

FIRE

STARTING AGAIN



SUZETTE WENGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS

After a fire destroyed a barn Thursday in West Lampeter Township, on Monday people worked to rebuild, above, and repair a nearby house that was damaged, at right.

The fire appeared to begin in the second floor of a barn used by a dairy farmer to store hay in the 800 block of Strasburg Pike around 9 a.m. Twelve fire companies helped extinguish the blaze, most of them bringing tankers to provide water to fight the fire.

Chief Rick Breneman of Lampeter Fire Company on Thursday said, to his knowledge, all animals were rescued. A neighbor who did not want to be named said a pony died.

For more photos, go to LancasterOnline.com.



FOOD

Rendezvous near for city cheesesteaks

Relatives of former owner reopening W. King St. restaurant with old recipe

CHAD UMBLE
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After being gone for nearly four years, the classic Rendezvous cheesesteak returns this week to downtown Lancaster.

Closed since the last day of 2019, the former Rendezvous Steak Shop in the 200 block of West King Street is being revived Friday by relatives of the former owner who say they'll be making cheesesteaks the way Rendezvous did for nearly 70 years.

Cheesesteaks at The Rendezvous Steak Shop & Piz-

IF YOU GO

Address: 243 W. King St., Lancaster

Hours: 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday.

zeria will be made with a blend of ribeye, chuck roast and sirloin served on an Amoroso's roll with American cheese and topped with steak sauce. The rolls will be steamed on top of the meat, which will soften them up and allow them to absorb
REOPEN, page A8

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Tax rate the same in draft budget

Spending increases only 1% over 2023; commissioners to finalize plan Dec. 20

TOM LISI
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Lancaster County commissioners today will begin discussing a \$182.5 million 2024 budget proposal that would nominally increase spending and hold the line on property taxes for an 11th consecutive year.

The budget proposal covering the county's general

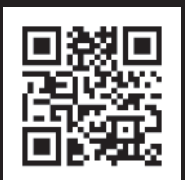
fund, its main checking account, calls for a \$4 million increase in spending, driven by payroll increases and other operating costs including equipment and utilities.

County budget director Pat Mulligan is scheduled to attend the commissioners' work session today to present the budget numbers.

BUDGET, page A8

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SUZETTE WENGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Zoe Kaminski, Riley Kaminski and Ed Kaminski, stand inside the new The Rendezvous Steak Shop & Pizzeria in Lancaster city on Monday. For more photos, go to LancasterOnline.com.

Reopen

Continued from A3
some of the flavor.

"I think we nailed it pretty well and people will not notice a single difference," said Riley Kaminski, operator of the new restaurant that he owns with his father, Ed, and sister, Zoe.

Ed Kaminski's late mother, Helen, was a sister of Roger and Romolo Gaspari, who originally opened Rendezvous Steak Shop in 1951 in a spot across the street from its last location at 239 W. King St. Roger Gaspari became the shop's owner after Romolo Gaspari died in 1971 and then worked there until its last day on New Year's Eve in 2019.

Roger Gaspari offered some instruction to the new owners on how to make the sandwiches, including a session that was put on video.

Gaspari, who will turn 93 years old this weekend, is expected to attend the Friday opening of the restaurant.

In addition to cheesesteaks, the menu will include pizza made in a wood-fired pizza oven. The menu will eventually be expanded to include salads and sandwiches.

The new Rendezvous Pizzeria & Steak Shop occupies the first floor of Landis Place on King, the seven-story apartment building that was built on the site of the former steak shop. The newly constructed restaurant at 243 W. King St. has seating for nearly 50, including some window counters and a counter with a direct view of the pizza oven. Like with the former restaurant, the cooking area will be visible from the outside.

Ed Kaminski is the director of Landis Quality Living, which developed the 55-

plus housing building that opened in May. He said his family interest in continuing the restaurant and his own children's experience in business and the restaurant industry led to the decision to reopen the steak shop.

Riley Kaminski previously was manager of a Pizzeria Vetri location in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood of Philadelphia. He also previously worked at Luca in Lancaster city. Zoe Kaminski is a former investment banker living in New York City.

In the late 1970s, Ed Kaminski spent a summer working at his uncle's shop, which he said has always played an important role in the life of his family.

"The Rendezvous not only meant so much to so many people outside the family but within the family it's always been a gathering place," he said.

