said.

"If people already have started to form opinions, it's a lot harder," Borick said.

Voters also are responding warmly to McCord's ads, campaign manager Mark Nevins said. But those spots also have been airing for just a week.

"We don't expect to see a large movement in the next public polls," Nevins said. "There's still a lot of time between now and the [May 20] election."

After his downtown tour and official endorsements by Morganelli, Donchez and Muller, Wolf explained his ad campaign.

Going on television was the only way he could get his name out to the electorate, he said. The story of a successful businessman and family man the commercials convey are resonating with voters, he said.

"I put my story on TV," Wolf said.

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Allentown hockey arena district getting high-tech security - mcall.com

In downtown Allentown, they'll be watching
Allentown developer behind much of city's resurgence is installing security system so tenants, visitors feel safe.

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Keystone Pipeline Project
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LATEST
By Scott Kraus, Of The Morning Call
9:58 P.M. EDT, APRIL 1, 2014

With the hockey arena nearing completion, a big-name act booked for an opening-night concert and the gradual addition of downtown tenants such as National Penn Bancshares, doubts about center city Allentown's rebirth are beginning to fade.

If there's one unanswered question, it's this: Will enough suburbanites who have stayed away feel safe enough venturing into the heart of the Lehigh Valley's largest city to help sustain it?

City Center Lehigh Valley, the private developer behind much of the rebirth, hopes a high-tech security system and 24-hour monitoring will go a long way toward alleviating fears, especially on weekends and at night, when city restaurants and bars will be looking for customers.

"I think it is important for any visitor, whether an employee working downtown, someone attending an arena event, someone who is coming down to dinner, visiting or coming to any of our buildings, anyone who is downtown, to feel safe," said Judy Woosnam, president of City Center Management Co., which oversees the developer's assets and property services.

The developer has hired Allentown-based Communications Systems Inc., which has provided the city with 135 police surveillance cameras, to install security technology in and around each of its downtown properties, and Allied Barton to provide security officers.

As with the city's own network of surveillance cameras, the perception of security is as important as the reality, said CSI General Manager Charlie Thiel.

"The perception out there is that Allentown is not a safe place to be, but if you look at the crime statistics, Seventh and Hamilton streets is a pretty safe place," Thiel said. "We want to make sure people have a feeling of safety."

That perception came through in a recent Morning Call/Muhlenberg College Quality of Life survey, where 12 percent of those who did not plan to attend events at the arena cited safety concerns. But that attitude appears to be changing. In 2013, 18 percent cited safety concerns.

The same poll showed 30 percent expected the arena to increase crime downtown, down from 38 percent in 2013.

In reality, serious crime in Allentown has dropped almost every year since 2007, and in 2013, the city saw its lowest number of serious crimes in more than a decade, according to crime statistics compiled by state police.

The concerns are partly a matter of unfamiliarity, said Mike Stershic, president of Discover Lehigh Valley, the regional tourism agency.

"A lot of them are people who have not been downtown in some time, or have stayed away from the downtown because they..."
perceived it wasn't safe. … I think these kinds of security measures will help that perception," Stershic said.

The same poll backs that up. In the survey, 41 percent of Lehigh Valley residents said they only visited downtown Allentown once every few years, if at all. And 41 percent said they came downtown a few times a year.

While Hamilton Street is busy with workers during the day, it's quiet on most weekends and evenings.

Stershic, who grew up in Baltimore, feels perfectly safe in Allentown, where Discover Lehigh Valley has had its offices for seven years.

"I know it's on people's minds, from people I have spoken with," he said. "It's something we work very hard by word of mouth to say it's not true. But you still have to get those people downtown to experience it themselves."

Each City Center building will be staffed around the clock with two security guards, and access to buildings and upper floors will be limited by swipe cards. Visitors will be expected to check in with security and show ID. They'll be given swipe cards providing access to certain floors only.

The guards will be out and about City Center properties, acting as "security ambassadors," Woosnam said.

"Even though we are not taking the role of the police officers who are on the streets, we will have perimeter rounds of our properties," she said. "The security officers are not just staying inside the buildings, they are out in our parking structures, in the streets near our restaurants, so people have a resource if they have a problem."

The developer will also have a 24-7 security command center in the 11-story Two City Center at Seventh and Hamilton, home to National Penn Bancshares' new corporate headquarters.
Muhlenberg College in Allentown receives $1 million donation from anonymous family

The Peter S. Thumbower Science Building at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. (Express-Times File Photo | COLIN MCEVOY)

on March 31, 2014 at 4:50 PM

Muhlenberg College (http://topics.lehighvalleylive.com)
Jeremy Teissere has received a $1 million donation that will be used for the endowment of a neuroscience professor. "Our hope for this endowment is that it enhances the college's mission in retaining and attracting talented professors in neuroscience who have a passion for both teaching and research at the undergraduate level," the donors said in a statement. The family that donated the $1 million wishes to remain anonymous, according to the Allentown college.

The donation will be paired with a $250,000 match from Muhlenberg College to establish the Stanley Road Endowed Chair in Neuroscience.

The inaugural endowed chair will go to Jeremy Teissere, associate professor of biology and neuroscience and director of the college's neuroscience program.

Teissere was hired in 2003 to start the development of Muhlenberg's neuroscience major, which is the school's sixth-largest and fastest-growing major. "Endowed chairs are one of the highest honors a college or university can bestow on a faculty member," Muhlenberg College President Randy Helm said in a statement.

"We are tremendously grateful to the donors who made this marvelous gift so that we can recognize Professor Teissere's academic leadership and extraordinary teaching ability," Helm said.

Teissere spearheaded the creation of the neuroscience major curriculum and has built research collaborations with 35 students in his lab, resulting in five undergraduate theses and several presentations at regional and national meetings.

Teissere's own research has long centered on resolving the biochemical basis of anxiety, according to the college. He is particularly interested in understanding the structure of specific neurotransmitter receptors targeted by anxiety-reducing drugs and plant extracts.

Muhlenberg College's $250,000 match comes from a $10 million matching fund.
Muhlenberg College in Allentown receives $1 million donation from an... http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/allentown/index.ssf/2014/03/muhlenbe... 3 of 6 4/2/2014 9:03 AM

Challenge unveiled last year (http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/allentown/index.ssf/2013/09/seeking_donations_muhlenberg_c.html), which has attracted more than $4 million in new gifts and pledges since September.

The Stanley Road Chair is the fifth named professorship at Muhlenberg College, according to the school.

The others include The Rita and Joseph Scheller Endowed Chair for the RJ Fellows Program; the William D. ’49 and Virginia D. Miers Chair in Entrepreneurial Studies and Business; the Truman L. Koehler ’24 Endowed Chair of Mathematics; and the Sarkis Acopian Professor of Ornithology and Conservation Biology.

Contact Allentown reporter Colin McEvoy at 484-894-2549 or cmcevoy@express-times.com (mailto:cmcevoy@express-times.com).

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Like Tom McNamara, Mike Schlossberg and 2,239 others like this.
Sundance Film Festival winning filmmaker Eugene Jarecki will be showing and discussing his films in the Lehigh Valley this week.

Jarecki, who won the 2012 Sundance Grand Jury Prize for his documentary “The House I Live In” and the 2005 Sundance Grand Jury Prize for his documentary “Why We Fight,” will speak at Lehigh University in Bethlehem and Muhlenberg College in Allentown this week.

“Why We Fight,” which focuses on the U.S. military-industrial complex, will be shown at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Lehigh’s Maginnes Hall in Room 102. Lehigh Associate Professor of History John Pettegrew will lead a post-film discussion.

Jarecki will take part in a screening and discussion of “The House I Live In,” which looks at the human rights implications of the war on drugs, at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Lehigh’s Whitaker Lab, room 303.

At Muhlenberg on Thursday, he’ll take part in a social justice lecture focused on “The House I Live In.” It starts at 7 p.m. at Muhlenberg’s Moyer Hall within Miller Forum.

Jarecki also made the Emmy award-winning “Reagan,” “The Trials of Henry Kissinger” and “Freakonomics.”
John Hunter brings 'World Peace' to Swain

Thursday, April 10 - 7 p.m.
Free and open to the community

On March 20 John Hunter was featured as a "TED All-Star" at the TED2014 Conference in Vancouver, having been voted as one of the Top 100 TED speakers of all times. See his original TED Talk here.

Back in 1978, fourth grade teacher John Hunter put all the problems of the world on a 4' x 5' plywood board and let his students solve them. Over the years his "World Peace Game" has evolved to a multi-level tower of Plexiglas covered with thousands of game pieces, with the players negotiating and solving 50 inter-locking global problems.

The Swain School is proud to host a free community presentation, at which this award-winning global educator explains how his "World Peace Game" has been engaging schoolkids for over 30 years - and why the complex lessons it teaches about peace and justice go further than classroom lectures can. It will be held on Thursday, April 10, at 7 p.m. in The McCann Center.

As part of Mr. Hunter's presentation, there will be screening of the critically-acclaimed educational documentary that chronicles his work, "World Peace and Other 4th Grade Achievements", followed by an interactive discussion.
Mr. Hunter's visit is the third in a series of developing dialogs promoting the power of education to achieve local and global goals. He will be on campus the afternoon of April 10 to make a similar presentation to area middle schoolers.

The evening program is appropriate for adults and students in fourth grade and above. Those planning to attend are encouraged to register at johnhunter.eventbrite.com.

Funding is provided by the Borgenicht Foundation.

To learn more about John Hunter and his work with the World Peace Foundation, click here.

Print out a flyer to post and share!

Photo by Will May
Bob Guzzardi, a wealthy Ardmore, Montgomery County resident, survives the appeal, he still remains a long shot against Corbett.

Guzzardi, 69, a former Democrat-turned-conservative Republican, is running an Internet-only campaign. Guzzardi has pledged to spend no money on a more traditional campaign like television ads or yard signs, even though he has donated $549,540 to other candidates, primarily fiscally conservative Republicans.

Guzzardi poses no real electoral threat to Corbett, said Muhlenberg College political science professor and pollster Chris Borick. But it could embarrass Corbett if Guzzardi picks up a sizable percentage of the vote from Republicans angry at Corbett, who has historically low approval ratings among all voters, he said.
Earlier this month, the GOP, acting through four Republican voters, argued that Guzzardi’s nominating petitions had three problems:

• The challengers' attorney, Lawrence J. Tabas, who is also head lawyer for the GOP, questioned the authenticity of some voters' signatures, stating they were either ineligible or incorrectly written.

• Tabas also argued that Guzzardi misrepresented his occupation as a "semi-retired lawyer and businessman" when state judicial records show he is an "inactive lawyer."

• Tabas also claimed that Guzzardi's petitions had a "fatal defect" because he did not file one of two financial disclosure statements as required by state laws.

But Judge Mary Hannah Leavitt dismissed those three claims.

She said not all the signatures the challengers singled out were incorrect, despite testimony from the challengers' handwriting expert. "Good penmanship is not a standard in the Election Code required of electors wishing to sign a nomination petition," Leavitt wrote.

Leavitt also agreed with Guzzardi's defense that he properly listed his occupation. She said he is a trained lawyer who has never been disciplined, even though he is no longer practicing law.

Finally, Leavitt said Guzzardi's admitted mistake in not filing the financial disclosure statement was not a so-called fatal defect as outlined in state law and prior court precedent cited by Tabas.

Other prior court rulings allow candidates to stay on the ballot if mistakes they make concerning their financial disclosure statements are minor or not their own doing, Leavitt ruled.

Guzzardi's mistake was an honest one, she said, and based on bad advice from the Department of State.

State election and ethics laws require candidates to file financial disclosure statements with the Pennsylvania Department of State and the Ethics Commission. Guzzardi filed his financial papers with the State Department, but not the Ethics Commission.

Until this year, financial disclosure statements were filed on three color-coded carbon copy forms. The original form went to the Ethics Commission, the second form went to the State Department, and the third stayed with the candidate.

But Leavitt sided with Guzzardi's defense lawyer, Gretchen Coles Sterns, who argued that technology rendered that old system null and void.

This year's form was downloaded from the Internet, and there was no need to file in two separate places, Sterns argued during two days of hearings. Once Guzzardi handed in the downloaded form with the State Department on March 10, the agency took that original and posted it online for the public and Ethics Commission to see until he corrected the Ethics statement omission on March 19, Sterns said.

In addition, Leavitt said Guzzardi’s campaign aide, Dan Snyder, “testified credibly” that a State Department employee told him he did not have to file the Internet forms with the Ethics Commission.

In a statement, Sterns said: "Today’s ruling by Judge Leavitt is a victory for the democratic process and Republican primary voters."

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Muhlenberg's edible contest one for the books
Students, staff create edible treats that pay homage to literature.

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As theater design majors at Muhlenberg College, Emily Baldasarra and Hannah Cook have worked with lots of different construction materials but Friday was the first time they had ever built a set from Rice Krispie treats.

Luckily, their entry for the college library's Edible Books Contest – "The Wonderful World of Cinnamon Roald Dahl" — was in miniature and they had plenty of help. Working with them were seniors Alex McKhann, Matthew Dicken, and sophomore Brian Pacelli. Junior Marc Jablonski provided the soundtrack for the mini monument to the author of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory."

They had stiff – and fluffy – competition. Among the 18 entries, the "Bake at Fahrenheit 451" cake by college staffer Katy Mangold took the prize for "Most Book Like."

Librarian Rachel Hamelers' "Twelve Angry Henz", which was a dozen ticked-off looking Peeps sitting at a Hershey's chocolate bar table, won most humorous. A large gingerbread house entitled "The House of Seven 'Clark' Gables," decorated with seven pictures of the dashing actor in various poses, garnered the "Best in Show" award for staff member Joy LeFevre.

Edible Books contests and festivals have been held around the world for more than a decade to celebrate the birthday of Frenchman Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826), who wrote a humorous book on food called "Physiologie du gout."

Contest entries are mostly witty takes on novels, according to Susan Falciani, Muhlenberg special collections and archives librarian. Friday's event was the college's first Edible Books contest and was held as part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of its Trexler Library and National Poetry Month.

After the judging, students, staff and others were invited to eat the entries. "The Hunger Games" dish was pretty dam sparse – a few peas, corn, Twizzlers and frosting. "The Brothers Karmel-zov," made of beer, sugar, salt, chocolate and cream, was — like the Russian novel — dense and hard to digest. Math professor Penny Dunham's "Father Brownie" brownies were to die for.

The students with the "Cinnamon Roald Dahl" entry said they baked, ate and built throughout the night, painting book titles and characters on circles of cake decorating fondant, making cinnamon buns and finishing up about 4 a.m. Friday.

Their hard work was rewarded with the prize for the Best Student entry and the People's Choice award, decided by popular vote.

"It's so much harder than making scenery," Baldasarra said. "It's easier to work with plywood."

Plus, plywood doesn't give you a high fructose hangover.

"The whole group is in agreement about being sugar sick this morning," she said.

Margie Peterson is a freelance writer.
Visit any decent-sized city, and you’ll probably find some “destination” neighborhoods – special shopping districts, ethnic strongholds, or historically significant zones.

And in the west end of Allentown, you’ll find the West End Theatre District, a bustling enclave of residential properties, merchants and artistic venues that’s like no other place in the city – maybe even the entire Lehigh Valley.

The District is bordered by 17th, 22nd, Washington and Liberty Sts. It encompasses about 5,000 residents and nearly 160 businesses, ranging from national chains to single-site merchants including Blink Optical Boutique, BOUTIQUETOGO and STEP in 4 MOR.

And its name reflects the four key venues within: the 19th Street Theater, Theatre 514, Muhlenberg College’s Performance Center on Chew St. and the Pines Dinner Theater on 17th.

Getting better all the time

Thanks to an ongoing revitalization effort spearheaded by the non-profit West End Alliance, the district has become a real draw – not just for the neighbors, but for people throughout the Lehigh Valley as well.

Joe Schaffer, owner of Allentown Appliances, and a member of the Alliance board, is pleased to be part of it.

“It’s a unique situation,” he says, “because it’s a neighborhood as well as a business district. I can walk to my bank or to a restaurant, and drop in on a neighbor on my way back. The atmosphere is completely different from a strip mall’s.”

He adds that his business carries some hard-to-find items, so his customer base comes from a wide area. “When customers come in, I tell them about the other things they can do around here, like the Civic Theatre or the Fairgrounds Farmers’ Market.”
Birth of the Alliance

The seeds for the Alliance were inadvertently planted when a major auto parts store announced its plans to take over a then-vacant property on 19th St.

“It started as a group of people coming together for a common cause,” recalls Michael Drabenstott, president of the West End Alliance. “We saw that building [site of the former Shanty restaurant] as a cornerstone property, and thought that Auto Zone would be better suited to another location. And so we fought it.”

“We decided to take a more proactive stance, looking for other things we could do to make the area more attractive to the residents and to bring in better-fitting businesses.”

The group succeeded, and Auto Zone finally opened at 15th and Tilghman Sts.

That victory led to the formal founding of the West End Alliance as a 501(c)3 neighborhood development organization. Its governing board includes representatives of residents, nearby businesses and Muhlenberg College.

“We decided to take a more proactive stance, looking for other things we could do to make the area more attractive to the residents and to bring in better-fitting businesses,” Drabenstott adds.

The Alliance’s efforts were enhanced by a 2004 marketing research study, performed by Muhlenberg students, that addressed such concerns as perceptions of the area, improvement ideas, and other matters.

Much more than a facelift

Those improvements are most obvious in the heart of the District – that is, 19th St. between Liberty and Tilghman. The more attractive, pedestrian-friendly area offers a sort of welcome mat for businesses that might move in, and for consumers aiming to spend some money.

The recently completed $1.6 million streetscaping project saw the replacement of sidewalks and curbs; installation of new power lines; new brickwork at crosswalks; the planting of young trees along the curbs, with ground-level uplights for soft visual accents after sundown; flower-filled planters; installation of several bike hitches; attractive park benches; and nighttime lighting for the World War II memorial at 19th and Allen.

Board member and Blink Optical owner Suzanne Hauck adds that the architect worked with neighbors and board members in choosing many of the design elements.

And while some vintage commercial architecture has disappeared from the downtown scene, businesses in the district can benefit from an ongoing façade restoration program.

“The city of Allentown and qualifying merchants will each pay half of the costs of renovating storefronts in the District,” Drabenstott says. “We’ve already received several applications and hope to award the funds within the next few months.”

He adds that, although “anything goes” is not permitted, the guidelines of the program are not excessively stringent. “Plans will receive an architectural review, to ensure they’re appropriate to the neighborhood. We want the designs to echo the Art Deco look of the 19th Street Theatre, but not necessarily imitate it.”

With so many visual changes, it should surprise no one that the district will continue to work with its businesses, residents and the Allentown Arts Commission in presenting curated art exhibits at Blink and
Theatre 514. “We’ve done this for three years,” Hauck says, “and we host openings together. It gives people a chance to meet the artists and discuss their works.”

**Synergy abounds**

To understand the level of synergy in the district, just consider the long relationship between the 19th Street Theatre and Muhlenberg College.

One of the District’s anchor properties, the venue opened in September, 1928, making it the oldest movie theater in the city. It’s been home to silent films, talkies and even accommodated the original 3D trend. In 1957, the Civic Little Theater (now called the Civic Theatre of Allentown) bought the property, and added community stage productions to the entertainment mix.

(The theater group also offers acting programs for youth and adults; its illustrious alumni include former residents Amanda Seyfried, Michaela Conlin, Dan Roebuck, Dane DeHaan and Christine Taylor.)

Today, the 19th Street Theatre is the last single-screen theater in Allentown. It shows about 60 independent and international movies each year and hosts special events such as “Science on Screen,” which paired fanciful movies with scientific presentations.

It also operates Theater 514, a flexible “black box” venue for staged and film presentations.

When Dr. Randy R. Helm became president of Muhlenberg College, “The 19th Street Theatre was one of the first things I noticed in the area,” he says. “And when I looked around the neighborhood, I saw family restaurants, interesting shops and other attractions within walking distance of the campus. As I got to know the neighborhood better, I thought Muhlenberg should partner with everyone who wanted to make this a lively place.”

“It’s been amazing to work with President Helm,” says Michael Traupman, managing director of the Civic. “He’s helped reduce the ‘town vs. gown’ mentality by bringing much of the Muhlenberg community into the theatre and into the neighborhood.

“The school’s activities committee selects films for late-night viewing, and those are open to the public. Students qualify for member-rate tickets and other discounts. And some of them serve internships with us.”

“It’s one of Allentown’s gems,” adds Michael Bruckner, Muhlenberg’s vice president of public relations, “and we want to see it improve. It also helps us with our student activities and recruiting programs.”

And Muhlenberg was there to help the Civic cross its $160,000 fundraising goal to convert both theaters to digital projection – a major undertaking but a necessary one, as movie distributors have all but eliminated 35mm prints.

“We can now show a wider variety of films, with a high-quality image,” Traupman says, “and even carry simulcasts of opera performances.”

In return, Muhlenberg enjoys increased access to those facilities. For example, its film studies group views relevant movies as a part of their classes, and professors sometimes use films to enhance class discussions.

The District is also home to some notable special events, particularly the annual Oktoberfest celebration.

“There had always been a ‘fall festival’ run by the Alliance,” says Blink’s Hauck. “I suggested doing
Octoberfest as a fund-raiser for District projects, and it has really taken off.” The day-long street party (on October 5 this year) features plenty of live music – everything from polka bands to crunching blues – authentic German food and other munchies from local vendors, beers by Fegley’s BrewWorks, Vynecrest wines, arts’n’crafts and lots, lots more.

More to come

Despite the extensive renovations, the Alliance is not resting on its laurels. Future projects (in various stages of planning) include:
• A major renovation of Theatre 514. Its capacity, patron comfort and accessibility will increase; and the screen will be repositioned for an enhanced viewing experience.
• The replacement of the forbidding chain-link barrier at the Fairgrounds with a more attractive black-powder-coated fencing and new gates on Liberty and Chew Sts. “There will also be brick columns every 50 to 100 feet,” Drabenstott says, along with additional sidewalk and crosswalk work at key intersections.
• A full-scale renovation of the 19th Street Theatre, to restore the luster of the grand old building.
• Expansion of Oktoberfest. “We plan to go clear up to Allen St.,” Hauck says, “and feature more artists and more crafters – sort of like a street-long art walk. We might add an acoustic music venue and a second beer stand at the corner, as well as a bigger kids’ section.”

The investments of time and effort are paying off. Amy’s Sweets and Treats recently opened, Mayfair will return to the Fairgrounds, a hair salon is in the works, and the legendary Shanty restaurant is being prepped for reopening, Drabenstott says.
As a teenager growing up in East Allentown, Patrick was impressed by the uniforms and exercise formations of the Dieruff High School Air Force ROTC members. He too wanted to look sharp and stand out before his fellow students so he joined the program. The purpose of Junior ROTC is to instill in students in secondary schools the values of citizenship, service to the United States, and personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment.
Four years later, Patrick walked off the graduation platform, diploma in hand, and joined the Army. His true dream was to go to culinary school, but the reality of his situation did not afford him the opportunity. "Joining the military was a great decision for me," confirms Patrick with a wide smile. "It gave me direction, confidence, and skills to help me become successful."

SSG Patrick Thomas, age 43, has served his country for 26 years. Some of his time has been in active status, while other time has been spent with the Pennsylvania National Guard. During this time he had three tours of duty, to Germany (2003), Iraq (2006) and Afghanistan (2012). There should have only been two tours of duty, but a phone call from a friend in his former National Guard unit informed Patrick that the unit was being mobilized to Iraq. Like many patriots and faithful friends, Patrick decided to join his old unit and go to Iraq. "I couldn't bear the thought of my brothers serving and not being there with them," said Patrick.

Patrick, faithful not only to his uniformed brothers but also to his family gives much of the credit to his wife. "She is my rock and a fantastic wife. People don't know that military wives are the backbone of the military and if it wasn't for them soldiers couldn't do half of what they do."

Like most strong family units, Patrick's wife is his biggest supporter. After returning home from his tour in 2012, Patrick decided to go back to school and complete his degree. "I will be the first Thomas to get my college degree," Patrick proudly explained. "I am doing this for my career and also for my children. I want them to see me studying, working hard and leading by example because I want them also to go to college."

Patrick confided that the re-integration process back home is difficult. Going from the worries abroad on the battlefield to a life back at home as a husband, father, and neighbor is a difficult transition. It is often challenging as an adult going back to school, taking notes, reading, and writing reports.

Fortunately, Patrick's transition is a little easier at The Wescoe School of Muhlenberg College. "The Army, like other facets of government, is a big bureaucracy with red tape. Under the GI Bill, we are entitled to a college education but there is a lot of ongoing paperwork involved and it can be very cumbersome," explains Patrick. "I am so happy with The Wescoe School. They are familiar with the process and facilitate the paperwork so I don't need to worry if my papers are in order and if my education is getting paid for. I can just focus on my studies."

Patrick has a lot on his plate. "My wife is a full-time nurse, I have two young kids and I'm still a reservist with the PA National Guard. I have to go away one weekend per month and two full weeks in the summer," explains Patrick. "The Wescoe advisors are so helpful and understanding of my situation."

Patrick gives a lot of credit to his wife, Wendi, who he says is the true hero. To keep himself organized, he admits that he relies heavily on his Day Timer. "I have everything scheduled and I live by my schedule. I still have time to cook and eat dinner with my family, do homework, be a husband, go to church and go to school, but it's all scheduled." Patrick admits that after returning from night classes he typically stays up until 4 a.m. studying. "It's the best time because the information is fresh in my mind and there are no distractions."

In 2015, Patrick is slated to graduate from Muhlenberg College with a degree in Political Science. Despite his military discipline, he has good motivation to keep him on schedule. "My fifth-grade daughter, Emily and second-grade son, Ian, are both straight A students. They always ask to see my grades and report card. They were a little upset at me when I had some B's," laughs Patrick.

At the end of Patrick's last deployment in 2012, Patrick's wife and his in-laws, Frank and Carole Nacci,
hatched a homecoming surprise for Patrick's children. Nacci Printing and the Iron Pigs worked together to surprise Emily and Ian. The kids thought they were on the field between innings to participate in one of the many entertaining games, but they were stunned by what came out of the box they ultimately selected as their prize. We won't spoil it for you, but have your tissues ready for the emotional reunion when you watch Patrick's homecoming video in 2012 on LehighValleyFamily.com homepage.

Muhlenberg College has been named the number one Liberal Arts School for Veterans 2014 by U.S. News & World Report. Whether you are a veteran or a non-military prospective adult student, contact The Wescoe School to learn more about the academic opportunities awaiting you. Visit their website at muhlenberg.edu/wescoe or phone 484-664-3300 to schedule a personal advisement session.

Resources

or Click here to find by Location
Offers

Local Handmade Headbands and Bows for Girls

Every girl needs a great accessory to compliment her look! Check out Ana's Bowtique, you'll ...

Preschool Piano Lessons

WunderKeys is a fun, exciting program that gets preschoolers playing piano! You'll meet piano f...

Contributors

Kenrick Smith - Wellness Content Specialist

Kenrick attended Widener University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree from the Sc...

Laura Putt- Editor
David Joachim feels spoiled living in the Lehigh Valley.

Joachim took time to look back on a food writing career that’s spanned decades, as his 40th cookbook project, "Cooking Light Global Kitchen," hits shelves.

Joachim's been in Upper Saucon Township since 1995, returning to call the valley home after graduating from Muhlenberg College in 1989.

"I live right in the middle of farm country. I have my choice of farmers' markets to go to — I feel spoiled in that regard," Joachim says. "There's all sorts of good food around here."

Not to mention its proximity to major cities, and the ease of flying in and out of Lehigh Valley International Airport, he says — convenient for a jet-setting food writer.

Despite a career working with some of the biggest names in the food world, Joachim says the path to becoming a food writer was anything but clear.

A foot in the door

As a kid, his hideaway was always the kitchen. And when his parents started an early CSA (community supported agriculture), it was the roots of his education in farming and farm-to-table cuisine.

He started writing about food in '92, after dispelling the thought of becoming a full-time chef. He learned food styling and honed his craft as editor of Vegetarian Gourmet magazine. He moved to Rodale, where he started writing and editing cookbooks.

"And I feel very lucky because that was a time when food writing was just starting to be something you could make a living at," he says.

He continued as a columnist for Relish, Prevention, Better Homes & Gardens and Cook's...
Illustrated, and he has appeared on The Cooking Channel, Food Network, History Channel, Discovery Channel and several others, according to his website, davejoachim.com. And he also gives cooking demos and has his own Chef Salt line. And he develops recipes for corporations, such as Panera Bread and Whole Foods.

Currently, he’s in the midst of two cookbook projects — "Mastering Pasta" with Chef Marc Vetri and "The Pork Lover’s Cookbook (with Kevin Gillespie)," due out in 2015.

**A global kaleidoscope**

"Cooking Light Global Kitchen" has him exploring the history of flavors from around the world. Sections are broken into six geographic areas, with a guide to the flavors and dishes that lead that locale’s cuisine.

"This book is meant to reflect a big kaleidoscope of flavors," Joachim says, describing the "culinary greatest hits from around the world."

But despite the name, it's not a cookbook that will send you running to 15 different specialty food stores for ingredients.

"Buy local, eat global," he says.

"The point of this book is to show people how to use all these great flavors right in front of them (at the supermarket)," he says, rattling off miso, lemongrass, coconut milk, Greek yogurt and sriracha as some of the international flavors that have permeated local shelves.

But the challenge of a global cookbook is in fairly representing the dishes one would expect to find on each continent.

Joachim’s included the Southeast Asian dishes he thinks people would expect — pad thai and satay — but he also wants to share those he thinks more people need to know about, like the kind of grilled pork and pickled veggies that hearken breakfast in Cambodia.

**Building flavors**

Comparing dishes on a global scale uncovers common threads, bridges built through globalization and stark flavor differences.

Take Asian cuisine, for instance. Joachim describes the root of the flavor profiles that call for contrasting flavors. In the West, we mark dishes with complementary flavors, like butter and vanilla. In the East, Joachim says, they look for contrast.

"The flavor pops in your mouth more. The tastes are more dynamic," he says.
And it’s not just the flavor. Joachim's latest book takes readers through the evolution of cuisine, citing the fact that 500 years ago, chile peppers were foreign in Indian cuisine. Now, look at their role in bolstering chana masala and curries.

The collaboration with Cooking Light lends a healthy element to the book. But for Joachim, healthy doesn't mean subtracting.

"Healthiness is more about what you're adding in, rather than taking away," he says. Other cultures rely on a variety of different herbs, veggies and fruits to build flavor.

Joachim cites Chicken Larb for proof — a Laos dish supported by curry, shallots, cucumber, cilantro and lime.

Joachim says the dish is easy, delicious and healthy.

The 150 recipes are not all Joachim's. Some are culled from The Cooking Light archives; other recipes and tips are from 15 renowned chefs, including Rick Bayless, Marc Vetri, Lidia Bastianich, Marcus Samuelsson, Jose Garces and Mark Bittman.

And the collaboration and research is what he says makes the book unique.

"What makes a cookbook different than a pile of recipes is the research, the personality and the recipe testing," he says.

* * *

Valley hotspots

So where does this foodie go for good grub?

He's a fan of Jenny's Kuali, 102 E. Fourth St. in Bethlehem. He says he's a fan of the small, family-run ethnic places in the Lehigh Valley, and this one serves up tasty Malaysian fare.

When he needs gadgets, he heads to La Belle Cuisine-Fine Cookware, 447 Chestnut St. in Emmaus. He says in addition to its extensive online catalog, the store is "jam-packed with good bakeware and useful, high-quality gadgets."

* * *

See him in action:

Joachim was just at Allentown Public Library for a talk on herbs. Check his website, davidjoachim.com for upcoming talks and appearances.

Joachim is also a regular at Musikfest, performing with his band Tavern Tan. The band's been together 10 years,
and has been known to make monthly appearances at The Funhouse, 5 E. Fourth St. in Bethlehem.

Have a tasty tip to share? Email me at khuth@express-times.com.

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905 people like Lehigh Valley Food on lehighvalleylive.com.

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Sprout Film Festival celebrates people with developmental disabilities
Sprout Film Festival celebrates people with developmental disabilities

A child with Asperger's syndrome finds joy in playing the bagpipes. An Australian rock group is made up almost entirely of members with physical and intellectual disabilities. And a 7-year-old shares what it's like to have a younger brother with Down syndrome.

These are some of people you will meet in eight films that are sad and funny and inspiring and are being shown as part of the Sprout Film Festival, a free public event Saturday at Allentown's Muhlenberg College.

"All the films in the festival are for, by or about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities," says Bruce Seidel, director of development for The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties, which is hosting the festival. "The mission of the festival is to use film as a tool for advocacy to change the perception of mainstream kids toward their disabled peers."

The Sprout Film collection is located in New York City, and the festival was started in 2003 by Anthony Di Salvo, who wanted to bring programming to people with developmental disabilities.

"There may not be anything in the world more influential than the medium of film," he says. "Film gives a unique opportunity to strengthen community consciousness about people with developmental disabilities, their history and culture."
Rudely Interrupted,' a short documentary about a rock act whose members are disabled, is one of eight films about children with intellectual and developmental disabilities being shown at the Sprout Film Festival April 26 at Muhlenberg College. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO / April 15, 2014)

Di Salvo says people with developmental disabilities are marginalized in the media. By showing critically acclaimed films, the festival hopes to break down stereotypes and offer accurate portrayals of people with disabilities.

A touring Sprout Film Festival was created in 2006 to let agencies pick films and show them in their communities. This is the second year that The Arc has participated.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to bring the entire family and begin a conversation on the importance of accepting and respecting other people who may be different," Seidel says.

