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REFLECTIONS

LOCAL OFFICIALS REFLECT ON 2020, OFFER HOPE FOR 2021

By Jen Samuel

jsamuel@dailylocal.com
@jenpoetess on Twitter

As 2020 comes to a close, people of Chester County remain unshaken as a community.

"What has not changed is that we are blessed to live, work and promote Chester County," said Susan Hamley, executive director of the Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau. "Chester County Commissioners and partners in the tourism and hospitality industry are an amazing group of dedicated people; all are working tirelessly to lift up each other and also those in need. We strive to emerge stronger together and even more appreciative for all that we do have — gratitude will endure long after 2020."

The pandemic shutdown began in Pennsylvania with school closures and business closure orders on March 13.

Stores such as Walmart and Home Depot were deemed essential businesses from the beginning and were never ordered to close.

Local restaurants have not been so lucky. Gov. Tom Wolf recently ordered the suspension of all indoor dining services until at least Jan. 4.

Local restaurant owners last week called the move "devastating."

"I hope the pain and suffering we have all seen and experienced this year moves out of our lives to reveal the compassion and unity we had before the pandemic," said Coatesville City Manager James



Logan

protect us.

"I hope our nation can put aside the pettiness and agree to disagree respectfully. I hope we can repair the damage done this year that has separated us yet has revealed our most vulnerable side of inequality.

"While I've never been one to reflect on the past in great detail, I do believe reflection has a place to help us improve, heal, correct, grow and become better than our old selves.

"Looking ahead, 2021 will bring new opportunities. We have to learn to move as one and not splinter into silos to achieve individual goals. I am very optimistic about the positive direction the city is going and I'm proud to work with my council members and other stakeholders who support that direction."

"I have most been inspired by the capacity of many in our community to care for each

other an innovate," said Rev. Kyle Boyer, president of the West Chester NAACP and pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church. "Everything from the selfless healthcare workers, to the food bank volunteers, to the mask-makers, to the students who have stepped up despite the worst of virtual learning arrangements. So many people have been selfless during this time to help protect their community."

Nature is key

"From a conservation perspective, my hope for the New Year is that those who found nature for the first time, those who renewed their interest and desire for nature, and those who dove deep into their existing passion for our natural environment remember how they felt — even when the world around them was filled with turmoil and uncertainty — when they found comfort in a walk on a trail," said Ellen Ferretti, director of the Brandywine Conservancy, "or the vision of a beautiful landscape unfolding before them, or the calming sound of water flow as they sat by a stream, or just sitting for a moment on a park bench to hear the birds sing and the wind in the trees."



Ferretti

together again with hugs and handshakes," Freese said. As for what has inspired Freese the most in 2020, he said: "The volunteers. I saw folks at the Downingtown schools trying to hold together the food line as the remnants of Hurricane Isaias passed

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— Ellen Ferretti

wine Conservancy "to protect this very essential, vitally fundamental and ever beautiful world on which we live."

The volunteers

Chuck Freese, the emergency management coordinator in Southern Chester County, a position appointed by the governor, said he hopes that the vaccines on the horizon are safe and well received.

"We will continue the fight for the residents and facilities in my municipalities until we can come



Freese

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2020

FROM PAGE C1

over us, wading through ankle deep water with battering winds because it was important and there were folks who need those meals. Time and again I saw hope in the actions of volunteers who are resolved to get us through this, and from whom I drew strength at times for my own missions."

Lessons learned

For some, this year brought opportunity in the workplace.

"In 2020 I was extremely inspired by my new job in New Garden Township,"



Reiner

she said the New Garden Board of Supervisors has been amazing and supportive.

"Along with them and the most wonderful groups of staff, volunteers and committee members, I feel as though we have been able to accomplish so much and it's just the beginning," she said.

"The best lesson that I learned in 2020 was to stop and listen," Reiner said. "Being forced to slow down and spend quality time with my family, I am extremely aware of how quickly time goes. If my boys ask me to stop and see something that is important to them — regardless of how many times it was related to TikTok or Playstation — I have learned that these moments won't last forever and I want them to know how important their ideas are to me. This has trickled over into other aspects of my life and I am learning that it's important to stop what I'm doing and listen

to others."

Eternally optimistic

"The COVID-19 pandemic has left its mark on all of us, you can't deny that. I, like everyone, just can't wait for it to be over," said Downingtown Mayor Phil Dague.



Dague

"Hopefully we've learned from all of this and should it ever happen again we will be much better prepared. Whatever 2021 brings, it has to be better than 2020. I am eternally optimistic.

"Through all of this, Downingtown has kept it going. Downingtown finds a way. That's the beauty of a community. We are not strangers to each other, we are an extension of family. If one of us is suffering, we all suffer, and we can't let that happen.

