

2017  
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# the Chamber Chatter

THE MEMBER NEWS & INFORMATION RESOURCE



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# From the **PRESIDENT**

Dear Readers,

At The Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce we are devoted to serving the businesses, entrepreneurs and consumers in our thriving local communities. I could not be more excited for the opportunity to bring the news and matters of the Chamber to the readers of the Daily Local News.

Connecting our members to the community is one of the chief tenets of our non-profit organization. The nearly 700 Chamber members span from retailers to restaurants, artists to lawyers, and just about everything in between. They are at the heart of our robust local economies.

The Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce recognizes that a thriving business community is an integral part of the outstanding quality of life in the Greater West Chester Region. Due to that GWCC advocates for the following principles - Improved Tax Structure & Local Economic Vitality; Improved Infrastructure, including Transit; Training, Education & Workforce



Development. In order to support this mission, the Chamber has made it a priority to educate both the full Chamber Membership as well as the Legislative Delegation of issues of importance.

Professional development and networking opportunities provided by the Chamber include panel and roundtable discussions, business card exchanges, open houses and networking luncheons. This September we'll once again bring the world-class training course Disney Institute to Chester County, providing attendees with invaluable techniques and strategies for business

development and optimization.

As community members ourselves, it's our great joy at the Chamber to produce the annual QVC West Chester Christmas Parade and Benchmark Twilight Cycling Classic, hallmark Chester County events for which we draw on the support of scores of local businesses and volunteers, as well as tens of thousands of community spectators.

Other upcoming Chamber events include the Gallery Walk, 10 Grand Club offering a chance to win \$10,000 and Quest for the Chamber Cup Golfing Outing, all scheduled for this May. For more information on our many programs and events, please visit us at [GreaterWestChester.com](http://GreaterWestChester.com).

We're thrilled to now partner with the Daily Local in sharing with you, our community, the many exciting happenings of the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce.

Sincerely,

Mark Yoder  
President  
Greater West Chester Chamber



## CHAMBER STAFF

Mark Yoder, *President*  
Dave Fairman, *Director of Membership*  
Bethany Kopp, *Event & Program Manager*  
Jeff Zajac, *Marketing & Communications Manager*

## CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Debi Friedmann <i>Blue Dog Printing &amp; Design</i>	Matt Shea <i>West Chester University</i>	

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Leigh Green of Leigh Green Copywriting • Andy Hachadorian of Cutanea Life Sciences

Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce, 119 North High Street, West Chester, PA 19380  
tel 610.696.4046 | fax 610.696.9110 | [www.GreaterWestChester.com](http://www.GreaterWestChester.com)

# Spring **EVENTS CALENDAR**

See full details of Chamber events at [GreaterWestChester.com](http://GreaterWestChester.com)

**Thursday, March 16, 2017**

**5:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**Food, Massages & Photography**

Zukin Realty knows how to host! Food and beverage provided by restaurants throughout town, Optimal Massage will be offering free chair massages, and your chance to win an updated headshot photo courtesy of Photography by Carol and Ingrid.  
121 East Gay Street, West Chester  
Free for members; \$10 for non-members  
RSVP is appreciated

**Wednesday, March 29, 2017**

**7:45 AM - 9:00 AM**

PNC Bank and The Master's Baker are hosting a morning of coffee and contacts. Please join us at the branch on West Chester Pike and start your day reconnecting with fellow chamber members, meeting new guests and enjoy beautiful and delicious treats

courtesy of The Master's Baker.

1599 West Chester Pike, West Chester  
Free for members; \$10 for non-members  
RSVP is appreciated

**Thursday, April 20, 2017**

**5:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

Looking for new office space? Pillar Real Estate Advisors is hosting at an available property in downtown West Chester. If not, come for the food and drinks provided by Kildare's Irish Pub! Another unique spot to have a party or maybe your future office!  
18 W. Gay Street, West Chester  
Free for members; \$10 for non-members  
RSVP is appreciated

**Wednesday, April 26, 2017**

**5:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**Women's Executive Roundtable - Making Your Comfort Zone WORK for You: An Alternative Approach to Handling Risk and Uncertainty**

Attorney, real estate investor and self-

described "risk-averse entrepreneur"