The films shown on Saturday will be:

- "Bagpipes and Bullies," a 4-minute documentary about a young boy with Asperger's syndrome, whose family makes a conscious decision not to fit in.
- "Bright/Simple," a four-minute documentary about a program in which intellectually disadvantaged people create works of art.
- "Deedah," a 25-minute documentary about a 7-year-old girl's relationship with her 6-year-old brother, who has Down syndrome — or has he calls it — "Up!" syndrome.
- "Distinctively," a 4-minute documentary about Ella and Eavan, 6-year-old identical twins, one of whom has Down syndrome.
- "Dream Lover," a 25-minute narrative about Seth, a shy man with developmental disabilities. He loves Linda, who lives in a group home with him. When she is ready to leave the home, Seth must decide whether to tell her how he feels.
- "Snack and Drink," a 3-minute animation about Ryan, a teenager with autism living in Austin, Texas. It documents his trip to a local store for a snack and drink.
"Rudely Interrupted," a 9-minute documentary about Australia's unique indie rock act, in which five out of six of the members have a range of physical and intellectual disabilities but also a common interest in self expression through music.

"One Question," a 7-minute documentary in which 35 people with developmental disabilities answer the same question, "If you could change one thing about yourself, what would you change?"

More than 12 student groups from Lehigh Valley area middle schools, high schools and a college are participating. They helped choose the films that will be shown. The students also made posters that promote inclusion, respect for human dignity and a celebration of diversity.

Seidel says two schools in particular went above and beyond the requirements of the project.

"The way they approached it was incredible and unique," Seidel says. "There were kids coming together to lift each other up."

At St. Joseph The Worker School in Orefield, middle school students produced public service announcements about the festival and the message of including kids who might be different. They were shown on the school television network and seen by all students. One student also wrote a short story inspired by watching the films.

At Northampton Middle School, rather than just one group working on the project, the entire student body participated, creating posters about inclusion.

"The posters were pasted all over the walls of the entire school," Seidel says. "It was really pretty cool."

Other schools that participated were: Allentown Central Catholic High School, Bangor High School, Bethlehem Central Catholic High School, Liberty High School, Nazareth High School, Parkland High School, Salisbury High School, Whitehall High School, Delaware Valley High School, Pocono Mountain High School and East Stroudsburg University.

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Sprout Film Festival

•What: Eight films about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

•When: 1 p.m. Saturday

•Where: Moyer Hall, Muhlenberg College, 2400 Chew St., Allentown. Enter semi-circular drive off Chew between 23rd and 26th streets. Moyer Hall is the second building on right side, next to the chapel.

•How much: Free

•Info: http://www.arcoflehighnorthampton.org

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Pennsylvania Gov. Corbett wants candidate Wolf to release tax records | ... http://triblive.com/politics/politicalheadlines/5984001-74/wolf-tax-corbett
Businesses embrace energy, ideas of interns | Lehigh Valley Business
Businesses embrace energy, ideas of interns | Lehigh Valley Business

A career fair at Muhlenberg College in Allentown draws businesses and students – students who are looking for internships and jobs.

Long gone are the days of an intern as merely the coffee-getter and errand-runner; that ended years ago.

Gone, too, is the era of having the intern answer the phone, cull emails and, essentially, waste the remainder of the day on the Internet.

Instead, businesses today embrace interns in an entirely new way, seeking out their innovative spirit, absorbing their energy and immediately throwing them into important roles and duties.

But how do companies land qualified interns who could very well end up filling their pipeline of future employees?

Businesses turn to colleges – and vice versa.

Colleges in the Greater Lehigh Valley, for example, now offer a wider range of services to encourage, prepare and help students earn internships that are so crucial to launching careers.

That’s what happened to Muhlenberg College senior Jason Schunkewitz, who – thanks to the annual Lehigh Valley Collegiate Career Expo last year – landed a 12-week internship last summer at Lutron Electronics in Coopersburg. The skills and experience at Lutron helped Schunkewitz to earn a full-time job at Quintiq, a supply chain optimization firm in Radnor, starting in June.
“I feel very prepared,” Schunkewitz said. “All of the skills, activities and job work I have acquired have given me an advantage, and a lot of it would not have been possible without my internship.”

Internships, in turn, help businesses.

“We really rely on interns to bring new ideas and fresh experience,” said Laurie Gostley-Hackett, manager of community relations and philanthropy at Air Products and Chemicals in Lower Macungie Township.

The career service departments at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Penn State Berks in Reading and Lehigh University in Bethlehem all are part of a consortium with 18 other Greater Lehigh Valley colleges. They work together to hold the Lehigh Valley Collegiate Career Expo, the largest annual career fair for their students with more than 100 companies in attendance.

The expo connects students and businesses with internship and job opportunities.

“Internships offer a lot of opportunities for students to do career exploration, regardless of their major,” said Alana Albus, director of Muhlenberg’s career center. “It’s a good training ground for our future workforce.”

Muhlenberg’s on-campus career center also does a lot of collaboration with its alumni, who serve as mentors and speakers for career development events and workshops, including tips on internship resume and cover letter writing and the interview process.

The college also uses an online portal system, called eRecruiting, for students to upload their resume and to access internship postings and job opportunities.

Albus said her office works to help students find what their values, interests, personality and skills are collectively telling them.

“It’s important to like what you do,” she said.

The Penn State Berks campus also provides on-site career services and helps nearly 300 students obtain internships a year.

The college holds career fairs on campus in the spring and fall and workshops throughout the year. It also invites corporations to visit to conduct interviews with students.

The school transports its students to other career fairs throughout the year, including four held at the Penn State main campus in State College, each fair having nearly 400 participating companies.

“We have had a lot of success with students getting interviews,” said Tish Jepsen, coordinator of career services for Penn State Berks.

All 20 Penn State campuses are connected by the online Nittany Lion Career Network, which includes about 27,000 corporate contacts for internships and job opportunities, and the career services department works to increase that number.

“Internships are a way for the student to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to a real-life situation,” said Alexa Wojciechowski, coordinator of internships and job development at Penn State Berks.

Lehigh University uses the Lehigh University Career Information Exchange as its online system for
Internship and job opportunities, which in 2013 had about 2,800 full-time employment listings with more than 1,150 companies, spanning across all majors.

“Having an internship experience that is career-related will make a student more marketable,” said Nick Praedin, assistant director of co-op and experiential education. “Internships provide a network of professionals for students to tap into.”

Lehigh holds a spring and fall career fair, and each department on campus holds its own career fair, as well. The college also has workshops and one-on-one career counseling and instruction throughout the year.

“Students are in a pivotal time in their development while in college,” Praedin said. “They want to succeed, and that creates a drive that can add value to a company.”

Air Products and Chemicals in 2012 started the Air Products Community Internship Program at Muhlenberg College, Moravian College, Cedar Crest College, DeSales University and Kutztown University – and is looking to add colleges to the program.

The program donates $10,000 to each of the colleges to ensure that students who participate in internships for nonprofit organizations receive compensation, either through wages or tuition.

Gostley-Hackett said Air Products hires nearly 200 interns a year at its Trexlertown facility.

“They are in school and are at the top of their game, and we welcome their innovations,” she said.

The career service departments of Muhlenberg, Penn State Berks and Lehigh work to make the internship process as seamless as possible for the student and the business.

“I think for a business it’s a win-win,” Schunkewitz said. “It’s like a 12-week interview, and you can tell more from a person in 12 weeks than in a one-day interview.”

Jennifer Glose

Reporter Jennifer Glose covers health care, Berks County and other topics. She can be reached at jenniferg@lbv.com or 610-807-9619, ext. 111. Follow her on Twitter @jenniferg_LVB and read her blog, “Networking,” at http://www.lvb.com/section/networking-blog.
Theater: Art imitates life in Muhlenberg's 'Mad Forest' - mcall.com

Jake Haven Parisse as Toma, Will Kellogg as Ianos, and Kim Rogers as Lucia in 'Mad Forest' at Muhlenberg College. (SCOTT SNYDER, CONTRIBUTED PHOTO / April 21, 2014)
With unrest in Ukraine shaking up eastern Europe in the news, Muhlenberg College Theatre and Dance is exploring similar events in neighboring Romania 25 years ago.

"Mad Forest," by British playwright Caryl Churchill, is set during the Romanian Revolution, a series of protests and riots that took place in Bucharest Dec. 21-25, 1989, and led to the overthrow of communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

The show, running Thursday through Saturday, is directed by Beth Schachter, chairwoman of Muhlenberg's Department of Theatre and Dance and a member of the creative team of the original New York production.

"Mad Forest," takes place in three acts — before, during and after the revolution. The first and final acts focus on weddings and the second act is based on interviews conducted by Churchill, a director and students that document the events of the revolution.

The play captures the events through the eyes of those who experienced it. On the eve of the revolution, in a society filled with paranoia and secret police, two families, one poor and one wealthy, struggle to survive the chaos and deprivations of a communist regime.

In each act the same actors portray different characters. The play employs magical realism in the first and third acts with characters that include an angel, a vampire and a ghost.

"Mad Forest' tells the story of what happens when people who were once oppressed have the freedom to speak truthfully," says Schachter. "It comments on the fragile nature of families and relationships in a very human way."

Schachter became familiar with "Mad Forest" when she served as dramaturgy for the American premiere of the play in New York City in 1991. She has wanted to revisit it since.

"Working on that production gave me insight into what is going on underneath the words, and more importantly, underneath the silences," Schachter says. "This play clarifies what so often goes unsaid between people in difficult situations."

Shortly after the revolution, Churchill traveled to Bucharest with director Mark Wing-Davey and a team of students to interview eye-witnesses and experience post-revolution Romania firsthand. While there, they lived with Romanian families and collaborated with Romanian drama students. The play grew out of that experience and premiered in London in 1990, opening in New York the following year.

Schachter hopes to bring the stories of revolution to a new generation.

"These stories have become particularly relevant in the last few months," Schachter says. "History is unfolding in the Ukraine, with remarkable parallels to 1989 Romania. It's not every day that you see world leaders toppled in a matter of weeks."

Churchill, who has received Obie Awards for "Top Girls," "Cloud Nine" and "Serious Money," is known for writing about controversial themes, including gender roles, power struggles and political conflicts.

"Churchill's writing is fascinating because it is blunt and direct," Schachter says. "She is able to capture how these characters struggle to find their voices after a shift in power through the revolution."

"Mad Forest" also features a faculty spotlight performance by Holly Cate, who teaches acting at Muhlenberg. She plays a variety of roles, including an angel, a grandmother, a dog and a translator.

"I love working on shows here because it is so much fun to play alongside students that I have had in class," Cate says. "I have always wanted to work on a Churchill play, so this is a great learning opportunity for me as well as for the students involved in the production."
The performance is intended for mature audiences.

**"Mad Forest,"** 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday, at Muhlenberg College, Baker Theatre, Trexler Pavilion for Theatre and Dance, 2400 Chew St., Allentown. Tickets: $15; $8, students. 484-664-3333, http://www.muhlenberg.edu/theatre.

"Polaroid Stories" at Cedar Crest

Naomi Iizuka's 1997 play, "Polaroid Stories" draws from "Metamorphoses" by Roman poet Ovid to tell the stories of street kids living on the edge of a desolate, urban landscape.

Directed by Tim Brown at Cedar Crest College, the show blends dance choreographed by Robin Gerchman, classical mythology and life stories told by homeless kids who are named after the ancient Roman gods.

The play features mythological kids named Orpheus, Persephone, Eurydice, Echo, Narcissus, Dionysus and Ariadne as young people pushed to society's fringe. The play also uses real life stories gathered through interviews with young prostitutes and runaways and blurs the line between fact and fable in its tales of transformation, desperation, retribution and rebirth. The kids' language mixes poetry and profanity, imbuing the play with lyricism and theatrical force.

By the end of the play, the stories we have witnessed help us understand and empathize with the street kids whose Polaroid snapshots are unveiled in the final scene.

"Polaroid Stories" was originally commissioned by En Garde Arts in New York, produced in the 1997 *Humana Festival* of New Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville and received the 1998 PEN Center West Award for Drama.


All those attending Thursday's show are invited to a post-show cast party with complimentary pizza and cake in the TCC Falcon's Nest Bistro. A talk-back follows Sunday's performance.

Also, on the third floor of the TCC, is a display of antique Polaroid cameras on loan from Amico Studios of Allentown.

The show is not recommended for those under age 17 due to strong language and mature themes.

**"Broadway's Next Hit Musical"**

Have you always wanted to create your own musical? The audience gets to take part in the creative process with "Broadway's Next Hit Musical" Thursday at Kutztown University's Schaeffer Auditorium.

In the final show of KU Presents! a cast of seven actors lead the audience in making a completely improvised musical comedy.

Deb Rabbai, Rob Schiffermann, Robert Z. Grant, Kobi Libii, Stefan Schick, Rebecca Vigil and emcee Greg Triggs gather song suggestions from the audience during the first act and host an award ceremony spotlighting the songs from four "best musical" nominees based on the audience-generated song titles. Eric March accompanies on piano.

During the second act the cast creates an entire musical based on the winning song from the first act.

Past "songs" and "shows" include "Truck Drivin' Dog" from "Who's A Fancy Pants Now?" "Rockin' the Car at the Drive-In" from "Comb-Thru Love," "Under the Table" from "Monsters With Spoons" and "It's Love ... Maybe" from "Ivory Tower."

The show opened off-Broadway in 2005 and was a recipient of a 2007 MAC Award, given by the nonprofit Manhattan Association of Cabarets & Clubs.


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Pennsylvanians increasingly unhappy with health law

Despite 8 million enrolled, poll finds public increasingly displeased with it.

By Tim Darragh, Of The Morning Call
9:35 P.M. EDT, APRIL 23, 2014

The Obama administration may have exceeded predictions of how many people would sign up for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act, but people in Pennsylvania are increasingly dissatisfied with the law and health care in the United States in general.

A new Morning Call/Muhlenberg College Public Health Program poll of 432 Pennsylvanians surveyed in the two weeks after the conclusion of the initial open enrollment period under the law found that the act, also called Obamacare, is slipping in its already weak public support. The percentage of those who view the law "very favorably" or "somewhat favorably" fell from 44 percent in the fall of last year to 39 percent now. Meanwhile, those who viewed the law very or somewhat unfavorably rose from 41 percent to 47 percent.

Chris Borick, director of Muhlenberg's Institute of Public Opinion, said the negative view of the law likely increased when the rollout of open enrollment failed last fall.

"[The administration was] playing a game of catch-up" from the start, he said.

The biggest shift in attitude occurred among respondents who had coverage through their jobs or a public program such as Medicare. When asked if their family was better off, in worse shape or unaffected by the Affordable Care Act, 23 percent of respondents
last fall said they were unaffected. This month, 48 percent said the law had no impact on them.

"For many Americans, nothing has changed," Borick said.

Nothing has changed for Medicare beneficiary Barbara Warnke of Bethlehem, who is among those telling the pollster she is unhappy with the law. Giving subsidized insurance to low-income people will drive up her share of the cost of Medicare, she said. She also opposes the law's mandate that most people have health insurance.

"I don't think you should force people to get health insurance," she said.

According to Borick, the act "for many, is defined by the mandate."

He noted that other parts of the law, such as a prohibition on excluding coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, poll well.

"When you do take it apart," he said, "you could see that many aspects of it remain very popular."

The law also closes the so-called "doughnut hole" — the gap in Medicare Part D coverage that forced senior citizens to pay extra for their prescriptions until coverage resumed. That provision of the law does not benefit Warnke either, since she also is a beneficiary of a state-run prescription subsidy program called PACE, she said.

The latest national Gallup poll also shows more than half of America views the law unfavorably.

Regarding health reform, respondents have even less confidence in Congress than in the Obama administration, with 80 percent disapproving of congressional action compared with just 8 percent approving.

Congress' approval rating on health care "makes the president's poor numbers look outright great," Borick said. "There really is no confidence in Congress right now at all."

Another respondent, Elaine Fiorillo of Chester County, said people will come around to support the law in time. Recalling the early months of Medicare, Fiorillo said the popular program took several years to get "straightened out."

Fiorillo, who also is covered by Medicare, said she's a nurse and understands the importance of health insurance. She also is a Democrat, and criticized Republican Gov. Tom Corbett for not expanding Medicaid under the health care law. Corbett is proposing an alternative plan now under review by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"If they had signed on to Medicaid [expansion], they'd have a lot more" people covered now, Fiorillo said.

Also in the poll was evidence that Pennsylvanians are increasingly dissatisfied with health care, not just insurance for it. A year ago, 58 percent of those polled said they were strongly or somewhat satisfied with the quality of health care in the United States. Thirty-nine percent were somewhat or strongly dissatisfied.

In the latest round, the breakdown was 49 percent satisfied, 47 percent dissatisfied.

That could be considered a tie, since the poll's margin of error is 6 percent.

Among respondents, 17 percent had purchased individual health insurance, 5 percent were uninsured and 74 percent had employer-provided coverage, Medicaid or Medicare. In terms of political affiliations, 42 percent were Democrats, 36 percent Republican, 11 percent independent, 9 percent unregistered and 2 percent identified as "other," a mix reflective of the state's electorate.

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Welcome to the EACE forum – the conversation starts here!

Where They Are Now – Cailin Pachter, Muhlenberg College

About these ads (http://en.wordpress.com/about-these-ads/)

Cailin Pachter

Director of Pre-Professional Advising, Muhlenberg College

Cailin has a Bachelor of Arts in Biology with a minor in Psychology from Lehigh University and a Master’s in Community Counseling from Eastern Kentucky University. She is currently working on a certificate in English from Muhlenberg (expected this month), just for fun! Cailin has been in her current role for one year and with the Muhlenberg College for 14 years.

What was your career path to get your current role? Student Services Counselor at Somerset Community College, Somerset, KY; Counselor, Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Louisville, KY; Undergraduate Student Counselor, University of Maryland University College, College Park, MD; Career Counselor, Career Center, University of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD; Career Counselor, Career Center, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA; Assistant Director, Career Center, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA; Associate Director, Career Center, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA; Interim Director, Career Center, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA; Director, Career Center, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA and current role

What was your first job? My very first job out of college was a waitress in a bookstore/cafe in Elkins, WV. My first professional job was in Student Services for a branch campus of a community college in Kentucky.

Why did you choose this career? I sort of fell into a career in higher education. I was working on my Masters in Counseling and a neighbor who worked for the local community college told me about a job opening there. When I moved to Louisville, Kentucky, I found a job with a TRIO program that helped people get enrolled in college. My favorite part of that job was the career counseling – especially the assessments like the Strong and the MBTI. When I later moved to Maryland, and then Pennsylvania, I
chose to concentrate in career development. Last year I was given the opportunity to move into a position at Muhlenberg that focuses on pre-professional advising, I work with pre-law students and also those going into the health professions. As I begin my college education as “pre-med”, I feel I have come full-circle.

**What is the skill that is most important in your current role?** Knowledge – As an advisor, I am expected to be knowledgeable regarding what it takes to be admitted into professional school. I need to know what classes they should take, what experiences they should have, what the admissions committees are “looking for”, etc. Communication – Not only do I need to be knowledgeable, I need to be able to convey this knowledge appropriately. I meet regularly with every student to get to know them and answer their questions. Writing – I must write a letter of evaluation for every student who is applying to medical, dental, podiatry and optometry school. This requires me to be reflective, thorough, and honest.

**How did you develop this skill and how do you fine-tune it regularly?** Knowledge – I read as much as I can about my field and confer with my colleagues when I have questions. I also attend annual meetings and conferences. Communication – I meet regularly with all students and practice the active listening skills I learned in graduate school. Writing – For the past number of years I have been taking writing-intensive courses in the English Department at Muhlenberg. I believe this has enhanced my writing skills.

**What is your biggest career accomplishment?** Wow – this is a tough one! Perhaps it was making my way from a part-time career counselor in 1999 up to the Career Center Director in 2008. I didn’t necessarily have aspirations of being a director when I started, but one thing led to another. It was a terrific journey!

**How many years were you a member of EACE?:** About 15 years

**Did you serve on the Board of Directors or as a Committee Chair?** I served on and then co-chaired the Awards and Grants Committee. I served on and then co-Chaired the Annual Conference Program Committee. I co-chaired the Annual Conference in Hunt Valley, MD. I co-chaired the Professional Development Committee. I ran for the Board a few times but never won – I was asked to step in for a board member who was taking a leave of absence, but that was right when I learned I would be leaving Career Development.

**How did EACE help you in your personal career development?** It definitely taught me a lot about networking. I met a lot of great people in EACE and continue to keep in touch as much as possible.

**Did you have an EACE Mentor or another member of EACE serve as your unofficial mentor?** Helen Brown was a great help to me, as was Deborah D’Atillio – especially during my time as conference co-chair. John Fracchia was a huge supporter as well.

**What is your advice to current EACE members who aspire to your current or a similar role to yours?** I’m not sure any of them are aspiring to be a pre-professional advisor, but the best thing they can do to advance their careers is to get to know lots of people and be willing to help in any way they can. You never know when you might need something in return some day. In the meantime, you will learn lots!

Cailin did not visit her career center when in college.
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An earnest appreciation of @historicalcats

An earnest appreciation of @historicalcats

BY CAITLIN DEWEY  April 24 at 1:52 pm

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"Young skippers South Boston Yacht Club." (Leslie Jones/Boston Public Library)

The Digital Public Library of America — a laudable effort to provide free online access
to “society’s digitized cultural heritage” — recently celebrated its one-year anniversary. Which means there’s no time like the present to celebrate the library’s cats.

Cats?! — you might be thinking. Of all the digitized treasures in the DPLA’s archives — 19th-century Native American narratives, prohibition-era photos, Gold Rush certificates and maps — you’re going with cats?

But I am not, it turns out, the only one. In fact, one enterprising developer has used DPLA’s API (basically an interface that lets programs talk to each other) to power an entire Twitter account dedicated to nothing but historical felines. It is, appropriately, called @HistoricalCats, and it was developed over the course of an afternoon by amateur coder/aspiring librarian Adam Malantonio during the American Library Association’s unofficial hackathon in January.

Malantonio, who currently works as a public services assistant at Muhlenberg University’s library, had never been to a “conference-like event” before and wasn’t sure what his project should be. So he chose, in his own words, something “silly”: All @HistoricalCats does is pull cat-tagged photos at random from DPLA’s archive and post links to them on Twitter with silly captions. Like so!

Fine Feline! "Dirty South End alley"
dp.la/item/873685fc8...
9:00 AM - 21 Apr 2014

Dirty South End alley · Digital Public Library of America
Source: Boston Public Library. Creator: Jones, Leslie, 1886-1967. Title and date from information provided by Leslie Jones or the Boston Public Library on the negative or negative sleeve.
A couple things about this project strike me as imminently brilliant. (Certainly brilliant enough to merit more than 281 followers, the account’s current and inexplicably modest following). First off, it’s a good, accessible demonstration of what the DPLA does best: (1) Collect and surface diverse, otherwise-siloed historical materials from libraries, museums and universities around the country, and (2) Make those records available to programmers, academics and the general public. Second, it’s hilarious. Look at these cheerful cats!

Most importantly, however, @HistoricalCats is a perfect collision of history and Internet culture, writ small: There is arguably nothing more “of the Internet” than cats, and there is surely nothing more dryly historical than yellowed engravings from the
“Mid-Manhattan Picture Collection” or somesuch. That actually makes Historical Cats a good metaphor for DPLA in general, since the project’s goal is to merge old-school library, museum and archive holdings with digital sensibilities. The DPLA now includes more than seven million items from 1,300 institutions, all of them searchable (and map-able!) at dp.la.

Then again, maybe I’m overthinking it.

“Why cats?” Malantonio wrote in an email to the Post. “They’re our furry overlords, and I wanted to pay tribute to them!”

No matter how many decades pass, that will never change.
Democrats across the health care law, fearing in the face of relentless

Apparently they didn’t get

Democrats vying to be are trying to one-up each other support for the law and are airing ads boasting ties to OpEds proving their pro 

even suggesting one D “frenemy” of the law.
And while embracing the law is risky, since it could haunt the nominee in November’s election, it is a reminder that Obamacare is still popular with at least one group important in the Pennsylvania gubernatorial contest: Democrats. President Barack Obama just last week called on Democrats to “forcefully defend and protect” the law.

On Tuesday, Rep. Allyson Schwartz released an ad touting her support for the Affordable Care Act and getting health coverage for kids with preexisting conditions.

“I worked with President Obama on the Affordable Care Act and getting health coverage for kids with preexisting conditions,” Schwartz says in the ad, which includes images of her and Obama together. “It was my legislation that companies can no longer deny coverage for kids with preexisting conditions.”

Schwartz also hits incumbent GOP Gov. Tom Corbett — who is considered one of the hottest governors in the country this year — for refusing to accept the federal Medicaid expansion to help replace him, she’d make it a top priority to reverse that decision.

On Wednesday, Schwartz went further, telling reporters on she’s the “only one in this race” to fully embrace and protect the law. In particular, she singled out fellow primary contender Tom Wolf, the lifelong liberal who has led the polls after pouring millions of his own money into the race and going up on the air early.

Wolf and the other two primary candidates quickly pushed back. Wolf tweeted out both a link to a local news op-ed he’d written about health care and a blog post saying, “We should set up state exchanges and do everything in our power to protect the health care reform law.”

His campaign also forwarded to reporters a post on the progressive blog Keystone Politics that called Schwartz a “frenemy” of Obamacare, noting that she’d “worked to undermine the law’s interests don’t like, at the same time as she stresses her support for the law overall.”
Former state environmental protection director Katie McGinty’s campaign, meanwhile, worked to “weaken” the law, and called the congresswoman’s statements “mind-boggling.” McCord’s campaign noted that he and Schwartz hold the same position on the law — up their differences on another issue, the state’s potential drilling tax.

With less than four weeks until the primary, Schwartz, who was once considered the frontrunner, is looking for momentum to propel her back to the top spot, and her embrace of Obamacare could provide the jolt she needs.

(CARTOONS: Matt Wuerker on Obamacare (http://www.politico.com/wuerker/2014/04/001724-024490.html))

“It’s about moving her campaign off the dime and energizing a base of voters in the suburban counties — with its large pool of female voters and liberals that are sympathetic to her platform — Pennsylvania pollster Terry Madonna said. “This is probably her best chance to catch up to Corbett in the suburban counties.”

Chris Borick, who conducts polls for Muhlenberg College, noted that Obamacare is still popular among Pennsylvania Democrats: Muhlenberg’s latest health care polling, released Thursday morning, showed that 87 percent of Democrats approve of the law, compared with just 18 percent who disapprove.

“The candidates are trying to carve out identities that might resonate with perhaps not all, but a strong cohort,” he said. “The law still plays well among most Democrats, and especially the ones that are going to show up during primary elections.”

The Democratic candidates in Pennsylvania are running toward the health care law just weeks of relatively good news, including the announcement that more than 8 million Pennsylvanians have signed up for insurance through the exchanges — beating earlier projections following the disastrous launch of the website.

After making that announcement, the president himself urged Democrats to proudly embrace their signature accomplishment.

“I don’t think we should apologize for it. I don’t think we should be defensive about it. I think we should stand behind it. I think it’s the right story to tell,” Obama said at a White House press conference last Thursday.

In Pennsylvania, though, a pro-Obamacare campaign could ultimately backfire. Corbett, he’s still an incumbent, and polls show that overall support for the health law is tenuous.
The Muhlenberg polling (http://articles.mcall.com/2014-04-23/news/mc-obamacare-pollinsurance-health-care) found that, among all adults in the state, approval of the health (disapproval stands at 47 percent). Among Republicans, approval of the law is at just

Robert Blendon, a Harvard expert on health care politics, said views on the law are in

“Democrats really like this bill … and Republicans and independents are as or more n
“In Democratic primaries, or areas where there are considerable Democratic voters, p and they feel good about it.”

Corbett, of course, is already worrying about the general election. The Republican’s te Schwartz, whom many expect could catch up with Wolf now that she’s on the air as w

The Corbett camp sent an email to supporters on Wednesday about how Schwartz, “c “doubling down” on the “Obamacare failures she crafted.”

“Do we really want someone like this calling the shots in PA?” the email asked.

Author: Emily Schultheis (eschultheis@politico.com | @emilyrs)
Short URL: http://politi.co/1iiCfyk

AROUND THE WEB

Economist: “Obama Won't Finish Term Without Bottom Dropping Out”
Money Morning

‘Warren Buffett Indicator’ Signals Collapse in Stock Market
Moneynews

You Won't Believe Who’s Related to Abraham Lincoln
Ancestry.com

YOU’VE got THIS!
HARRISBURG — “Top of the mornin’ to you!”

Attorney General Kathleen Kane cheerfully greeted photographers and reporters for a St. Patrick’s Day news conference. Yet it was anything but a good morning for Kane.

The state’s first elected female Democratic attorney general hunkered down for two days earlier, working on explanations about why she did not prosecute five Philadelphia Democrats for taking cash and jewelry from an undercover informant who recorded their encounters.

The legislative sting, which Kane termed “so botched that this case was found unable to be prosecuted,” began under Republican Attorney General Tom Corbett, now the state’s governor.

“The evidence developed was inconsistent, underdeveloped and lacked focus,” Kane said.

Since the March weekend when news broke that Kane dropped the case, many of her arguments have been challenged — some contradicted — potentially damaging her political future, analysts say.

“She came into office with a high level of trust, and I think this has eroded that,” said Moe Coleman, director emeritus of the University of Pittsburgh’s Institute of Politics. “Right now, I think it has hurt her politically. It just looks really funny — people giving cash to elected officials?”

Kane questions the timing of the case becoming public knowledge.

Her aides believe it was an attempt to hurt her credibility before she releases a report on why it took Corbett nearly three years to charge former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky with molesting boys; her office has examined that case for 14 months. A jury convicted Sandusky in 2012 of 45 criminal counts.
Hell has officially frozen over in Pennsylvania. The first political ad warmly embracing ObamaCare, by a candidate not named Obama, hit state airwaves last week. It likely will be the last pro-ObamaCare ad ever made. Allyson Schwartz boldly went where no Democrat has gone before, trying to gain ground in a primary race that is slipping swiftly from her hands.

The suburban Philadelphia congresswoman, seeking the Democrat nomination for governor, not only extolled ObamaCare's virtues in her ad; she called out her rivals on social media, in press releases and on MSNBC for not being equally pro-ObamaCare. "I'm proud of it. And I believe the other Democrats in this race should also speak up and talk about their pride in this law," she said.

If this is how she genuinely feels, then at least give her credit for standing up for her principles. But if she is using the issue as a wedge to escape her poor polling, then it only strengthens the notion that ObamaCare is poison for Democrats.

Schwartz, the early frontrunner in the gubernatorial race and the darling of Washington elites, fell behind as the primary field grew. The most recent Franklin & Marshall College polls show her trailing York County businessman Tom Wolf; he holds strong 33-percent support, while she is at 7 percent and hoping to persuade the 46 percent of Democrats who are undecided.

And she is doing it by bragging about her "pride" in ObamaCare.

"It is a pretty bold and risky move," Keystone College political science professor Jeff Brauer said. But that "almost desperate" attempt to distinguish herself from her rivals could backfire, he said, "especially if the Affordable Care Act emerges as a major issue in the election, since its support is dubious with average Pennsylvania Democratic voters."

If, by some chance, Schwartz emerges as the Democrats' nominee, her strong support of ObamaCare could become...
Croton-on-Hudson firefighting brothers Dave and Joe Kempter

CROTON-On-HUDSON, N.Y. -- Croton-on-Hudson firefighter Dave Kempter suctioned the job with two simple ideals: "try to make a difference" and "everyone goes home."

"The satisfaction of knowing that I made a difference is all that keeps me going, training and Learning never stops," Kempter said. "When we respond to an emergency the saying "everyone goes home" is in the back of my head, not only for my brother firefighters but we protect. There is nothing better in this world than being able to help and serve the community in such a valuable way as being an emergency services business."

Vincent Nienstedt, a volunteer emergency medical technician in Larchmont and Mamaroneck, said the photos posted on the Kempter's Fire Wire -- as a way of letting us know what we should be doing to avoid the emergency services business.

There have been so many emergencies over the years that really stick with you or that you keep in the back of your mind," Nienstedt said. "I come upon a lot of medical incidents that are not life-threatening emergencies but are concerns that do require professional attention. Russ said. "If people are trained in first aid and it is safe for them to do so, they should render care to the injured. They should continue to be out of the way of the emergency personnel working."

Eli Russ of Larchmont, who is an EMT in New York and in Pennsylvania on the campus of Muhlenberg College where he is a student, said civilians can help assist first responders in emergencies.

"I come upon a lot of medical incidents that are not life-threatening emergencies but are concerns that do require professional attention," Russ said. "If people are trained in first aid and it is safe for them to do so, they should render care to the injured. They should continue to be out of the way of the emergency personnel working."

Nienstedt said first responders can expect food and bad days -- with lives being saved and lost.

"I have been lucky enough to have saved people, and make a difference in someone's life," he said. "From something as extraor dinary as saving someone back from the dead, to something as simple as holding an elderly person's hand because they are scared. It is the same accomplishment. It takes a strong person to do the jobs we do, and we are proud to do it."
Kempter said he and his Fire Wire co-workers who are with fire and EMS companies in Somers, Verplank and Larchmont as well be prepared for emergencies but more prepared to prevent them.

"The best advice I think most people would give civilians when they are confronted with an emergency is to always make sure a victim -- don't do anything out of the scope of your training," Kempter said. "Seek professional help by calling 911, and do you or mitigate the situation until help arrives."

The Kempter's Fire Wire is not an official Facebook page of any fire or emergency service department and the expressions of the contributors are their own.
State relies on industry law firm for advice on oil and gas zoning

APRIL 28, 2014 | 5:28 PM
BY MARIE CUSICK

Over the past two years Pennsylvania has employed a Harrisburg law firm with ties to the oil and gas industry for advice on zoning rules directed at that very same industry.

