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success**

See full story on B1.

LEADER TIMES

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

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Photos: Submitted

FAR LEFT: Pictured is Oreo, a dog recovered from the Madison Township property of Keri Beth Wolfe, 45, who recently pleaded guilty before Armstrong County Court of Common Pleas President Judge James J. Panchik to a series of charges of animal cruelty in connection with a reported incident in which multiple animals were found deceased at the site. **CENTER:** Patrick, a dog also recovered living but extremely malnourished from Wolfe's property, gathers with Chris Jirak O'Donnell, Humane Police Officer who also represents Orphans of the Storm, a no-kill animal shelter in Rayburn Township. **FAR RIGHT:** Patrick, along with Oreo, are both still waiting for homes. They are available for adoption through Orphans of the Storm. Anyone interested can call 724-548-4520.

New Bethlehem woman pleads guilty in case of multiple deceased animals

*Keri Beth Wolfe, 45, renders guilty pleas before
Armstrong County Court of Common Pleas President Judge James J. Panchik*

By **A.J. PANIAN**
Managing Editor

A New Bethlehem woman recently pleaded guilty to a series of charges of animal cruelty in connection with a reported incident in which multiple animals were found deceased at a property in Madison Township.

Keri Beth Wolfe, 44, rendered a guilty plea earlier this month before Armstrong County Court of Common Pleas President Judge James J. Panchik, according to court documents.

Case background

In June of 2021 the charges filed against Wolfe, 45, were held over for trial in the county common pleas court during a preliminary hearing at the office of Rural Valley Mag-

isterial District Judge Kevin McCausland.

The information on the reported incident was made available in a criminal complaint, in conjunction with an affidavit of probable cause written by Chris Jirak O'Donnell, Humane Police Officer (HPO), who also represents Orphans of the Storm (OOTS), a no-kill animal shelter in Rayburn Township.

According to the affidavit, on March 22, 2021, O'Donnell, Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), Humane Officer Deb Urmann, Dr. Becky Morrow, and an assistant from Frankie's Friends searched 230 Bingham Road, in Madison Township, which is owned by Wolfe.

Upon arriving at the scene, O'Donnell said they found six deceased birds located in

cages at the back of the house, with no water or food, and a large amount of feces, court papers state.

According to the affidavit, upon entering the home, they found seven deceased dogs, five deceased rabbits, and three deceased felines, with two of the deceased dogs found in one crate. O'Donnell said skeletal remains of one dog were found in the hallway, which had been eaten by other animals inside the house; one dog was found deceased in a chair; two cats were found deceased in the basement lying together with mold growing on their bodies; three rabbits were found in a tote on the kitchen counter; and one kitten was decomposing in the hallway on top of a black box, court papers state.

According to the affida-

vit, mobility in the house was difficult due to the "extreme" amount of trash throughout; there were overflowing litter boxes throughout the house; a large amount of feces; a foul smell of decay; some of the animals appeared to be recently deceased, with others deceased for some time; and there was no water or food available for the animals, with unopened wet dog food located in the kitchen.

O'Donnell said there were cats and three dogs that were still alive, with the dogs having low body scores, court papers state.

According to the affidavit, one dog was weak and had difficulty walking, and another dog had numerous sores on his body.

See **WOLFE** on Page A2

New organization created to protect animals

*How Armstrong County's
Humane Program helps animals*

By **A.J. PANIAN**
Managing Editor

A new non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization has been created to support Armstrong County's Humane Program and humane police officers (HPOs), according to a press release recently issued by Chris O'Donnell, Armstrong County Humane Officer.

Humane Animal Al-

lies' (HAA's) mission is promoting respect and compassion for all living creatures in the hearts and minds of those in our community.

Supports Humane Officers

HAA supports local humane officers by providing funds for supplies, equipment and training.

See **ANIMALS** on Page A2

JUST GETTING 'BETTER'

AOTA to welcome Better Than Ezra for kickoff concert of 2022 Summer Series on July 23

Band to take the stage at 8:30 p.m., at John P. Murtha Amphitheater in Kittanning Riverfront Park

By **A.J. PANIAN**
Managing Editor

They've got catchy lyrics and they're a favorite from the 90s.

That was the biggest factor in Mary Ann Valasek's decision to book Better Than Ezra to kick off the Arts on the Allegheny 2022 Summer Concert Series at 7 p.m. July 23 at John P. Murtha Amphitheater at Kittanning Riverfront Park in Kittanning



Photos: Submitted
The official logo of
Better Than Ezra

Borough.

See **AOTA** on Page A2



In memory of a fallen firefighter and friend

Submitted

The uniform of late Pine Township-Templeton Volunteer Fire Dept. volunteer firefighter Brandon Weaver lays Monday at the site of a dirt bike accident in which he was involved Friday on State Route 1030 in Pine Township, approximately a half-mile north of Templeton. Mr. Weaver, 26, succumbed to injuries sustained in the crash later Friday evening.

Leechburg VFC Kids Kraze is July 23

By **A.J. PANIAN**
Managing Editor

The Leechburg Volunteer Fire Co. (LVFC) will be holding a scheduled community-focused summer event on July 23, according to a press release recently issued by LVFC President Brian Scott.