Jennifer Walker offers her unique perspective on managing personal and professional uncertainty without losing your sanity.  
\$55 Members; \$65 Non-Members  
RSVP is required

**Friday, May 5, 2017**

**5:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

**Spring Gallery Walk**

A popular spring tradition! Visit more than 40 one-night-only art shows in downtown West Chester on the First Friday of May. Bring a group of friends and make a night of it!  
Free to attend

**Friday, May 12, 2017**

**7:00 PM - 10:00 PM**

**10 Grand Club**

Join us for the 12th Annual 10 Grand Club on Friday, May 12! Your \$200 ticket includes a 1

in 200 chance of winning \$10,000 PLUS Dinner & Drinks!

*The American Helicopter Museum*  
1220 American Blvd., West Chester  
Contact the Chamber or visit  
[GreaterWestChester.com](http://GreaterWestChester.com) to purchase tickets

**Monday, May 22, 2017**

**10:00 AM - 7:00 PM**

**Quest for the Chamber Cup Golf Outing**

The Quest for the Chamber Cup held annually is an opportunity to play golf with area leaders and help support the Chamber's Education Foundation Scholarship Program.  
*Radley Run Country Club*  
1100 Country Club Road, West Chester  
Early Bird (until April 1) - Individual - \$175  
Early Bird (until April 1) - Foursome - \$700  
Contact the Chamber or visit  
[GreaterWestChester.com](http://GreaterWestChester.com) to purchase tickets

# Chamber **ADVOCACY**



## Governor Wolf Releases Innovative Budget Plan

Governor Tom Wolf delivered his 2017-2018 fiscal budget to the General Assembly during the first week of February. This ambitious budget seeks to save \$2 billion in tax payer money by merging departments together, modernizing the workforce, and offering new, early retirement programs.

Also, the Chamber is excited to see the proposal does not include any broad-based taxes, such as a personal income tax increase or expansion of sales tax. However, the Chamber will continue to analyze and monitor some of the proposed new taxes to see how it impacts our members. This includes the Governor's plan for a 6.5 percent severance tax on natural gas extracts, changes to Corporate Net Income (CNI) Tax rate, expansion of the insurance premiums tax to most previously exempt insurance entities, and elimination of exemptions in the sales and use tax for specialty software and computer services, prepared food sold to airlines, aircraft maintenance and repair and business storage.

In addition, as reported by PA Legislative Services, Gov. Wolf is proposing to lower all available tax credits by \$100 million by combining them into a block grant "to focus these initiatives on those credits that have demonstrated the greatest return in new business investment, education access, and community development."

As the budget process unfolds, the Chamber of Commerce is committed to continued work with the Governor and our Legislative Delegation to support pro-business policies which will go a long way towards making our area and state a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

## Dear West Chester Area School District Community Members and Parents:

I'm extremely concerned about state legislation that's about to be proposed that would completely change the way public schools are funded in Pennsylvania. The plan would leave schools dramatically underfunded by eliminating property taxes and replacing them with increases in personal income and sales tax. If this plan goes through, our school district will be facing many cuts in programs and staff.

Please take a moment to read the summary of this bill and its impact on our schools. Senator Dinniman is listed as a co-sponsor. I have written a letter to Senator Dinniman and other lawmakers outlining my concerns and the details of my concerns are outlined in that letter. I have included the letter below.

I am asking that you contact and send a similar note to your legislators whose contact information can be found at [www.psba.org/legislative-advocacy](http://www.psba.org/legislative-advocacy). Feel free to send them this letter and tell them your thoughts about this bill. Don't hesitate to call them, as well. The more people they hear from, the more likely we are to get this stopped.

Property tax and school funding certainly need reform, but this plan is not an acceptable solution. I'm asking for your help to stop this legislation in its tracks. It sounds trite, but truly our children's future is at stake.

Thank you,  
*Dr. Jim Scanlon,*  
*Superintendent*

Dear Senator Dinniman,

I am writing to express my extreme concern for any legislation that would eliminate the school property tax as a revenue source for school districts. Senate Bill 76, which was presented to the Senate in the fall and failed by one vote, would have eliminated the ability for local school boards to collect a property tax and replace it with a school funding formula determined by the state legislature.