The law firm of McNees, Wallace and Nurick is an associate member of the gas industry trade group, the Marcellus Shale Coalition. The firm's attorneys routinely represent energy companies before the state Public Utility Commission (PUC).

In fact McNees is currently representing Sunoco Logistics in a high-profile case before the commission. The company is seeking permission from the PUC to be considered a “public utility corporation,” which would exempt its Mariner East pipeline from local zoning codes.

“This is pretty bizarre”

McNees has also spent the past two years working as outside legal counsel to the PUC—advising the PUC on its authority under the state’s two-year-old oil and gas law, known as Act 13. The firm was hired in 2012 and has received $29,593 for its work so
Chris Borick is political science professor at Muhlenberg College and directs the school’s Institute of Public Opinion.

“This is pretty bizarre,” he says of the firm’s arrangement with the PUC. “No matter what the legal boundaries say, from a public perception point, it just seems too cozy between the industry and the regulators.”

Act 13 gave the PUC the power to withhold natural gas impact fee money from local governments with unfavorable oil and gas zoning rules.

Parts of the law were struck down by the state Supreme Court late last year—including the most controversial portions restricting local governments of their zoning power.

Despite the decision, the court battle over Act 13 isn’t over yet. One of the remaining issues in the case is whether or not the PUC still has the authority to review local zoning rules.

Jordan Yeager is a attorney who represents local governments challenging Act 13.

“There’s a real concern the PUC isn’t putting the interests of the citizens first, they’re putting the interests of the industry first,” he says.

“This contract did not create any conflicts of interest”

In April 2012, McNees assembled a nine-member team of attorneys to advise the PUC on zoning matters.

In the firm’s official proposal to the commission, two of the attorneys are listed as active members of gas industry trade groups— the Marcellus Shale Coalition and the Pennsylvania Independent Oil and Gas Association.

PUC spokeswoman Jennifer Kocher says although the firm provided initial training to the commission on zoning issues, it did not give any specific counsel on reviewing zoning ordinances under Act 13.

“This contract did not create any conflicts of interest for the PUC as the McNees attorneys advising the PUC on Act 13 zoning matters were not the same attorneys who practice before the Commission on separate utility matters,” Kocher wrote in an email.

“The divisions are siloed within the law firm.”

McNees also represented two state Republican...
leaders– House Speaker Sam Smith and Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati– in a motion they filed attempting to defend Act 13 and intervene in the court case. Their petition was subsequently denied.

In a May 2012 letter to the PUC, McNees attorney Charles Courtney wrote that the firm, “certifies that the work to be performed on behalf of the Commission does not represent a conflict of interest,” but he continued, “it is important to note, however, that McNees appears before the Commission on behalf of its clients on utility and energy related matters on a regular basis and will continue to do so.”

In an email to StateImpact Pennsylvania, McNees spokeswoman Vikki Grodner says the firm has not represented any clients before the PUC with respect to Act 13.

“We fully disclosed to the PUC that we had existing clients that were a part of the natural gas industry, as well as municipal clients.”

The firm’s contract with the state expires on Wednesday. According the PUC it will not be renewed, due to the state Supreme Court ruling on Act 13.

McNees formed its own political action committee over a decade ago and has given generously to candidates from both parties. Since 2009 its PAC has spent more than $100,000 annually.
Today's Entrepreneur: Greg Horn

No. 1 Mistake: Hiring the wrong people

Innovation series by Mingmei Niu
April 30, 2014 | Comments

Short URL: http://vator.tv/n/3691

Today's Entrepreneur is Greg Horn, CEO and Founder of Gigawatt, which is a crowdfunding platform that specializes in "blitz fundraising" and helps groups hit their goals quickly with exciting 24-hour giving campaigns. We developed our "24-Hour Formula" when we raised over $150,000 for Muhlenberg College (PA) in 24 hours.

Gigawatt is one of the top 5 finalist to present in the Oaktown Competition at Splash Oakland on May 6-7.
Be sure to support Horn and Gigawatt. Register here.

**Horn** graduated from Lehigh University with a BS degree in Information Systems Engineering. Here's a look at his entrepreneurial background.

**Companies I've founded or co-founded:**
Gigawatt

**Companies I work or worked for:**
Nuance Communications

**Achievements (products built, personal awards won):**
At Nuance, I developed the concept to build an ever-evolving speech recognition engine for the open-ended requests that come into New York City 311 (NYC's general information hotline). We cataloged millions of call transcriptions and logged them into a database to find the most common reasons people call. We were giving callers the ability to answer a "How may we help you?" request. Eventually we'd build automation around the top requests. This solution is being put into place by Nuance at 311.

**If you are an entrepreneur, why?**
I want to change the world.

**My favorite startups:**
Tesla, Virgin, Google

**What's most frustrating and rewarding about entrepreneurship/innovation?**
The most frustrating things about innovation is that nothing ever moves as fast as you'd hope it would. Everything always takes a fair bit longer than you expect it to and that can be really frustrating.

The most rewarding thing is that I see the direct impact of my contributions to our cause on a daily basis. This can be a double-edged sword because I also see a dip when I take some time off, but the rewarding side of it is soo worth it to see that direct impact.

**What are the top three lessons you've learned as an entrepreneur?**
1. Don't be afraid to fail. Mistakes are great lessons.
2. People are much more willing to help than you would think. All you need to do is ask.
3. It's going to take longer than you expect.

**Full bio**
I've been a risk taker and a rule breaker my entire life, which is why I feel that I've gravitated to the entrepreneur's lifestyle. Add to that the fact that I ran Track for 10 years which gave me a sense that you only get the results you want based on the amount of work you put in!

I've spent most of my career in the "real world" doing Technical Sales for a speech recognition
software and services company called Nuance where I helped large enterprises construct customized solutions.

At Nuance, I developed the concept to build an ever-evolving speech recognition engine for the open-ended requests that come into New York City 311 (NYC's general information hotline). We cataloged millions of call transcriptions and logged them into a database to find the most common reasons people call. We were giving callers the ability to answer a "How may we help you?" request. Eventually we'd build automation around the top requests. This solution is being put into place by Nuance at 311.

However, after a handful of years doing that, I realized that I truly wanted to make a difference in this world and I wasn't going to be able to do that as a part of a large, public company, so I left and started Gigawatt!

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Related companies, investors and entrepreneurs

Gigawatt
Startup/Business
**Description:** Gigawatt is a crowdfunding platform that specializes in "blitz fundraising" and helps groups hit their goals quickly with exciting 24-hou...

Greg Horn
*Bio:* I've been a risk taker and a rule breaker my entire life, which is why I feel that I've gravitated to the entrepreneur's lifestyle. Add t...
Sustain–A–Ball spotlights food sustainability and community gardens in the Lehigh Valley

Food sustainability and community gardens are the focus of the third annual Sustain–A–Ball. The event takes place Saturday at the Allentown Brew Works. (Express-Times Photo | MATT SMITH)

Follow on Twitter (http://www.twitter.com/dustin_schoof) on April 30, 2014 at 8:02 AM, updated April 30, 2014 at 8:06 AM

Community gardens and food sustainability are the focus of the third annual Sustain–A–Ball. The event takes place Saturday at the Allentown Brew Works. (Express-Times Photo | MATT SMITH)

From Around the Valley

1 Strange Trick
KILL Teeth Stain
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Database: Lehigh County public

1 of 6

5/1/2014 8:09 AM
Sustain-A-Ball spotlights food sustainability and community gardens in the Lehigh Valley.

The focus of the third annual Sustain-A-Ball, taking place Saturday at Allentown Brew Works, will be held 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday in the Five Room at Allentown Brew Works, 812 W. Hamilton St., Allentown.

Tickets cost $35; $20 for students.

For tickets and information, visit sustain-a-ball.com.

Allentown Environmental Advisory Council founder Julie Thomases says the purpose of the event is to highlight the work being done to protect Lehigh Valley resources, specifically in Allentown, while promoting food and economic sustainability and growth in the area.

"There are a lot of environmental things that happen, which are more like workshops, so this (Sustain-A-Ball) is a really great opportunity to meet friends and new (people) and just get together," Thomases says. "A lot of ideas come out of this."

The Sustain-A-Ball will feature a musical blessing for Earth by artist/activist Pana Columbus, a Selkie Theatre performance of "Call Us Ishmael, Or (Product) Coffee" by Michael Fegley and roots rock band Tavern Tan. "Call Us Ishmael" was written by New York City-based playwrights Honor Molloy and Joe Goodrich.

A silent auction is also among the evening’s planned festivities as well as a locally themed menu and craft beers from Fegley’s Brew Works.

Cali Burrito in Allentown, Buy Fresh Buy Local, Lower Macungie Township-based The Seed Farm, Urban Eco Fish, Grow Lehigh Valley, Pure Sprouts Organic Delivery, Lehigh County Community Gardens Program, Muhlenberg College Sustainability House (The Tree House) and Muhlenberg College Community Gardens Program will be recognized for their efforts.

"We feel the people we highlighted and I think people that come to this event really care about and support a triple bottom line and that is people, planet and profit, and that is really critical to the mentality we want to support in the Lehigh Valley," Thomases says.

Buy Fresh Buy Local chapter director Lynn Prior says the recognition and event are reflective of the Valley’s sustainability and green community initiatives in recent years; not to mention the rise in popularity of the farm-to-table movement. "People want to know what they’re eating. They want healthier foods," Prior says.

Rich Niesenbaum, chairman of biology and director of sustainability studies at Muhlenberg College and founder of the college’s Urban Eco Fish program, is hopeful...
that the event will facilitate sustainability and farm-to-table practices beyond high-end restaurants and farmers markets to areas where residents might not have access or the ability to afford fresh and/or organic food and produce.

He says his Urban Eco Fish project goal is to raise food in an urban center, in turn creating economic opportunity in a city and put food in close proximity to consumers. Niesenbaum says he developed a way to grow tilapia in a closed system so the fish are not exposed to any kind of pollutant. He says he would like to take the Urban Eco Fish project further by developing an urban aquaculture fish farming project in Allentown.

"To bring this to fruition, there has to be some kind of collaboration, public or private, to bring sustainable food ideas to Allentown. I'm open to ideas," Niesenbaum says.

Proceeds from Saturday's Sustain-A-Ball will benefit Allentown's community garden efforts, according to a news release.

Thomases says while there has been an increase in sustainability efforts in the Valley, there is still more work that needs to be done.

"There is a much stronger awareness for all of us, each of us, to do our part and we really have to keep the conversation going amongst all these different stakeholders in the community. It's really important," Thomases says. "I think by addressing the deepest needs of the community, we can create a healthier community and greater economic security in the region."
Heading down the home stretch, York businessman Tom Wolf is maintaining the wide lead he built over his fellow Democratic gubernatorial hopefuls with a barrage of early TV ads.

The first statewide poll of the contest in more than a month shows support for Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz and state Treasurer Rob McCord creeping up, but they're still trailing Wolf by more than 20 points.

Wolf is the choice of 38 percent of likely Democratic voters in The Morning Call/Muhlenberg College survey, leading Schwartz (13 percent) and McCord (11 percent). Katie McGinty, a former state environmental protection secretary, is a distant fourth with 2 percent.

Add in undecided voters who are leaning toward one candidate, and Wolf comes away with 42 percent, Schwartz 16 percent, McCord 14 percent and McGinty 3 percent.

The cadre of voters describing themselves as unsure is dwindling but still substantial — at 33 percent — less than three weeks before the May 20 primary.

Realistically, that's not enough undecideds to vault any of Wolf's opponents into the lead, said Muhlenberg College political scientist Chris Borick, who conducted the poll. To do that, they'd have to knock off some of Wolf's supporters.
Pennsylvania Democratic gubernatorial candidate Tom Wolf is photographed after speaking at a private event in Philadelphia on March 20. (MARK MAKELA / REUTERS / March 24, 2014)

"If he can hold this margin around 40 percent of the vote, it is mathematically a big challenge for those other candidates to be able to reach him," Borick said. "That is why they are trying harder and harder to bring him back — to increase his negatives."

Wolf is staying ahead of the pack with the help of Democrats such as Alice Euer of Bethlehem. She thinks Wolf is an outsider who would bring new ideas to the state capital, which gives him an edge, in her book, over Schwartz and McCord, both politicians.

"I don't want to see anybody who has been in politics," Euer said.

A retired Lehigh County social services caseworker, Euer demonstrates the advantage Wolf gained from being the first candidate to run television ads statewide. Wolf's plan to raise taxes on natural gas drilling, the subject of one of his first spots, helped win her support.

"He's the first candidate who said that," she said. "I have a home in Bethlehem, but I also have a home in western Pennsylvania, a vacation home. I'm very interested in that issue, because it's right near where a lot of this fracking takes place."

Fracking also struck a nerve with sales rep Dani Kennedy of Havertown, Delaware County, but she's leaning toward McCord. She's also more familiar with him because he lives in her section of the Philadelphia suburbs.

"I'm still researching them, but if the race were tomorrow, I would vote for Rob McCord," she said. "He is the most aggressive on the gas drilling, actually taxing them."

Fracking, or hydraulic fracturing — the process of extracting natural gas from shale rock — is on Democratic voters' minds, according to the poll. Named by 12 percent of respondents, it came in third behind education at 28 percent and jobs/economy at 16 percent when voters were asked to name the most important issues in the race.
The McCord and Schwartz camps have intensified attacks in recent days over Wolf's support for the failed re-election campaign of a York mayor who was a former police officer acquitted of murder in the 1969 shooting of a black woman during a race riot in the city.

Wolf has called the attacks "outrageous" and "racially charged."

There's a reason they're taking shots, Borick said. A solid 72 percent of voters have a positive opinion of Wolf, far more than the 49 percent who have a favorable opinion of Schwartz and the 43 percent whose opinion of McCord is positive.

"So far, the other candidates haven't really been able to build up his negatives," Borick said. "He has really low negatives. And he has the highest name recognition."

With little money to pay for television ads in the pricey Philadelphia market, McGinty has the lowest name recognition. Just 27 percent of voters have a positive image of McGinty, while 60 percent don't know enough about her to form an opinion, according to the poll.

"Our polling shows this is going to be a very competitive race as people continue to get to know Katie," said her spokesman, Mike Mikus.
Corbett's sudden support of limited medical marijuana could draw broad appeal: analysis

Tom Corbett
Gov. Tom Corbett (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

Robert J. Vickers | rvickers@pennlive.com By Robert J. Vickers | rvickers@pennlive.com
Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on May 01, 2014 at 5:40 PM, updated May 02, 2014 at 2:46 AM

In the same way wary Americans trusted staunch anti-communist Richard Nixon to open relations with Red China, skeptical commonwealth conservatives could also be swayed by Gov. Tom Corbett's sudden, but deliberate support of legal medical marijuana.

Corbett’s switch to favoring a limited trial usage came Thursday with little advance indication.

"I have been looking at this issue extensively over the past few months and listening to many perspectives," Corbett said in a news release after meeting with parents who say the drug is their only weapon to combat their children's debilitating seizures.

"I have heard the concerns and heartbreaking stories of these families and want to help," he added. "However, we must address this issue in a way that helps these families, but also protects the public health and safety of all Pennsylvanians."

Even though a recent Quinnipiac poll showing 85 percent of state voters support medical marijuana, many Pennsylvania elected officials remain highly uncomfortable with the topic.

Just last month Corbett said he wouldn't back legalizing medicinal pot even if his toddler grandson needed it. But Thursday the incumbent Republican governor reversed field, proposing a research-based pilot program of cannabidiol – an oil derivative of cannabis taken orally – in leading children’s hospitals in Pennsylvania.

His most immediate hurdle will come in the Republican-controlled state House, where representatives, cautious of the impact a level one narcotic would have on children even if prescribed by a physician, will not be easy to persuade.

"We'll listen to him," said House GOP spokesman Steve Miskin. "And everyone wants to alleviate the pain and suffering of these kids. It’s heart wrenching. But we think the Obama administration needs to get off its duff, get these studies done, and see whether this stuff really works, or not, what the effects are, and whether its safe."

However, some political observers believe having the tough-on-crime former prosecutor on board will calm
principled fears in the chamber.

“\text{I would assume that it would, if for no other reason than his track record and being a career prosecutor,}”, said Brian Nutt, a Corbett confidant. “\text{They probably have the same concerns he had. So if he’s able to explain to them how they’ll protect constituents from widespread marijuana use, I’d imagine that would help relieve some of the concerns some of the members may have felt.}”

Another challenge to legalized medical marijuana may come from a different direction in the state Senate.

Corbett’s proposal ignores an existing bipartisan Senate bill drafted by Montgomery County Democrat Daylin Leach and co-sponsored by Lebanon County conservative Republican Mike Folmer.

Still Leach was receptive to Corbett’s change of heart Thursday.

“I am hopeful that the governor’s specific proposal, which I hope is forthcoming, is a reasonable one,” he said in a statement. “I would also say that I am grateful the governor has moved off his rigid position.”

Folmer acknowledged Corbett’s new position as “a great step forward,” but still pushed for more.

“It’s refreshing the governor is more open to the issue, but I would like to go further than what the governor is proposing” Folmer said in a statement.

“We can’t forget veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, cancer patients, and the many others who could benefit from medical cannabis,” he added.

Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi, R-Delaware County, also signaled some encouragement.

“If a child’s physician believes that cannabidiol would relieve suffering, state law should not stand in the way,” Pileggi said in a statement. “I will continue to work with Senator Folmer on his legislation and look forward to sending a bill to the governor’s desk.”

But it’s unclear if the Senate would be willing to forgo is current effort in favor of the governor’s more cautious approach.

And in an election year in which the incumbent’s low approval ratings remain a daunting challenge, many will see his sudden switch in purely political terms.

Most Democrats, who favored legalizing medical marijuana before public opinion swung their way in recent years, will criticize Corbett for defying public sentiment, taking too long, and then doing too little.

“\text{Given how low Gov. Corbett’s approval numbers are, it’s not surprising that he would try and latch on to something which ... 85 percent of Pennsylvanians support, including 78 percent of Republicans,},” said Philadelphia-based Democratic campaign strategist J.J. Balaban.
“But it looks like Corbett, as he has done on so many issues, is doing this in such a tentative and half-hearted way that it’s unlikely to have much of a political impact,” Balaban added. “A tiny pilot program at some children’s hospitals is unlikely to impress a lot of people who are passionate about this issue.”

Even among cynical observers, however, Corbett’s move could be perceived as good public policy, and the manifestation of reflective leadership, according to Muhlenberg College pollster Chris Borick.

“There is solid support among Pennsylvanians for allowing the use of medical marijuana in the state so Corbett’s tentative steps in that direction aren’t really risky, and are in line with his broader efforts to appeal to more moderate voters in the Pennsylvania,” Borick said.

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LANCASTER, Pa. -- Weeks before Democrats pick their challenger to Gov. Tom Corbett, candidates chasing Tom Wolf tried Thursday to tarnish the York County businessman with claims about his associations and leadership.


Ms. Schwartz of Montgomery County questioned him for standing by a state representative who served time in prison. As Democrats jockey to prove they would defend traditional pensions for state and public school workers, Mr. McCord criticized him because his company moved to a 401(k) retirement plan for new workers.

"Evidently they're seeing the same polls I am, that I'm way ahead, so I have a bull's-eye on my back," Mr. Wolf said.

He said the former York County legislator, Steve Stetler, is a friend, and that the change to a 401(k) plan, which did not affect workers with existing defined-benefit plans, occurred after he sold the company.

With an early command of statewide television advertising, Mr. Wolf won significant leads in public polls of Democratic voters. He maintains that advantage in a new statewide survey from The Morning Call and Muhlenberg College, according to the Allentown newspaper.

The survey showed Mr. Wolf with the support of 38 percent of likely Democratic voters, while Ms. Schwartz had the backing of 13 percent, Mr. McCord of 11 percent and Katie McGinty, a former state secretary of environmental protection, of 2 percent.

Mr. Corbett has continued to suffer from low public approval ratings, and his campaign Thursday also
turned its sights on Mr. Wolf, launching a statewide television ad targeting the Democrat for tax increases during his tenure as head of the revenue department for former Gov. Ed Rendell.

The Democrats on stage here agreed that Mr. Corbett had failed to provide adequate funding for public education and that he was wrong to favor a per-well impact fee for natural gas drilling, rather than a tax on production. They promised to use such a severance tax to boost classroom funding.

In the wake of a botched execution this week in Oklahoma, the candidates were asked about their position on capital punishment. Mr. Wolf, Mr. McCord and Ms. McGinty said they support a moratorium on executions, while Ms. Schwartz said she opposes the death penalty.
Opponents needed to use Thursday's debate to trip up Tom Wolf, the York businessman who's the front-runner in the Democratic race for governor. Some experts think they failed.

"Wolf seemed comfortable defending himself. He didn't seem flustered," said Chris Borick, political science professor and director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion. "His arguments were straightforward and concise, and he didn't look particularly vexed by the challenges."


Schwartz was especially aggressive in attacking Wolf as a friend and supporter of former state Rep. Stephen Stetler, who went to jail for 16 months on public corruption charges.

But being too aggressive carries a risk, said E. Fletcher McClellan, a political science professor and dean of faculty at Elizabethtown College.

"Mr. Wolf called attention to making negative campaigning the issue, which you see from candidates leading in the polls," McClellan said, adding that he doesn't think voters would have found the attacks on Wolf persuasive.

Wolf "was able to keep his cool," McClellan said. "He has a sense of humility. He doesn't have extended long answers. He doesn't sound like a politician that goes on and on. If you were inclined toward him because of his commercials, I think you're still in his corner" after the debate.

"I think at some point (Schwartz) may have looked a little frustrated in not getting Wolf more flustered," Borick said.

Watch the Debate Replay
A new Morning Call/ Muhlenberg College poll shows Wolf leading by more than 20 points among likely Democratic voters. He has 38 percent support. Schwartz and McCord are at 13 and 11 percent, respectively. Former Environmental Protection Secretary Katie McGinty of Chester County trails with 2 percent.

Both professors doubt the debate shakes up the race in any way.

Borick thinks Wolf didn't score a lot of points, but emerges victorious because he didn't fumble any answers and maintained his front-runner status.

"If you can hold onto the lead, or most of it, the end game is good," Borick said. "Tonight, I think he strategically was able to do that."

Wolf "comes away pleased," McClellan agreed.

McClellan said McCord has emerged as the policy expert, and didn't seem entirely comfortable being the attack dog, "going out on the limb" in trying to tarnish Wolf with his association with former York Mayor Charlie Robertson, who was found not guilty, three decades later, of the 1969 murder of a black woman during race riots.

Both professors said McGinty, in attacking Gov. Tom Corbett and not her Democratic opponents, seemed adept and comfortable discussing policy.

"She's a long shot," Borick said. "She could afford to take the higher ground and roll the dice."

"She doesn't have the wealth that Wolf has and the established organizations the others have," McClellan said of McGinty, "so any time she gets exposure is good for her. I thought she carried herself well."
McClellan said Schwartz's best moment was in demonstrating a mature and thoughtful understanding of economic development, how it must include the state's diverse industries, from transportation to biotech.

Borick said he thinks the undecideds who watched the debate could flow equally to any of the candidates, and if Wolf won over an equal share of the undecideds, that's not good enough for those trailing him.

"Nothing I saw tonight was a game-changing event," he said.
NEW CASTLE — Katie McGinty’s ties to the Clinton White House have not given her a bump in polls, but those connections have kept her campaign alive by providing the money needed to stay in the race.

The latest poll, released this week by Muhlenberg College in Allentown, shows former secretary of revenue Tom Wolf with a commanding lead. Thirty-eight percent of those polled said they intend to vote for Wolf. McGinty is last among the four contenders. Two percent of those polled said they plan to vote for McGinty, a former state secretary of environmental protection.

With little in-state traction, McGinty is leaning on out-of-state donors to pay her campaign bills, finance reports show.

Wolf spent more than $5 million in the period ending March 31 and he still had $7 million left, finance records show.

McGinty’s campaign raised $1.1 million during the same reporting period. Of that, $467,000 came from donations of more than $250 from contributors who live outside Pennsylvania.

U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz had $1.5 million in donations for the reporting period, records show. Of that, about $350,000 came from donations in excess of $250 from individual out-of-state contributors. Schwartz also received $355,000 from Emily’s List, a Washington, D.C.-based political action committee that is focused on getting pro-choice women elected to office.

Including PAC money, Treasurer Rob McCord reported just over $200,000 in out-of-state donations of more than $250.

Heavy dependence on out-of-state donations may bear watching, said Barry Kauffman, executive director of Common Cause of Pennsylvania.

Some election reformers have suggested that out-of-area donations should be limited or even eliminated.

“People supporting a candidate ought to have some skin in the game,” Kauffman said.

With many of the major unions and traditional party backers lining up behind McCord early, it was natural for Schwartz and McGinty to tap their national connections to compete, said G. Terry Madonna, a political science professor at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster.

“The reality is, there are just so many pockets you can dip into” for donations, said Chris Borick, a professor of political science at Muhlenberg.
In addition to having served as Pennsylvania’s secretary of environmental protection, McGinty served in the Clinton White House and as an environmental adviser to former vice president Al Gore.

The friendships and connections she forged in those years have helped her seed her campaign finances with support from donors across the country, Mike Mikus, McGinty spokesman, said.

Among McGinty’s biggest donations was $150,000 from California software tycoon Stephen Silberstein. McGinty got another $100,000 from California businessman Kenneth Coit.

Schwartz, on the other hand, has developed relationships nationally as a member of Congress.

“People are not buying influence; they are investing in Allyson’s agenda,” Schwartz spokesman Max Bergman said.

“There is national interest in the campaign,” he added.

But Schwartz also has gotten substantial support from people in Pennsylvania. Her campaign has gotten donations from every county in the commonwealth, he noted.

Some of the other candidates were able to give themselves headstarts by transferring campaign funds from old war chests. McGinty didn’t have that option, Madonna said.

“Katie’s problem isn’t that she is getting out-of-state money,” Madonna said, “it’s that she doesn’t have enough of it.”

(Email: jfinnerty@cnhi.com)
Marisa DeStasio said she doesn’t deserve the credit.

"The players we've had here at Muhlenberg have been absolutely amazing," she said. "They’re the reason for our success."

And yet, last weekend DeStasio became the first coach in Mules' softball history to win 100 games in any four-season stretch. The fact that the 100 wins came in DeStasio's first four seasons made the milestone all the more impressive.

The Mules made it to the Centennial Conference tournament finals before losing to Haverford. They finished the season 25-13 and the senior class went out as the winningest class in school history.

But the success of DeStasio's teams goes beyond the wins.

"What I am most proud of is that not only do we have a smart team, but their camaraderie is the best I've ever seen as a player or coach," DeStasio said. "It's such a great group of kids and I looked
forward to going to practice every day and being around them. They made my job so much easier and more fun.

DeStasio is a 2001 Freedom High graduate who was a three-time all-Mountain Valley Conference shortstop with the Patriots. She went on to a solid career at Binghamton University where she was again an all-conference choice.

To show that the team always came first for her, DeStasio set the school record for sacrifice hits with 34.

Although she played with the traits of a future coach, DeStasio said coaching really wasn't "on my radar."

"I didn't really think about it until late in my college career," she said. "But looking back, I can tell that I was being groomed to be a coach because of the people I was around and coached by. Once I started, I realized that this was it.' I loved it and knew instantly that this where I wanted to be. So, even though it wasn't originally on my radar, I am glad it eventually got there."

DeStasio played for Jeff Franquet and Denny Hollinger at Freedom and Holly Brown at Binghamton. Every stop along the way, she tried to take something away from each coach she played for, including her field hockey and basketball coaches.

She also learned a lot in her three seasons as an assistant coach at Lafayette College under Jeanine Gunther.

"Jeanine was a great head coach who taught me some very valuable lessons," DeStasio said. "She taught me to not let my ego get caught up in winning and losing. That's one of the biggest things I learned and it was important. I think I could have been a person who got wrapped up in the wins and losses, but she taught me that no matter what happens, you can't get too crazy.

"What my experience at Lafayette taught me is how to work with student-athletes who are really focused on academics first. That helped to prepare me for Muhlenberg where the players are all academically-minded, but also play softball."

And that's why DeStasio makes sure her teams have fun.

"I am intense and I want the kids to be intense, but softball is also a game and I want them to have fun," she said. "We're going to get the most out of them when they're having fun."

She also learned a lot about support from her parents, John and Ellen.

"They've been so supportive throughout my entire coaching career," she said. "Even as an assistant when I wasn't necessarily making a lot of money, they knew this is what I wanted to do and didn't push me toward an office job or a 9-to-5 job. They let me do this and I wouldn't be here without them."

Having grown up here and knowing the caliber of high school softball played in the Lehigh Valley, DeStasio would like to get local products on her Muhlenberg squad.

Of course, many local kids like to go elsewhere and there is a high academic standard at Muhlenberg that must be met.

"It is a challenge," she said. "It's unfortunate that we don't have any Lehigh Valley kids on our team, but I am not going to stop trying."

DeStasio, who won a league title in her first season, was disappointed this year's team couldn't win the championship, but she vows that the Mules program will continue to strive to be one of the elite in a very competitive league.

"We're moving forward and we like the direction we're headed," she said. "We're not going to be satisfied, though, unless we're winning championships and playing in NCAA regionals and winning games. Even if we win a national championship, we're always going to be striving for more."

CAROLE WEIL ALL-STAR EVENT

The Carole Weil Memorial Scholarship Fund will be hosting its 31st annual High School All-Star Classic on June 4 at Pates Park.
All senior softball players in the LVC, Colonial League and Mountain Valley Conference are eligible to participate. Interested players should see their respective coaches for a scholarship application and an application to play in the game. All applications are due on May 15.

Scholarship and game applications can also be accessed on the Weil website at http://www.caroleweil.homestead.com. Players may contact Ed Stinner, the Weil chairman, at 610-395-3555, with questions.

Last year, three $1,500 scholarships were presented.

Also, the Weil committee is seeking nominations for the Kyle Miller Courage Award. The Miller Courage Award salutes a player who has overcome adversity of some kind in their careers.

If coaches or parents have a nomination, they can e-mail it to kgroller@mcall.com.

LAST CALL FOR THE HALL

The meeting to determine this year's inductees into the Lehigh Valley Softball Hall of Fame will be held on Saturday, so if you have a nominee — players, coaches, umpires, sponsors, special contributors are all eligible — please send email to kgroller@mcall.com by midnight on Friday.

This year's induction ceremony is set for June 18 at Pates Park.

ALL-AREA ALERT

Coaches, we're looking for your help with our Morning Call All-Area Softball team. Please send your nominations with complete stats (overall, not just league) to kgroller@mcall.com no later than Memorial Day, May 26. I know this is an early alert, but I just want coaches to start thinking about who should be on this team. Also, I'd like to hear your choices for player of the year and coach of the year.

WHO'S HOT

Northern Lehigh graduate Payton Marunich became one of the first two Elizabethtown College players to be recognized as Landmark Conference all-stars. This was the Blue Jays' first year in the league and Marunich made her mark.

The junior played the majority of the season in right field and batted No. 2 in the lineup. She was second on the team in batting average (.360), hits (40), doubles (5), and total bases (48). Marunich, who had 11 multiple-hit games, was the team's leader in runs scored (30) and tied for lead in walks with 12.

Nazareth sophomore outfielder Brooke Lichty hit two home runs to lead her team to a win over Easton on Wednesday. On April 26, Lichty hit a grand slam to pace the Blue Eagles to a win over Stroudsburg that clinched a District 11 berth.
HARRISBURG – Tom Wolf was heavily favored in polls for almost two months to win the four-way Democratic gubernatorial primary election before an opponent pulled the trigger on a TV attack ad against him.

Five more TV attack ads followed in the last three weeks, including one by the Republican incumbent, Gov. Tom Corbett, as Wolf’s foes made a calculated bet the risky strategy was the only way to beat him.

They bet too late, it seems.

Wolf is polling so far ahead that a victory by any other Democrat in the May 20 primary election would amount to the most dramatic comeback in Pennsylvania’s modern political history.

“It would be, in my humble judgment, without precedent,” said G. Terry Madonna, a pollster and a professor of public affairs at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster.

Christopher Borick, a political science professor and pollster at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, echoed that sentiment.

“It’s certainly a formidable challenge to reel him in at this point,” Borick said. “It’s just looking at the math.”

So far, three polls in the race have shown Wolf leading by at least 20 percentage points, with the most recent one surveying voters in late April. Overcoming such a large polling deficit is certainly possible, but Madonna and Borick could not recall it ever happening in Pennsylvania in such a short stretch of time.
They acknowledge it is more difficult to produce an accurate poll when voter turnout is low. Without a hot-button issue to motivate the electorate, perhaps 1 million registered Democrats, or one in four in Pennsylvania, will vote in the primary.

“The smaller the turnout, the more difficult it is to predict the exact nature of who will vote,” Madonna said.

The latest independent poll, by Muhlenberg College, surveyed 417 likely voters in the last three days of April. It showed Wolf winning easily with 38 percent, even as 33 percent remained unsure about which candidate they will support. The other 29 percent were divided among state Treasurer Rob McCord, former Clinton White House environmental adviser Katie McGinty and U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz.

That poll’s results were very similar to two earlier Franklin and Marshall College polls. New polls are forthcoming from both schools this week and could show what kind of damage, if any, the attack ads inflicted on Wolf’s popularity.

Wolf’s advantage started with his spending advantage – the wealthy businessman is helping his campaign outspend McCord’s and Schwartz’s by $5 million. That gave him the ability to start airing daily TV ads Jan. 30, seven weeks before his first competitor did.