"The event is a Family Fun day for kids with multiple

youth activities along with a car show in the afternoon followed by evening entertainment with live bands for a 'Bike Night' theme," Scott stated in the release.

The happening will run noon to 10 p.m. at the LVFC grounds on the event date at 268 Canal St., Leechburg, PA 15656.

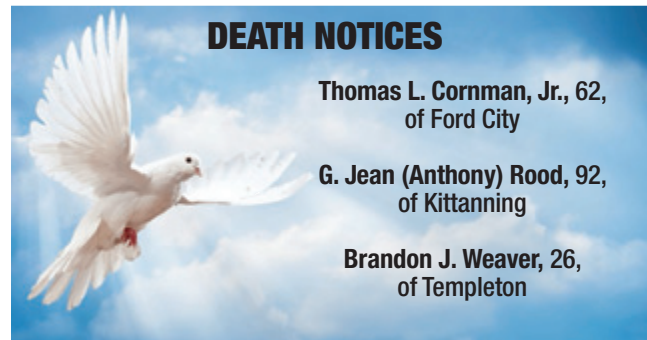
See **LVFC** on Page A2

DEATH NOTICES

Thomas L. Cornman, Jr., 62,
of Ford City

G. Jean (Anthony) Rood, 92,
of Kittanning

Brandon J. Weaver, 26,
of Templeton



ObituariesA3
Sudoku.....A5
Local Sports B1-2
TV ListingsB4

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Photos: Submitted

LEFT: Pictured (from left) are State Committeewoman/Armstrong County Republican Committee Vice Chairwoman Darlene Smail, Republican U.S. Senate Candidate Dr. Mehmet Oz, Armstrong County Republican Chairwoman Darlene Iseman and State Committeeman Anthony Shea (Major – U.S. Air Force Retired).



Pictured (from left) Republican State Committeewoman/Armstrong County Republican Committee Vice Chairwoman Darlene Smail, Republican Lt Governor Candidate Carrie Lewis DelRosso, and State Committeeman Anthony Shea (Major – U.S. Air Force – Retired).

ACRC leader and Republican state committee chairs attend PA GOP meeting

At the PA GOP meeting, the Armstrong leadership team met with their peer county chairs and state committeemen and women from across commonwealth

FOR THE LEADER TIMES

Armstrong County Republican Committee Chairman Darlene Iseman and State Committee Chairpersons Darlene Smail and Anthony Shea (Major – U.S. Air Force – Ret) recently attended the State GOP summer meeting held in Valley Forge, Pa.

At the PA GOP meeting, the Armstrong leadership team met with their peer County Chairs and State Committeemen and women from across Pennsylvania.

All in attendance heard from each of the Republican state-wide candidates, Doug Mastriano (Governor) PA State Senator 33rd District / (Colonel – U.S. Army – Ret),

PA State Representative 33rd District Carrie Lewis DelRosso (Lt Governor), and Dr. Mehmet Oz (U.S. Senate) as they laid out their platforms for a prosperous and secure Pennsylvania and United States.

The Armstrong leadership team also had the opportunity to meet with each of the state-wide candidates personally to ask questions and get to know them.

The Armstrong leadership further networked with members of the Southwest Republican Caucus.

During the Saturday working session, Committee Chairwoman Darlene Iseman was asked to lead the group in prayer just prior to the Dr.

Oz’s closing remarks.

Also at the meeting, the Armstrong leadership team received an initial supply of candidate signs.

Signs will be available first come first served at the next scheduled Armstrong County Republican Committee meeting at 7 p.m. Aug. 4 at the Armstrong County Courthouse Annex in the Commissioner’s office; those interested may also reach out to Darlene Iseman at 724-525-0092/darleneiseman@yahoo.com, Darlene Smail at 724-902-2244 or Anthony Shea at ashea247@comcast.net to coordinate getting signs if unable to attend the meeting.



Pictured (from left) are State Committeeman Anthony Shea (Major – U.S. Air Force Retired), Armstrong County Republican Committee Chairwoman Darlene Iseman, Republican Governor Candidate Doug Mastriano (33rd PA Senate District) (Colonel – U.S. Army – Retired), Rebecca Mastriano & State Committeewoman/Armstrong County Republican Committee Vice Chairwoman Darlene Smail).

Animals

Continued from Page A1

Officer Chris Jirak O’Donnell represents Orphans of the Storm in Rayburn Township and Officer Amber Phillips represents Champion’s Crusaders Rescue in Leechburg. Both serve as un-

paid volunteers and pay for expenses out of their own pockets. HAA encourages those who support humane officers enforcing cruelty and neglect laws in Armstrong County to donate to its Cash per Case (CpC) program to help officers pay for investigation supplies and materials.

Builds partnerships
Working together helps more animals and people. HAA partners with animal shelters and rescues, law enforcement, community organizations, veterinarians, and volunteers to achieve the impossible.