I am anticipating that some version of SB 76 will be introduced into the upcoming Legislative session, outlining a plan to replace the school property tax with an increase in the personal income tax (from 3.07% to 4.95%) and an increase in state sales tax from 6% to 7%, with new items being taxed such as clothing and food. The bill would guarantee the same funding for school districts in 2017-18 as they currently collect in property tax during the 2016-17 year. However, it would cap increases at that rate, except for cost of living. Cost of living increases simply do NOT cover the mandated expenses that our public school system faces.

This new funding system would leave public schools dramatically under-funded and would force them to cut programs and staff.

The West Chester Area School District gets a quarter of its property tax revenue from businesses. This new plan would eliminate those funds, which amounted to \$41 million this past year alone.

The new plan would allow school districts to go to voter referendum for capital improvements but not for operating expenses. Within a few short years, we will simply not be able to operate at our current levels, and the quality of our educational system will dramatically suffer.

We work very hard in our school district

to spend wisely and control our finances. Six years ago, we formed a community budget task force to analyze our revenue and spending. We have implemented numerous cost-saving measures and continue to scrutinize our budget.

As we plan our budget for 2017-18, we must cover the following increased costs that the new plan simply will not fund:

- \$4.6 million in special education costs that we incur due to a federally unfunded mandate called Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
- \$1.4 million in additional state mandated costs for pension increases
- \$700,000 to implement a full day kindergarten program, which was strongly supported by our community two years ago for implementation in fall, 2017. We have been planning financially within the Act 1 limits to fund this very important program for our children.

▪ Cash flow schedules for renovations of an elementary school that is nearing 60 years old. We have been planning financially within the Act 1 limits to make renovations slowly and over time to keep our 16 school buildings safe.

If this funding formula is enacted, I don't see how we will be able to implement the programs for which we have carefully planned.

Our district has the lowest millage rate in Chester County. We have worked very hard with our community to provide an excellent education and spend dollars wisely. The additional income tax and sales tax will cost our residents significantly more than the property tax they pay. I don't see this as a viable option for fair funding of schools nor do I see this as a viable option for our community.

No one debates the fact that property tax and school funding need a closer look. How-

ever, I have seen no analysis of what has worked well in other states, and no attempt to provide an adequate funding source for public education, perhaps our most precious commodity.

I can't strongly enough express how much I oppose this plan, and I will ask my community to join me in that opposition. It is not the right thing for our children.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

*James R. Scanlon,*  
*Superintendent of Schools*

CC:

*The Honorable Tom Wolf, via fax*

*The Honorable Mario Scavello,*

*mscavello@pasen.gov*

*The Honorable Mike Stack,*

*Ltgvostack@pa.gov*

*The Honorable Judith Schwank,*

*SenatorSchwank@pasenate.com*

*The Honorable Jay Costa,*

*jcosta@pasenate.com*

*The Honorable Scott Wagner,*

*swagner@pasen.gov*

*The Honorable Jake Corman, via fax*

*The Honorable John Yudichak,*

*yudichak@pasenate.com*

*The Honorable David Argall,*

*dargall@pasen.gov*

*The Honorable Thomas Killion,*

*tkillion@pasen.gov*

*The Honorable Lisa Boscola,*

*boscola@pasenate.com*

*The Honorable Thomas McGarrigle,*

*tmcgarrigle@pasen.gov*

*The Honorable Mike Folmer,*

*mfolmer@pasen.gov*



# Hometown Newspaper Partners with Regional Chamber of Commerce



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The Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce and the Daily Local News have joined forces to produce and distribute the Chamber's bi-monthly newsletter, it was announced.

The Chamber Chatter, a bi-monthly newsletter produced by the staff of the Greater West Chester Chamber, will now make its way to more than 17,000 readers in Chester County, one of Pa.'s most affluent communities.

The Chamber will continue to provide all of the

same content it has in the past and the Daily Local will take care of its delivery meaning that the current recipient list of about 800 will grow to more than 17,000.

Chamber officials said that since both organizations focus on supporting local businesses and the community, it was a natural fit.

"We were very excited when the Daily Local agreed to work with the Greater West Chester Chamber to present our newsletter, The Chamber Chatter, to their readership," said Chamber President Mark Yoder. "We think this is a great partnership between a fantastic paper and our regional Chamber of Commerce."