GivingTuesday

Continued from A1

consider where and how much they want to give while they are gathered with their families before Thanksgiving, said Amy Pirozzolo, head of donor engagement at Fidelity Charitable.

Her organization forecasts grants from their donors will increase compared to last year, saying \$9 billion has been granted as of the end of October, before the end-of-year bump which can account for 30% of the total. Last year, some \$11.2 billion was granted from its DAF accounts.

Many fall short

The rosy forecast for end-of-year giving from organizations like Fidelity Charitable contrasts with warnings from organizations like the National Council of Nonprofits, which said in an August report that many organizations anticipate falling financial support this year. That would follow the trend of charitable giving in 2022, which dropped for only the fourth time in 40 years.

Perhaps more concerning for nonprofits, the Giving USA report found fewer people are donating at all, with less than half of Americans giving to charity in 2022 compared with more than two-thirds who gave in 2000.

The trend, though, is different for affluent Americans, whose charitable contributions have made up a larger and larger share of overall donations. The recent 2023 Bank of America Study of Philanthropy found households with a net worth of more than \$1 million or annual income of more than \$200,000 are still giving 19% more than before the pandemic.

The bifurcated trends mean many organizations will target their wealthiest supporters,

The rosy forecast for end-of-year giving from organizations like Fidelity Charitable contrasts with warnings from organizations like the National Council of Nonprofits.

though the harsh reality is that even they may pull back on donations because of larger economic forces, like high interest rates, a dragging stock market and persistent inflation.

Ciara Coleman, who works for a large philanthropic foundation, approached the fundraising problem from the angle of a donor when she started a giving circle in New Orleans to support women and girls in her city. Her professional experience had taught her that too often, decision-makers in philanthropy overlooked her community.

"I gathered nine of my friends at the time and just had this conversation about reshaping philanthropy because I was frustrated with the roles being dominated by white men," Coleman said. Since it was founded in 2021, the giving circle, Geaux Girl Giving, has donated \$50,000 to 30 organizations in grants that range from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

She and the other members also volunteer, serve as mentors and open their networks to their grantees and the people those organizations serve, which she sees as embodying the original, Greek meaning of the word philanthropy. That is, "the love of humanity, which never was, I think, intended to mean solely those who write a large check," Coleman said. "But those who really have a love for people and tap into all of their resources in order to exude that love for others."

Budget

Continued from A3

The budget proposal will be released for public viewing Wednesday. A special evening commissioners' meeting, slated for 6 p.m. Dec. 12 at the Lancaster County Government Center in conference room 102/104, will include an in-depth budget presentation from county officials.

The commissioners are scheduled to approve a final version of the budget Dec. 20.

Following a year in which the county, along with households and businesses, saw inflation drive up costs in everything from labor to energy, the 2024 budget proposal represents just a 1% increase in spending compared to 2023.

The proposal balances the minor increase by lower-

ing capital spending, which includes spending on infrastructure projects, making a smaller debt payment next year and, perhaps most critically, reaping the benefits of a banner year in interest earnings.

The budget proposal predicts the county will earn \$9.5 million in interest from investments, more than the \$6.8 million county officials expected to receive in 2023.

Local governments are permitted by law to make "investments" using unspent taxpayer dollars, but those investments are far less risky than a pension fund or 401(k) plan. Local governments are generally limited to low-risk products such as government bonds and certificates of deposit.

Traditionally, the county has posted annual interest earnings in the tens or hundreds of thousands of dol-

lars. But that has not been the case in the last couple years, thanks in part to major infusions of cash from the federal government. The 2021 American Rescue Plan Act allocated \$106 million to the county for pandemic recovery efforts.

Since then, the board of commissioners has gradually approved rescue funds for county operations and community-based projects. For dollars not yet spent, county officials have in the meantime stowed some of that money away in interest-bearing accounts.

As of Monday, the county has reported allocating about \$77 million of its federal rescue funds, leaving about \$29 million remaining.

The rescue plan requires local governments allocate their share of recovery money by the end of 2024 and spend it by the end of 2026.

Obituaries

OTHER OBITUARIES ON PAGE A9

Ronald A. McClain



Ronald A. McClain, 81, of York, passed away on November 22, 2023 at Normandie Ridge. He was the husband of the late Judith A. (Smith) McClain. Born in York on July 4, 1942, he was the son of the late M. Arlene (McClain) and Gerald E. Frey.