The TV ads were widely praised as effective, featuring his take on key issues, his family and his employees while bringing a relatively unknown candidate to life in a folksy, apolitical way that seemed to resonate with registered Democrats, such as university administrator Bruce Taggart.

“Wolf has the best ad/media campaign I’ve seen in many years,” said Taggart, a suburban Allentown resident who was undecided before he saw Wolf’s ads.

The advertising delivered a huge lead to Wolf in a field of Democratic competitors, who, despite far more experience in politics and government, had relatively low statewide name recognition.

Even so, McCord and Schwartz can claim advantages that Wolf lacks: McCord has captured the endorsements of the state’s major labor unions, while Schwartz has a congressional district of voters who have elected her five times and the Philadelphia city Democratic Party behind her.
But for all the millions of dollars McCord and Schwartz have spent – bolstered with daily attacks on Wolf by Corbett and the state Republican Party – it is not clear it had much effect. No candidate has released an internal poll that casts doubt on the results of the public polls.

That might reflect the persuasiveness of Wolf’s ads. It also might reflect a backlash against candidates who go negative.

For Corbett, who has no primary opponent, the risk is lower. But for McCord and Schwartz, who are attacking a fellow Democrat, the risk is greater, Borick said.

Teacher Bonne Bosco of Allentown said she had been split between supporting Wolf and McCord – until McCord’s attacks on Wolf prompted her to lean toward Wolf.

“I just feel that no Democrat should be running negative ads against someone in their own party. It’s a big turnoff for me,” she said. Still, “I could change my mind in a week. My opinion isn’t set in stone.”
More than $45 million has flowed into the race for Pennsylvania governor, campaign records show, highlighting once again the importance of big-ticket donors in a state with no limits on contributions.

The latest reports, filed Friday, showed Gov. Corbett's four prospective Democratic challengers had collectively raised $35.5 million and spent $31.1 million through Monday in their bid to win the May 20 primary.

Together, the Democrats are poised to easily eclipse the $31.5 million spent in the 2002 Democratic gubernatorial primary campaign, one of the state's most expensive.

But the single largest donation so far in this race has been on the other side of the ballot.

Corbett, widely described as one of the nation's most politically vulnerable incumbent governors, got $1.6 million from the Republican Governors Association on April 30, the records show.

The only other member of the seven-figure club in the 2014 election had been Tim Grumbacher, board chairman and former CEO of the Bon-Ton department store chain.

Grumbacher gave $1 million to Democrat Tom Wolf. (Wolf and Grumbacher are both from York County, and Wolf once served on Bon-Ton's board).

Other candidates were also buoyed by big-ticket donors.

U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz of Montgomery County logged $150,000 more from her most generous donor, Emily's List, an organization that supports pro-choice candidates. The group has given a total of more than $600,000 to Schwartz's campaign.

Mark Bergman, a Schwartz campaign spokesman, said that the average contribution had been $250 and that contributions had come from every county in the state.

Dan Fee, a Democratic consultant who is unaffiliated with any of the candidates, said the current big-ticket contributors were pretty typical.

"The names change, but the concept of big donors does not," said Fee, who worked on Ed Rendell's gubernatorial campaigns.
Other six-figure donations include $250,000 to Corbett's campaign from John S. Middleton, a Bryn Mawr philanthropist and part-owner of the Phillies. Middleton, who rarely grants interviews, did not respond to The Inquirer's request for comment.

Al Lord, a former Sallie Mae CEO, gave $500,000 to State Treasurer Rob McCord's campaign. He told The Inquirer this year that he believed McCord, a Democrat, would do the best job of rebuilding Pennsylvania State University's reputation after the Jerry Sandusky scandal.

Katie McGinty, former secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and a White House aide during the Clinton administration, got $200,000 in donations and a $100,000 loan last year from Brian Duperreault, a New York insurance executive. He and McGinty are graduates of St. Joseph's University.

"These people are friends, some of whom she's known for 20, 25 years," McGinty campaign spokesman Mike Mikus said of the bigger donors. "They're personal friends and professional colleagues who think she'd be a gre

Political experts aren't surprised by the big checks rolling in this year.

"You see the continued need and importance of raising this type of money to be compe professor at Muhlenberg College. "There is a price for entry."

G. Terry Madonna, a political scientist and pollster at Franklin and Marshall College, sai was the self-funding by some candidates, most notably Wolf - who put $10 million of his lot of it on TV ads.

"We've never seen anything like that," Madonna said. "Would he have been able to be : The answer is no."

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This article contains information from the Associated Press.
AP reports that at least three polls show Democratic gubernatorial nominee Tom Wolf up by 20 points, making him a shoo-in to win next week’s primary election.

“Overcoming such a large deficit is certainly possible, but pollsters Terry Madonna of Franklin and Marshall College and Christopher Borick of Muhlenberg College say they can’t recall anyone mounting such a dramatic comeback in modern Pennsylvania politics in such a short period of time,” the wire service reports. “They acknowledge, however, it’s more difficult to produce an accurate poll when voter turnout is low.”
That last sentence is just super-doooper caution at work: Turnouts are always low for gubernatorial primaries. Which means the example of "it's never happened before" is still in play—something could change. But probably it won't. We're running out of time for surprises to matter.

**Read More About:** 2014 Governor Race

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Historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ron Chernow will be Muhlenberg College's commencement speaker this year.

(Photograph courtesy Muhlenberg College)
An American historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author will be Muhlenberg College's commencement speaker this year.

Ron Chernow, who has written biographies on such figures as George Washington, John D. Rockefeller and Alexander Hamilton, will speak at the college's 166th commencement on Sunday.


The St. Louis Post-Dispatch called him "one of the pre-eminent biographers of his generation," and Fortune called him "America's best business biographer."

The commencement will be held 10 a.m. Sunday on the college green, during which Chernow will receive an honorary doctorate, according to the college.

Others who will receive honorary degrees Sunday include Henry David Abraham, Donald Holder and Carson Schneck.

Abraham, who graduated as valedictorian in 1963 from Muhlenberg College, conducts a psychiatric practice and has worked at various hospitals and medical institutions since the 1960s.

Schneck, who receive a bachelor of science degree in 1955 from Muhlenberg, served from 1960 to 2012 on the faculty of Temple Medical School.

Holder has designed more than 40 Broadway productions, been nominated for nine Tony awards, and won the Tony for Best Lighting Design for The Lion King and the 2008 revival of South Pacific.

Contact Allentown reporter Colin McEvoy at 484-894-2549 or cmcevoy@express-times.com.

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For most of the race, the Democratic congressional primary in the Bucks-centered 8th District was practically genteel.

Small-businesswoman Shaughnessy Naughton touted her local roots and background in medical research, while former Army Ranger and CIA counter-terrorism analyst Kevin Strouse displayed his photogenic family, even a mailer that prominently featured his wife and young kids.

The winner would take on formidable incumbent Republican Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick.

But the final week has seen a shift in tone around an issue that might seem surprising in a congressional district without a single natural gas well: Fracking.

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Naughton has talked up her support for making the moratorium on gas drilling in the Delaware River Basin permanent, a stronger anti-fracking stance than Strouse, who supports the current ban, but would allow drilling if it was subjected to federal clean air and water laws.

She says Strouse's position has changed from one that was more supportive of fracking, a process that injects chemicals deep into the ground to release the gas.

"I drew the attention to the money he has taken from the fracking industry because of his ever-changing stance on fracking," she said.
Her new ad suggests that Strouse's willingness to allow natural gas drilling in the future "threatens our drinking water," and likens him to pro-natural gas drilling Republican Gov. Tom Corbett. It calls attention to $10,400 in campaign donations Strouse received from employees of a private equity firm that invests in the natural gas and other industries.

Strouse bristles at the comparison to Corbett, and said the donors were friends he knew before he entered the congressional race.

"They are distorting my record on fracking," said Strouse, who fired back Tuesday by accusing Naughton of accepting $2,020 in gas-drilling related donations of her own.

Naughton said donations she received from Tyndale Corp., a Pipersville, Bucks County, company that makes safety equipment for a variety of industries, came from a longtime family friend.

The other donor, Linda Peterson, an attorney with Occidental Petroleum in Los Angeles, came through Emily's List, which supports women candidates.

The focus shouldn't be that surprising. Democratic voters across the Pennsylvania rank fracking among their top concerns, said Chris Borick, Muhlenberg College political scientist and pollster. "Bucks County would be the kind of place where fracking would be very powerful among Democratic primary voters."

The 8th District encompasses all of Bucks County — from densely populated Bensalem in the south to the wide open townships of Nockamixon and Springfield in the north. It also includes a chunk of north-central Montgomery County.

While two Bucks municipalities were among seven across the state that successfully challenged Act 13, Pennsylvania's natural gas law, only upper Bucks County has had a direct brush with fracking.

In the middle of the last decade, Michigan-based Arbor Resources bought up hundreds of families' mineral rights, mostly in Nockamixon Township, in a bid to use new fracking technology to search for and extract natural gas deposits in the area. It abandoned the idea in 2010.

Butler County-based Turm Oil applied for a permit to drill for natural gas there in 2012 but never moved forward.

There is gas to be extracted. The U.S. Geological Survey estimated in 2012 that there are 876 billion cubic feet of the gas in the East Newark Basin, a rock formation that underlies parts of Bucks, Montgomery and Berks counties. But there are doubts that there's enough profit to interest drillers.

The Delaware River Basin Commission's moratorium was enacted in 2010. It has signaled its intent to develop regulations that allow natural gas drilling in the Delaware River Basin, which provides drinking water for 15 million people, but has not set a timeline.

Congress' role in the process has been limited primarily to offering comments.

Keeping that pressure up matters, Naughton said.

"I think having a representative who clearly stated their position on it and pushing for a federal ban is of great importance to the Delaware River Basin," she said.

Fracking is a serious issue, Strouse said, but the voters he talks to are most concerned about the economy.

"When I am out talking to people the thing they are most thinking about are jobs, and the economy and their quality of life," Strouse said.

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May 15, 2014

**Small group of Democrats could select the next governor**

John Finnerty CNHI

HARRISBURG — The Democrat chosen next week to contest Gov. Tom Corbett’s reelection will inherit big expectations, if the one-term Republican is as vulnerable as pundits say he is.

Pennsylvania’s next chief executive, in that case, could be decided Tuesday by roughly 8 percent of the state’s population.

Pennsylvania is one of 11 states with closed primaries, which means only members of a political party are allowed to participate. That suggests about 1 million Democrats, based on historic trends, will decide which of four candidates ought to face Corbett in the fall.

Political watchers don’t expect long lines at the polls, given a Democratic primary lacking much star power or difference of opinion. The candidates all have stuck to similar themes — taxing natural gas drilling and boosting school spending.

“They are so alike, voters don’t have a sense of their differences,” said Chris Borick, a pollster and political science professor at Muhlenberg College in Allentown.

State Rep. Chris Sainato, D-Lawrence County, said most voters are more interested in November’s general election between Corbett and the Democratic winner.

The only people who seem to care about the primary are those involved in it, he said. The average voter will probably wait for the fall.
State Rep. Jaret Gibbons, D-Lawrence County, agreed. “I think the only people who are going to show up are the super-voters who vote regardless of who is on the ballot,” he said.

That leaves a major decision to a relatively small slice of the state’s 12 million residents.

History suggests only about one in four of the state’s 4 million registered Democrats will take the time to vote Tuesday, observers say.

Philadelphia has an outsized role in Democratic politics, with three gubernatorial candidates from its suburbs. But none has the strong city ties of former Gov. Ed Rendell, said G. Terry Madonna, a political science professor and pollster at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster.

Rendell, also a former district attorney and mayor of Philadelphia, won the 2002 Democratic primary by beating now-Sen. Bob Casey. About 1.23 million Democrats voted in that year’s primary, according to election records, with Philadelphia and its immediate suburbs accounting for about 40 percent of the ballots.

The last Democratic primary for governor featured a four-way contest — just like this year. The candidates then combined for just over 1 million votes. The drop from 2002 related to low turnout in Philadelphia, where about half the number of voters participated as did when Rendell ran eight years earlier.

This year’s primary pits former Revenue Secretary and front-runner Tom Wolf, of York, against three candidates from greater Philadelphia — Treasurer Rob McCord, U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz and former Environmental Protection Secretary Katie McGinty.

In some ways, the Philly-centric field leaves rural Democrats feeling a little ignored.

Wolf and McGinty have visited Mercer County, in northwestern Pennsylvania, but neither Schwartz nor McCord has, said Democratic chairman Charles Rice. Most active Democrats there, as a result, lean toward Wolf or McGinty, he said.

With the gubernatorial campaigns echoing each other, the only means for candidates to differentiate themselves has been to create standout personal narratives, Madonna said.

In the case of Wolf, Borick said, the campaign story became that of a job creator who rescued his family’s failing kitchen cabinet business.

Wolf used a barrage of television advertising to strike at jobs concerns that matter most to voters and parlay his personal story into a wide lead in the polls, Borick said.

That’s forced other Democrats — and the governor — to go on the attack to undermine his story.

The Jeep Wrangler that Wolf used early to show his common touch, for example, became a meme of his opponents’ ads.

“They are trying to make him less attractive, and his Jeep has become the target,” Borick said. “If they are trying to zero in on (the Jeep), it must have struck a nerve.”
Madonna said there’s no evidence the attacks have substantially narrowed Wolf’s lead.

Borick’s latest poll, dated May 1, had Wolf leading by 25 points, with 33 percent of voters still undecided.

Madonna’s latest poll, dated April 3, had Wolf up by 26 points.

All four Democrats consistently out-perform Corbett in polls, leading some national pundits to tab him the most vulnerable incumbent governor up for re-election this year. The Fix blog by The Washington Post has rated Corbett the most vulnerable governor each month since last fall, even before Wolf jumped to the head of the pack of Democrats.

(Email: jfinnerty@cnhi.com)
They come from as far north as Canada, as far south as Brazil, and very many other points in between.

Whatever their point of origin and regardless of their relentless pursuit of individual goals, the eleven graduates of The Nutmeg Ballet Conservatory training program share at least one significant thing in common. Their paths have converged to pursue a dream; training at The Nutmeg Ballet is the very first step in a wonderfully exciting journey to realizing it.

“As our graduation performances arrive, our students become very excited and emotional. It is a time of saying goodbye and stepping into the unknown,” said The Nutmeg’s Artistic Director, Victoria Mazzarelli. “This has been a wonderful year and I look forward to hearing from our graduates from time to time as they begin their new lives and our hope is that they always keep Nutmeg in their hearts.”

This year, one very special Nutmeg graduate, Catherine Ward, has completed the 10 Year Professional Program. A Torrington native, Catherine began her ballet studies at The Nutmeg’s Torrington School of Ballet under the direction of Susan Szabo back when the studios were located on Water Street. Cat, who also graduates from Holy Cross High School in Waterbury this year, will be attending Muhlenberg College on an academic and dance scholarship in the fall.
Connecticut), who is headed to Orlando Ballet.

Graduating from the 2 Year High School Professional Program are Ben Youngstone (Richmond, Virginia), who will join Charlotte Ballet (North Carolina Dance Theatre) as an Apprentice in the fall; Thel Moore (Windsor Mill, Maryland) and Matanya Solomon (Morgantown, West Virginia) will both be returning to The Nutmeg Ballet in the fall as Post High School Professional Program Trainees.

Graduating from the 1 Year High School Professional Program are Hope Friedman (Gansevort, New York), who will divide her time between Cincinnati Ballet and Joffrey Ballet in Chicago this summer; Adrian Mendez-Hutchinson (Chesapeake Beach, Maryland) who is headed to Next Generation Ballet.

Cydney Bronstein (Trumbull, Connecticut) is a Graduate of the 2 Year Post High School Professional Program and will be a Trainee Candidate at Festival Ballet Providence.

Graduates of the 1 Year High School Professional Program include Leticia Bitelli (Sao Paulo, Brazil) who is headed to Atlanta Ballet; Deanna Dewitt (Cary, North Carolina) will be attending Wake Tech College; and Meagan Selinsky (Dollard des Ormeaux, Quebec) is headed to Joffrey Ballet in New York City.

When Catherine Ward and Benjamin Youngstone step up to the podium to address their fellow graduates and trainees on Saturday, May 17th, they will remind those in attendance what it means to dream and then act upon that vision with a sense of commitment, passion, and relentless discipline. When Roman Baca, Nutmeg alumnus and keynote speaker, captivates the audience with his story of a world of professional ballet, battlefields, and boardrooms, the quiet dignity inspired by the world of ballet will reveal its strength and fortitude.

Graduation performances, which take place May 14-17 in the Premiere Studio Theatre, will enchant, inspire, and awaken the senses. The graduation ceremony that takes place Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. in that beautiful building on 58 Main Street, will reveal a journey of many small steps, some graceful, some powerful, with each step moving toward what was once but a dream.

Tickets to the performances that take place Wednesday, May 14 and Thursday, May 15 at 7 p.m., Friday, May 16 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, May 17 at 3 p.m. can be purchased through the Warner Theatre 860.489.7180 or online at www.warnertheatre.org.
Gov. Tom Corbett listens to questions from reporters at a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of a $550 million, 13-mile expansion project on the Turnpike's Southern Beltway in Bulger, Washington County on Monday, May 12, 2014.

By Brad Bumsted

Published: Saturday, May 17, 2014 12:01 a.m.

HARRISBURG — Republican Gov. Tom Corbett since March has shifted his position on key issues, possibly to garner support among Democrats and independent voters in the November election, analysts say.

The governor “appears to be taking some opportunities to soften his (conservative) positions on an array of issues,” said Christopher Borick, a political science professor at Muhlenberg College in Allentown.

Corbett opposed medical marijuana but now supports a pilot program. He dropped an appeal of a court ruling against the state's voter ID law and moved from a mandatory to a voluntary work-search requirement for
recipients in the state's expanded Medicaid plan.
The shifting positions are not coincidental, said Michael Federici, chairman of the political science department at Mercyhurst College in Erie.
"They are calculated efforts to improve his position in the election," he said.
Corbett's campaign spokesman, Billy Pitman, countered that these were not campaign-based decisions "but were made in the best interest of the people of Pennsylvania."
The governor is running unopposed in the GOP primary on Tuesday. The state Republican Party waged a successful legal battle to knock ultra-conservative challenger Bob Guzzardi off the ballot. Among four candidates vying for the Democratic nomination, York businessman Tom Wolf remains the front-runner in a Franklin & Marshall College poll released this week.
No Pennsylvania governor has lost a re-election bid since a constitutional change allowed two terms and voters re-elected the late Gov. Milton Shapp in 1974. Political strategists across the country have pegged Corbett as one of the nation's most vulnerable governors in 2014.
Corbett's turnarounds on Medicaid and limited forms of medicinal marijuana "allow him to be portrayed as more flexible and compassionate," said J. Wesley Leckrone, a political science professor at Widener University in Chester. The changes appear to be aimed at swing voters, he said.
"Other pivots, such as his proposal for increased education funding and more aid for middle-class college scholarships, allow him to make the case he's not a Tea Party clone," Leckrone said.
Corbett has not shored up his Republican base, Federici said. Two years of poor performance in public opinion polls suggest he has "a minimal chance of getting re-elected," he said.
But Alan Brink, a Republican committeeman in Delaware County, believes Corbett is "grossly underrated."
"When the Democrats sort out their candidates and we know the nominee, he'll look a lot stronger," said Brink, president of a manufacturing company.
He's not sure Corbett's shifts on issues will make much difference.
It's not clear whether the governor has improved his odds of winning re-election by changing stances, said Jack Treadway, author of a book on state elections who taught political science at Kutztown University.
"Will it work? That is another question. Voters will say, 'Look at what he did in the past,' " Treadway said.
Asked whether Corbett has won her over, voter Carol Messinger, 63, a Northampton County Democrat, said:
"One hundred percent no. I just think he is one of the worst governors we've had in a very long time."
Messinger said Corbett's reduction of education funding is a major reason. Then, she said, there's his "horrible handling" of the nearly three-year investigation of child molester Jerry Sandusky, who was convicted in 2012. Corbett began and supervised that investigation as attorney general until January 2011.
If Wolf wins the nomination, Democrats will need to unify to negate attacks on him by challengers Rob McCord, the state treasurer, and U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz, said Chris Nicholas, political director for the Pennsylvania Business Council.
Most unions have endorsed McCord, Nicholas said. The fourth Democrat running is former Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Katie McGinty. Wolf might be hurting for campaign money after spending most of his own $10 million on the primary, Nicholas said.
Not according to Corbett, who in a fundraising appeal to Republicans this week said that "President Obama and his special-interest supporters (will be) funding my opponent to the teeth."
Corbett's best course is to "improve his standing among moderates," Borick said, "but of course he runs the risk of disappointing conservatives who have mixed feelings about his commitment to their issues."
Brad Bumsted is Trib Total Media's state Capitol reporter. Reach him at 717-787-1405 or bbumsted@tribweb.com.
Let us be honest with each other. God isn’t finished with any of us yet — not me, not you, not even your favorite faculty members.

And if you ever find yourself believing that you have achieved intellectual maturity, impeccable values and perfect judgment, you will be mistaken. In such circumstances I suggest that you immediately have children or seek out the company of teenagers who will set you straight. This has worked for me over the years, and I’m sure it will work for you.

I’m all for self-improvement, but achieving an ideal state is simply not in the cards. Our lives are research projects where the hypotheses keep changing, the variables are infinite, and new data arrives with every conscious moment. Assumptions about which we are completely confident at one moment may change utterly in the next: I am a husband, a son, a brother, a father, a scholar. I have a job I love. I have many friends. I am in perfect health. Until things change. And then how will I know who I am?

The same is true for you, and the changes will be more significant than those you make to your Facebook profile. You will fall in love; you will get dumped; you will win important jobs; you will be fired; you will, perhaps, have children. You will certainly lose loved ones.

If you are now strong and healthy, you may be severely injured or develop a chronic illness. If you are proud, you will be humbled. I realize that this sounds like a downer, but my point is this: These qualities and circumstances may shape you, but you must not let them define you. If you take time to reflect and re-evaluate when life surprises you, then you will develop a deeper understanding of who you are and who you are meant to be.

We human beings are designed to make meaning out of our experiences, and making meaning is tough work. Some attempts at self-definition are relatively mutable and superficial, like those based in political affiliations, food preferences or admiration for professional sports teams.
Other affiliations are more profound, like religious faith, ethnicity, gender identity, and others that deeply shape how we perceive the world and how others perceive us. Even these facets of our experience, however, are subject to doubt and reappraisal as we seek to make meaning of our lives. You have begun the process of building on these aspects of identity over the past four years. But you have not finished.

I hope Muhlenberg College has equipped you with the determination to continue exploring that combination of values, habits and beliefs that defines you.

As the ground shifts beneath your feet, as circumstances change, as relationships with those you cherish evolve, your task will always be to deepen your understanding of who you truly are — the essential qualities that will persist no matter what life throws at you.

Doing so will require of you many of the same traits that have enabled you to thrive at Muhlenberg: an openness to people who are different, a commitment to community, a focus on service to others, an interest in new ideas, a refusal to accept "received wisdom" — knowing that true wisdom cannot be received but must be forged in the crucible of experience.

I hope we have prepared you well for this lifelong research project. I hope you will draw on the friendships you have made, the lessons you have learned, and the insights you have achieved to live a life worthy of your potential.

Peyton R. Helm is president of Muhlenberg College. This commentary was adapted from the baccalaureate address he gave to the college's graduating class Saturday night.
A York businessman, Wolf has never won statewide election. So, while he took the battle of the airways in the Democratic primary, he's not shown that he can get people to actually vote for him, said Mark Nevins, a spokesman for Treasurer Rob McCord's campaign.

McCord and other Democratic candidates are counting on that as a possible weakness in Wolf's campaign.

“We have a field organization like no other, and you could make a compelling argument that could carry the day,” said Nevins.

The McCord campaign, he said, has knocked on 231,000 doors, called 382,000 voters and hung 100,000 fliers on doors in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg to remind likely supporters of their polling places.

But get-out-the-vote efforts by McCord or any of the other Democrats will have to surmount a daunting lead.


Wolf jumped to the front of the field in January by getting on television seven weeks before any other candidate, said G. Terry Madonna, a political science professor at Franklin & Marshall. His lead has remained stable for more than two months.

Wolf’s early success connecting with the public surprised pundits and the other candidates, said Madonna. And none of the other contenders has been able to overcome Wolf’s early advantage – despite the fact the state’s most powerful labor organizations lined up behind McCord or Schwartz.

Those candidates surely will count on union support today to help get voters to the polls. That could narrow the gap with Wolf, pollsters say, but it’s unlikely to erase a 20- to 25-point difference.

“I would be amazed if the polls are that far off,” said Chris Borick, a professor of political science at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. “There are no signs of significant movement or erosion” in Wolf’s lead.

Experts forecast around 25 percent of the party’s eligible voters will show up.

Wolf doesn’t just have strong poll numbers and a large campaign budget, say local party activists. He has buzz.

“Tom Wolf seems to be who everybody in Snyder County is talking about,” said the local Democratic Party chairman, Tom Spangler.

While the primary has splintered support – with many established political figures endorsing McCord or Schwartz – local Democratic leaders expect Wolf to get broad support against Corbett if he wins today.

“That could spell trouble for Corbett. The incumbent and former attorney general captured the governor’s
office in 2010 by beating Dan Onorato, a former Pittsburgh city councilman and Allegheny County executive, who won that year’s four-way Democratic primary with 463,000 votes, compared with 248,000 received by the runner-up, Jack Wagner.

“Whoever wins, we’ll all support,” said Crawford County Democratic chairwoman Diane Adsit.

Negotiations in a settlement for what may be nearly 100 claims of sexual abuse by a now-dead Franciscan friar who taught at Bishop McCort Catholic High School are continuing despite a lack of participation by the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

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Two Cambria County schools were honored Monday by Carolyn Dumaresq, acting state education secretary. Penn Cambria Primary School and Richland Elementary led the county in the first round of the Pennsylvania School Performance Profiles, scoring a respective 91.7 and 92 points overall for the 2012-13 school year.

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Tom Wolf likely coasting to victory in today's Democratic primary for governor and earning the bid to challenge incumbent Republican Gov. Tom Corbett.

Poll after poll shows former Revenue Secretary Tom Wolf likely coasting to victory in today's Democratic primary for governor and earning the bid to challenge incumbent Republican Gov. Tom Corbett.

The invisible killer threatening millions of migrating birds

By Aidan Lewis
BBC News, Washington

Every year, hundreds of millions of birds are killed or injured when they fly into windows. Volunteers who document the collisions are now calling for architects and landlords to make their buildings more bird friendly to reduce the number of deaths.

Sometimes birds see plants or empty spaces beyond the windows - sometimes they just see the reflection of the sky or trees, but not the glass itself.

Most tend to cruise at 20-30mph (32-48kph) - if they hit a window at that speed the impact is usually fatal as their beak is jammed back into the brain.

Although collisions can happen anywhere, they are most common in cities where big glass buildings proliferate.

Local birds seem to learn where they can fly safely but migratory songbirds such as warblers, thrushes and sparrows have a particular problem identifying glass.

They usually fly by night when they are less visible to predators and use the stars to navigate
- but they appear to get confused by the illumination of towns and cities below.

Drawn down by the lights, the birds stop to rest and refuel. Some hit windows as they descend but it is more common for them to run into trouble the next day on the way back up, when reflections are stronger - research suggests that the majority of collisions happen on the lowest six storeys of buildings.

The birds are often distracted looking out for predators and food so "what's in front isn't necessarily more important than what's behind them or to the side," says Christine Sheppard, bird collisions campaign manager at the American Bird Conservancy.

Reports of mass collisions date back to the late 1800s when powerful electric lights were introduced, she says. Dead birds were often found at prominent illuminated structures such as the Empire State Building and the Washington Monument.

Today, groups of volunteers patrol nearly 20 North American cities during the spring and autumn migration seasons to document the number of casualties and lobby for the owners of buildings to turn their lights out at night.

The idea began in Toronto in 1993 - since then, the city's Fatal Light Awareness Programme (Flap) has recorded more than 66,000 collisions involving 166 species.

Though overlapping migratory pathways stretch across North America, some cities are thought to present particular problems.

"Toronto is one of those urban centres that was built in the worst possible location for this kind of issue," says Michael Mesure, Flap's founder. "It sits on one of the busiest migratory corridors on the planet."

One day, 12 years ago, they stopped counting after picking up 500 bodies in a single place.

Further south in Washington, volunteers cover a four-mile (6km) route every day during the migration season, setting off before dawn and skirting round the edges of buildings thought to be especially problematic to record the number of collisions.

Often they find a handful of birds - occasionally they find none, but they only cover a tiny fraction of the city.

They have to work fast - gulls and rats may find the dead birds first, or street cleaners may
sweep them up. Hotel owners sometimes clear away birds in the morning so as not to upset guests, while crows have been seen waiting in trees, then swooping in to catch a bird before it hits the ground.

The documentation of bird collisions is slowly becoming more thorough and Flap has developed a web [mapping tool](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27426866?print=true) that allows people around the world to report cases.

Difficulties involved in conducting accurate surveys over large areas mean there are big margins of error when it comes to the statistics. The best current estimate for the US, made by Scott Loss of Oklahoma State University, is between 365 million and 988 million bird deaths each year.

While there is no proven link between collisions and the decline in some bird populations, "there's a good chance that some species are being affected in some locations," he says.

He suggests some land-bird populations are being eroded by 2-9% each year - a rate that could have a lasting impact on some species.

The collisions are particularly worrying because they are indiscriminate, says Daniel Klem, professor of ornithology and conservation biology at Muhlenberg College.

He pioneered the study of window strikes four decades ago and found the fittest members of the population were just as likely to die in this way as weaker birds.

"You may be killing some very important members of the population that would be instrumental in maintaining its health," he says.

Klem has watched glass proliferate as a building material, even in bird conservation areas.

"We have some of our most prestigious ornithologists working on conservation issues who work in buildings that are palatially covered with glass," he says, frustrated that some architects and developers seem unaware of the issue.

"My suspicion is that this is very unfriendly or uncomplimentary to them - dead and dying, and it's associated with their products."

For those who want to prevent collisions on their buildings, the options, so far, have been limited.

[Adhesive tape](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27426866?print=true) that is visible to birds can be stuck on windows but it is not widely available,
while blinds and other shades can be expensive to install. New buildings can use a technique called fritting - a ceramic design baked into the glass which can be effective if the spaces between the patterns are the right size.

Until now, this has been applied to the interior surface of windows where it doesn't interfere with cleaning but is less effective at deterring birds than on the outside - that may soon change though as new methods are developed.

An alternative solution could be to use glass that emits UV signals that are more visible to birds than humans - Klem is positive about the only product to do this, Ornilux, but would like to see it developed further.

In some places, the law is adding another incentive - regulations were recently introduced in California and Minnesota requiring buildings in certain areas to be more bird-friendly. There is a similar law in Toronto.

Extra costs can be justified by designs that serve more than one purpose. Just as companies can save on energy bills by turning lights off at night, so they can save on air conditioning costs by using external shading that is visible to birds.

The Philadelphia based architectural firm KieranTimberlake which is building the new US embassy in London is designing an "outer envelope" for the building. This will provide shade, carry photovoltaic panels to generate solar energy, and help prevent bird collisions.

As new technologies are developed Michael Mesure from Flap is hoping designers will see this as an opportunity. "There are infinite things that you can do to the surface of a building that has its envelope made up of glass," he says. "The windows themselves can become an art form."

Videos by Colm O'Molloy, bird images courtesy of Sam Droege / US Geological Survey

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Suburban Dems prepare for fall congressional battles

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THE PRIMARY was cake. Now comes the tough part for suburban Democrats.

Former Army Ranger and CIA analyst Kevin Strouse was leading businesswoman Shaughnessy Naughton late last night in the Democratic primary for Bucks County's 8th Congressional District seat.

In November, the winner will take on Republican U.S. Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick, a battle-tested survivor in one of the state's few remaining competitive districts. Most of Pennsylvania has been carved up to protect congressional incumbents.

Democrats also have a tough road ahead in the GOP-held 6th and 7th Congressional Districts, where yesterday's primaries were uncontested.
Suburban Dems prepare for fall congressional battles

GALLERY: Suburban Dems prepare for fall congressional battles

Strouse, 34, a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars who moved into the district last year and works at an educational nonprofit, was poised to defeat Naughton, 35, a Bucks County native and former breast cancer researcher, according to unofficial results.

Strouse and Naughton ran mostly positive campaigns - unlike the nasty Democratic primaries for governor and in the 13th Congressional District - and didn't clash on major policy points, aside from fracking. Naughton proposed a permanent ban on fracking in the Delaware River Basin. Strouse supported a moratorium in Bucks and Montgomery counties, but had called a permanent ban on natural gas drilling "premature."

But Strouse, who was backed by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, would emerge from the primary with a potential weak spot for Fitzpatrick to attack: Last week, the Inquirer reported that Strouse's parents had donated money to Democratic candidates in Colorado, Florida, Illinois and California, and that the parents of those candidates donated nearly identical amounts to Strouse's campaign at about the same time. The Strouse campaign has not provided an explanation.

In the Chester-County based 6th District, Democrat Manan Trivedi, a doctor and Iraq war veteran, will face Republican Chester County Commissioner Ryan Costello in November to determine who replaces retiring U.S. Rep. Jim Gerlach.

In the heavily gerrymandered 7th District, Republican U.S. Rep. Pat Meehan is a strong favorite over Democrat Mary Ellen Balchunis, a La Salle University political scientist. The district, once mostly in Delaware County, now has tentacles reaching into Chester, Montgomery, Berks and Lancaster counties.