(The Daily Local News has been a long-time Chamber member and supporter)

The newspaper's advertising leadership agreed.

"It's wonderful for us to be able to partner with the

chamber," said Daily Local Sales Director Jen Batog. "Distributing the chamber newsletter through the Daily Local allows many more people to get important information about businesses and business events in Chester County. Our goal is to help businesses get their message out to customers and the chamber's goal is to help businesses succeed. This partnership is the perfect way for all of us to achieve our goals. We appreciate the opportunity to work with the chamber on this project."

Production and distribution under the new agreement is set to begin with the first issue - the March/April issue - to be distributed around the first week of March. Subsequent issues - May/June, July/August, September/October and November/December issues will be distributed midweek around the first week of the publication date.

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## Understanding The Chamber's My Benefit Advisor Program

Many employers struggle with understanding and getting the most out of their employee benefits. As a solution for its members, The Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce has recently rolled out the My Benefit Advisor (MBA) program. MBA focuses on four key components – consulting, management, enrollment, and compliance.

USI Affinity remains a close partner with The Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce and is the endorsed administrator of this new offering, providing members with first-class service and support. USI Affinity is part of a top-10 insurance brokerage firm with over 75 years of experience and is the endorsed broker for more than 500 associations while partnering with 15,000 member-businesses.

The experts at My Benefit Advisor can guide you through the entire process of obtaining quality medical, dental, and vision coverage. MBA is always up-to-date on the latest market trends, research, and best practices to help you customize your benefits program.

As a result of the ever-changing status of the Affordable Care Act and health care reform, there is a great deal of confusion around health insurance and employee benefits. Our experts provide insightful guidance, in easy-to-understand resources, throughout the year so you can make informed decisions.

There are many more advantages to the MBA program and we invite you to learn more at [gwcc.mybenefitadvisor.com](http://gwcc.mybenefitadvisor.com). You can also speak directly to an MBA expert by contacting Jim Pitts at (610) 537-1377 or [jim.pitts@usi.com](mailto:jim.pitts@usi.com).



### ADVERTISING RATES & SPECIFICATIONS



## Advertise in the Chamber Chatter



**1 Issue**  
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**Full Page Ad**

9.89" (w) x 9.6" (h) color.....\$380.00.....\$1,026.00.....\$1,824.00

Rates listed above include:

- The Chamber Chatter print edition (circulation 17,500)
- Digital flip book on [DailyLocal.com](http://DailyLocal.com) and [GreaterWestChester.com](http://GreaterWestChester.com)

**ADVERTISING:**

Contact Arlene at Daily Local News  
610-235-2634 | [amcgranaghan@dailylocal.com](mailto:amcgranaghan@dailylocal.com)

**EDITORIAL:**

Contact the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce  
610-696-4046 | [info@gwcc.org](mailto:info@gwcc.org)

*The Chamber Chatter is a bi-monthly publication with a circulation of 17,500. Editorial content and advertising is limited to Chamber members. Editorial coverage does not imply or indicate Chamber or Daily Local News endorsement of members' business, product or services.*

**ISSUE DEADLINE**

- Jan/Feb issue .....DEC. 15
- Mar/Apr issue..... FEB. 15
- May/June issue..... APR. 15
- Jul/Aug issue.....JUN. 15
- Sep/Oct issue .....AUG. 15
- Nov/Dec issue .....OCT. 15

Preferred file format: PDF  
(high resolution TIF and/or JPG is acceptable)



# The Chamber Welcomes **NEW MEMBERS**

**Angelo's Cleaning**

www.AngelosCarpet.com  
Cleaning Services

**Bartlett Tree Experts**

www.bartlett.com/locations/West-Chester-PA  
Tree Services

**Carol Oliveto**

www.carol-oliveto.squarespace.com  
Photography

**Chester Valley Golf Club**

www.ChesterValleyGC.org  
Country/Golf Club

**Common Cents Planning**

www.commoncentsplanning.com  
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**Exude, Inc.**

www.exudeinc.com  
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www.FarmersAgent.com/JAllred  
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www.jtrsolutions.com  
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**The Mainliners Men's Acapella Chorus**

