



VOLUME 2

ISSUE 5



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This year is going to be twice the fun. We celebrate both our chapter and state banquet inductions.

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Silver medals and sharing is caring updates.

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Saying goodbye/Out and About

A MESSAGE FROM JIM

SPRINGING INTO ACTION

Spring has sprung and we are at full throttle preparing for all that 2026 is already throwing our way. Banquet 2026 is already in preparations. The class has been selected; the scholars are close to being finalized and the special award winners have been named. In addition, we are honored to announce that two of our chapter athletes will be inducted into the PA State Hall of Fame this year. Our LCSHOF CARES program is in full swing too. Several programs have already received donations to date, and we have many other disbursements to make in the coming year. This CARES program has helped transform our Hall of Fame from a place that simply honors the past into one that actively shapes a better present and future. We are more than a showcase of shiny things (by the way, we did medal again this year). The program allows us to act as role models in real time. The program is working as many of our athletes are giving back in their own communities. You can find their stories here, as well as stories about some who continue to celebrate personal successes and others who are gone but not forgotten. Read on folks. -Jim

WELCOME CLASS OF 2026

On June 7th at Mohegan Pennsylvania, we will welcome our Class of 2026. Ten of the area's best will represent ten different sports. Members of the Hall of Fame Class of 2026 are: Pittston Area soccer/basketball player Allie Barber; Penn State University golf coach, Ed Keil; Wyoming Area Field hockey player and coach Bree Bednarski; Crestwood wrestler Joe Kemmerer; WVW swimmer Karen Krysiewski Day; College Misericordia cross-country runner Frank Redmond IV; Wilkes University coach and long-time athletic director Addy Malatesta; GAR and professional basketball player Bob Sura; Pittston Area and College Misericordia tennis player Brianna Pizzano; and former Wilkes University, now Indiana Pacers sports and marketing director Ed White III.



**Luzerne County
Sports Hall of Fame**
John Louis Popple Chapter



PA SPORTS HOF 2026

TWO BANQUET CELEBRATIONS THIS YEAR



This year we will be celebrating not just our chapter banquet, but also the induction of two athletes who have been selected best in the state. Kelsey Kolojechick and Ben Johnson have been selected as members of this year's PA Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2026. Kelsey, who presently is the head field hockey coach at Bucknell

University, will be inducted as a field hockey phenom. A graduate of Wyoming Seminary, Kelsey was a member of two state championship teams, three district championship teams and one undefeated team in 2006. The local papers named her Player of the Year in 2008. Kelsey was named both All State and All American. In 2009, she was named Athlete of the Year by the National Field Hockey Coaches Association. She matriculated to UNC where she never missed a start for four years. As a freshman she was named Rookie of the Year on a squad that won the National Championship. She was the first player in UNC history to be named First Team All American all four years. In 2015, Kelsey made the US National women's team and competed on the USA Olympic team at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Prior to her Olympic debut, Kelsey played in the Pan American Games, Canada, The Champions Challenge, Scotland, and The World League 2, Brazil.



Also honored at the state banquet will be Ben Johnson, a member of our inaugural hall of fame class in 1985. Ben hails from Plymouth. Ben, who was once labeled "the world's fastest human" was introduced to track and field at Plymouth High School. Johnson went on to shatter the Pennsylvania state scholastic dash records by winning state titles in the 100 yards (9.8) and 220 yards (21.4) dashes. He also won the state long jump title. He held district 100-yard records in 1931-32-33 and was a state PIAA Champion in 1932. After graduation, Johnson continued his education and track and field career at Columbia University. Johnson clocked a 49-second quarter on the mile relay that won the Penn Relays freshman race and "The Columbia Comet" was born. Competing against the biggest names in track and field, including Jesse Owens, Ben matched Owens' 6.6 second record in the 60-meter AAU Championships. Ben missed the 1936 Olympic games due to injury but continued to compete successfully in the US and abroad. His record setting performances in the 100, 220, and the broad jump stand first by any athlete of the 20th century.