Christopher Borick, a political-science professor at Muhlenberg College, said it could be difficult for Democrats to take any of the three seats without a national political wave or local scandal. Opposition to Obamacare seems to be
"Even though Americans say they don't like members of Congress, we still overwhelming vote for incumbents," Borick said. "It's been so gerrymandered to create safe Republican or Democratic districts. Right now, it seems to have worked."
Shuster wins Republican primary vote

May 21, 2014 12:28 AM

By Tracie Mauriello / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Aggressive opposition advertising and challenges from the right appeared not enough to take down U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster, whose primary race was fueled by an infusion of cash from stakeholders in the transportation industry, where he wields power as a committee chairman.

As votes continued to be tallied Tuesday, the seven-term incumbent appeared to be staving off Art Halvorson, a retired Coast Guard officer. Franklin County alpaca farmer Travis Schooley, meanwhile was trailing well behind.

Voters' support of Mr. Shuster exemplifies a nationwide trend of Republicans moving away from ultraconservative candidates and toward more moderate candidates, said Chris Borick of Muhlenberg College, a pollster and political scientist.

"This is a year when we're seeing Republicans like Rep. Shuster hold on to their seats and fight off the types of Tea Party challenges that have, in the past, been more successful," he said.

If Mr. Shuster prevails in the final vote count, his next challenge will come from Alanna Hartzok, who ran unopposed in the Democratic primary. It will be an uphill climb for Ms. Hartzok, who hasn't raised any money and who will be running in a heavily Republican district.

Meanwhile, longtime Rep. Mike Doyle of Forest Hills -- the only other Pennsylvania incumbent with primary competition -- appeared to be sailing through a repeat challenge from fellow Democrat Janis Brooks, who runs a social service agency in North Versailles. With no Republican filing for the seat, the primary win seals Mr. Doyle's return to Washington for an 11th term.

Just to the east, Harrison businesswoman Erin McClelland defeated retired Marine Corps Col. John Hugya in the 12th District Democratic primary for a chance to unseat freshman Republican Keith Rothfus.

In a statement, Ms. McClelland said she was "honored and humbled" by the nomination.
"We have come a long way since we started on this road, but our work is not done yet," she said. "We get to keep on fighting to fix Washington, to make our government work for us and to make sure the people of Western Pennsylvania have their voices heard."

Ms. McClelland, of the Alle-Kiski Valley, operates Arche Wellness, a rehabilitation center for substance abuse and psychological issues. She has said that her 17 years of experience as a researcher and expert on behavioral health care would be an asset in crafting health policy in Congress. According to her campaign biography, she already has worked on health care policy as an adviser to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

On the other side of the state, Democrat Brendan Boyle and Republican Dee Adcock, were leading the field in their respective primaries and set to face each other in November for a chance to replace Rep. Allyson Schwartz, D-Philadelphia.

Ms. Schwartz gave up her House seat to run for her party's gubernatorial nomination. She lost that contest to Tom Wolf, a businessman and former state revenue secretary.

Mr. Adcock is a businessman who campaigned on promises to work to help put the American dream within reach. Mr. Boyle is a two-term state representative. Tuesday night's win virtually assures him a seat in Congress, since the 13th is among the most Democratic leaning congressional district in the country.

Mr. Boyle's appeal to organized labor, his traditional approach to campaigning and his ability to stay out of the fray while other candidates were attacking each other helped him Tuesday, Mr. Borick said.

"He really appealed to unions, which still very much matter in Democratic politics, and he was able to leverage union support in a lower-turnout election," Mr. Borick said. "He needed that union support."

The four-way Democratic primary for that congressional seat was one of the most expensive in the country. The candidates raised a combined $4.6 million to fund their aggressive primary campaigns, according to the most recent campaign finance reports.

Like Ms. Schwartz, Rep. Jim Gerlach, R-Chester, also declined to run for another House term, but his open seat drew far less attention from either party. Republican Ryan Costello and Democrat Manan Trivedi ran unopposed in their respective primaries.

Mr. Costello is a Chester County commissioner while Mr. Trivedi is a physician and a Navy veteran.

The minimal interest in that seat and others -- including the one Mr. Rothfus only narrowly won two years ago -- baffles political scientists like Mr. Borick.
Gerrymandering made most of the districts uncompetitive in the general election, so that should raise the stakes for primaries, Mr. Borick said. In Pennsylvania, it hasn't.

"It hasn't been a very vibrant primary season," he said. "Maybe we'll see it rev up, but right now there's just not a lot of energy."
Governor Tom Corbett and businessman Tom Wolf will face off in the November general election.

Republican Corbett won the primary in an uncontested race, while Wolf pulled in 58 percent of the votes in a four-person race on the Democratic side.

Wolf's campaign has picked up quite a bit of steam recently, while experts said Corbett has a tough battle ahead.

"If you look at polls between Tom Wolf and Tom Corbett, Wolf tends to lead by 15 to 20 points before he was nominated...Wolf is in some ways in a better position," said Chris Borick, political science professor at Muhlenberg College.

For Wolf to come out on top, Borick said the he'll need to continue running the campaign he's already started, but to a much larger crowd.

"He now has to introduce himself to a general electorate audience in Pennsylvania. That means expanding his appeal," Borick said.

Borick envisions a different plan of attack for Corbett, whose approval ratings have been low.

"What Tom Corbett has to do is improve on his public standing...And at the same time start to diminish Tom Wolf's general perception," Borick said.

Borick said Corbett would also benefit by an improving economy.

The general election is set for November 4.

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Woman shares family tragedy with Herman-DeKalb students distracted driving

By SUSAN MENDE
JOHNSON NEWSPAPERS
PUBLISHED: THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2014 AT 12:30 AM

JASON HUNTER • WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES
Jacy M. Good, left, whose parents died in a car crash caused by cellphone, reaches out to hug Hermon-DeKalb Central School Wednesday following Good's presentation at the school.
High school roundup: Martin pitches, bats Heuvelton to win
High school lacrosse; Watertown's Rick finally returns to field after long journey
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FiberMark plans one-week shutdown, blames China's anti-corruption laws

JASON HUNTER • WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES
Jacy M. Good, left, whose parents died in a car crash caused by a cell phone, reaches out to hug Hermon-Dekalb Central School on Wednesday following Ms. Good's presentation at the school.

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HARRISBURG — Jim Cawley for governor?

Thousands more Republican voters on Tuesday backed Cawley, Gov. Tom Corbett's lieutenant governor, than the governor himself, signaling their displeasure with the chief executive. Many also voted for their Republican congressman but not for Corbett.

Of course the Republican governor faced no opposition Tuesday, so technically the difference means nothing. But analysts viewed it as another sign of his electoral troubles heading into the fall against Democrat Tom Wolf, who easily won his party's primary election.

"How do you win a general election when your [political] base may not be revved up about you?" asked Chris Borick, Muhlenberg College pollster and political science professor.

National political experts acknowledged the protest against Corbett, but cautioned against reading much into it, pointing out that any governor makes more enemies than his second-in-command. In Pennsylvania, governor and lieutenant governor candidates appear separately on the primary ballot.

"I was surprised Corbett got as many votes as he did — given that no one was running against him and he is so unpopular," said Lara Brown, a George Washington University political scientist and close observer of Pennsylvania politics. "The sort of Republicans who are going to turn out are regular party voters, so they basically wanted to
show their support for the party, but weren't necessarily happy to show their support for Corbett."

Corbett's under-vote isn't too surprising, said the University of Virginia's Larry Sabato, who authors the influential Sabato's Crystal Ball, which ranks political races around the country.

"It certainly suggests there are Republican identifiers who do not intend to vote for him, but we already knew that," Sabato said.

Sabato's Crystal Ball ranks Pennsylvania's governor's race as "leans Democrat," and Sabato said Corbett is among the five most vulnerable sitting governors.

Cawley, of Bucks County, got 26,850 more votes statewide than Corbett. Corbett got fewer votes than Cawley in nearly all 67 counties, and Cawley got nearly 8 percent more votes in Corbett's home county of Allegheny.

Corbett did outperform Cawley in five counties: Fayette, Greene, Northampton, Philadelphia and Pike. The difference was a total of 446 votes.

Voter displeasure with Corbett showed itself in the state's conservative rural heartland, in the more moderate Lehigh County, and in the Philadelphia suburbs represented by Republican congressmen, according to a Morning Call analysis of voting records at the Pennsylvania Department of State.

In tiny Cameron County, Corbett got 255 votes, Cawley, 274, and U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, 299. Republican Kelly also did better than Corbett in Armstrong, Butler and Crawford counties, which his 3rd Congressional District serves.

In the Lehigh Valley, Congressman Charlie Dent, unopposed in the 15th District, got 7,403 votes in Lehigh County compared to Cawley's 6,692 and Corbett's 6,525.

The biggest disparity happened in Bucks County, where Corbett had 1,702 fewer votes than Cawley's 18,551, and 2,782 fewer than the 19,631 that went to U.S. Rep. Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick, R-8th District.

Things certainly aren't looking great for Corbett, said Bruce Castor, the Montgomery County commissioner who threatened and then withdrew plans for a primary challenge in 2013. But he's also not reading too much into Cawley's higher vote tally.

"The lieutenant governor never has to make an unpopular decision, and if he does, the governor takes the blame for it," Castor said. "The lieutenant governor is the nice guy who shows up and says nice things, and this particular lieutenant governor, while he is a qualified executive in his own right, is easy-going and friendly and exceptionally likeable."

Corbett did not have an opponent Tuesday.

Earlier this month, the state Supreme Court booted Republican challenger Bob Guzzardi of Montgomery County off the Republican ballot because of problems with his nominating petitions. With Guzzardi off the ballot, Corbett was supposed to coast.

Corbett campaign manager Mike Barley blamed some of the vote totals on the court's late court decision involving Guzzardi. Some counties did not have time to remove Guzzardi's name from voting machines, he said, leading to confusion for voters.

Copyright © 2014, The Morning Call
Pennsylvania, the last northeastern state to prohibit gay marriage, will let a judge’s ruling end the ban without a fight as Governor Tom Corbett follows others in conceding court losses.

The ruling made Pennsylvania the 25th state to have gay marriage declared legal by voters, lawmakers or courts, evenly dividing the nation almost a year after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling triggered a flood of lawsuits.

Corbett, a Republican who is running for re-election this year, is the latest governor to abandon defense of same-sex marriage bans after court rulings, following New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval, both Republicans.

“As a Roman Catholic, the traditional teaching of my faith has not wavered,” Corbett said yesterday in a statement, saying he had to consider the chances of successfully appealing the May 20 court decision. “I continue to maintain the belief that marriage is between one man and one woman.”

Montana Governor Steve Bullock, a Democrat, said yesterday that a federal judge should overturn his state’s ban after four couples sued. Bullock is at odds with the state’s Republican Attorney General Tim Fox, who promised to defend the ban.

In Philadelphia, more than 50 gay couples have applied for marriage licenses, a clerk in the city’s Marriage License Bureau, said yesterday. The office stayed open past regular business hours to accommodate the couples.

**Discrimination Wall**

Corbett’s decision helps break down a “dark wall of discrimination,” Chad Griffin, president of the advocacy group Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement following Corbett’s decision.

Corbett chose to defend his political aspirations over marriage, which is “a unique public good,” said Brian Brown, president of the Washington-based National Organization for Marriage, which was formed in 2007 to marshal opposition to same-sex marriage.

Pennsylvania joins 18 other states and the District of Columbia where same-sex marriage is currently
available. In six other states, court rulings that such bans are unconstitutional have been put on hold during appeals.

Proponents of same-sex marriage have won at least a dozen consecutive victories since the Supreme Court overturned part of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act that said the federal government could only recognize heterosexual marriages. The high court also rejected an appeal of a decision that threw out a voter-approved California gay-marriage ban.

**70 Cases**

More than 70 marriage-equality cases are pending in 29 states and Puerto Rico, the Human Rights Campaign said. With Montana’s suit, North Dakota and South Dakota became the only states with gay-marriage bans that haven’t been challenged in court, the group said.

The wave of litigation prompted legal officers in some states to decide against defending the bans. Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen Kane, a Democrat, in July called the prohibition unconstitutional. Attorneys general in Kentucky, Illinois, Nevada, Virginia, Oregon and California, all Democrats, also refused to defend bans.

At least four lawsuits were filed attacking Pennsylvania’s 1996 marriage law. U.S. District Judge John E. Jones in Harrisburg ruled on a challenge to the law by 11 gay couples and a widow.

An appeal of Jones’s ruling is “extremely unlikely to succeed” given the high legal threshold the judge set in the case, Corbett said.

**Incest Comparison**

Corbett was criticized by gay rights’ advocates in October for comparing gay marriage to incest. When asked his opinion in a television interview on arguments by state lawyers that gay marriage should be illegal just as marriage between children, Corbett said a better analogy would be between brother and sister. He later said he didn’t intend to offend anyone.

Same-sex marriage is supported by most Pennsylvanians, said Chris Borick, director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Corbett’s decision not to challenge the ruling may appeal to the population broadly, but also “flirt with creating resentment” among social conservatives who may not show up to vote in November, Borick said.

“This year he’s trying fairly hard to make some appeals to the middle of the road Pennsylvania voters,” Borick said.

The ACLU case is Whitewood v. Corbett, 13-cv-01861, U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg). The Montana case is Rolando v. Fox, 4:14-cv-00040, U.S. District Court, District Of
Gay Marriage Turns Tide as Governors Drop Defense of Bans - Bloomberg  
Unopposed in the primary election Tuesday, Gov. Tom Corbett cruised to the Republican Party nomination for governor, and took another hit to his image anyway.

Lt. Gov. Jim Cawley, also unopposed, got 27,000 more votes than the governor.

The outcome only highlighted why analysts think Corbett stands as the most vulnerable governor seeking re-election in the nation.

Democrats hate him, and Republicans are not exactly thrilled either with the Allegheny County Republican, who will face York County businessman Tom Wolf, the Democratic nominee and former state revenue secretary for Gov. Ed Rendell.

"It's a really tough match-up for Tom Corbett," said Christopher Borick, Ph.D., head of Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion. "Now that we've seen Tom Wolf go through a campaign, he's proven himself to be a pretty adept candidate."

With the help of early television advertising touting his life story, Wolf walloped three primary election challengers Tuesday and moved on to a race that's his to lose. The last public poll measuring the two against each other had Wolf up 19 percentage points in February. Borick said Wolf probably still leads by 15 points or more.

"I have zero reason to believe that the governor has improved his standing," he said.

At the moment, almost nothing in traditional political math favors the governor.

A January Franklin & Marshall College poll found voters' opinion of him at the lowest point for any governor in the poll's history with fewer than a quarter of voters (24 percent) viewing him at least somewhat favorably.

A month later, a Quinnipiac University poll had almost half or more of voters disapproving of his handling of the economy, taxes, health care, education and government spending. Corbett trailed every Democratic governor candidate in that poll, including hardly known John Hanger, who later dropped out. By then, Wolf had earned that 19-point lead by charming voters with a TV commercial featuring the Jeep he drives to work and the employee profit-sharing plan at his cabinet-making business.

Voters' message was clear: anybody but Tom Corbett.

Fewer than half (42 percent) of Republicans in that January poll said he deserves re-election, which is maybe why Cawley polled more votes.

It's a sure sign Corbett must reconnect with the party's conservative base, which might be less than enchanted with his decision last week against appealing a federal judge's ruling banning same-sex marriage.

That likely explains his campaigning with conservative Texas Gov. Rick Perry in western Pennsylvania the day after the primary, but Corbett has to win back conservatives while winning over a fair share of Democrats, who outnumber Republicans by a million voters.

Oh and did we mention Wolf comes from York County, still a Republican county in the most Republican part of the state, central Pennsylvania?

Despite the daunting numbers, Republican former Erie area congressman Phil English said Corbett can win because he has guided the state through tough times by making difficult and controversial, but correct, decisions that left the state poised for better times. The key is telling the story in a convincing way and defining for voters Wolf, "a guy who is largely undefined, who was a cabinet member during an administration where you could argue the financials were not as good and a; a guy who has put out a personal story as a private-sector job creator that I think needs to be carefully examined," English said.
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Wolf's Democratic opponents criticized him for profiting by the sale of his family's cabinet-making business, leaving it to fail due to heavy debt, returning to save it only by outsourcing jobs to Indiana and using its value to obtain a loan that helped fund his campaign.

Expect more of the same from Corbett, who must raise voters disapproval of Wolf to have a chance of winning, said G. Terry Madonna, Ph.D., director of the Franklin & Marshall poll.

The Corbett campaign will likely portray Wolf as "a tax-and-spend liberal who's going to put the state back into a fiscal hole," he said. Critical to Corbett's chances is boosting education funding in the next budget in June to counter voter dissatisfaction, a difficult task considering the state is facing a potential $1 billion year-end shortfall, Madonna said.

Education has emerged as the leading issue in the race and a potentially lethal one for the governor, Madonna said.

One number that favors Corbett is unemployment. As he took office in January 2011, it was 8.1 percent, but it was down to 5.7 percent in April (6.3 percent nationally) with almost 188,000 more people working. Democrats argue the job growth rate remains near the bottom nationally.

"If Pennsylvania does have a good year economically and the recovery does become more robust here, he gets a ride on the tide," Borick said.

Former Lackawanna County Commissioner Mike Washo, a Wolf supporter, said he doubts Corbett can redefine Wolf, whose folksy appeal and reserved self-confidence seem to transcend traditional politics. None of the other Democrats' mud-slinging stuck, he said.

"There's never been a campaign like the one we're seeing now (from Wolf) or a candidate like Tom Wolf in recent memory," Washo said.

"When a person believes so much in himself and has such a level of confidence, it makes the voter more comfortable. It's a crazy phenomenon."

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Natural gas tax, education tied in Pennsylvania voters minds - Pittsburgh...
Expect to hear a lot more about a severance tax on energy companies between now and election day.

During the Democratic gubernatorial primary campaign, the issue of taxing the oil and gas extraction was linked to restoring public education funding. The economy and education have rated as the key issues for voters. Linking the severance tax with education seems to have worked for Democrats.

“The issues have now become intertwined in the minds of voters,” said Christopher Borick, a professor of political science and director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Allentown.

Gov. Tom Corbett has steadfastly ...

Paul J. Gough is digital producer at the Pittsburgh Business Times. Contact him at pgough@bizjournals.com or 412-208-3827. You can also follow him on Twitter.

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**Rory O'Malley, Julia Murney Perform *For Daniel*, Celebrating Life of Playwright Killed in High-Rise Fire**

By Andrew Gans  
June 2, 2014

*Always for Daniel*, a celebration of late playwright Daniel James McClung, who tragically lost his life in a Jan. 5 fire in a midtown Manhattan high-rise apartment building, is presented June 2 at 7 PM at 54 Below.

The evening, which includes passages from McClung's collected works alongside the music of Judy Garland and Ella Fitzgerald, re-imagined, was created by Mr. McClung's friend Michael Zahler.

Performers include Rory O'Malley, Julia Murney, Jenni Barber, Chelsea Packard, Jason Michael Snow, Tamika Sonja Lawrence, Bonnie Milligan, Joelle Lurie, Michael Zahler and The Skivvies. Music director Will Van Dyke leads an on-stage band that includes Alec Berlin on guitar, Mairi Dorman-Phaneuf on cello, Steve Gilewski on bass and Mason Ingram on drums.

Proceeds benefit Muhlenberg College Theatre and Dance, where a scholarship will be established in McClung's name.

Mr. McClung's *Paper Nautilus* was staged by Josh Hecht for AliveWire Theatrics. His plays were also developed at Rattlestick and PS 122.

There is a $45-$55 cover charge and a $25 food and beverage minimum. 54 Below is located at 254 W. 54th Street. For more information visit [54Below.com](http://54Below.com).
Pennsylvania lawmakers are scrambling to seal state budget by June 30

Lobbyists wait in the Capitol rotunda before Gov. Tom Corbett's February budget address. As the session resumes on Monday, June 2, 2014, lobbyists and others will push lawmakers to take action on issues such as a shale-gas tax, pension reform and liquor privatization before summer recess.

By Brad Bumsted

HARRISBURG — Lawmakers on Monday begin the dash to approve a no-tax-increase state budget before midnight June

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Brad Bumsted is a state Capitol reporter for the Trib
Coal industry, EPA pollution rules become part of Corbett-Wolf race | http://triblive.com/business/headlines/6227294-74/coal-corbett-pennsylvania...
Sen. Joe Scarnati determined to boot elected state officials out of pension system

Jan Murphy | jmurphy@pennlive.com
By Jan Murphy | jmurphy@pennlive.com

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on June 04, 2014 at 8:54 PM, updated June 05, 2014 at 12:36 AM

If no other pension reform gets done before lawmakers break for the summer, the highest-ranking state senator is calling for the Legislature to at least act to move all elected officials in the legislative, executive and judicial branch out of the state's defined benefit pension plan.

"It's not going to have significant impact on savings, but you know what? I think it sends a strong message that we're serious about getting our finances under control," said Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati, R-Jefferson County.

Scarnati offered this last-resort pension proposal in a telephone interview after expressing concern that none of the pension reform plans being worked on in the House or Senate has yet to draw the votes needed to pass.

He said if any consensus plan does gain traction, he wants to see elected officials in all three governmental branches be treated like new employees and pushed out of the guaranteed pension system and into a 401k-style plan upon their election or re-election.

The State Employees' Retirement System, of which most elected officials are participants, and the Public School Employees' Retirement System faced a $47 billion debt for pension benefits that retired and current employees have accrued but the systems lack the money to provide. As a result, the state and school districts face dramatic increases in payments for many years to come to pay off that debt.

"Everybody believes we are the pension problem, so let's take ourselves out of it. Then we'll see what the real pension problem is," Scarnati said.

"We can move ourselves out and you're still going to have the spiked payments for years and unfunded liability. So I want to get the conversation going and I'm up for the task."

Northern Lebanon School District Superintendent Don Bell, who has railed about lawmakers reluctance to tackle
pension reform, called Scarnati's idea an "excellent first step, but more importantly that action would finally show that the legislators are beginning to get serious about solving the financial challenges associated with pension reform."

Scarnati said he doesn't want to go home for the legislative summer recess having to defend keeping his pension while asking others to absorb funding or service cuts that are bound to be included in next year's state budget given a $1 billion-plus revenue shortfall.

The symbolism loaded into Scarnati's proposal would demonstrate to the public that lawmakers recognize they need to do more than talk the talk, said Christopher Borick, a Muhlenberg College political scientist.

"If you are talking another round of cuts, if there's nothing to show the electorate regarding cuts that affect you as a legislator, it does ring a little hollow," Borick said.

Scarnati was careful to say he wouldn't be satisfied if booting the elected officials out of the defined benefit pension system was the only pension reform that passes this month.

"But at least I'm not going home to have anybody look at me and say sure you got your pension and I got my services cut. I think that's the real political question that elected officials have to ask themselves when they do this budget. If they're willing to cut [something that impacts others] but you won't cut yourself, that's hypocritical."
Princeton prep program sends 22 local students to top colleges

Erik Lima, a Trenton Central High School student was one of the speakers at the Princeton University Preparatory Program graduation ceremony that took place at Friend Center, Lecture Hall in Princeton. Trentonian Photo/CARLOS AVILA

By Carlos Avila, The Trentonian

Posted: 06/07/14, 5:35 PM EDT | Updated: 1 day ago

0 Comments
On Wednesday, 22 Mercer County students attended their Princeton University Preparatory Program graduation ceremony at Friend Center, Lecture Hall in Princeton. Trentonian Photo/Carlos Avila.

PRINCETON — Every year, the Princeton University Preparatory Program (PUPP) sponsors a three-year preparatory program for area high school students.

On Wednesday, 22 Mercer County students graduated the program and are going on to attend top universities across the nation.

PUPP offers a rigorous, academic and cultural enrichment program that supports high-achieving, low-income high school students from local schools. The multi-year program is tuition-free and prepares students for admission to and ongoing success within selective colleges and universities. All students are selected to become PUPP Scholars during the spring of their freshman year of high school.

The graduation of the 2014 PUPP cohort includes students from different backgrounds and high schools. The 22 students were selected three years ago upon completing their 9th grade year.

“We are extremely proud of the hard work and resilience displayed by the PUPP Class of 2014. These fine young men and women have used every
tion to graduate among the top students in their high schools,” said program director Dr. Jason

For the past three years PUPP students have endured rigorous academic training. During the school year students engaged in numerous after school workshops, test preparation sessions, cultural excursions and college tours. In addition, each summer students studied at Princeton University getting a world-class education.

“They are well-prepared for the next step in their educational journey as they matriculate this fall at some of our nation’s finest colleges and universities,” said Klugman.

At the graduation ceremony, held at the university’s Friend Center, Magdalena Stankowska from Ewing High School and Erik Lima from Trenton Central High School spoke about their experiences.

“They helped select me from under privilege families and those who are first generation to go to college, and not just any college, but prestigious colleges. I am extremely proud to have completed this program and to have been accepted into such a prestigious institute such as Princeton University,” said Stankowska from Ewing.

“Through this program I learned so many things about college and was able to get almost a full ride. I am truly grateful for the people who run this program.” said Lima from Trenton.

Princeton University Preparatory Program graduates:

Ewing High School
D’Andre Battle, Dickinson College.
Akahyl Henry, Rutgers University
Magdalena Stankowska, Princeton University.
Kadija Yilla, Pomona College.
Lawrence High School
Jordan Finger, Monmouth University.
Yadira Santos, The College of New Jersey.
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Princeton prep program sends 22 local students to top colleges

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Caelle Rousseau, Amherst College
Princeton High School
Chelsea, Mia Pierre-Dickinson College
Cynthia Silva, Muhlenberg College
Trenton Central High School
Erik Lima, Colgate University
David Lopez, The College of New Jersey
Simon Lopez, Rutgers University–Newark
Trenton High School West
Danica Bradley, The College of New Jersey
Paola Dubon, Muhlenberg College
Aliya Grooms, Spelman College
Karem Mathiang, Dickinson College
Wilhelmina Minney, Wilhelmina Minney

About the Author
Carlos has lived in the Trenton area since 1990, when he immigrated to the U.S. from Ecuador, where he earned a Bachelor’s degree from Universidad de Cuenca. He is the editor of www.njexpreso.com Reach the author at cavila@trentonian.com.
HARRISBURG — Attorney General Kathleen Kane's report clearing her predecessor, Gov. Tom Corbett, of delaying the Jerry Sandusky investigation for political reasons cost state taxpayers at least $180,000, her office said on Monday.

That conclusion of the report, first published by the Tribune-Review on Saturday, is only one element of a 15-month review by a Widener University Law School professor that Kane hired.

Geoff Moulton, a former federal prosecutor, worked 1,803 hours on the Sandusky report at $74 an hour, Kane's office said. He was paid benefits of $34,661 and reimbursed $12,477 for travel costs.

"I have to give her credit for handling such a sensitive issue in a professional and fair manner," said Rep. Jim Christiana, R-Beaver County. "I think it's reasonable for her to put resources into protecting the integrity of the Attorney General's Office."

But, said Jay Meashey, 33, of State College, who attended Penn State until 2003: "I think $180,000 is a lot of money, and it could pay for a lot of things in the Attorney General's Office. She probably could have done it cheaper. But I know it was something she campaigned on, and it was a reason a lot of people voted for her."

Kane is expected to publicly release the report by June 30, once Cambria County Judge Norman A. Krumenacker III reviews the responses of those named in it.

The governor's office declined to comment.

Reconstructing millions of deleted office emails delayed the report. Kane's spokesman J.J. Abbott said the email recovery was done in-house, and because that Information Technology employee pursued other tasks, it's not possible to calculate time spent on the recovery.

The investigation required no equipment or software purchases, he said.

"Most of the time necessary to recover the material was simply a computer running a process with no manpower required," Abbott said. He said Kane "made every effort to keep costs at a minimum."

Kane, the first Democrat elected attorney general, promised voters during her 2012 campaign that she would investigate whether Corbett, a Republican, delayed the Sandusky case to get past the 2010 gubernatorial election.

Corbett was governor in November 2011 when Sandusky, 70, a former assistant Penn State football coach, was arrested and subsequently convicted of sexually assaulting boys. Sandusky's arrest and the firing of legendary head coach Joe Paterno sparked upheaval on the State College campus.

Although some sources who have read the report portray its content as "complete vindication" for Corbett and his team, others suggest serious questions remain about case delays.

Mark Dwyer, a 2004 Penn State graduate, said it's "a little premature to go into the costs and the pros and cons of it."

Dwyer, 32, a school aide in the State College School District, thinks it's too soon to say that Corbett has been
"completely cleared." Being "politically cleared" is one thing, but Corbett accepted campaign money from board members of the Second Mile, the nonprofit charity where Sandusky groomed his victims.

"He's investigating a guy whose charity is giving him money for his election," Dwyer said. "I want to see the full report."

Rep. Mike Vereb, R-Montgomery County, said he had no doubts that politics didn't factor into the Sandusky investigation.

"If you knew all of these (prosecutors), you knew that," Vereb said. "If spending that kind of money is what it took to get public trust, to say no one was playing politics, then maybe that's a good expenditure."

The report likely is not a "game-changer" for Kane or Corbett, who is running for re-election in November, said Christopher Borick, a political science professor at Muhlenberg College in Allentown.

"If the report does indeed absolve Corbett of playing politics but provides evidence of some mistakes and inefficiencies in the investigation, I think it will have negligible (political) effects on both Corbett and Kane," Borick said. "In many ways, opinions on the entire Sandusky scandal have been established in voters' minds, and it would take some form of amazing revelations to move voters' views on this matter."

Many people loyal to Penn State were angered not so much about Corbett's handling of the investigation while attorney general "but more about a perceived heavy-handedness toward the university" when the scandal broke, Borick said.

"Many Penn Staters believe he kicked the university when it was down, rather than helped to see PSU through a very difficult time."

Larry Backer, a law school professor at Penn State, called Kane's review "a useful exercise in an age when we don't seem to have a lot of public trust in government."

Brad Bumsted is Trib Total Media's state Capitol reporter. Reach him at 717-787-1405 or bbumsted@tribweb.com. Staff writer Adam Smeltz contributed.

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How to Remove a Tick

Entomologist Marten Edwards shows the proper technique in removing ticks to help you lower the risk of contracting Lyme disease.

Published June 4, 2014

Get a behind-the-scenes look at how we conducted the tick photoshoot for our July 2014 feature here.

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A lineup of hoofers takes its audience behind the scenes, and a musician tells all from the roof. It's a wide range of musical offerings by the Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre and the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival that will reach thousands of patrons in the Lehigh Valley over the next three months, beginning with “A Chorus Line” and “Fiddler on the Roof,” respectively, both underway through June 29.

Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre (SMT), whose home base is the Baker Center for the Arts at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, embarks on its 34th theatrical season, opening with the Tony Award-winning best play of 1975 and one of the longest running plays in Broadway history, “A Chorus Line.”

Charles Richter, (left), SMT artistic director, directs the production that delves into the lives of 17 dancers auditioning for the eight spots in the chorus of an unnamed Broadway musical. It takes the audience behind the scenes and into the minds and lives of the 17 Broadway hopefuls in the midst of a soul-baring audition. As the ranks thin, the auditioners face the realities of life, love and a career in show business.

Musical director is Michael Schnack; choreographer is Muhlenberg dance program chairwoman Karen Dearborn. Joining the cast as Zach is Robert Torres, who performed in a regional tour of “A Chorus Line.” Two former designers of lighting and sets for the summer theater program, Donald Holder and Beowulf Boritt, respectively, also return to Muhlenberg.
Holder was nominated for a 2014 Tony Award in the category of best lighting design of a musical for Broadway’s “The Bridges of Madison County.” Boritt received a nomination for best scenic design of a play for “Act One.”

The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival (PSF) has opened its 23rd season at the Labuda Center for the Performing Arts at DeSales University in Center Valley with the Tony Award-winning musical, “Fiddler on the Roof,” directed by Dennis Razze, (left), PSF associate artistic director. Razze directed PSF’s “Oklahoma” last summer. He directed “Fiddler on the Roof” at DeSales in 1990.

Portraying the role of Tevye is Joe Vincent, (right), who played Big Daddy in PSF’s “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof” in 2012. John Ahlin returns to PSF as Lazar Wolf. Vincent has played Tevye several times around the country and looks forward to taking the stage again. He calls Tevye “a beautiful, loving and funny creature that we ALL indentify with. He is a very real Everyman.”

The production features the largest cast at PSF, with 35 actors, singers and dancers. Jerome Robbins’ original choreography has been taught to the dancers by Stephen Casey, who choreographed PSF’s “Oklahoma.”

The story, based on “Tevye the Dairyman” and other tales by Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem, is set in 1905 in Czarist Russia. The fiddler balanced precariously on the roof is a metaphor of survival, and of the traditions and faith that help provide balance and direction in the upheaval of challenging times. Timeless songs include “If I Were a Rich Man,” “Sabbath Prayer,” and “Sunrise, Sunset.”

“A Chorus Line’ is a show that doesn’t date,” said Richter, commenting on his strong group of dancers, all Muhlenberg students and recent graduates, and its tremendous score with such numbers as “What I Did for Love,” “One,” “I Can Do That,” “At the Ballet,” “The Music and the Mirror,” and “I Hope I Get It.”

“It’s going to be put through the filter of kids and young people of our time,” Richter said. “...Every student will bring their humanity to the character.”

Due to strong adult content, the show is recommended for ages 12 and up.

Summer Music Theater continues with the Muhlenberg premiere of the Monty Python comedy, “Spamalot,” directed by James Peck, July 9-27, and “Gruff!” a new family musical...with goats! It’s directed by Ora Fruchter and presented by the neo-vaudeville theater group Doppelskope, June 18-July 26. Muhlenberg ’07 graduate Christopher Scheer is a member of the cast. The show is recommended for ages 4 and up.