www.mainliners.org  
Entertainment

**The Movesmith, LLC**

www.themovesmith.com  
Transportation

**Peloton Cold Brew Coffee**

www.PelotonColdBrew.com  
Food & Beverages

**Precision Realty Group**

www.precisionrg.com  
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**ProCare Property Services**

www.ProCarePropertyServices.us  
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**Spence Cafe**

www.spence.cafe  
Restaurant

**Valley Forge Captive Advisors**

www.vfcadvisors.com  
Insurance

**Velvet Hair Studio**

www.velvethair.studio  
Beauty Services

## Chamber Membership ANNIVERSARIES

Please help us congratulate these businesses celebrating milestone anniversaries who renewed their membership with the Greater West Chester Chamber in December 2016 and January 2017.

**25 Year ANNIVERSARY**

Pagani and Wylam, CPA  
Dusty Rose Cleaning Service

**20 Year ANNIVERSARY**

Englund's Apparel for Men  
Jon Ivins / United Real Estate

**15 Year ANNIVERSARY**

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**10 Year ANNIVERSARY**

SERVPRO of West Chester  
Pietro's Prime

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ecoservices, LLC  
Rams Head Bar & Grill  
Media One Products, LLC  
Children's Country Week Association  
Saints Peter & Paul School



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## HOARDING OR COLLECTING?

By Jeannie McGinn

We used to tease my mom that she was a QVC hoarder because she used to buy and buy and buy to the point that three spare bedrooms would be piled high with QVC boxes and most were unopened. When we would ask her about this she'd always say, "It was a terrific Today's Special Value." Since she has limited mobility, she thought it was a good idea to have plenty of "gifts" on hand. While this is not exactly a Reality TV-worthy hoarding story, our family faced an uphill battle getting this to stop. Sorry QVC, we had to cut her off from making those 2am calls. While this is a light-hearted example, hoarding can be a serious situation impacting someone's health, safety and family harmony.

Hoarding is categorized as a biohazard due to the substances that might be found

in your home, apartment, or commercial building. During hoarding situations there could be a wide range of things you could find from house supplies and magazines to hazardous materials and animal waste or remains. A hoarding cleanup job may include not just the removal of items, but also the recovery and restoration of useful and valuable objects. Always check to see if your insurance company will cover this situation or if it will be a self-pay.

If you are property manager, a real estate agent, estate lawyer, banker or a concerned family member here are some tips to keep in mind. The most important thing is that the "hoarder" lives in a safe environment. If the individual has been moved out of the property permanently, getting the house cleaned out cleaned

up and back on the market becomes the next necessary steps.

### Hoarding Tips:

- Hoarders see objects having significant value
- Often begins during adolescence around the age of 13 or 14
- Often environmentally related
- Depression is often related
- Most hoarders have Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), anxiety or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Consequences are more than a messy home- unsanitary living environment now exist
- Increased risk of fires for occupants and their neighbors
- Accumulation of objects
- Blocked exits
- Unsafe cooking and heating environment – 39% of fires in hoarding homes result from cooking
- Safety and health risks to people, animals, and the community

There are very specific cleanup and restoration procedures to follow since hoarding is categorized as a biohazard due to the substances that might be found in the home, apartment, or commercial building. Certified technicians should follow a specific contents management process and then move on to the deodorization of the scene to eliminate any and all existing odors that could have come from a number of sources. If more cleanup is necessary like, carpet cleaning, mold removal, or water damage; a reputable cleanup & restoration company will handle the reconstruction efforts also and continue to communicate with you throughout the process.

If you have inherited or are struggling with a hoarding situation, or simply want some help with your mundane spring

cleaning, help is available.

*Jeannie McGinn is the Director of Sales & Marketing for SERVPRO of West Chester. SERVPRO of West Chester is certified in handling hoarding or bio-hazardous clean-ups, carpets, drapes, blinds, upholstery, dryer vent and HVAC vent cleaning and much more. If it's messy, dirty, stinky, smoky, or plain disgusting, call us to support your residential and/or commercial property needs. Reach us 24/7 at 610-692-8444 or at jeannie@servprowestchester.com or SERVPROWestChesterPa.com.*



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## FIX THE HOLES IN YOUR CHILDREN'S 'SAFETY NET'

By Jennifer H. Walker

If you're a parent, you spend a lot of time thinking about safety. Your goal is to make sure your children are safe and protected, even – or perhaps especially – when you can't be with them. The protective measures you put in place and the life lessons you pass along to your children act as a "safety net" for those times when you're not there to catch them:

- Before your child begins to crawl, you "baby-proof" your house by installing electrical outlet covers, placing edge guards on table corners, securing utility cabinets, shortening window-blind cords, etc. Even if your child never does try to stick a fork in that electrical outlet, having the covers just in case gives you much-needed peace of mind.