SPECIAL AWARDS 2026

MEDIA, TRIBENDIS, AND FALCONE AWARD WINNERS



This year's special award winners include a co-founder and longtime sports editor at the Citizen's Voice newspaper. A Hazleton Area Field hockey coach who battled courageously on and off the sidelines. And the co-founder and president of Patriots Cove, an organization designed to help veteran's and first responders through restorative outdoor experiences. Neil Corbett, who also volunteered for our hall for many years, will accept the Media Award. Mary

Kelly, a cancer survivor and coach will be awarded the Tracey Tribendis Profile of Courage Award. While Jeff Swire will be receiving the Sam Falcone Community Service Award. These three recipients represent the best of the best of our community. We look forward to celebrating them at the banquet on June 7th at Mohegan Pennsylvania.

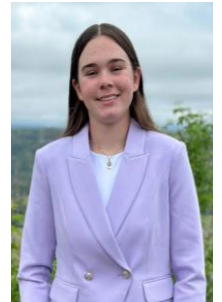
LCSHOF SCHOLARS 2026

BLASI, BLY, AND MAYERNIK



The winners of our Carol A. Hurley Scholarship Awards have been selected for 2026. Tucker Blasi graduated with a class rank of 3 out of 41 students at the Sullivan County School District, where he was a 5-sport athlete. Tucker attained recognition as a District ROY-League Champion and MVP. This multi-award letterwinner was a leader on the field and in the classroom. He received the Larry Kiess Leadership Award. He will continue his academic and athletic

pursuits at Penn State University - Harrisburg. Addisyn Bly graduated with a class rank of 1 out of 93 students at the Wyalusing Valley School District. She captained the Soccer team and was a letterwoman in Soccer, Softball, and Football. Addisyn was an FBLA Class Officer and a National Honor Society member. She received the Future Medical Leaders, Women in STEM, and Athletic Association Awards. She will continue her academic and athletic pursuits at the University of North Carolina.



Joseph Mayernik graduated with a grade point average (non-weighted GPA) of 4.0 from MMI Preparatory School, where he captained the Golf and Tennis teams. This 3-sport athlete also gained recognition from the Science, English, and Mathematics National Honor Societies. He garnered awards at the regional and state levels in FBLA and PA Jr. Academy of Science competitions. Being an active member of social, community, and volunteer organizations has helped him develop a sense of servant leadership. Joseph will matriculate to Bucknell University to continue his education.



LCSHOF CARES

STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY

We've been busy. It's only April and already we have given our support to five different causes in a variety of ways. To date we have provided financial assistance to the Hazleton Integration Project for services and programming. We purchased and awarded the Wyoming Valley Conference Basketball Championship trophies to the Dallas boys and the Hazleton girls. We donated groceries to the TSA workers at AVP struggling to make ends meet during the recent government shutdown. We provided monies to the Special Olympics for their Polar Bear Plunge, their bowling program, and even ate a few hoagies during Jersey Mike's Day of Giving. Finally, we provided a donation to Leadership Northeast Impact: Leadership in Education Program. The program is for local classroom teachers and guidance counselors to develop special programs designed to benefit their classroom or their entire school. There is still much more giving to be done.



Pictured above: Karel Zubris presented to the folks from the Hazleton Integration Project; Nancy Johnson and Dave Kanavich with the WVC Basketball Champions of 2026; Jim Martin, Karel Zubris, and Bill Downey donating essential groceries to TSA at the airport; Jim Martin and Randy Proctor chowing down for Special Olympics; and Jim Martin with Leadership NE Impact teachers.

CROWNING MOMENT

SILVER MEDALIST 2026



For the fifth year running, our hall of fame airport museum won a silver medal in the Times Leader Best of the Best contest for 2026. Despite our hopeful campaign of winning a gold medal, we fell a little short. But when considering the competition within the exhibit category, which includes both professional and curated efforts, our all-volunteer display garnered enough votes to win silver. The display, if you have not seen it, sits in the display cases just outside of

the TSA area. It is a one-of-a-kind visual timeline of achievement telling stories, struggles, and victories of each athlete inducted into our hall of fame. It exists to remind us of the effort, dedication, and pride it takes to succeed. It connects us to the stories of area athletes we remember and hopefully inspires our youth to dream the dream too. Our thanks to the airport for graciously granting us space. It has been a true medal winner for our hall of fame. Pictured accepting this year's award are Jack Monick, Jim Martin, and Matt Bufano.