For further info: muhlenberg.edu/SMT  pashakespeare.org

ARTS ROUNDUP

The Lehigh Valley’s largest free youth concert is about to take place tonight at 7 in Allentown’s West Park, when YEAllentown! (Youth Education in the Arts) presents some 500 of its talented youth in a celebration of music and dance. The event will feature The Cadets, Cadets2, Xcape Dance Company, and Designated Hitters Drumline.

For further info: yea.org

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Two-time Grammy Award-winner, pianist and conductor Peter Nero will perform “Broadway at the State Theatre” on Saturday at 8 p.m., at Easton’s State Theatre. He will be accompanied by Michael Barnett, his principal bassist for 18 years.

Nero founded the Philly Pops and for 35 years directed the entity known as Peter Nero and the Philly Pops. Today, he remains as the artistic director. Hailed as one of the premier interpreters of Gershwin, he starred in the Emmy Award-winning NBC special, “S’Wonderful, S’Marvelous, S’Gershwin.” He’s appeared on television with the National Symphony in Washington, D.C., on its July 4th special, “A Capitol Fourth.” He also was music director and pianist for the PBS special, “The Songs of Johnny Mercer: Too Marvelous for Words” with co-stars Johnny Mathis, Melissa Manchester and the Philly Pops.

For further info: statetheatre.org

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The Allentown Band strikes up patriotic music for the “Salute the Troops and Flag Day Concert” on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at the Musikfest Café at ArtsQuest in Bethlehem, and at 7 p.m. for the Allentown Flag Day Association Concert at the West Park Bandshell in Allentown. Both programs are free and feature Lehigh Valley soloist Evelyn Stewart.

For further info: allentownband.com

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The dancing is truly the star in "A Chorus Line" at Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre.

The production, directed by Charles Richter, is filled with talented dancers, all of whom are students or graduates of Muhlenberg College.

It's a daunting show that requires nearly nonstop dancing, and no intermission. But none of the cast members seemed winded.

A truly inside show, the story puts the audience in the viewpoint of a director auditioning 17 dancers for eight spots in a Broadway show. The story, originally staged in 1975, still resonates and feels fresh in the Muhlenberg production. You feel these people could be auditioning on a Broadway stage today.

The dancers are told they have to fit seamlessly in the chorus line but are also asked to open up about their lives and feelings for the chance of getting a spotlight part.

A truly inside show, the story puts the audience in the viewpoint of a director auditioning 17 dancers for eight spots in a Broadway show. The story, originally staged in 1975, still resonates and feels fresh in the Muhlenberg production. You feel these people could be auditioning on a Broadway stage today.

Robert Torres plays the director Zach as gruff but not unkind. He also demonstrated he can hoof it with the best of them.

The show opens with "I Hope I Get it" — the performers' hopeful paean to maintaining a positive outlook. The
number is expertly choreographed with performers not all matching perfectly and some even intentionally making mistakes.

Tyler Holoboski makes an appealing Mike, and his "I Can Do That" is delivered with warmth as well as top-notch dance moves.

Sheila (played by Julia Garber), Bebe (Sarah Biren) and Maggie (Molly Karlin) were poignant and harmonic in "At the Ballet" backed by the rest of the cast. It was the only point at which Sheila was not simmering with attitude.

Diana, played by Angela DeAngelo, was fearless and funny in her rendition of "Nothing" done in the middle of an empty stage — no small feat.

As Val, Chelsea Montgomery-Duban made "Dance: Ten, Looks: Three," sizzle giving the character a little bit of an insightful edge.

For "Sing" Ryan Skerchak showed a well-toned voice and impeccable timing. Zoe Briggs nailed the challenging job of making Kristine purposely off-key.

Emily Phillips was entrancing as Cassie when she demonstrated her considerable dancing prowess in "The Music and the Mirror."

Kevin Kulp is moving as Paul, who struggles to open up about his painful past.

Other standouts among a stellar cast were Bryan Dougherty as an energetic Bobby, Paula Chang as a self-effacing Connie, Jakeim Hart as the enthusiastic Richie and Henry Evans as the youthful and confused Mark.

All the ensemble numbers, including "Hello Twelve," "What I did for Love" and "One," were well-executed. The finale of "One" was completely satisfying.
The stripped-down set has a line of tape across the stage and, for some scenes, mirrors that turned around, giving the effect of a rehearsal studio. Then there’s a flashier backdrop for the finale.

“A Chorus Line," 8 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays, through June 29, Muhlenberg College, Baker Center, Empie Theatre, 2400 Chew St., Allentown. Tickets: $39, $33; $36, $29, seniors; $20, $18, students. Info: 484-664-3693, muhlenberg.edu/SMT.

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'Spamalot,' 'A Chorus Line' highlight Muhlenberg College summer theater offerings

"A Chorus Line" will be performed through June 29 at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. (Courtesy Photo)

A Lehigh Valley premiere, an old favorite and an original show will be showcased during this summer's live theater offerings at Muhlenberg College.

Muhlenberg's summer theater performances continue through July at the Allentown...
"Gruff," this year's original children's theater performance opening Wednesday, is a fresh, innovative take on the beloved fable, "The Three Billy Goats Gruff," according to Charles Richter, Muhlenberg professor and director of theater. The play illustrates a message of sustainable living and is another first in live theater for the region.

"We're offering a sensory friendly show for kids with autism," Richter says. "It's difficult for autistic kids to attend (mainstream theater productions) and this show, geared toward those (ages) 4 to 12, will make it more accessible for those with disabilities to come and feel comfortable."

Created and performed by Ora Fruchter and Christopher Scheer, as the character Doppelskope, the pair use puppetry, sets and props created from recycled materials to tell refreshed fable, Richter says.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for drama and a Tony Award for Best Musical, "A Chorus Line" tells the story of what it's like to audition for the backup positions in a Broadway show.

"In 'A Chorus Line' the backing group gets to move to the front and we see what it's like through their eyes," Richter says.

Richter says the timeless music of Marvin Hamlisch and the compelling story of watching people audition give audiences a bird's-eye view of the process.

Die-hard Monty Python fans will satisfy a desire to see their favorite sketches along with some original material in "Monty Python's Spamalot."

"Spamalot" director Jim Peck says the show is "lovingly ripped off from" the "Monty Python" film franchise.

"There is definitely a cult following of fans for 'Monty Python' and there is pleasure for them in seeing their favorite skits performed live," Peck says.

Peck says "schmaltz and trashiness" make up the show. "Unquestionably, it's both parody and homage to the original," Peck says.


By nature, the show feels slightly contradictory -- at once adorned with Hollywood style glitz and "razzmatazz," while at other times feeling like a youngsters' history pageant," Peck says.
"Spamalot" includes flying sets and props, which make the scenes fresh," Peck says. "You can pack a lot of scenery into this show, which makes it fun for people. At every turn it will look new."

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ON STAGE

Muhlenberg College's Summer Music Theatre continues through the end of July at the Allentown campus, 2400 Chew St., Allentown.

- "A Chorus Line" runs through June 29 in the Empie Theatre.
- "Gruff" opens Wednesday and continues through July 26 in the Studio Theatre.
- "Monty Python's Spamalot" opens July 9 and runs through July 27 in Baker Theatre.

Tickets, show times and information: [muhlenberg.edu/main/academics/theatre-dance/smt/](http://muhlenberg.edu/main/academics/theatre-dance/smt/)
Philadelphia Comic Con attendees could be lured to the classroom, one college says


By Alyssa Passeggio | The Express-Times (http://connect.lehighvalleylive.com/user/apassegg/posts.html)

Email the author | Follow on Twitter (https://twitter.com/apasseggio)

on June 17, 2014 at 7:00 PM, updated June 17, 2014 at 7:01 PM

Actors, authors and costumes:
You'd expect all of that at a Comic Con.

But professors trying to entice you to their school?

Muhlenberg College

Muhlenberg College is sending students to Philadelphia Comic Con this weekend.

Muhlenberg College Photo | Bill Keller

giving it a shot this weekend at the Wizard World Philadelphia Comic Con.

"Comic Con geeks have many of the qualities we're looking for: They are imaginative, creative, close readers and listeners, with an eye for detail, a sense of humor and a flair for the dramatic. That pretty much describes the typical Muhlenberg student," President Randy Helm said.

The Allentown college is sending one staffer and three students -- decked in matching T-shirts declaring them "Raiders of the Liberal Arts."
Mark Lang: Teach today's students to think like tomorrow's entrepreneurs

Remarkable things are happening in Allentown with the Neighborhood Improvement Zone. Many people contributed their political clout and/or resources in the extreme to make this possible. Thank you!

However, there is one overriding challenge that threatens everything: an education system that fails to prepare too many students for success in today's economy. This is bad for those kids and for our community that needs their skills and future tax dollars.

Many dedicated educators, business leaders, school board members, nonprofits and others have made efforts to address this challenge for a decade or more. Stories abound about small wins that have resulted, but the basic challenge has stubbornly refused to budge. Why? It seems the previous efforts were understandably designed to improve the existing system without too much disruption, while current competitive demands mean we need to
start from the ground up with a new approach.

Today's global economy has changed the rules. Graduates need greater understanding of technical subjects, including science and math, and they also must think, collaborate and communicate and solve new problems if they want a good job. Further, they must develop a mind-set for success. These criteria set a new bar for a good education, and one quickly sees that the traditional lecture-testing approach falls way short. Just look at how many kids don't make it to graduation and how many who graduate cannot find a good job.

The answer emerged to our diverse group of entrepreneurial business and community leaders when we realized that, today, all graduates must learn to think and act like entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur's ability to learn and adapt on the fly, recognize opportunity, and collaboratively develop new solutions to problems are exactly what businesses and organizations need to succeed in today's dynamic, unpredictable marketplace.

Over several years, we have piloted several such education programs, then explored the design for a full school and visited pioneering schools with a similar approach.

It is remarkable to see how kids respond when, rather than memorizing answers out of books, they are asked to solve real problems that interest them. When students lead in solving the problems, they take ownership and are so involved they don't even consider getting into fights or other distracting behaviors. Further, students demonstrate 21st century skills, including initiative, communications, collaboration and problem-solving that every employer desperately seeks.

On traditional measures, the school we visited in Texas — Manor New Tech High — has a 100 percent graduation rate and proficiencies of 91 percent in math and 98 percent in English, even with a student body whose majority is minority and poor. In Allentown, 66 percent of students graduated in 2012, and, among 11th graders, 25 percent scored proficient or above in math and 34 percent were proficient or above in English.

That is our opportunity. The challenge is this type of learning requires a complete rethinking of education and retraining of all educators. Such change is extremely difficult, especially in the fish bowl of public education with its long-established special interests. It will take strong collaboration from many players in all key sectors and strong public pressure to ensure success.

The next step is to implement a model school as a demonstration for others to follow. Our team developed a comprehensive plan for a model middle and high school that was submitted to the Allentown School District as a charter school (the only way we could find to support this initiative), but it was denied.
We subsequently discovered that at least a few leaders from the school administration and school board want to do something similar, and we are discussing how we could assist within the district, rather than form a charter, with a resubmitted charter proposal as the fallback. We are reaching out now to solicit more participation and support from the community. Share your ideas and questions; volunteer to mentor; parents show your interest by pre-enrolling your kids.

Please refer to our website, lventure.org, and social media sites for information, contacts and sharing. We also have a community forum from 6-7:30 p.m, Thursday at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 417 N. Seventh St., Allentown, hosted by Erika Sutherland, an associate professor of Spanish at Muhlenberg College. This initiative could transform Allentown's greatest problem into the region's greatest strength, and become a national model for 21st century education. Wide community participation will ensure that it happens. How about you?

Mark Lang, former executive director of Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania, is executive director of Charter Partners Institute, a nonprofit organization in Bethlehem.
Behnke Museum docents secure contract for book about Paramus

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BY KAREN KLEIMANN
MANAGING EDITOR
TOWN NEWS

http://www.northjersey.com/arts-and-entertainment/books/behnke-museum-docents-secure-cont...
The Fritz-Behnke Historical Museum, with the help of its docents, has secured a contract with Arcadia Publications to publish a book on the history of Paramus.

It may now be a bustling borough where commercial enterprise runs six days a week, but 75 years ago Paramus was still made of soil, with plows used to transform the land into agricultural promise.

Paramus' long history will soon be chronicled in a new book.
company Arcadia Publications to add Paramus to its series of published borough histories.

Museum Director Bill Leaver said the book will be published and available for purchase in about six months, including at the Fritz-Behnke Historical Museum.

Leaver said it is fitting that the museum would sell the books as its building is named after Fritz Behnke, the borough historian who devoted his life to preserving the memories of the past by teaching people what life was like in Paramus many years ago.

Arcadia contacted the museum several years ago, and while a series of docents wanted to take on the project, circumstances prevented it from getting off the ground completely, Leaver said. That is until current docents and lifelong Paramus residents Thalia Goulis and Marc Jablonski came on the scene.

For Goulis, a recent graduate of Ramapo College, and Jablonski, an incoming senior at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania, the chance to write a book on the borough they've lived in was too good of an opportunity to pass up.

"I like learning new things every day," Goulis said.

And despite being a resident all her life, Goulis said this project has surprised her.

"I realized how little I knew about a town I've lived in my whole life," she said.

Jablonski got involved in the project as a result of the research he's done as part of his major, anthropology.

"I research cultures," he said. "I've been learning about Paramus as a culture and how it's different today than it was as a culture 75 years ago."

Both said they are very excited about the project and hope to bring new perspectives of what the borough was like to residents.
The docents got to work last summer on the requirements to secure a contract with Arcadia. After they completed the author's proposal, the company rubber stamped a contract.

Research sessions can take four to five hours and involve looking at archived photos, taking lots of notes and pinpointing the most important aspects of Paramus' history, Goulis said. The two did independent research using resources from the museum, library, books and stories from borough residents and then edited each other's work. This past February, they started writing up all the information they gathered and hope to finish the book by the end of July, several weeks before the mid-August deadline.

Goulis and Jablonski said the book, per Arcadia Publication's guidelines, is about 180 pages long, comprised of photographs with long caption information and sprinkled with written accounts of life in the borough.

The docents said the strict guidelines make the project easy and hard at the same time. They said it helps to have a page limit, but it makes it hard to decide what should go in the book as a chapter and what may have to remain a footnote.

"We try to balance it," Goulis said.

Like the books before it, the Paramus history will focus on the borough's roots, from farming celery and tomatoes to highlighting the long-gone aspects that made Paramus a popular locale - diners, farming, hunting and even an amusement park before it was lost to a fire.

Goulis and Jablonski are seeking old photographs to include in the book. Anyone with information to provide can contact them at thalia.goulis@gmail.com.

E-mail: kleimann@northjersey.com
Just back from performing on a Mediterranean cruise, Muhlenberg College theater and history '03 graduate Shannon Lambert-Ryan and husband, Fionan de Barra, will be joining their Philadelphia- and Nashville-based Celtic roots band, RUNA, on Friday at 8 p.m., for a concert launch of its fourth album in the intimate setting of the Sellersville Theatre in Sellersville, Bucks County.

The 13-track album, titled “Current Affairs,” includes Irish and Scottish tunes with strands of folk roots and bluegrass. The project involved three Grammy-winning guest artists: Ron Block (Alison Krauss & Union Station), Jeff Taylor (Paul Simon, Elvis Costello), and Buddy Greene (Kentucky Thunder, Bill Gaither).

“We are incredibly honored to have them join us for this project,” said Philadelphia native Lambert-Ryan. “They’ve since become dear friends of ours,” she said, adding that she met the three musicians at “living room” jam sessions held at the Nashville home of husband-and-wife modern hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty.
Members of the award-winning RUNA, founded in 2008 by Dublin native de Barra, (guitar, vocals) and Lambert-Ryan (lead vocals), often tour with the Getty’s, who are natives of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Members include Kentucky’s Maggie Estes White (fiddle), Canada’s Cheryl Prashker (percussion), and Galway’s Dave Curley (mandolin, vocals). Also performing on “Current Affairs” is Dublin’s Patrick D’Arcy (uilleann pipes).

Lambert-Ryan explained that one track, “The Ruthless Wife,” was inspired by the newsworthy events — and composed with “poetic license” -- surrounding the death of her great-great grandfather, Philadelphia Police Officer James Allen Lambert, in July 1922.

Another track, the labor song “The Banks Are Made of Marble” by Les Rice was recorded unknowingly on the night of Pete Seeger’s death. Seeger was known to have sung this song throughout his life.

“We were sad to learn of Seeger’s death,” Lambert-Ryan recalled. “It was a serendipitous moment for us, to be able to capture that moment, as only he could using peace and harmony in music.”

RUNA has performed in the Lehigh Valley at Celtic Fest, Musikfest, Godfrey Daniels, and Mayfair Festival of the Arts. Upcoming performances are slated for Arizona, Canada, and Upstate New York. The band performed live for “Music Monday” at the WFMZ-TV studio on June 2.

Opening for RUNA in Sellersville on Friday will be good friend, Philadelphia singer/songwriter Michael Braunfeld, co-artistic director (with his father, Andrew) of the annual Spring Gulch Folk Festival in New Holland, Lancaster County. Braunfeld also has performed at the Philadelphia Folk Festival.

For further info: runamusic.com

ARTS ROUNDUP

The Common Chords concert will be held Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m., at the Kesher Zion Synagogue, 1245 Perkiomen Ave., Reading. Performers will include the Berks Youth Chorus and Maggie Spike with East Side Dave Klein and others. The music of Maggie Spike (Peggy Gernerd) offers acoustic pop, psych folk, Celtic, reggae, jazz, Americana and world rhythms.

The concert is billed as a free, peace-based celebration with diverse styles of music and musical guests.

For further info: kesherzion.org

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Touchstone Theatre, 321 E. Fourth St., Bethlehem presents “Fresh Voices, Beyond Worlds,” an original showcase from the venue’s 2013-2014 apprentices, on Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. It’s a one-of-a-kind peek into the creative process with solo- and ensemble-based works in progress, under the guidance of the Touchstone family.

For further info: touchstone.org

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¡Sabor! Latin Festival returns to the SteelStacks campus in Bethlehem beginning Friday at 11 a.m., and running through Sunday, with free concerts by Bachata star Joe Veras, the Wito Rodriguez Orchestra and Latin legend Pupi Legarreta. The weekend includes arts and crafts, children’s activities, Latin dance presentations, a Mariachi Mass and World Cup Brazil matches shown on screen in the Air Products Town Square as part of the FIFA World Cup SoccerFest and viewing party held on the grounds.

Participating community organizations include the Hispanic American League of Artists (HALA), Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley, Borinqueneers, Latin American Motorcycle Association, and La Ola Radio.

For further info: artsquest.org/sabor

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Allentown’s 40th annual juried Art in the Park, sponsored by the West Park Civic Association, will feature original work of nearly 100 artists of the region on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at West Park, located at 16th and Turner streets. Rain date is June 28.

Prize money will be awarded in the following categories: oils/acrylics, watercolor, graphics (drawings and prints), photography, and 3D (pottery, wood, jewelry, glass, sculpture). Student artists in grades 9-12 also will display their work and gain some invaluable marketing experience in the surroundings of the pros.

A poster contest open to adult and student artists was held earlier this year with the winning design used for the 2014 Art in the Park promotion. All entries will be displayed on Saturday.

Entertainment will be provided throughout the day at the Victorian band shell on site by the Allentown School District Middle School Ballroom Dance Group, the district’s fifth grade chorus, Repertory Dance Theatre, Allen High School Double String Quartet, the Allentown Band, the Philadelphia rock band Arizona Lights, and the Brooklyn-based Brotherhood of the Jug Band.

The West Park Civic Association also holds its annual Historic House Tour on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For further info: westpark-ca.org

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Yes, that will be a camel you see in downtown Easton on Wednesday from 4 to 8 p.m., at the inaugural Easton Hump Day Street Fair running from Fifth to Seventh streets. The event will highlight the businesses and neighborhoods in the city's West Ward along this stretch of Northampton Street. Activities will include camel rides, face painting, games, and even a scavenger hunt. And, of course, live music and food.

For further info: facebook.com/eastonhumpday

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Santa Bannon Fine Art Gallery at the ArtsQuest Banana Factory, 25 W. Third St., Bethlehem, is exhibiting “Color and Form,” works by Frank Wyso (1915-1994), through July 27. Wyso, or Wysochansky, is described as an “outsider folk artist” whose work includes sculpture, oil, pen and ink drawing, and a unique wax reduction technique.

For more info: SantaFineArt.com

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A new group juried exhibition, “Upon Reflection,” A Studio B Members’ exhibition, part of the Studio B, Boyertown, “On the Road” program, is at the Baum School of Art, 510 Linden St., Allentown through June 27. Artists have created works that are inspired by and related to the theme of Reflection.

The exhibition program is designed to promote its members artists by providing exhibition and networking opportunities throughout the region’s arts communities. Gallery director of Studio B is Susan Biebuyck.

For further info: baumschool.org

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Honors And Awards

Originally Posted: March 12, 2008

Guild Hall’s Academy of the Arts recently honored Mel Brooks, Joe Pintauro, David Salle, and Robert F.X. Sillerman at their 23rd Annual Lifetime Achievement Awards at the Rainbow Room in New York City. Emceed by comedian Angela LaGreca, the evening paid tribute to their work in Performing Arts, Literary Arts, Visual Arts and Leadership, and Philanthropic Endeavors.

During cocktail hour guest and honorees sipped champagne and mingled while overlooking the cityscape. As the lights below twinkled I had a moment to chat with Albert Maysles of "Grey Gardens" fame. He reminisced about the filming process of the two very interesting women - Edith Bouvier Beale and her daughter "Little Edie". He related that they were exactly how he filmed them. To check he and his brother, David Maysles, would sneak over to the property before they were scheduled to arrive to observe the ladies. If nothing else they toned down their antics when the cameras were rolling. We’ll all be watching out for the HBO film version of the story, co-written and directed by Mike Sucsy due out this year starring Jessica Lange and Drew Barrymore in the lead roles. Jeanne Tripplehorn and Daniel Baldwin also make appearances.
True to form, Mr. Brooks had the crowd laughing when receiving his award for Performing Arts, reminiscing about his career and his work with Carl Reiner on "The 2,000 Year Old Man," which was created by the duo after Brooks had just undergone painful surgery for gout and quipped that he felt like a 2,000-year-old man, "[Carl] said, 2,000 years old, can you prove that? Do you have a birth certificate? I said, 'yeah, I have a birth certificate, October 16th negative 2,000.' He said, 'can I see it?' I said, 'see it? I don't carry it on me, you know?' Back then when they gave you your birth certificate, it was on a boulder," he joked.

Past honorees, friends, family, and supporters of Guild Hall's Academy of the Arts, including Alec Baldwin, Mercedes Ruehl, Albert Maysles, Academy of the Arts President Roy Furman, Guild Hall Chairmen Mickey Straus and his wife Leila, Guild Hall's Executive Director Ruth Appelhof, Dayassi Olarte de Kanavos, Somers and Jonathan Farkas, Richard and Renee Steinhard, Pamela and Edward Panzer, Muriel Siebert, Full Frontal Fashion's host Judy Licht, Susan Cappa, Jeannine Dyner, and Anne Livet were all on hand to congratulate the honorees and show their support for the Academy of the Arts.

A few blocks across town at Touch nightclub Bravo TV's "The Real Housewives of New York" made their debut. The high-profile ladies of Manhattan and Hamptons society and now reality television Jill Zarin, Ramona Singer, Countess LuAnn de Lesseps, Bethenny Frankel, and Alex McCord were joined by their closest friends and family for their show's debut on Touch's big-screen. Cindy Guyer, Alison Minton, Mark W. Smith, Devorah Rose, Colin Lively, and Lisa Wexler were among those toasting the housewives on the show's premiere.

As each lady was introduced during the show you could hear their cheering sections scream with excitement. Jill made the rounds and was the consummate hostess. The statuesque LuAnn had a bird's-eye-view of the event from the balcony. Alex was head to toe Roberto Cavalli - must have picked that up on her trip to St. Bart's that we watched in the premiere episode. Bethenny, always the chef, was checking on the food. Ramona and her handsome hubby were very affectionate all night long, just like on the show.

Knowing these ladies so well it'll be a treat to see them up on the screen each week - cheers to a fun show -
The last few days felt like high season with a plethora of parties, new play readings, art openings, and big bashes in the Hamptons and in New York.

Early Saturday evening you could barely squeeze into The Levitas Center for the Arts at the Southampton Cultural Center as hundreds of parents and families lined up for the 8th Annual Student Artist Invitational. Works by over 260 area high school students went on display for a week. Organized by artist Jim Wightman, Sonia Stratford, Ann Lombardo, Gayle Tudisco, and the dedicated working artists of the Southampton Artists Alliance, the show is a unique opportunity for the students to display their creativity - and what creativity is on exhibition. Paintings, etchings, digital photography, clay works, and mixed media pieces.

It is a vibrant testimony to the extraordinary work of the art teachers in our community in drawing out and shaping the talent in this next generation of de Koonings and Gorniks. Judges for the Invitational had a really tough time choosing a Best in Show with so many fine works submitted. Judges, working artists all, included Aura Levitas, Michael Viera-Guest, Linda Capello, Anthony Lombardo, John Capello, and Joanne Rosko.

In addition to the collection on view, there was a musical presentation by Muhlenberg College music major John Ludlow who studied saxophone under Hal McKusick for eight years and a portrait presentation by the newly founded Long Island Academy of Fine Art with Julia Reynolds and James Daga.

Printmaker Mireille Sturmann of Pierson High School won Best in Show and a $400 prize. There was some very serious competition from fellow high schoolers from Bridgehampton, East Hampton, Center Moriches, Greenport, Longwood, Mattituck, Riverhead, Ross, Pierson, Southampton, Eastport South Manor, William Floyd, Westhampton Beach, and McGann Mercy.

Best in Category artists each received a prize of $100. Winners were Leanne Luce of Westhampton Beach for Painting, Coral Kelly of Longwood for Drawing & Printmaking, Sasa Sucic of William Floyd for Photography, David Capella of William Floyd for Mixed Media, Melanie McHay of Riverhead for Sculpture, and Michelle Morin of Longwood for Electronic & Computer Art.

Committee's Choice Awards went to Leanne Luce of Westhampton Beach, Matthew Moore of Longwood, and Michael Hartman of William Floyd.
staged reading of James Joyce's "Penelope," a soliloquy by one of Joyce's most memorable characters, Molly Bloom, performed by the brilliantly talented Kate Mueth. Kate is the recent recipient of a fellowship from The Watermill Center Byrd Hoffman Foundation to develop the work into a multi-character two act play, performed the piece with a most believable Irish brogue. The fellowship allows Kate to collaborate with Margot Lewitin and Ronnie Geist to ready the work for a more complete production.

Over at John Duck's Restaurant, folks gathered for the annual tribute to the beloved Paul Koster, of The Clamman fame. The 8th Annual Paul Koster Memorial Benefit for Southampton Youth Association & Paul Koster Scholarship Fund for graduates of Southampton High School was a Mardi Gras Gala of the first order.

Four Seasons Caterers provided a lavish hors d'oeuvre buffet complete with a roast pig thanks to the efforts of chefs Jeremy Palmer and Wayne Pezubek.

This was, as always, a community effort of the first order with scores of local businesses donating gifts and services for the elaborate Chinese Auction. There was music, dancing, and an open bar, but the big draw was a "Texas Hold 'em Tournament" with folks lining up for chips sold by the volunteers from The Clamman and Four Seasons Caterers staffs. Even internationally acclaimed artist Paton Miller pitched in to sell the Chinese Auction tickets and noted ice sculptor John Olstrom created a masterpiece with his rendition of Paul Koster overlooking the banquet table.

Placing their chips down at one of the many casino games were Nina and James Kennedy, Loren Bennett, Rodney Smith, Josephine and Peter Cardone, Charles and Rosemary Bruno, Lori and Tony Mendola, Tase McCulley, Linda Ingram and daughter Jenna, Elana Curreri, and hundreds more. Kudos to Jean Mackenzie Koster and all the folks who pulled together to salute a much respected and sorely missed member of our community to raise funds to better the lives of our young people.

That same evening hair guru extraordinaire Kevin Maple and his good friends Penny and Jay Lieberman teamed up to host a toast and book signing for their great pal Dr. Tom De Vicentis who just released his new book "Tails of the City" last week. Over a hundred guests
swarmed through Kevin's beautifully designed and decorated home (which has already been featured in several magazine spreads) while nibbling on tasty treats like mini croquet monsieur from master chef Brent Newsome.

It took us almost an hour to snag an autographed copy from Tom as everyone couldn't wait to peruse his chronicles of life in the city as New York's "celebrity veterinarian" handling the precious pets of the rich and famous. The book is a delightfully charming read that will have animal lovers smiling in recognition at the sweet "tails" he writes about. With a preface by Carolyn Roehm and illustrations of our four-legged companions by the brilliant Bill Charmatz to compliment Tom's tender and insightful stories about the effect on our furry friends on our lives the tome is lovely. With endorsements by the likes of Town & Country editor Pamela Fiori the book is sure to be a best seller.

Kevin, the consummate host, greeted his guests with his mother Pat Maple at his side and made sure everyone was introduced around the very elegant gathering of animal lovers. In the crowd were Amy and Richard Plum, Peter Hallock and Craig Mowry, Lisa Lieberman, LIACC Board member John Haigney and his twin James Haigney, CFDA's Stan Herman, Mary Ellen Winston, and scores of Kevin's fellow riders from the Smithtown Hunt Club. If you weren't on the invite list you can meet Tom on Saturday, March 15 when he appears at John Brancati's East End Books Gallery in East Hampton.

Then it was off to the official launch of the coming season, The Parrish Art Museum's annual Spring Fling which brought out one of the largest crowds in the history of the gala thanks to the efforts of co-chairs Nancy Hardy and Susan Davis and their hard-working vice chairs Christine Curiale, Leslie Halsted, Leith McLoughlin, Robin Pauli, and Maryanne Robinson.

The Saturday Night Fever theme encouraged lots of folks to pull out their 1970s disco wear in all its shiny polyester glory - just the right thing to hit the dance floor and get into the groove. When folks weren't hustling on the dance floor they swarmed the silent auction tables overflowing with luxury goodies and fabulous one-of-a-kind experiences. All the while, superstar caterer Kevin MacDonald kept his team flowing throughout the halls with platters of tempting treats.
Newly appointed Executive Director Terrie Sultan and Alicia Longwell, The Lewis B. and Dorothy B. Cullman Curator, were on hand to point out highlights of the vibrant exhibition of student art on display. Very appropriate as the Spring Fling party raises funds for the museum’s education and children’s programs and guests were able to see the efforts of the budding artists from area schools in a museum setting.

Doing their best Travolta moves were Southampton Village Mayor Mark Epley and wife Maryanne, Shaunagh Byrne, Joy Marks, Jeanette Hekton, Neill Slaughter, Keith and Anne Davis, John Brancati, Ernest Cervi, Meegan Darby, Jeanine Edington, Anese Young, Dr. Martin and Blossom Gluck, Davis Gaffga, Dr. Evan and Bonnie Nadal, Bernard Green, Alison Sneed, Jackie Worth, Elliot Epstein, Stephanie Finkelstein, Patricia Garrity, Rick Hoffman, Roberta O. Hunter, Esq., Michael Kent, Gary Lawrance, Michaela Keszler, Nancy Blasko, Karli Kittine, Robin L. Long, Esq., Beth E. Marano, Alexis Mayer, Karen A. McNamara, Eileen Mercer, Adam Miller, Esq., and Laura and John Wynne.

The Diamond Underwriter was Joe Nieves and The Ocean Group, Graphic Design & Printing. Platinum Underwriters included Bobbie Braun, Christine Curiale, Wells Fargo Private Mortgage Banking, Mr. and Mrs. Timothy G. Davis, Glacier Potato Vodka, Dorothy Lichtenstein, and Niche Import Co. Let's not forget the fun gift bags from Paulpac - the metallic gold and silver bags will be all over town for sure.

Nicole, an award-winning journalist, is Executive Editor & Publisher of Hamptons.com where she focuses on celebrity interviews, fine living and design, social events, fashion and beauty. She lives on the North Fork with her husband, their two daughters, and Bernese Mountain dog, Cooper. 🌐 www.hamptons.com 🌐 HamptonsOnline 🌐 NicoleBBrewer

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Moravian Historical Society holds Hands-On History Camp on June 24, ...
Veteran tap dancer Dianne Walker calls them "the sound of joy" — the signature click, clacks, taps and shuffles of tap dancing.

"When the foot hits the floor with the metal tap, you have created a sound," Walker says. "It's all about playing with those sounds. It's a never ending, wonderful experience."

Walker, of Boston, has danced on Broadway, television, film and stages all around the world for more than 30 years. Throughout her career she has performed with some of the world's top dancers, including Jimmy Slyde, Buster Brown, Gregory Hines and Savion Glover. Now, at 63, Walker has focused on teaching tap dancers of all levels around the world.
Professional tap dancer Dianne Walker will teach at Tap Fest in Allentown June 27-29. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO / June 15, 2012)

“They call me the tap ambassador,” Walker says. “I like to move around and see what’s going on in tap dancing.”

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TOPICS
- Dance
Walker will be in the Lehigh Valley to teach at Tap Fest, a new festival June 27-29 at Accent School of Dance in South Whitehall Township. The festival will include sessions with professional dancers, including Tre' Dumas, director of the Chicago-based company Jus LisTen; Broadway dancer Jimmy Tate, and Lisa Hopkins, artistic director of the nationally renowned Tap Kids. There also will be workshops for young dancers looking to pursue a future in dance and learn about auditioning, resumes and more. On Saturday night, there is a "Saturday Night Fever" event open to the public with a "Tap Jam" improv performance, an acoustic guitar set by Jimmy Tate, and a panel discussion.