- Before you leave your child with a babysitter, even for just a few hours, chances are you've done some background checking to make sure the sitter can be

trusted with your precious little one. You've probably also prepared a list of instructions a bit more detailed than "Food and soda are in the fridge, don't set the house on fire before we get home."

- As your children grow, your focus on keeping them safe evolves and you transition to teaching them how to protect themselves out in the real world. You provide lessons on looking both ways before crossing the road, not talking to strangers, internet safety, and not texting while driving, to name a few.

Unfortunately, many parents leave huge holes in their children's safety nets by not choosing legal guardians for the children. The same loving parents who provide detailed instructions when leaving their children with a sitter for a few hours often have little or no planning in place for what would happen if they never came home.

Like most parents, you proba-

bly find this scenario painful to think about. However, your children's long-term safety and well-being is far too important to be left to chance (or a judge you've never met) just because you don't want to think about it! It is YOUR responsibility as a parent to put the necessary plans in place, just in case. Here are a few important points to keep in mind when choosing guardians for your children:

1. Where there's a Will, there's a way. Your Will should name the people you choose as your minor children's permanent guardians in the event of your death. It is important that you formally document this! You also can (and should) name backup guardian(s) in case your first choice is unable to serve.

2. Plan for Incapacity. Many people name guardians in a Will, but the Will only goes into effect upon death. Because of this, you should also prepare a separate

Nomination of Guardian document in the event your children need a permanent guardian due to your suffering a serious injury or illness.

3. Plan for Emergencies. PA law allows parents to name "Standby Guardians" who are authorized to take immediate and temporary custody of the children in an emergency. Naming "Standby Guardians" can protect your children from being taken into custody by authorities while the situation is figured out.

4. Leave Instructions. Would you leave your children with a friend or family member for 2 weeks without leaving any instructions at all??? Of course not. Take the time to write down (or record, or video) your thoughts on how you would want your children raised and cared for in your absence. What traditions do you hope they continue? What are your thoughts on education, money, religion?

What lessons and values do you want passed on to your children? What should the Guardians know about each child? The more detail, the better. Just start slowly, do a little at a time, and update or edit as time goes by.

*Jennifer H. Walker is the founder of Peak Legal Group Ltd., an Estate Planning and Probate law firm in West Chester. 610-580-4689|www.peaklegallgroup.com.*



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# CAN I DEDUCT THAT?

By Kathy Wileczek

It's tax season again and as an accountant who prepares taxes, I work with my clients to make sure that they take advantage of all the deductions available under the existing tax code. Any expense not specifically excluded by code (such as payments for illegal activities and country club dues) may be deductible. According to the Internal Revenue Service; to be deductible, a business expense must be both ordinary

**If something is used to benefit your business and you can document the reasons for it, you generally can deduct it off your business income.**

and necessary. An ordinary expense is one that is common and accepted in your trade or business. A necessary expense is one that is helpful and appropriate for your trade or business. An expense does not have to be indispensable to be considered necessary. If something is used to benefit your business and you can document the reasons for it, you generally can deduct it off your business income.

▪ Home Landscaping - Home office deductions are notoriously scrutinized, so it might surprise you that home landscaping is deductible. If you regularly meet with clients in your home office, those expenses may be a deduction.

▪ Breast Implants - While cosmetic procedures are not normally deductible, an exotic dancer successfully argued that her breast implants were a nec-

essary part of her business, and that without the implants, she would lose income to other exotic dancers.

▪ Guard Animals - If you use a guard dog or other animal to protect your property, you may be able to deduct some of the costs of caring for that guard animal. The Tax Court even allowed cat food to be deducted for a cat that was deemed necessary to a junkyard to keep it free of rats and snakes.

▪ Beer - If you are a business trying to attract customers, it might be deductible. A deduction was approved when a gas station deducted the cost of beer it used to attract customers and promote its business as a business expense.