"I, myself, am looking forward to being in a CROWD somewhere and hearing an umpire shout: 'play ball!'"

Brighter days ahead

"I am looking forward to a better, brighter future for our country, our state and for Chester County as we finally begin to get the COVID pandemic under control," said Dick Bingham, chairman of the Chester County Democratic Committee. "But to make this happen as quickly as possible, we all must do our part now.

"I am hopeful we all individually and our country as a whole will at last embrace social justice for everyone." What inspired Bingham the most in 2020 were the Good Samaritans — every-



Bingham

day people — of Chester County.

"I was inspired by the frontline workers — health care workers, first responders, police, firefighters, teachers, grocery store personnel and postal workers — who continued to provide essential services in the face of a raging pandemic," Bingham said.

Historical year

"I gained inspiration from my own staff who worked tirelessly submitting grant applications to the county, the Commonwealth and federal government to help small businesses get the capital they needed to retain their employees and keep operating," said Gary Smith, president and CEO of the Chester County Economic Development Council.

As for the best lesson learned in 2020, Smith said, "Where there is a will, there is a way. We all learned to manage our businesses differently in order to keep operating in the new normal. No doubt, 2020 will go down in the history books."

Ethic of love

"This past year we have seen a country divided by both politics and a pandemic," said Gordon Eck, chairman of the Republican Committee of Chester County. "It is my hope and prayer that this coming year will be marked by a restored unity grounded in our shared identity as people made in the image of God.

"I was inspired by the creativity and perseverance of many hard-working Americans who refused to give up in the face of a pandemic and authoritative actions that often compounded the crisis.

As for what surprised

him most in 2020, Eck said, "I was particularly surprised with how easily people were willing to unnecessarily part with their freedoms in return for the prospect of temporary safety."

Note of grace

"Being a history enthusiast, I resolve and hope others use the lessons and experiences from 2020 and put them good use — become stronger, more thoughtful, and resolute to improve the world in 2021 and beyond," said Chief Gerald R. Simpson of the Southern Chester County Regional Police Department. "When you didn't expect it, and albeit infrequent, seeing small acts of kindness and graciousness towards humanity."

As for what surprised the police chief the most in 2020, Simpson said: "Seeing society on the edge, afraid, feeling helpless and worried in a way I have never witnessed. I have seen these behaviors on a much smaller scale throughout my career, but not an entire nation or better yet the world."

As for the best lesson the chief learned in 2020, his answer was rooted in simplicity — "to find pleasure in the small things — to be less dependent and more self-sufficient. To offer grace to those who are in need.

"As we leave this year and enter 2021, I choose to have an optimistic attitude, to know that we have a common thread woven between us no matter our station in life and to believe that there's not a challenge we cannot overcome together."

High hopes

"What I have been reminded of time and time again this year is the resiliency of Pennsylvanians," said U.S. Congresswoman Chrissy



Houlahan

"When I think about what inspired me this year I think of the words of Fred Rogers, to 'remember the helpers.' The essential workers, healthcare and emergency workers, grocery store employees and everyone who stepped up to help our community are the reason the hope that we will see the other side of the public health crisis, and they continue to inspire me each and every day."

— Josh Maxwell

Houlahan (D-PA). "They continue to inspire me and my work in Congress. I'm very lucky to represent the people of my community, and it's my privilege to fight for them."

Kennett Square Mayor Matt Fetick said he hopes everyone can contain the pandemic and stop seeing the loss of life and business.

"Seeing the community come together during this crisis," Fetick said. "Everyone doing their part to either be responsible to mitigate the spread of the virus or by supporting local businesses and our first responders. The community really rallied together."

The Kennett Square mayor said he was surprised by the severity of the pandemic and how long it has lasted.

"I thought it would be quickly stopped in its tracks," he said.

As for a quintessential lesson learned this year, Fetick said: "Life can change in the blink of an eye. 2020 was poised to be a great year on many fronts and

it so quickly became a life changing crisis. I need to be more thankful for what is right in front of me and not take anything for granted.

Life can change quickly."

"COVID has shaken our community in 2020," said Chester County

Commissioner Josh Maxwell. "And while there is a lot of government work that continues during the crisis, my most fervent hope for the New Year is that there is a smooth roll out and rapid delivery of a COVID vaccine to the residents of Chester County.

"I resolve to do everything in my power as an elected official to support that process.

"When I think about what inspired me this year I think of the words of Fred Rogers, to 'remember the helpers.' The essential workers, healthcare and emergency workers, grocery store employees and everyone who stepped up to help our community are the reason the hope that we will see the other side of the public health crisis, and they continue to inspire me each and every day."