Walker travels to about 20 festivals a year around the country and around the world. She also has taught tap dancing at Harvard and MIT.

"We're in a full explosion of new ground for tap dancing all over the world," Walker says. "All over in every nook and cranny people are enjoying tap dancing."

Walker decided to come to Tap Fest and forgo the first week of the acclaimed dance festival in Massachusetts called Jacob's Pillow because of her relationship with Easton native Nicole Hockenberry, Tap Fest creator.

"I want to do the things that bring me the most joy personally and professionally," Walker says. "For me, [Tap Fest] has so much personal meaning."

Walker and Hockenberry's relationship began when Hockenberry, an Easton native, was 14 and sent Walker a letter asking for advice about pursuing a career in tap dancing.

"When I was a kid in dance school I realized that tap was my niche and I was going to go forward with it," Hockenberry says. "I just sent a letter to let [Walker] know how much she moved me as a young kid when I saw her tap dance on TV ... it just stuck with me."

Months later, Walker called Hockenberry to discuss pursuing a future in tap dancing.

"I called her back and I think she was quite surprised," Walker says. "I really wanted to talk to her a little more because I knew she was really so serious because she asked the right question and I was impressed that someone was so dedicated with her choices with what she wanted to do with herself."

Walker went to college and worked as a psychologist in child services at Boston University Hospital. She decided to get involved in tap dance because she believed it would be therapeutic for her patients, and for herself. However, she left psychology behind to pursue dance professionally.

Normally Walker tells young dancers to pursue college and get a degree so they have a career on which to fall back. Walker says she saw something different in Hockenberry and instead encouraged her to pursue dance fully and audition for companies in New York.

"She was the only person that I ever encouraged and suggested to just go and audition for a dance company,"
Walker says. "She was that focused and that driven. She was an extraordinary lady."

Hockenberry took Walker's advice. She went to New York and began dancing for A&G Dance in 1991, under the artistic direction of Germaine Salsberg, and Manhattan Tap in 1992, under Heather Cornell. When Hockenberry was 19, she reconnected with Walker when Hockenberry performed with Walker and Manhattan Tap in Los Angeles.

"All of this time later I'm looking at her and here's this young lady that really went the distance," Walker says. "She thought about what she wanted to do and did it and she was at the top of her game."

Hockenberry decided to leave Manhattan Tap and in July of 1997, she created a Lehigh Valley dance company called TAP, or Teach All People.

"At a time we were dealing with gender and race issues, the timing was perfect and the message was loud and clear," Walker says. "[Teach All People] was a strong message and loud message right in our tap dance community. I've always looked at her with real admiration."

Although Hockenberry no longer has a studio, she and Walker both aim to teach and create an environment for students to learn and have fun regardless of their experience with tap dancing.

Hockenberry teaches and performs nationwide, and is now an adjunct at Muhlenberg College. Her choreography has been commissioned by tap companies throughout the country. In 2013, Hockenberry recreated TAP with her husband Mark.

Hockenberry says that legendary tap dancer Buster Brown taught both Hockenberry and Walker that "if you can walk, you can dance." "Anyone at any level can do any tap dance," she says.

Above all, Walker says that dance has brought her the most profound happiness in life.

"If we can get through this life and come out on the upside, you can do that with a pair of tap shoes," Walker says.

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TAP FEST

•What: Tap dance festival presented by TAP and featuring workshops and a 7 p.m. Saturday performance.

•When: June 27-29 today through Sunday

•Where: Accent School of Dance, 4638 Broadway, South Whitehall Township

•How Much: $15 registration; $25 per class; $5, Saturday night performance

•Info: [http://www.teachallpeople.com](http://www.teachallpeople.com)
Join the goats and trolls of "Gruff!" for some fun at the Lehigh Valley Zoo Sunday. The cast will present scenes from the show 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Zoo's Peacock Pavilion.

Zoo admission is $12; $11, seniors and $10, ages 2-11. The zoo is at 5150 Game Preserve Road, Schnecksville. Info: www.lvzoo.org, 610-799-4171.

Loosely based on the fable "Three Billy Goats Gruff" "Gruff!" combines Muppet-like puppets, wacky improvisation, original music and a little bit of magic.

The Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre children's show which runs through July 26 was created by Doppelskope, a New York City-based theater made up of Christopher Sheer, a 2007 graduate of Muhlenberg College and Brooklyn artist Ora Fruchter.

In "Gruff!" a young goat named Gruf...
lives in a garbage-filled junkyard with the other goats until she ventures off one day and discovers a bridge guarded by a troll that leads to a beautiful, unspoiled natural world.

The show features original folk-pop musical written by Toby Singer, a New York City songwriter. The songs which include "What’s Ours is Yours," "Game of the World," "Nothing Can Stop Us," "Trip, Trop, Trio" and more are "really catchy," Sheer says. The performers recently recorded an original cast recording which will be available for sale at the shows.

During the show, kids also are invited to dance, help make sound effects and give advice to the characters when they have to make decisions. After the show the cast will meet children to sign autographs and pose for photos.

It is appropriate for ages four and up.

A sensory friendly performance of "Gruff!" will be presented 1 p.m. June 28. It will feature lighting and sound design conducive for children with autism and other sensory-processing difficulties. The performance will include a cast meet-and-greet and orientation before the performance, an open house and available sensory stories in advance of the performance and facilities available for children who need time away from the performance. Tickets for the sensory-friendly performance are $5. For reservations and info: Jess Bien at 484-664-3087.

Shows are 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Wednesdays to Fridays, 10 a.m. Saturdays. Tickets are $12. Info: 484-664-3693, www.muhlenberg.edu/SMT

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Current Comments

Prepping liberal arts students for the job market
Muhlenberg program gives grads business skills they need to land jobs.

In recent years, liberal arts graduates have wandered an employment desert. Hiring was sluggish and most available entry-level jobs were going to students majoring in business or technology fields. But things are starting to look up. Graduates in disciplines such as visual and performing arts, communications and history saw more job offers in 2014 than last year, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Forty percent of education majors received job offers in 2014, compared with 29 percent last year, for example.

"Coming out of the recession in the first couple of years, 2011, 2012, 2013, the improvement was all in majors like computer science, engineering, accounting, even business administration," said Edwin J. Koc, director of strategic and foundation research at the National Association of Colleges and Employers. While a recovery in the public sector, especially education, has boosted the hiring prospects of liberal arts majors, students graduating with degrees in more practical, technical fields still fared better, according to the association's annual survey. About 43 percent of visual and performing arts graduates received full-time job offers this spring, up 15 percentage points from 2013, but they still trailed accounting majors, 63 percent of whom had jobs lined up at graduation.

Muhlenberg College thinks it has come up with what may be the beginnings of a solution for closing that gap: a new program that provides history, theater and dance students and other liberal arts majors with a crash course in the number-crunching, profit-driven ways of business. "One goal is to ensure students understand the applicability of what they have done in liberal arts education to working in the outside world," said Scott Koerwer, a marketing entrepreneur, special assistant to President Randy Helm and executive director of the college's new Summer Business Institute.
For years, liberal arts schools have been grappling with how to better prepare their broadly educated, idealistic students for an entry-level job market, which the Federal Reserve reported in January is the toughest for new graduates in two decades. The recession exacerbated the issue, as prospective students and their parents began giving added weight to future employability, forcing colleges to give those efforts higher priority. "There is tons of pressure on everyone to make sure that given the amount people pay to go to college, they are really getting the appropriate value from it," said Andy Chan, Wake Forest University's vice president of personal and career development.

The North Carolina University is leading the wave of colleges rethinking how they offer career services. That process started two years ago when Wake Forest hosted a national conference called Rethinking Success to examine the value of a liberal arts education in the 21st century. In her keynote address at the conference, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice — herself a political science major — said, "Sometimes the most successful institutions are the last ones to adapt to new realities, and so our challenge is to adapt to the new challenges without losing the core of who we are."

One approach gaining popularity is to integrate career preparation throughout the college experience, Chan said. Easton's Lafayette College has been doing that with a four-year career exploration program called Gateway that provides internships, networking opportunities, links between academic majors and professionals in their future careers, and help with interviews and job searches.

A 2013 study by technology staffing firm Burning Glass Technologies determined that liberal arts graduates can improve their job prospects and salary outlook by adding certain high-demand technical skills that include training in marketing, sales, social media and data analysis.

Muhlenberg's Summer Business Institute offers only an overview of many of those topics, but some in the program think just having it on their resume will give them an advantage over other liberal arts grads. The two-week program, which costs $699, includes introductions to accounting, marketing, analytics, human resources and communications. It puts students in teams to work on business simulations and gives them tips on interviewing, dressing for the business world and networking.

For Margot Steinberg, a junior dance major with minors in math and religious studies, the Summer Business Institute provided insight into an aspect of the arts world that's not always obvious from the stage. That insight has enabled her to envision more possibilities. "I'm realizing there is a business element to the arts I would be happy with," she said. Dance organizations need people to oversee fundraising and development, and to manage charitable support. But if Steinberg were granted one wish for her career, it wouldn't be to work with numbers and spreadsheets. "I'd want to be a choreographer and dance teacher," she said.

Many of the students in the program, recent graduates in majors such as political science, international relations, dance and theater, said the institute has given them a bridge between what might be — a career in the arts — and what might have to be — a job that pays the bills while they pursue the dream. The strength of the liberal arts degree is that it gives students perspective and a balanced education that will serve them well down the road as they pursue and mature in their careers, said Phil Gardner, executive director of Career Network at Michigan State University and director of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute. Students just have trouble getting a foot in the door. "Over time, the liberal arts students do just as well as other students. That's the ironic part about it," Wake Forest's Chan said.

'Have a linchpin'

Zach Kronish, a 21-year-old senior theater major with a minor in English, hopes the courses he's taking through the Muhlenberg program will help in his entrepreneurial pursuits. Kronish has his own photography business, which he thinks will benefit from the new skills he is learning, but he also entertains hopes of working in publishing or writing books. "It is a highly competitive world out there," Kronish said. "This course with the Summer Business Institute will help us compete in the job market."

There is evidence that liberal arts graduates benefit by adding business expertise on top of their broad-based degrees. "They leave probably talent-rich and preparation-poor in many ways," Gardner said. "They need some technical
grounding. A lot of the liberal arts do a great job of augmenting and extending and making people flexible and adaptable. But you have to have a linchpin.”

Laura Haffner, area president for Wells Fargo bank’s Lehigh Valley region, said what Muhlenberg is teaching definitely won’t hurt. A former Moravian College education major, Haffner heads a group of retail banks for Wells Fargo and participated in the Summer Business Institute. She and her staff gave the students an overview of the banking business and some tips on personal money and credit management. While Wells Fargo hires plenty of business and finance majors, Haffner has found liberal arts graduates to be good fits for a rapidly changing and diversifying field of retail banking. "They are more flexible in their learning styles and in their capacity to work with other personalities,” she said. Just enrolling in a program like the Summer Business Institute shows a level of initiative and basic competency in the language of business that will serve them well as they look for work, Haffner added.

When it comes to future aspirations, the students in Muhlenberg's program are all over the map. Nathan Frick, a 21-year-old neuroscience graduate, needs something to help him compete for work while he readies applications for graduate school. He wants to be a psychiatrist. "Having the basics of the business world has been very helpful," Frick said.

Julia Cagin, 22, is using the institute to help decide if business law would be an appealing career option. She has a degree in political science and plans to study for the law school exam over the summer. "I'm learning a lot about business that I didn't have an opportunity to do in my classes," she said. "I'm optimistic. I know the law field is a little tight. I'm hoping four years from now there will be more positions opening up."

Matt McAlister, who wants to run his own theater company, sees a future where business is a necessary evil. "It has become a lot easier for small groups of people to start a theater group together," said McAlister, 21. "There are so many startups these days." He's willing to do what it takes to pay the bills in the meantime. "I am confident in my ability to find a job," McAlister said. "I have worked construction and in retail and I am happy to do those jobs."

Haffner, who dreamed in college of teaching elementary school, told the students not to rule out the world of commerce as more than just a temporary way to make ends meet. "I said, OK. I'll try this banking thing for the summer," she recalled. "Now, here it is 28 years later. It's great to have a plan, but it is also important that you're not so focused on your plan that you miss out on an opportunity."

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SALARIES SNAPSHOT

Starting pay, Class of 2014:
- Foreign language and literature: $46,900
- English language and literature: $42,200
- Liberal arts & sciences/general studies: $41,600
- Political Science/government: $41,600
- History: $40,600
- Psychology: $37,900
- Social work: $36,700
- Sociology: $36,300
- Visual and performing arts: $36,300
- Criminal justice and corrections: $36,200

Source: April 2014 Salary Survey, National Association of Colleges and Employers

Read more: http://www.mcall.com/news/local/mc-muhlenberg-liberal-arts-20140628,0,2522650.story#ixzz36EVPrYdD
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Republican supporters of so-called "paycheck protection" legislation moved bills in both houses last week that would prevent government employee unions, such as the Service Employees International Union and the Pennsylvania State Education Association from deducting union dues and political contributions from members' checks.

The debate, seen as a bellwether of conservative legislative muscle, has played out recently in a string of other states with Republican legislatures, with lawmakers in Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan and Arizona enacting similar measures.

"When you look at union political activity, it is overwhelmingly supportive of Democratic candidates nationally and in Pennsylvania," said Chris Borick, Muhlenberg College political scientist. "There is no coincidence that Republican legislators both in Pennsylvania and around the country have been looking for ways to limit unions' strength."

The legislation has the support of national conservative groups such as the American Legislative Exchange Council and Americans for Prosperity, funded primarily by billionaire industrialists Charles and David Koch.

Movement in Pa.

The movement in Pennsylvania comes as the U.S. Supreme Court readies its opinion in Harris v. Quinn, a case that could have national implications for labor by addressing public sector unions' ability to collect so-called "fair share" fees from employees in union shops who elect not to become members.

No one is sure where the Supreme Court will come down or how its ruling will affect Pennsylvania's union
General Assembly, making them eligible for passage by the full state House and Senate.

With Pennsylvania's budget deadline looming at midnight Monday, that's dominating lawmakers' time, leaving passage of, or even final votes on, the paycheck measure uncertain.

Here's what is at stake: Public sector union members, such as teachers, pay annual membership dues, in a teacher's case to the powerful Pennsylvania State Education Association. Annual dues for a full-time public school teacher in Pennsylvania are about $500.

In addition, a teacher can contribute voluntarily to his union's political action committee. Both amounts can be deducted from the employee's paycheck by a school district or other government employer, and electronically transferred to the union and its political action committee.

Teachers and other unionized public employees who don't wish to become union members can decline. But in most places they must pay a portion of the annual dues — called a fair-share fee — designed to cover services provided by the union.

The Senate bill would prohibit employers from collecting the PAC contributions and limit collection of union dues to the amount of the fair-share fee collected from non-members. The House bill would prohibit collection of both union dues and PAC contributions. Both exclude public safety unions, such as police.

That would require unions to arrange dues and political contribution payments directly with members by billing them or setting up a bank draft system.

Other views

Proponents, such as the conservative free-market Commonwealth Foundation, argue that government resources should not be used to collect member contributions that unions use to promote political candidates and engage in lobbying.

"All along, our stance has always been it should be up to the government union executives to collect their own dues, and the taxpayers should not be involved in doing that," said Commonwealth Foundation spokeswoman Cindy Hamill.

Democratic Allentown state Rep. Mike Schlossberg voted against the House bill in committee, calling it an "assault on the middle class."

"This is very, very clearly an effort to weaken unions and the Democratic Party in the process," he said.

The cost of administering the deductions to public sector employers such as the state and school districts is minimal, said PSEA spokesman Wythe Keever, because payroll systems are already set up to process deductions for a host of other items, including health insurance and charitable deductions.

Dues aren't used for political activity, other than to provide members with a list of supported candidates,
"What the supporters of this legislation really want is to silence teachers and nurses and public safety workers, law enforcement officers on issues they are concerned about, and that is bad for middle-class Pennsylvanians and Pennsylvania," he said.

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MCT Information Services
Muhlenberg College going global thanks to new grant money

The students of Marten Edwards, an associate professor of biology at Muhlenberg College, during a learning abroad trip in Costa Rica. *(photo courtesy Muhlenberg College)*

*By Colin McEvoy | The Express-Times*
*Follow on Twitter*
*on July 01, 2014 at 5:02 PM*

Muhlenberg College hopes new money will help it go a little more global.

The Allentown college plans to use a $428,000 grant to increase study abroad programs, strengthen faculty knowledge in the humanities and further globalize the curriculum.

"As we internationalize our curriculum, Muhlenberg faculty and students will extend and deepen their understanding of the languages, cultures, arts, literatures and histories of people across the globe," Muhlenberg College Provost John Ramsay said.

The grant, provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, will go toward several related activities, including increased short-term study abroad opportunities for students with a language instruction component.
The funds will help the school provide short-term on-campus residences for humanities scholars in art history, English, history, modern languages, religion studies and philosophy over the three-year period.

It will also fund the creation of new courses focused on diversity and globalization, integrate more global perspectives into existing classes, and strengthen the curriculum in religion studies and Asian traditions.

A humanities faculty positions will be focused on India in particular, with the grant funds supporting a two-year position to support the study of India, particularly in the religion studies major and Asian traditions minor.

Muhlenberg will also use the grant funds to broaden faculty expertise in international issues and global perspectives through seminars, as well as help integrate faculty with digital tools into teaching and scholarship in the areas of humanities.

"Mellon's support for the integration of digital tools into our humanities curriculum will provide opportunities to fulfill our civic mission right here in the Lehigh Valley," Ramsay said.

"We're truly grateful to Mellon for their generous investment in the college and their confidence in the future of the humanities at Muhlenberg," he said.

Contact Allentown reporter Colin McEvoy at 484-894-2549 or cmcevoy@express-times.com.
Three private colleges in the greater Philadelphia area are among the priciest to attend in the country according to the U.S. Department of Education’s latest College Affordability and Transparency list. But the local schools say the latest rankings unfairly characterize the cost of attendance.

- **2 Teens, 3 Adults Shot at Basketball Court**

The net price of attending Drexel University is $35,948 while St. Joseph’s University followed closely behind with a net price of $35,408, according to the latest figures for the 2011-2012 school year.

Muhlenberg College also made the list with the net price of attendance listed at $32,841.

The figures put the three Philly-area schools above the $20,247 net price of attendance reported as the national average for all private, not-for-profit 4-year or more schools.

“But the formula inadvertently penalizes schools that administer financial aid the way we do,” said Joseph Lunardi, spokesman for St. Joseph’s.

- **Missing Soldier Returns Home After 62 Years**

Officials with Muhlenberg back up Lunardi’s critique.

“The flaw in the government’s list... is that they do a rather simplistic equation that simply takes total cost of attendance and subtracts average grant/scholarship to get a net price for aided students,” said Chris Hooker-Haring, Muhlenberg’s Dean of Admission and Financial Aid.

Drexel officials did not return requests for comment.

- **Vigil Held for Philly Teen Missing in Ocean**
Lunardi criticizes the study model, which calculates the net cost for the students who receive financial assistance from the institution, or federal, state or local governments and excludes everyone who does not receive aid.

The structure means a school will receive a higher-ranking if only a paltry number of students receive a free ride because that vastly lowers the cost of attendance for the small population receiving aid.

- **Bucks County Native Wins 'Chopped'**

“Our mission is to try and make education as accessible as possible to the most number of families,” Lunardi said. “If you award fewer dollars to more recipients, you come out with a higher net price…while helping more families.”

According to the study, 96 percent of St. Joe’s undergrads received grant or scholarship aid.

At Drexel University, 98 percent of undergrads were awarded financial assistance, while 79 percent of Muhlenberg’s students were, the report shows.

“As with all such equations, you can decide how you are going to figure something, and then simply report out the results,” Hooker-Haring said. “But that doesn’t necessarily tell the whole story, or even an entirely accurate story.”

On the public side, seven of Penn State University's campuses make the highest net price of attendance list, as well as Temple University. In the Garden State, the College of New Jersey and the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey are the most expensive.

To see the full list of schools, visit the [U.S. Department of Education’s website](http://www.ed.gov).

**Tags:**

news
Ten liberal arts colleges in Pennsylvania have received an $800,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to create the Pennsylvania Consortium for the Liberal Arts (PCLA), an entity designed to help each institution create new cost efficiencies, improve the quality of academic and co-curricular programs, and enhance inter-institutional knowledge and collaboration.

Washington, PA (PRWEB) July 02, 2014

Ten liberal arts colleges in Pennsylvania have received an $800,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to create the Pennsylvania Consortium for the Liberal Arts (PCLA), an entity designed to help each institution create new cost efficiencies, improve the quality of academic and co-curricular programs, and enhance inter-institutional knowledge and collaboration.

The consortium also plans to contribute in important ways to national discussions about improving access to higher education and improving affordability for families.


The grant, which will be expended over three years, will provide seed money for collaborative programs among the various participants. The member colleges, each with its individual assets, will contribute and benefit in ways distinct to their institutional strengths and needs. In pursuing the Mellon grant, the leaders of the institutions asserted that their first priority as a consortium is to enhance the strong liberal arts preparation we provide our students while controlling associated costs.

Liberal arts colleges across the country face serious challenges -- shifting demographics, student access, affordability and the pressure to keep up with new technology, said Tori Haring-Smith, president of Washington & Jefferson College. Bringing Pennsylvania liberal arts colleges into a consortium helps us leverage our collective strengths to better serve our students.

The 10 consortium members will explore and develop collaborative programs in seven core areas: academic program improvement; faculty development; study abroad; library resources; administrative services; compliance and risk management; and enhancing the institutional climate for diversity.

Collaborative initiatives may include:

--Using teleconferencing and online technology to combine under-enrolled courses at member institutions. For example, in the coming academic year Juniata, Gettysburg and Washington & Jefferson will each do the planning to allow them to offer a language
Pennsylvania Liberal Arts Colleges Form Consortium - KFDA - NewsC... http://www.newsc... course that will be shared across their campuses. --Training for faculty chairs of academic departments; for example, bringing faculty together with college leaders to better understand and examine financial models, workshops on teaching in a diverse classroom, using technology to enhance learning, and the evolving role of the humanities. --Shared study abroad sites and programs to reduce costs and expand opportunities for students. --Shared library resources, including the expertise of subject specialists and consulting services for such issues as disaster planning and digitization. -- Cooperatives in areas such as health plans, branding and licensing, sustainability management, security in information technology, and purchasing. --Shared expertise and staffing for compliance and risk management. --Shared training for faculty and administrators on issues of race, gender, class and sexual orientation, as well as joint efforts to build pipelines for diverse faculty recruiting. Pennsylvania enjoys an extraordinary concentration of the nations finest private liberal arts colleges, and working together we can all be stronger and more effective and efficient in our missions,” Muhlenberg President Randy Helm said. “This consortium will serve as the foundation for new, collective institutional efforts to tackle some of the pressing issues facing higher education. For the original version on PRWeb visit: http://www.prweb.com/releases/2014/07/prweb11993452.htm Information contained on this page is provided by an independent third-party content provider. WorldNow and this Station make no warranties or representations in connection therewith. If you have any questions or comments about this page please contact pressreleases@worldnow.com.
10 Liberal-Arts Colleges in Pennsylvania Team Up to Save Money

Ten private liberal-arts colleges in Pennsylvania have formed a consortium that will seek to help them save money and improve academic programs by collaborating across campuses, The Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

The 10 members of the Pennsylvania Consortium for the Liberal Arts are Bryn Mawr, Dickinson, Franklin & Marshall, Gettysburg, Haverford, Juniata, Muhlenberg, Swarthmore, Ursinus, and Washington & Jefferson Colleges. The group is being supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The colleges will work on collaborating in seven key areas, including academic-program improvement, faculty development, and administrative services.
The winners and losers in Pa.'s budget battle
The winners and losers in Pa.'s budget battle

Mayor Nutter and his fellow Democrats of Philadelphia's statehouse delegation saw the cigarette tax approved. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke/File photo)

Angela Couloumbis and Amy Worden, Inquirer Harrisburg Bureau

LAST UPDATED: Sunday, July 6, 2014, 1:09 AM

HARRISBURG - As the first week of a new fiscal year came to a close Friday, Gov. Corbett still had a decision to make: whether or not to sign the $29.1 billion spending plan that doesn't include one of his top policy priorities - overhauling the state pension.
Corbett could sign or veto the plan - or do nothing and let it automatically take effect. For the governor, facing a difficult reelection in the fall, every option carries risk.

But few emerged unscathed from the annual budget tussle, one that ended with some extra dollars flowing to public education and a new per-pack cigarette tax in Philadelphia to help the city's ailing schools.

From Republicans in the House to their colleagues in the Senate, most left Harrisburg with items on their wish list not checked off.

"It's hard to define clear winners here," said Chris Borick, a pollster and political science professor at Muhlenberg College in Allentown.

Here's a look at how key players fared:

**Gov. Corbett**

Desperately needing to score points for his reelection bid, the governor appears to have ended up with a mixed bag.

For starters, he deliberately stepped away from his 2010 campaign promise to deliver on-time budgets. He did so because he wanted to give the legislature time to agree on a bill he favors to move all new state and public school employees into a hybrid pension plan.
Down in polls, Corbett has limited options with Pa. budget, pension return | TribLIVE

Renembering Richard M. Scaife
Tribune-Review owner and philanthropist Richard Mellon Scaife, whose vision and funding reinvigorated conservative politics in America, died Friday, July 4. His death early Friday, a day after his 82nd birthday, coincided with Independence Day — fittingly auspicious for a man widely recognized for his deep-rooted patriotism.

Down in polls, Corbett has limited options with Pa. budget, pension return
Late budget not expected to impact state workers' paychecks

(Harrisburg) -- Budget stalemates have resulted in missed paychecks for state employees in the past. But as of right now, that's not expected to happen this year.

In both 1991 and 2009, tens of thousands of employees, including Pennsylvania National Guard members serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, went without pay because the budget wasn't passed in time.

With the state House and Senate approving the bulk of the $29.1 billion spending plan June 30th, furloughs or missed paychecks aren't likely this time, even if Governor Corbett doesn't sign it.

The budget would automatically go into effect tomorrow without action from the Governor.

Political science professor Chris Borick, Director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, says the automatic approval will keep the money flowing to state workers.

"The legal framework right now, as established, makes it very likely that paychecks will be paid to state employees. There could be some interpretations of the law that might have some caveats to that. The likelihood that those will impact state employees remains pretty low."

Governor Corbett could still veto the budget bill and call the Legislature back, or use his line item veto power to force cuts.

Those changes could potentially impact paychecks.

His spokesperson has offered no updates on his thinking since saying the governor could make any number of decisions.
• The Growing Threat of Plastic in Marine Litter

by Jacob S. Glass • July 7, 2014 • Climate and Environment • Email This Post
A sea turtle all wound up. The United Nations Environment Program reports that plastic is increasingly present in the world’s oceans and that microbead plastics, found in toothpastes and other gels, are also being released problematically into bodies of water.

Two summers ago, Bill Grafton, the president emeritus of the Algalita Marine Research Foundation, and commercial fishermen lifted a 5,000-pound net ball from coastal waters off Provincetown, Massachusetts. The knot of plastic and rope was so heavy that his crew enlisted a construction loader for help.

At the time, Grafton was coordinating a derelict-fishing-gear retrieval project called Stellwagen Sweep. The project eventually removed 50,000 pounds of debris from the Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays, underscoring for Grafton the threats facing marine environments.

“The loss at sea of household and marine products is a real problem because of the increased presence of plastic that is resilient and breaks down into ever smaller particles, eventually
being consumed by marine wildlife,” Grafton said in an interview. “Marine litter also becomes entangled in fishing gear.”

Recently, Grafton’s concerns were echoed by the United Nations Environment Program, which published the 11th edition of its “Year Book,” detailing 10 environmental issues that have emerged in the last decade. The report cites plastic pollution in the world’s oceans as one of the growing problems and microplastics as especially worrisome.

Though no official statistics quantify marine litter worldwide, the UN cites studies estimating that nearly eight million synthetic items enter oceans and seas every day, and 13,000 pieces of plastic litter are floating on every square kilometer of ocean surface.

Plastic waste is known to have severe environmental impacts, particularly when ingested by marine life. Reports abound of entanglements of animals such as turtles, dolphins and whales. The UN Environment Program also notes concerns relating to chemical contamination and the spread of invasive species by plastic fragments.

Since the Year Book last looked at ocean plastic waste in 2011, fears have mounted that microplastics (particles up to five millimeters in diameter) represent an underappreciated problem. The report explains that microbeads found in toothpaste, gels and facial cleaners are often not filtered out during sewage treatment and are released into rivers, lakes and oceans. Having entered the marine environment, microplastics can facilitate the growth and transport of microbes and pathogens, which are known to thrive on the material.

Achim Steiner, the executive director of the UN Environment Program, said that scientists have recently found tiny pieces of plastic trapped in sea ice. Experts fear that these plastics could end up as contaminants in our food. The Year Book also reports that microplastics are harmful when ingested by large marine organisms, including the endangered northern right whale.

Dr. James Mead, curator emeritus of marine mammals at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., has spent 45 years studying marine biology and maintains an extensive database of stranded whales. “My database lists 43 samples of whales and dolphins that have had plastic in their stomachs,” Dr. Mead said in an interview. “In several cases, the plastic caused blockages that probably led to the death of the whale.”

Despite this evidence, plastics remain integral to our everyday lives and to the global economy. In the United States alone, the plastics industry exported $58.5 billion dollars’ worth of goods in 2012 and employed nearly one million workers.

Yet the hidden costs of poor plastic management may be greater than was once thought.

“Valuing Plastic,” a UN Environment Program-supported report, makes the business case for improving plastic management. The report finds that the overall financial impact resulting from pollution of the marine environment and air pollution caused by plastic incineration costs the consumer-goods sector around $75 billion each year. The report notes that the costs
directly related to the marine environment are well over the UN’s estimate of $13 billion dollars a year. In contrast, “Valuing Plastic” finds that smart management of plastic saves companies $4 billion each year.

The Year Book and “Valuing Plastic,” both released in June at the UN Environment Program’s first high-level assembly, held in Nairobi, call on companies and consumers to reduce their plastic waste. Important recommendations include improving metrics to quantify plastic use, setting plastic reduction targets and increasing the efficiency of recycling programs. The UN agency emphasizes that increasing consumer awareness is also relevant, noting initiatives such as the Plastic Disclosure Project and the UN’s Global Partnership on Marine Litter in helping to raise the profile of the issue.

Above all, experts agree that plastic must be managed appropriately before it reaches marine ecosystems. “The only way to minimize the threat is to cut off plastics at the source and to ‘reduce, reuse, recyle,’” Dr. Mead explained.

The plastics economy is such that the hidden costs of mismanagement and poor disposal practices are often noticed only by those who regularly interact with marine environments, such as Bill Grafton in Massachusetts and Dr. Mead. Though a world without plastics is hard to imagine, the UN Year Book makes the case that the effect of plastic waste cannot be ignored.

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About Jacob S. Glass

Jacob S. Glass is the chief editor and a research associate for a leading government affairs firm in Washington, D.C. He was previously a staff writer for the environmental change and security program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington. Glass is an RJ Fellows Honors Program graduate of Muhlenberg College, where he also won the presidential award for post-graduate promise. In addition, he is a Truman scholar and a Morris K. Udall scholar, among other fellowships.

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As a way to cut down costs and improve quality through collaboration, Franklin & Marshall College and nine other liberal arts institutions in the state are forming the Pennsylvania Consortium for the Liberal Arts.

A $800,000 grant over three years from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is providing seed money for the consortium, known as PCLA.

"Working in higher education carries major responsibility: We must sustain high academic standards that promote extraordinary student learning," F&M President Daniel Porterfield said in a press release.

“But we also need partners — elsewhere in higher education, in government, in the private sector and in philanthropy — to invest in intellectual excellence in undergraduate education,” he said.

"The Mellon Foundation's support of the PCLA allows the member institutions to investigate and create new structures that give students, faculty and administrative leadership additional resources and flexibility by maximizing our existing collective strengths."

In addition to Franklin & Marshall, the members of PCLA are Bryn Mawr, Dickinson, Gettysburg, Haverford, Juniata, Muhlenberg, Swarthmore, Ursinus and Washington & Jefferson colleges.

The institutions will work together in seven core areas: academic program improvement; faculty development; study-abroad opportunities; library resources; administrative services; compliance and risk management; and enhancing the climate for diversity.

According to the press release, initiatives could include:

•Employing teleconferencing and online technology to combine underenrolled courses. For instance, Juniata, Gettysburg and Washington & Jefferson will offer a language course this coming academic year shared across their campuses.

•Training for academic department chairs, through workshops and other means.

•Sharing study-abroad sites and programs to lower costs and increase student opportunities.
• Sharing library resources, such as the expertise of subject specialists.

• Creating cooperatives for health care plans, branding and licensing.

• Joining forces to expand the recruitment of a more diverse faculty.

As Muhlenberg College President Randy Helms said in the press release, “This consortium will serve as the foundation for new, collective institutional efforts to tackle some of the pressing issues facing higher education.”
Northampton County exec picks three for cabinet
New sheriff, directors of administration and fiscal affairs named

Published: Jul 10 2014 05:37:14 PM EDT | Updated On: Jul 10 2014 05:43:10 PM EDT

EASTON, Pa. -
Three men have been named to fill top cabinet positions in the administration of Northampton County Executive John Brown.

They are Luis Campos as director of administration, James Hunter as director of fiscal affairs and David Dalrymple as sheriff.
Northampton County Executive John Brown, who announced the appointments in a news release Thursday, called the three men "distinguished professionals."

Their names will be presented to Northampton County Council for approval later this month.