▪ Body Oil - a professional bodybuilder who went through a lot of body oil so his muscles would glisten during competition was allowed to deduct this

as a business expense.

▪ Airplane - Rather than drive five to seven hours to check on their rental condo or be tied to the only daily commercial flight available, a couple bought their own plane. The Tax Court allowed them to deduct their condo-related trips on the aircraft, including the cost of fuel and depreciation for the portion of time used for business-related purposes, even though these costs increased their overall rental loss on the condo.

The above examples are anecdotal and do not apply to most businesses. Business owners should not be reluctant to take deductions that legitimately increase the success of the business. Make sure you get professional advice before you get too creative with your small business deductions. Saving a little now in taxes could cost you significantly more in penalties

and interest if your innovative expenses are denied.

*Kathy Wileczek, CPA, is an associate at Umbreit, Korengel & Associates, P.C., a full-service certified public accounting firm, offering a complete range of financial consulting, planning and tax services that help you run and grow your company most efficiently. kwileczek@ukacpa.com | 610-444-3222 | www.ukacpa.com.*



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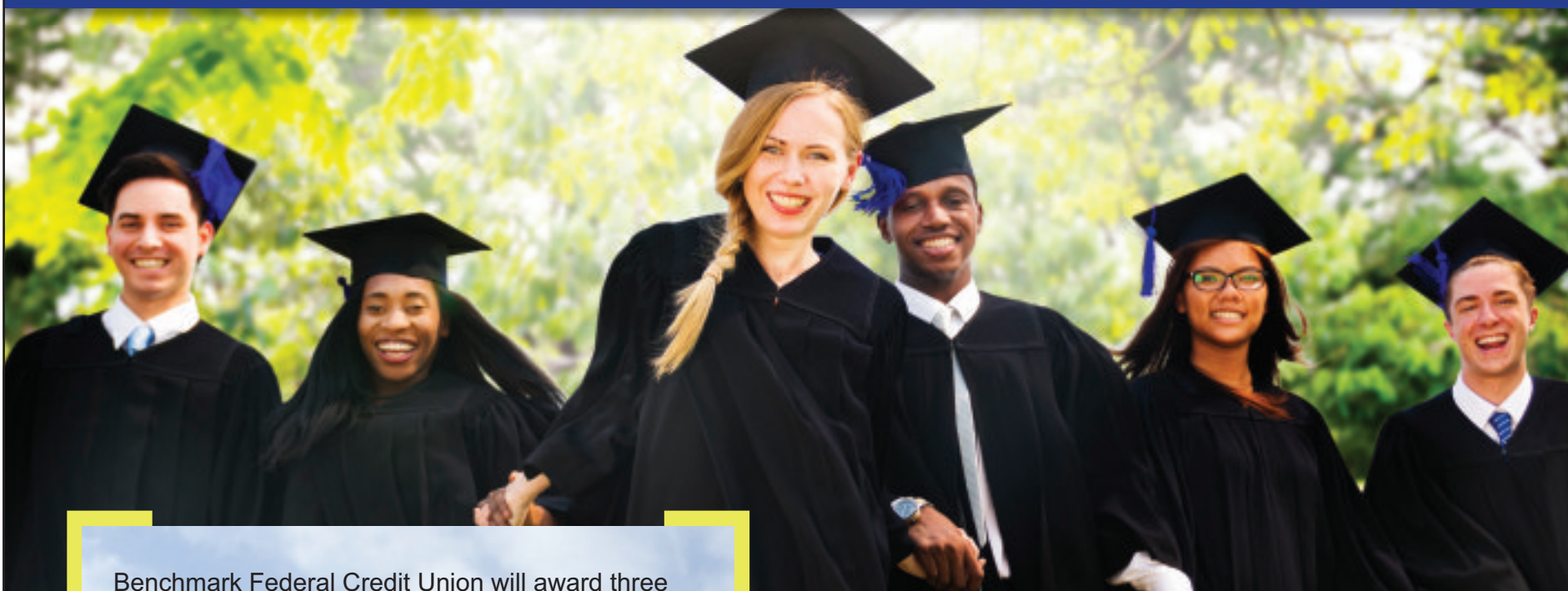
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