Maxwell



Fetick

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SPOT OF T

These old boots were made for ... everything

By Terry Alburger
Brittany Pointe Estates

As I was lacing up my old boots the other week, ready to clear the snow from the latest Nor'easter, I couldn't help but think about the adventures these old boots have seen. These rugged steel-toed beauties were originally purchased for my first trip to West Virginia as part of the Appalachian Service Project mission trip a decade ago.

I was told I needed rugged boots in preparation for the unexpected. A quick-moving copperhead or a stubborn wooden joist, uncooperative in its removal, or perhaps a large arachnid or the unforgiving terrain on which some of the construction sites are located — a good pair of steel-toed boots would definitely come in handy in each of those cases.

Since this trip was for just one week out of each year, I was advised to try the local thrift shop when purchasing my gear. So off I went, dubious that I'd be able to find what I needed and in my size.

But, miracle of miracles, there they were — an unused pair of steel-toed hiking boots in a petite size 6, all for the modest sum of

\$3. Thus began our journey together — me and my boots. We were obviously meant to be.

These old boots have walked many a weary mile in the execution of hard work and adventure. They were fearless and, by default, made me fearless, too. I have always felt empowered in these old boots, like I could conquer the world. I become a warrior and show no fear even when faced with daunting tasks.

I can remember demolishing rotting walls and pulling apart decrepit joists, extracting moldy asbestos insulation and digging postholes in the rockiest of terrain. I recall replacing ceilings and handling a variety of power tools. These old boots have been muddied, saturated, covered with sawdust and dry-wall dust, paint-splattered and battered. And with every adventure, they came out with just a little more character.

These old boots tell a story. They are a reflection of the best part of me — the part who is willing to give to others, to sacrifice and work hard to improve the lives of people in need.

When I look at these boots, I have to smile. The



Old hiking boots like these have a lot of miles and adventures on them.

long days put in while wearing these old boots resulted in many aches and pains and blisters and scrapes. But mostly, long days in these boots resulted in a joy that is nearly unmatched. It is a happiness that comes in generosity.

The best part is that I know our adventures will continue. There are more houses to repair, more snow to remove, more gardens to till, miles and miles of ground to cover. Together. Me and my old boots.

We await 2021 and better times. How about you? Ready to break new ground in the new year? Just don your favorite footwear and make some strides!

A happy and healthy and safe New Year to you all!



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TECHNOLOGY

Pennsylvania to use Padbots to connect with older adults

MediaNews Group

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging announced that the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman has incorporated two Padbots as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance communication with residents in long-term care facilities.

Padbots are mobile robots that utilize a smartphone or tablet attached to a wheeled base. They are designed to safely connect ombudsmen with residents via video who may not be able to adequately correspond or who do not have their own communication devices.

The Padbots, dubbed “Addie the Advocate” and “Pete the PEERbot,” are part of a pilot program launched during the COVID-19 emergency. Ombudsmen control the Padbots’ movements and their faces are projected on a screen to allow personal, private interaction with residents without assistance from facility staff.

“Addie and Pete have been great additions to our ombudsmen’s arsenal,” said the Department of Aging’s State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Margaret Barajas. “They really have allowed us to go into a facility safely and efficiently to connect with residents when face-to-face contact has not been permitted due to the ongoing pandemic.”

“Our ombudsmen have received very positive feedback on Addie and Pete so far. They brought smiles to



Robert Torres, Pennsylvania Secretary of Aging

peoples’ faces and helped to lighten the mood of interactions that we have had with residents.”

The pilot program for the Padbots launched in Dauphin County, and the devices were purchased with funding from the CARES Act. The goal is to get two Padbots in each of the six regions of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

“The COVID-19 emergency has prompted the Department of Aging to come up with unique ways to continue serving older Pennsylvanians, whether they still live in their homes or in a long-term care facility,” said Secretary of Aging Robert Torres. “Technology has proven to be more essential than ever, and these Padbots are just another example of how we can remain on the front lines in helping our vulnerable pop-

ulations while keeping everyone safe.

“I am pleased with the positive results that Addie and Pete have produced for the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, and I look forward to seeing these Padbots making their way across the commonwealth and reaching more residents in long-term care facilities.”

The program is partnering with TechOWL, a part of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, to provide these Padbots as an option for facility visits. TechOWL will provide needed guidance and on-going support for proposed in-person and virtual activities, particularly with the increasing cases of COVID-19.

Learn more about Pennsylvania’s Ombudsman Services at www.aging.pa.gov/aging-services/Pages/Ombudsman.



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SENIOR LIFE

New neighbors at Daylesford Crossing literally on the same page



COURTESY OF DAYLESFORD CROSSING

Carl Bruhns, left, and David Bosniack are neighbors at Daylesford Crossing with a lot in common.