Ronald was a 1960 graduate of Kennard-Dale High School, a 1972 graduate York College of PA, and HACC Harrisburg. Ronald worked for the York City Police Department from January 1965, beginning as a patrolman, working his way through the department from Detective to Sergeant, and retiring as Lieutenant in March 2003 after 38 years of service. He was a member of the White Rose Fraternal Order of Police No. 15.

Ronald and his wife traveled extensively and reached a goal of visiting 6 continents. He was a member of First Presbyterian of York. He was also a member of the Zembo Mason Lodge #649. Ronald played the trumpet since the fourth grade in school. In high school, he won competitions in the FFA that took him to Kansas City. His love for music stayed

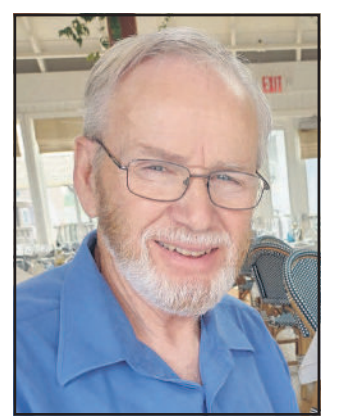
with him and he learned how to play many different instruments in a band. He continued to play in multiple bands in the county including Southern York County, Emigsville, Brodbeck's, Red Lion - Felton, Dallastown Boys & Girls, Glockenspielers, York Drum & Bugle, Lancers and many more.

Ronald is survived by three daughters, Kelly W.M. Reigart and her husband Toby L.; Heather L. Ward and her husband Robie, both of York; Erin S. Ehlen, Burnet, TX; a step-daughter Lisa A. Schmittle and her husband Karl V. Jr. of York; a step-son Michael G. Leichliter and his wife Mary Edith of Duxbury, VT; a brother Robert P. Frey; 15 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a grandchild and a brother.

A funeral service will be held on Friday, December 1, 2023 at Noon at the Etzweiler Funeral Homes and Cremation Service, 1111 East Market Street, York. A viewing will be held from 11:00 a.m. until Noon. Burial will be in Greenmount Cemetery, York, PA. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the York City Police Pension Fund, Attn: Amy Shewell, 101 S. George Street, York, PA 17401.

Arrangements by the Etzweiler Funeral Homes and Cremation Service, 1111 East Market Street, York, PA 17403. www.etzweilerfuneral-home.com

Jere Lee Witmer



Jere Lee Witmer, 72, of Elizabethtown, passed away on Saturday, November 25, 2023 after a brief illness. Born in Columbia, he was the son of the late Irvin and Loreen (Kauffman) Witmer. Jere was the husband of Debra Lynn (Peffley) Witmer with whom he celebrated 19 years of marriage this past May 17th.

Jere was a graduate of Manheim Central class of 1969. He retired from M&M Mars in 2005 after 26 years of service in production. Jere was an avid Philadelphia Eagles and Phillies fan. He enjoyed traveling with his wife.

Surviving in addition to his wife, Debra, are two children, Gwendolyn Merrell, wife of Jon of Marietta and Elizabeth Nunez, wife of Carlos of Madison, AL; two step-children, Michael Dengler, husband of Jennifer of Jonestown and Kristen Blouch, wife of Joshua of Cleona; four grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; three great grandchildren; a brother, John Witmer, husband of Mary of Purcellville, VA; and a sister, Jean Witmer of Newtown, PA.

Services will be private at the convenience of the family. To send an online condolence, please visit www.sheetz-funeralhome.com

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In brief

LANCASTER CITY

Man charged with stabbing victim in hand Sunday night

A man was charged with aggravated assault after a stabbing Sunday night, Lancaster city police said.

Emergency crews found a man with a knife wound to the hand around 8 p.m. in the 100 block of New Dorwart Street.

The victim and witnesses told police Michael Hess, 49, stabbed the man during an argument, then fled. Hess was staying with the man and his family, police said.

A short time later, police said they located Hess hiding in a garage on the 600 block of Lafayette Street. Hess was taken into custody and charged with aggravated assault. He was being held Monday in Lancaster County Prison after being unable to post the \$10,000 bail.

Hess' preliminary hearing is Dec. 13 at 1:30 p.m. before Judge Adam J. Witkonis.

The victim's injuries weren't life-threatening, but police said he was transported to a local hospital for treatment.

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*if your photo was taken by a professional photographer

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