"Over the past months, we've conducted an in-depth search process to fill these critical positions," said Brown. "I wanted to ensure we had the best candidates for the positions and we now have them."

The announcement ends an attempt by former county Sheriff Randall Miller to get his job back. After being fired by Brown, Miller sued to get it back. When that proved unsuccessful, he re-applied for the position.

According to the news release, Campos is a well-known management professional and community leader, serving as the chair of the Lehigh Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and a board member of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber and the Workforce Investment Board.

"With deep experience in both the public and private sectors, Luis will provide the county with strong

Northampton County exec picks three for cabinet | Regional: Lehigh Valley - Home

organizational management skills and the ability to coordinate and communicate effectively with all departments and the legislative bodies," said Brown in the release.

Campos is a graduate of both Muhlenberg College and Lehigh University and holds a Masters in Political Science. He worked in the governor’s office of administration and the governor’s budget office during the Rendell administration, and has held executive roles in the real estate development and business services industries.

“Luis’ ability to lead is clearly evident and his capacity to manage a multitude of different responsibilities will be a strong asset to Northampton County,” said Brown.

“Throughout his career, he has enthusiastically participated in community initiatives and accepted responsibilities in several important organizations including the LVEDC and the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs.”

Hunter is a banking professional with more than 30 years of experience in fiscal management, loan underwriting, budgeting and personnel management.

With a career that spans regional and community banking, he served as a vice president and regional manager at Bank of America, and most recently as vice president and commercial lender for Merchants Bank of Bangor.

His community involvement includes volunteer leadership roles in the Slate Belt YMCA, Slate Belt Chamber of Commerce and Northampton County’s Revolving Loan Fund board.

“Jim has outstanding financial management and leadership skills,” said Brown. “He understands the many dimensions of fiscal policy, capital resources and debt management that make up the environment a government of Northampton County’s size must navigate.”

Dalrymple recently retired from the New Jersey State Police as a major. A highly accomplished detective, his last posting was as commanding officer of the intelligence section, directing the efforts
of more than 200 detectives, analysts and support staff.

His 25-year career in the state police includes serving in the major crime unit and the missing persons and child exploitation units, as well as chief of the official corruption bureau.

In 2007, Dalrymple was named Trooper of the Year.

“I am thoroughly pleased to have a law enforcement professional of this caliber lead our sheriff’s department,” said Brown. “The citizens of Northampton County can be confident and secure in David’s leadership.”

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Corbett signs budget, vetoes legislative funding

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Published: Jul 10 2014 11:24:13 AM EDT  |  Updated On: Jul 10 2014 05:20:11 PM EDT

HARRISBURG, Pa. - Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett has used the line veto to eliminate $65 million from the $29.1 billion state budget.

The governor held a news conference Thursday morning at the state Capitol to announce he signed the budget, but he used the line item veto to reduce spending and slammed the Legislature for not passing pension reform.
Corbett signs budget, vetoes legislative funding

General Assembly spending and an additional $7.2 million in legislative designated spending.

"His actions strike me as a petulant child," said Pennsylvania Representative Mike Schlossberg, an Allentown Democrat. "It just doesn't make sense. He's had four years to try and negotiate a pension plan."

Wanting to avoid more school districts from raising property taxes to cover pension costs, Corbett pleaded for reform.

"It is time for much needed financial relief to our families, senior citizens, school districts and communities," Corbett added.

"They filled the budget with discretionary spending, then refused to deal with the biggest financial challenge facing the state," Corbett said.

The budget was approved by the state House and Senate just before the July 1 deadline, but it sat on the governor's desk until Thursday morning.

Corbett announced he is using the line item veto to eliminate $65 million from the plan for General Assembly spending and an additional $7.2 million in legislative designated spending.

"It is time for much needed financial relief to our families, senior citizens, school districts and communities," Corbett added.

Quick Clicks

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Corbett's 4th budget could be toughest fight yet

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Renovated National Canal Museum set to open June 7 - 101 people recommend this.
93-year-old World War II veteran takes special flight - 80 people recommend this.
Allentown Fairgrounds closing gates for fence work - 98 people recommend this.
The question now for legislators is can reform be done, especially after the governor blasted them publicly.

"Always a continuing discussion. Like they say, 24 hours is a lifetime in politics," said Pennsylvania Representative Doyle Heffley, a Carbon County Republican.

But Corbett's political life is in peril. Polls have him trailing Tom Wolf, the Democratic candidate for governor, by 20 points.

"He needs to shake up this campaign. He needs to shake up public perception of him," said Chris Borick, a political pundit.

Borick said Thursday's attempt was part of a broader effort to show Corbett is trying to get things done.

"It would be fairly historic if governor able to raise his margin in the next few months. It's not impossible, but he has his work cut out for him," Borick added.

Corbett also cut $7.2 million from earmarked projects designated by General Assembly, however, what many will see as a positive, the budget does not include tax increases.

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NYC artist's wearable sculptures take aim at sexism, racism

BY ULA ILNYTZKY, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS    JULY 14, 2014 7:33 AM

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Linda Stein wants people to armour themselves in her art.

She creates full-length wearable sculptures embedded with all manner of found objects, including driftwood, engraving plates, steel wire, zippers, pebbles and comic book imagery of superheroes.
Her idea grew out of her sense of vulnerability after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, with the aim of giving wearers a sense of empowerment and protection. Her targets are any form of institutionalized oppression, such as sexism, racism and homophobia.

She also designs "bullyproof vests," made from a patchwork of fabrics featuring such female symbols as the Japanese anime character Princess Mononoke and the comic book hero Wonder Woman, along with words "I will ... not let cultural impediments and sexual stereotypes hold me down."

At a recent "body swapping" at her studio in Manhattan's Tribeca neighbourhood, she invited a group of professional women to try on what she calls sculptural avatars, which can each weigh from 7 to 20 pounds (3 to 9 kilograms). Stein asked the wearers to imagine they are trying on another skin "to get in touch with how their bodies feel."

"It's like putting on a whole new persona," said Rinku Sen, who struck a "Rocky" pose in front of a mirror in a "Wonder Woman" torso made of acrylized paper.

Another participant, Dana Sparling, donned a heavier metal creation she said felt like a "shield between me and the world."

Stein explained that she features Wonder Woman prominently in the works because "she never killed."

"She protected the weak and downtrodden wearing her bracelets and her black lasso. It's very hard to find a female superhero that's not violent and isn't a total sex object," Stein said.

The representation of gender and sexual identity is a longstanding tradition in activist art that dates back to the feminist movement, said Muhlenberg College art history professor Margo Hobbs. She said Stein's work is particularly powerful because "it works on the viewer's body to bring about a really visceral rather than an intellectual experience."

Reminiscent of classical torsos, a group of her sculptures is making the rounds at 24 universities, galleries and museums across the U.S. in what is a seven-year travelling exhibition, "The Fluidity of Gender," that runs through 2017.

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Corbett's climate stance draws fire, pulls money to governor’s race

John Finnerty CNHI State Reporter

HARRISBURG — By John Finnerty

CNHI State Reporter

HARRISBURG — When new clean air rules came out in June targeting emissions at coal power plants, the Corbett campaign tried to link Democrat Tom Wolf to the Obama Administration policies. That kind of politicizing of energy policy might come back to haunt the governor in the fall.

A billionaire environmentalist from California intends to use a political action committee to spend $100 million targeting seven climate-change deniers — Corbett, two other governors and four candidates for U.S. Senate.

“Corbett and his administration deny basic science. Gov. Corbett says climate change is still ‘a subject of debate’ and his administration’s top environmental appointee says he hasn’t ‘read any scientific studies that would lead him to conclude there are adverse impacts’ from climate change,” said Suzanne Henkels, a spokeswoman for NextGen Climate, the political action committee created by former hedge fund manager Tom Steyer.

Experts said there is little evidence that climate change is an issue that will resonate strongly with voters.

But that doesn’t mean that the attacks couldn’t damage Corbett’s re-election bid.

“I believe that young people are probably more sensitive and understanding of climate-related issues, but I would be hesitant to say that climate...
issues will make a difference in an election for governor,” said Mary Jane Kuffner-Hirt, a political science professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Even young voters are more focused on things like the cost of higher education and “the availability of jobs that match the qualifications of those who persist and graduate from college,” she said.

The Corbett campaign is trying to sell the idea that the governor’s policies have translated into an improved economy.

Campaign spokesman Chris Pack pointed to the latest jobs number report showing that the state unemployment rate of 5.8 percent is the lowest it’s been since 2008. That argument has strong support from chamber groups and the drilling industry. A “pro-gas jobs” rally held at the Capitol in May attracted 2,500 people.

But polls show most Pennsylvanians believe the state should levy an extraction tax on the drilling industry, according to Chris Borick, a political science professor and director of the Institute of Public Opinion at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. And most people think that local governments should have more control over regulating the energy industry, he said.

Corbett could be susceptible to criticism that he is too closely aligned with the energy industry if critics go after him for being out of step on those types of issues, Borick said.

Last week, Corbett’s campaign launched its first ads since the primary. Days later, the NextGen Climate committee began airing ads criticizing the governor for accepting energy industry donations while refusing to detail how closely the administration communicates with gas drilling companies while crafting policy.

It was the opening salvo in what could be a protracted attack.

Steyer told Politico that he intends to throw as much as $50 million of his own money into the campaigns to unseat Corbett, Florida Gov. Rick Scott, Maine Gov. Paul LePage and Senate candidates in Colorado, Iowa, New Hampshire and Michigan.

Steyer spent $8 million to help Terry McAuliffe win the race for governor in Virginia.

Henkels declined to explain how the political action committee will spend its money.
ALLENTOWN, Pa. -

It may seem hard to believe today, but as recently as 75 years ago there was no broadcast news, or at least very little of it.

Local news sometimes made it on the air but radio was primarily a sports and entertainment medium. FDR had his “fireside chat” speeches, but there were no regular news broadcasts. Anything more required you had to go to the corner store put down your nickel and get a newspaper.
All that was before Edward R. Murrow. When word came in 1947 that Murrow, the voice of CBS radio that had brought World War II into American parlors with his deep voiced signature sign on, “This Is London,” was going to give the commencement address at Muhlenberg College, it rated headlines and excitement across the Lehigh Valley.

Murrow, whose chiseled good looks and ever present cigarette was the very imagine of a foreign correspondent, had been born Egbert Roscoe Murrow in rural North Carolina to sharecropper Quaker parents. An outstanding student as well as an excellent high school athlete, he captured prizes in debate and college politics.

From 1932 to 1935 Murrow was assistant director of the Institute of International Education, which is where he first came into contact with Levering Tyson, later Muhlenberg’s president.

Both men were interested in using radio as a tool in education. Tyson’s position in those years as a board member on the National Advisory Council of Radio in Education sponsored by the Carnegie Corp. and author of several books on the subject brought them together.

Although most Americans were still unaware or uninterested in the affairs of Europe, Murrow was an
exception. As early as 1935 he was part of a program that aided academics fleeing the rising forces of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. By 1937 he was employed by CBS to create contacts from an office in London with leading figures in Europe who might want to broadcast as experts of the continent’s spreading turmoil.

On August 20, 1937, Murrow contacted veteran newsman William L. Shirer, who had just been laid off from his newspaper. Over cocktails and dinner at Berlin’s swank Adlon Hotel Murrow outlined his idea.

"He said he was looking for an experienced foreign correspondence to open a CBS office on the Continent," Shirer noted in his diary. "He could not cover all of Europe from London." Shirer quickly jumped at the chance and accepted Murrow’s offer. Shirer recalled the end of the conversation with Murrow in his diary this way:

“Oh, there’s one little thing I forgot to mention," he said. “The voice…”

“The what?”

“Your voice.”

“Bad,” I said, “as you can see.”

“Perhaps not. But, you see, in broadcasting it’s a factor. And our directors and numerous vice presidents want to hear your voice first. We’ll arrange a broadcast. You give a talk, say on the coming (Nazi) party rally. I’m sure it’ll work out all right.”

Murrow was right. Shirer’s broadcast voice easily passed muster with the CBS brass. Using his long time friendships with reporters and other connections, Shirer managed to set up links so that by the time of the Munich...
crises in 1938 it was possible for Americans to get nightly overviews on what was happening between Hitler’s speeches and British Prime Minister Chamberlain’s misguided promise of “peace in our time.”

When Nazi tanks rolled into Poland in 1939, starting World War II, the new broadcast medium was ready to cover it.

Throughout World War II Murrow burnished his image as the voice of American journalism that offered a sharp contrast with the ranting propaganda coming out of Berlin. With the war’s close in 1945 there was no doubt that Murrow, Shirer and the others had created revolutionary form of journalism.

On June 2, 1947, the now world-renowned journalist rose to speak to 113 Muhlenberg College students and their families gathered for the graduation. By then there were already hints that the Cold War with Soviet Russia was on the horizon.

This Murrow told those gathered there that that day would require from their generation new leadership. “Leadership is expected of America,” he said, “but it cannot lead with dollars alone, with bulldozers or supersonic guided missiles. Dollars will not buy greatness for a nation or a man and they will not alter the course of the political tides that are running over the world.”

Murrow talked about the role the U.S. must play in international organizations. He particularly reminded the students “to have an opinion and be courageous in expressing it; to continue learning and questioning; to differentiate between slogans and logic; to examine anew such phases as enterprise, socialism, educational equality racial and religious tolerance.” But most important they
should never forget and should always be conscious of good fortune and defend decency and human dignity.

On June 27, 1951 Murrow attended a departure dinner for Tyson who was moving to New York to join what was to become Radio Free Europe. In order to keep his commitment to CBS, he broadcast his program that night from local radio station WHOL. It was his last visit to the Lehigh Valley.

From that time until his death in 1965 at age 57 from lung cancer, Murrow was to produce some classic journalism but also become involved with Cold War politics and is still remembered for his broadcast denouncing Senator Joe McCarthy in 1954. Today he is viewed as one of America's finest journalists.
"Spamalot" at Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre is unabashedly crazy fun and perfectly captures the absurdist and often downright silly humor of British comedy group Monty Python.

The story is nominally about King Arthur and the knights going on a quest for the Holy Grail but the real point is setting up the zany song sequences and comedy bits, many which are straight from the 1975 cult film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail."

Simply said, the madcap musical, directed with flair by James Peck, is very funny nonsense set in the form of an outlandish Broadway musical.

The eye-popping set by Curtis Dretsch is almost like another character. Sight gags abound, and Dretsch has reproduced many of the iconic images from the show to a tee.

Ed Bara is properly kingly as Arthur, the straight man of the piece. He has a booming voice that fits the character and ably commands the stage in the midst of all the goings-on.

Jordan Elman as Arthur's servant Patsy is hysterical. Known for providing the coconut clapping hoof beats of Arthur's non-existent horse, Elman can tell an entire story with his expressive face. He shone particularly in
"Always Look on the Bright Side of Life," along with a chorus line of umbrella-toting knights in a homage to "Singin' in the Rain." His total look of frustration during Arthur's "I'm All Alone," sung as he stood right next to Patsy, made the song.

The familiar "bring out your dead" scene culminates with a cart full of singing corpses and Josh Shapiro is hilarious as the grinning not-dead-Fred.

Steve Bauder is funny as the manly Lancelot and gets extra props for dancing in a silver codpiece in the goofy coming-out ode "His Name as Lancelot," a Latin-style number with dancing boys and Shapiro as the uber-effeminate Prince Herbert in a Carmen Miranda hat.

Jarrod Yuskauskas plays the cowardly Sir Robin and leads one of the funniest songs, "You Won't Succeed on Broadway," which sends up "Fiddler on the Roof," complete with a giant Star of David and knights doing the bottle dance with grails on their heads.

The Lady of the Lake, Shani Hadjian, is a standout. She has an amazing voice and the quicksilver ability to sing in different styles, switching at will as she parodies divas from Celine Dion and Liza Minnelli.

She and Bauder have a funny number in "The Song That Goes Like This," which apes "The Phantom of the Opera" with the couple standing in a boat singing while candles glow all around them.

Other Broadway shows, including the classic "West Side Story" and the contemporary "Newsies," also get humorous treatment.

Equally wacky are Justin Galletto as a Marxist Sir Galahad and Joshua Neth as the flatulent Sir Bedevere.

A high energy ensemble of male and female dancers make up dancing lines of knights, Vegas showgirls and "Laker" girls (the entourage of the Lady of the Lake) as they dance with maces,
strategically placed buns and as cheerleaders with pompons.

The references to the film are fast and furious. Arthur chops off the arms and legs of a knight who refuses to give up in a cleverly fashioned scene. And in another, taunting french soldiers with ridiculous moustaches intimidate Arthur and the knights with Can-Can girls (and boys) and even a dancing mime. Add to that the knights who says 'Ni' on stilts, a flying Tim the Enchanter and a whole glitzy Vegas number and you have one wild ride.

"Spamalot," 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday, through July 27, Muhlenberg College, Trexler Pavilion, Baker Theatre, 2400 Chew St., Allentown. Tickets: $39, $33, adults; $36, $29, seniors; $20, $18, students; $10, ages 5-18 at Sunday matinees. Info: 484-664-3693, http://www.muhlenberg.edu/SMT.

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Theater Review: A sunny, very funny 'Spamalot' at MSMT

Wednesday, July 16, 2014 by PAUL WILLISTEIN pwillistein@tnonline.com in Focus

James Peck is "The Minister Of Silly Laughs" at Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre (MSMT).

Peck directs "Monty Python's Spamlot" with liturgical attention to the canon for Python acolytes. The resulting non-stop laughs continue on stage through July 27, Dorothy Hess Baker Theatre, Trexler Pavilion for Theatre & Dance, Muhlenberg College, 2400 Chew St., Allentown.

Whether you're a Pythonite or not, "Spamalot" is hilarious thanks to actors' line delivery timing, orchestra music cues, sound effects, numerous set changes and exciting lighting effects.

The "Spamalot" cast and ensemble deserve kudos for performances that are spot-on, particularly the determined happiness that informs their every facial expression, vocalization and dance step.

"Monty Python's Spamlot" is a pastiche of scenes from the "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975) movie, reconceived for the stage by the Python's Eric Idle, who wrote the book, songs and music, the latter with John du Prez, for the musical comedy.

The 14 songs (including one reprise) in the first act and 12 songs (including three reprises) in the second act are as silly as the seminal Python's "Minister Of Silly Walks" and imbue the spirit of madcap humor, distracted miscommunication and brilliant wordplay and puns that are the essence of the Python appeal.

There's no sense attempting to encapsulate the nonsense that is the storyline for "Spamalot." There reason enough to celebrate the talent brought together for MSMT.

Ed Bara (King Arthur) has a booming line delivery, wonderful voice ("King Arthur's Song," "Knights Of The Round Table," "I'm All Alone") and great comedic instincts.

Shani Hadjian (The Lady Of The Lake) has a gorgeous voice ("Come With Me") and the ability to vamp, scat and growl to add self-deprecating humor ("Find Your Grail," "The Song That Goes Like This," "The Diva's Lament") to her magnificent stage presence.

Jarrod Yuskauskas (Sir Robin), who is Moravian Academy director of theater, creates a zany physicality backed by a fine voice ("Brave Sir Robin," "You Won't Succeed On Broadway").

Jordan Elman (Patsy) plays the put-upon sidekick to King Arthur to great effect, with nuanced asides and hilarious double-takes, culminating in a show-stopper number ("Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life") that symbolizes the show's cheerfulness.

Standout supporting performers include Steve Bauder (Sir Lancelot), Justin Galletto (Sir Galahad), Joshua Neth (Sir Bedevere) and Josh Shapiro (Prince Herbert, Historian, Not-Dead-Fred).

Contributing to the show's rousing entertainment, in addition to Peck, are music director Justin Brehm, sound designer Thomas A. Korp, dialect designer Troy Dwyer, choreographer Samuel Antonio Reyes, and Vince Di Mura, who conducts the energetic 14-piece orchestra.

Costume designer Nicole Wee created lovely gowns for The Lady Of The Lake and the female ensemble, and...
silly outfits for the men, plus some great special effects costumes.

Scenic designer Curtis Dretsch has made the set a character all its own, blending faux stone towers, castle walls and a drawbridge with the actual stone and wood of the Baker Theatre.

"Monty Python's Spamalot" is a rollicking good time: a musical of gleeful silliness, exuberant irreverence and blissful optimism. You will exit laughing, feeling all the better for having experienced this show.

"Monty Python's Spamalot," through July 27: 8 p.m. Wednesday - Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre, Baker Theatre, Muhlenberg College, 2400 Chew St., Allentown.
muhlenberg.edu/SMT, 484-664-3333
Democratic novice asked to step out of pivotal Bucks race

High-powered Democrats have asked political novice Steve Cickay to withdraw from what is viewed as a pivotal Bucks County state Senate race, according to sources familiar with the discussions, and give way to Shaughnessy Naughton - who lost in the May primary in her bid for a congressional seat.

Leading party operatives, including former Gov. Ed Rendell and State Sen. Vincent Hughes (D., Philadelphia), believe Naughton's name recognition and her ability to appeal to female voters make her a stronger candidate to take on two-term incumbent Chuck McIlhinney, the sources said.

Naughton, 35, also could use whatever leftover campaign...
Democratic novice asked to step out of pivotal Bucks race

funds she stockpiled during her congressional run for a state Senate bid, two election-law experts said, potentially giving her more resources to challenge McIlhinney than Cickay, who has struggled with fund-raising.

The race could be crucial for state Democrats, who are eager to wrangle control of the Senate from Republicans but have a limited number of winnable seats statewide, political experts say.

So far, Cickay, 59, has shown little desire to leave the race, saying he’s gotten a positive response while campaigning.

"I start something, I finish it," he said in an interview. "I feel an obligation to these people that voted for me. . . . I feel I owe it to them to finish."

Rendell said he called Cickay about 10 days ago, telling him that "people were impressed with Shaughnessy" after her race, and that he believed a female candidate had a better shot at winning that district. When Cickay indicated he wanted to remain in the race, Rendell said he respected the decision and wished Cickay luck.

Hughes declined to say whether he asked Cickay to step aside, but added that "we want to field the best candidates in the best seats."

John Cordisco, chairman of the Bucks County Democratic Committee, said simply, "As far as I'm concerned, at the moment, Steve Cickay is the candidate."

Naughton, through her previous campaign manager, declined to comment.

Cickay, a retired information-technology employee with the Army, Navy, and Labor and Treasury Departments, ran unopposed for the Democratic nomination in Pennsylvania's 10th Senate District.

Cickay said he was asked to run this winter by local Democratic leaders, including Cordisco.
Passionate about many topics, including raising the minimum wage, expanding Medicaid availability, and increasing investment in education, Cickay said he figured he could advocate for those issues in Harrisburg and decided to join the race.

"I was the only guy, and I stepped forward," he said. "I was proud that [Cordisco] supported me, and I've worked hard."

Unseating McIlhinney in November will be a challenge.

McIlhinney has deep political roots in the area, having served as a Doylestown Borough councilman and state representative before becoming a state senator in 2007.

One Democratic poll from March, obtained by The Inquirer, showed McIlhinney leading Cickay by 16 percentage points.

And Cickay had only $1,717 in cash on hand as of June 9, according to campaign records, compared with more than $150,000 for McIlhinney. Cickay acknowledged that raising money has been difficult.

All those reasons would motivate Democrats to try "to maneuver in a way to make that race as competitive as possible," said Chris Borick, a professor of political science at Muhlenberg College.

Borick said he was unaware of any attempt to remove Cickay from the race, but added that McIlhinney's district is coveted by Democrats, since it's one of the few across the state they can realistically win.

With Gov. Corbett facing a difficult reelection campaign, Borick said, Democrats "probably would like to have [Naughton] in this election cycle, where there's at least an outside chance where they could take control of the state Senate."

Naughton lost May's Democratic primary for Bucks County's congressional seat by a few hundred votes to Kevin Strouse, a former Army Ranger and CIA employee.
Naughton performed well in central Bucks County, the territory McIlhinney represents.

And Naughton's congressional campaign had just under $158,000 in cash on hand April 30, federal records show. Whatever money remained after the May 20 primary could be transferred to an account supporting Naughton's state candidacy, according to Lawrence J. Tabas, a lawyer who specializes in election law.

Still, whatever lobbying is taking place on her behalf, Naughton can't run as a Democrat unless Cickay drops out.

Cickay said he's in the race until the end.

"You'll be hearing from me," he said. "Now and through Nov. 4."

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Sen. Robert Casey is working to undo the Supreme Court's recent Hobby Lobby decision. (Photo by Cindy Ord/Getty Images for Autism Speaks)
WASHINGTON - Sen. Bob Casey, an antiabortion Democrat, plans to vote Wednesday for a bill that would overturn the Supreme Court's recent Hobby Lobby decision and force most businesses to offer employees the full range of contraceptive coverage, even if the owners raise religious objections.

The Pennsylvanian is siding with fellow Democrats - who argue that they are protecting women's right to decide their own health care - and against many religious groups and Republicans, who say the court ruling protected religious liberties.

Casey, who is Catholic, said Tuesday in an Inquirer interview that he draws a distinction between abortion - which he still opposes - and contraception, which he has long supported and which he believes can reduce the number of abortions.

"The health-care service that's at issue here is contraception, which means prior to conception," Casey said.

But abortion has been a central part of the Hobby Lobby firestorm, which has also touched on health care, religious freedom, individual rights, and election-year politics.

Casey on Tuesday became the first antiabortion Democrat to cosponsor the bill, aimed at reversing the Supreme Court decision allowing business owners to exclude certain contraception options from their employee health packages. Some business owners said certain types of contraception could amount to abortion, an idea disputed by many doctors and scientists.

"I'm a pro-life Democrat, always have been, always will be," Casey said. He later added: "I'll go with the scientists on what contraception is, rather than a religious viewpoint of what science is."
He also worried about private executives using their religious beliefs to restrict access to other types of health coverage.

Even with Casey's support, the bill has little chance of becoming law, but Democrats see it as an opportunity to highlight their support for women's rights.

Democratic leaders expect a key procedural vote Wednesday, but the measure faces opposition from Republicans and some Democrats from conservative states. It has virtually no hope of clearing the GOP-controlled House.

Casey joined 44 other Democrats sponsoring or cosponsoring the bill.

Conservative critics have often said his voting record has undermined his antiabortion credentials. "His reputation as a conservative is different than the reality of the stances that he takes," said Randall Wenger, chief counsel of the Pennsylvania Family Institute.

Wenger called Casey's support of the bill "disappointing" because "government should never be in the position of forcing someone to violate their most deeply held convictions."

For Casey, his position represents a third recent stand with his party's left on a cultural fight in the national spotlight.

In December 2012, he reversed his long-held opposition to new gun laws after the Sandy Hook School shootings. Less than four months later he joined the many Democrats who changed course to embrace same-sex marriage.

In hoping to overturn the so-called Hobby Lobby ruling, though, Casey said there had been no change in his views.

"This is entirely consistent with my votes," he said, pointing to previous support of contraception.

He also stressed that there were still protections in place for religious nonprofits, such as hospitals or private schools, but said those safeguards shouldn't apply to for-profit businesses.
The abortion debate has a long association with Casey's family. His late father, former Pa. Gov. Robert P. Casey, was an antiabortion Democrat who clashed with national party leaders over the issue.

The younger Casey has tried to find a balance between his party's pro-abortion rights orthodoxy and his antiabortion stand, said Christopher Borick, a political scientist at Muhlenberg College.

"He has remained a pro-life Democrat but one who has stretched the bounds of that definition," Borick said. "On issues like contraception, he's clearly been much more in line with the approach of the Democratic Party position and not those of the teachings of the Catholic Church."

In the Supreme Court case - revolving around Hobby Lobby, a chain founded in Oklahoma City, and the Lancaster County-based Conestoga Woods Specialties - business owners raised religious objections to some types of contraception coverage that President Obama's health-care law mandated as part of employee health insurance. They argued that certain methods amounted to abortion.

The court ruled 5-4 for the businesses, drawing praise from Republicans and scorn from Democrats.

"Religious liberty belongs to all of us; it does not belong to a corporation," Sen. Cory A. Booker (D., N.J.) said on the Senate floor Tuesday morning. "Religious liberty means being free from having other people's religions foisted upon you."

In a statement on the day of the June 30 ruling, Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.) called it "a win for religious liberty."

He has cosponsored a bill aimed at providing a religious exemption to the health law requirement on contraceptives.
Ray William Johnson, who rose to Internet fame with his long-running YouTube comedy series “Equals Three,” has selected a new host for the show: Robby Motz, a 20-year-old theater student who’s never been on YouTube until now.

Johnson produced and starred in “Equals Three,” a short-form program riffing on Internet-trending topics, since launching it in 2009. This March, he announced that he was retiring from the show — and on Tuesday, he revealed the choice of Motz as his replacement.
"I'm replacing myself in the online space," Johnson told Variety. The show was slated to return Tuesday on his channel at YouTube.com/RayWilliamJohnson (https://www.youtube.com/user/RayWilliamJohnson), which has 10.6 million subscribers. Each week, two new episodes will be posted (on Tuesdays and Fridays).

Johnson said he and his team solicited talent agencies for candidates to host the show and reviewed 1,000 applicants. He picked Motz, a native of L.A., because of the aspiring actor’s strong performing and improv skills.

“We really like him and thought we'd change his life,” Johnson said. “He's charming, good at performing and he seems smart.”

In addition, he felt that Motz had a thick skin — a necessary trait in the YouTube game because of “the backlash you get online,” Johnson said. “It’s hard to perform right out of the gate and have people call you the most horrible things humans can call you.”

This spring Motz finished his freshman year at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa., where he was studying theater, and threw his hat into the ring for “Equals Three” along with auditioning for a few other projects. With the one-year contract to host the show, Motz is taking a leave of absence from school and “is delighted to be the choice,” said Terrie Snell of TalentINK, which is repping him.

Until Motz gets up to speed on “Equals Three,” Johnson will be writing and directing the show, which is shot in a small studio in Culver City, Calif. Johnson said the show “is not going to change, but it may evolve with his sense of humor.”


On Monday, Johnson had teased the arrival of the new host in a tweet:


FOLLOW @VARIETY (HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/INTENT/FOLLOW?SCREEN_NAME=VARIETY) ON TWITTER FOR BREAKING NEWS, REVIEWS AND MORE


'Harry Potter' Actor Found Dead in Death Valley
HARRISBURG — When new clean air rules came out in June targeting emissions at coal power plants, the Corbett campaign tried to link Democrat Tom Wolf to the Obama administration policies.

That kind of politicizing of energy policy might come back to haunt the governor in the fall.

A billionaire environmentalist from California intends to use a political action committee to spend $100 million targeting seven climate-change deniers — Corbett, two other governors and four candidates for U.S. Senate.

“Corbett and his administration deny basic science. Gov. Corbett says climate change is still ‘a subject of debate’ and his administration’s top environmental appointee says he hasn’t ‘read any scientific studies that would lead him to conclude there are adverse impacts’ from climate change,” said Suzanne Henkels, a spokeswoman for NextGen Climate, the political action committee created by former hedge fund manager Tom Steyer.

Experts said there is little evidence that climate change is an issue that will resonate strongly with voters.

But that doesn’t mean that the attacks couldn’t damage Corbett’s re-election bid.

“I believe that young people are probably more sensitive and understanding of climate related issues, but I would be hesitant to say that climate issues will make a difference in an election for governor,” said Mary Jane Kuffner Hirt, a political science professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Even young voters are more focused on things like the cost of higher education and “the availability of jobs that match the qualifications of those who persist and graduate from college,” she said.

The Corbett campaign is trying to sell the idea that the governor’s policies have translated into an improved economy.

Campaign spokesman Chris Pack pointed to the latest jobs number report showing the state unemployment rate of 5.8 percent is the lowest it’s been since 2008.

That argument has strong support from chamber groups and the drilling industry.

But polls show most Pennsylvanians believe the state should levy an extraction tax on the drilling industry, according to Chris Borick, a political science professor and director of the Institute of Public Opinion at Muhlenberg College in Allentown.

And most people think local governments should have more control over regulating the energy industry, he said.

Corbett could be susceptible to criticism that he is too closely aligned with the energy industry if critics go after him for being out-of-step on those types of issues, Borick said.

This week, Corbett’s campaign launched its first ads since the primary. Days later, the NextGen Climate committee began airing ads criticizing the governor for accepting energy industry donations while refusing to detail how closely the administration communicates with gas drilling companies while crafting policy.
It was the opening salvo in what could be a protracted attack.

Steyer told Politico that he intends to throw as much as $50 million of his own money into the campaigns to unseat Corbett, Florida Gov. Rick Scott, Maine Gov. Paul LePage and Senate candidates in Colorado, Iowa, New Hampshire and Michigan.

Steyer spent $8 million to help Terry McAuliffe win the race for governor in Virginia.

Henkels declined to explain how the political action committee will spend its money. But the group has indicated that in addition to advertising, it will seek to mobilize likely Democratic voters and target groups, especially moms, with tailored messages about the links between pollution and high childhood asthma rates.

At the last campaign filing, covering the period ending June 9, Corbett reported having $4.8 million on hand. Wolf reported $3 million in the bank at the same time.

Experts have forecasted that both candidates will spend around $15 million in the campaign ahead of the November election.

Corbett has received at least $625,000 from oil and gas company political action committees, lobbyists, industry executives and employees, a newspaper review of campaign finance filings for the first reporting periods in 2014 found. That’s a little more than 10 percent of the total of $5.6 million in donations the governor received over that period, covering the first six months of the year.

That’s been par for the course for Corbett. A 2011 analysis by the National Institute on Money in State Politics found that donors from the energy sector gave Corbett 9 percent of the $29 million he raised leading up to his election as governor in 2010.

“That’s a significant amount” to come from one interest group, Borick said.

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