Daylesford Crossing

David Bosniack and his wife, Eve, moved from Scotch Plains, N.J., to Daylesford Crossing in Tredyfrin Township, Chester County, in August to be closer to family. Shortly after moving in, they realized their new neighbors, Carl and Nancy

Bruhns, also had roots up I-95.

As they got to know each other, six degrees of separation would become more like six inches.

David and Carl are the same age. Both were raised in the Bronx, N.Y., and both graduated from DeWitt Clinton, an all-boys high school at the time with an

enrollment of about 4,000.

Nancy still had that high school yearbook and, after checking the 1950 "Clintonian," found that their senior portraits appeared on the same page.

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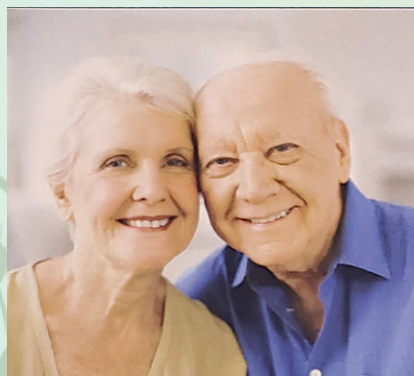
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FINANCES

With the new year comes a chance to begin anew

By Ryan Daniels

Maybe 2020 wasn't the picture-perfect year one might have imagined. But, it was the perfect metaphor to highlight key elements of financial planning.

From changes to budgets to job loss and market crashes, 2020 tested the fortitude of even the most financially savvy among us. The good news is as the New Year approaches, it brings an opportunity to begin anew.

Perhaps the March Madness that led to the great toilet paper shortage left you stranded. Now I'm not suggesting you need a shopping cart filled to the ceiling, but preparedness is important. Financially, you should have two emergency funds.

- The first: \$2000 to cover an expense such as car tires or a furnace repair. You don't want to have to use credit for these expenses and end up paying hundreds or more in interest payments.

- The second: three to six months of living expenses (bare bones, no cable or fancy seafood dinners) in case of a job loss or major medical emergency leaves you unable to work. This is one of the biggest lessons learned for many during 2020. It's better to have and not need than to need and not have.



Ryan Daniels

Did the graph on your retirement savings statement look like the plans for the newest thrill-seeking roller coaster? Probably, but hopefully you stayed course and rode the roller coaster back to the top. The March market crash is nothing new. It was nothing more than a new protagonist for the speculators on the news to craft a story around to boost ratings.

Remember, no one can predict the market, but historically, the market has always gone up, down, up, down and back up again. I guess enough time passes between the last "crash" and the latest downturn where it can feel like the world is coming to an end.

For many, when the market crashed in March, they made a mad dash to the nearest exit, missing opportunities to regain their losses or add to their savings in the follow-

ing months. As 2021 approaches, make sure you have a financial coach on your side that reminds you of the basics, takes the emotion out of decision making and keeps you focused on your strategy even during the most volatile of times.

Forget the fancy charts and graphs and the terminology that makes you feel like you're in a medical school classroom. A good financial coach/advisor will keep it simple, give you confidence and guide you through the latest broadcast of the Financial Fear newscast.

If 2020 wasn't the picture-perfect year, it's time to start anew in 2021. Let's take the lessons learned, prepare for challenges and plan for success.

Starting anew is an opportunity to regroup, refresh and take a step from where you are to where you want to go. Financially, assess the strength of your plan. Make sure you have a workable budget, ample emergency funds and a simple to follow strategy for retirement savings.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and much success in the New Year!

Ryan Daniels is a financial coach/advisor. He is a U.S. Army Veteran who enjoys continuing to serve, "Supporting communities by building financially strong families." Visit his website at www.RFinances.com.

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EATING WELL!

Eating well needs to be a high priority for every older adult. Nutrient-rich foods like seafood, beans, nuts, and fruits should be what are reached for at grocery stores and restaurants since they are high in vitamins and minerals. Pay attention to portion sizes, and try not to eat while distracted, like in front of the television or another screen. If you live alone, it is enjoyable to make a habit of dining often with a friend. Stay away from foods and drinks that are high in sugar, and be sure to study the nutrition labels on packaging. Making extra and freezing portions is a great idea for the days when you don't want to cook.

As you age, your metabolism slows, your senses weaken, and you're more likely to develop chronic conditions. Giving your body the right nutrients and maintaining a healthy weight can help you stay active and independent. You'll also spend less time and money at the doctor. BARCLAY FRIENDS provides skilled nursing and rehabilitation care for older adults. To learn more, please call 610-696-5211. With Faith Woodward, Director of Admissions and Marketing at Barclay Friends—to learn more, please call 610-696-5211 or visit our website, <http://bf.kendal.org/>.

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