GIVING BACK

TAYLOR DEAN KATHY HEALEY HELPING OUT



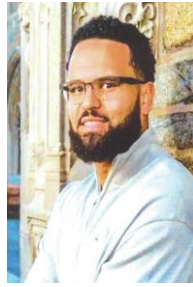
It's always nice to hear that our athletes are out in their communities doing good things for others. We would like to give a shoutout to two of our inductees who have done just that. Taylor Dean (2024) read *Dream Big Little Pig* by Kristi Yamaguchi to the kids at Ross Elementary for Read Across America. While Kathy Healey (2020) rolled up her sleeves to

assist with the first field cleanup for Challenger baseball. We love when our athletes go the extra yard to help personally in the community. By giving their time, it signals genuine care for others in a way that throwing money at something cannot. Giving time just feels more intentional. It shows that you chose to show up, not just contribute. We would like to thank these two for making it more personal and making us look good!

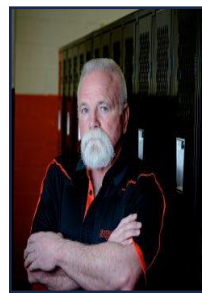


IN THE NEWS

CAMPENNI, SEXTON, WEINSTOCK



LCSHOF, Class of 2020, Julian Campenni landed a job as assistant defensive line coach with the National Football League's Los Angeles Chargers. Campenni left the Rutgers University program and headed to California to begin his work on coach Jim Harbaugh's staff. Julian, a Wyoming Area and UCONN grad was a force to be reckoned with on the field, however he traded in his pads and cleats for a whistle and clipboard and moved on to coaching. His coaching experience included a grad assistantship at Boston College, five years at Bowling Green, and two years at Rutgers. This will be the first full-time position in the National Football League for Campenni. We wish him tremendous success coaching in the big leagues.




Towanda's head wrestling coach, Bill Sexton became the winningest coach in the state this past wrestling season. Sexton is a member of our hall of fame class of 2021. With 768 wins under his belt, earned over his nearly five-decade career. Viewed as instrumental by former and current athletes, Sexton is a legend and inspiration to all. Cited by many as their biggest role model and dream coach, Bill's wrestlers describe him as the only coach they want to be coached by. Coach Sexton has no plans to stop being the winningest wrestling coach in state history anytime soon. He was quoted as saying that he is still having too much fun. Congratulations Bill on your winning ways.




Speaking of not retiring anytime soon, J. Bruce Weinstock has also dedicated over five decades to athletics, as an official. Fifty years of perfecting his craft was rewarded this past basketball season, after Bruce was selected as crew chief for the 2026 PIAA 6A boy's state final at the Giant Center in Hershey. The game was broadcast on PCN TV. Weinstock is a member of our hall of fame Class of 2007. Fifty years back you would have found Bruce Weinstock, on the basketball court playing the game as a younger man. He has been a referee at the college and at the pro level as well. He says the game has changed over the decades in ways that are bothersome at times. However, regardless of his personal preferences, the privilege of being selected to referee a game of this magnitude was not lost on him. Bruce stated he was "honored and humbled" by the selection and with no plans to retire, he looks forward to another chance to ref a state title game again.

Congratulations to these inductees who continue to contribute to the sporting world in such impactful ways. Beyond their Hall of Fame inductions, they continue to prove that greatness isn't a single moment-it's a lifetime victory lap. It's so satisfying to see them keep on running.

In Memory of




Bob Oultra 1987




Pat Pitzer 2000


*The Light
There are some who
bring a light so great
to the world that even after
they have gone, the light
remains.*




Alex Brogna 1991



George Mizer 2002



Joseph Moran 1985



Joseph Weminski 2005

LUZERNE COUNTY SPORTS HALL OF FAME

CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

AUGUST 2, 2026
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