Educates on animal care and laws
Both officers O’Donnell and Phillips present free programs to schools, scouts and community organizations on humane care of animals and PA laws protecting them. To learn about Pennsylvania laws protecting animals,

sponsor a humane call, schedule a presentation or report animal abuse or neglect in Armstrong County visit: humaneanimalallies.org.
A.J. Panian is the managing editor of the Leader Times. He can be reached at 724-543-1303, ext. 1325, or apanian@leadertimes.com.

Dogs remain without homes
Two dogs recovered living from Wolfe’s property remain in need of homes. Both Ore and Patrick are available for adoption through OOTS. Anyone interested can call 724-548-4520.
A.J. Panian is the managing editor of the Leader Times. He can be reached at 724-543-1303, ext. 1325, or apanian@leadertimes.com.

AOTA

Continued from Page A1

“I can remember them and they were good, and we’re happy to have them and happy to be able to provide this for the community,” said Valasek, who chairs the board of directors of the AOTA, a non-profit organization continuously striving to uphold its the mission statement.

That statement, included on its website — artsontheallegheny.org — details the entity’s drive to stress the enrichment of cultural life of western Pennsylvania by presenting free, high quality arts and entertainment at the local amphitheater and other venues, the letter states. To do that continued generosity and support will be much appreciated, the letter states.

Related to the featured act, Valasek said, the choice was in keeping with the idea of maintaining a wide degree of musical variety for people from far and near who annually attend the events along the Allegheny River at John P. Murtha Amphitheater at Kittanning Riverfront Park in Kittanning Borough.

“We want to reach all genres in the project; I just want to keep it diverse,” she added. Also for the event, Valasek noted that a wide variety of food and beverage vendors awaits concert-goers.

“The weather should be good ... so we’re looking forward to another good show,” she said.

Ryan Sprankle, owner of Sprankle’s Neighborhood Market in Kittanning, is a Gen-X’er who will do something he never

thought he would — give a band he’d listened to on the radio a ride to town from Pittsburgh International Airport upon their arrival.

“If you would’ve told 21-year-old Ryan that 20 years from now he would be picking up Better Than Ezra at the airport in The #SAVEONMEAT Bus and then seeing them play in Kittanning along the river he wouldn’t have believed it,” Sprankle said. “Literally they were one of my top five favorite bands in college!”

Better Than Ezra will take the stage at 8:30 p.m. Saturday. The opener for the show will be The Wait at 7 p.m.

Funding is needed to keep project going

As with every year AOTA has been operation, monetary support from the surrounding community and beyond from sponsors on an individual and a corporate level is crucial to the entity keeping the music flowing, Valasek said.

“We really do need funding,” she said.

The Clarks to return for next series installment

Looking ahead, the Clarks will perform during the next AOTA 2022 Summer Concert Series Installment at 8:30 p.m. Aug. 27, with the opening act, The Bail Jumpers, to take the stage at 7 p.m. that night.

About Better Than Ezra
The following is a press release issued to the Leader Times by the band Better Than Ezra:

The best songs, records, and bands transport you back to the first moment you heard them



Well-known 90’s alternative band Better Than Ezra will perform during the Arts On The Allegheny (AOTA) Summer Concert Series, which will start at 7 p.m. July 23 at John P. Murtha Amphitheater at Kittanning Riverfront Park. The opening band will be The Wait, followed by the main act at 8:30 p.m.

each and every time they play. Whether you caught a house party gig after Better Than Ezra formed in 1988 at Louisiana State University, heard “Good” on the radio once it hit #1 during 1995, became a fan following Taylor Swift’s famous cover of “Breathless” in 2010, or saw them headlining sheds in 2018, you most likely never forgot that initial introduction to the New Orleans quartet founded by Kevin Griffin [lead vocals, guitar, piano] and Tom Drummond [bass, backing vocals].

Those hummable melodies, unshakable guitar riffs, and confessional lyrics quietly cemented the group as an enduring force in rock music. How many acts can boast being the inspiration of a classic Saturday Night Live skit? Very few. Speaking of incredible accomplishments, they occupy

rarified air with spots on Billboard’s “100 Greatest Alternative Songs of All Time” and “100 Greatest Alternative Artists of All Time” as of 2018.

Additionally, 2018 also marked 25 years since the arrival of the breakthrough album Deluxe. Maintaining a steady pace forward, the new single “GRATEFUL” garnered acclaim from Billboard who praised its “highly commercial, anthemic sheen that certainly pairs nicely with the approach of Deluxe.”

The story of Better Than Ezra began before the nineties explosion they remain so often associated with ever even happened. Griffin and Drummond comprised the core of the band at its onset as they hit the road and won over one fan at a time beginning in 1989. This fan base would go on to be known as

“Ezralites” by the time the first pressing of Deluxe landed independently in 1993. As the audience dramatically grew, Elektra signed the boys in 1995 and officially released Deluxe. A fixture on radio and MTV, “Good” captured #1 on the Hot Modern Rock Tracks Chart and went multi-platinum. 1996’s Friction, Baby yielded definitive anthems such as “Desperately Wanting” and “King Of New Orleans.” A string of fan favorite albums followed, including How Does Your Garden Grow? [1998] and Closer [2001].

2005’s Before The Robots represented another creative high.

Its lead single “A Lifetime” peaked in the Top 15 of the Billboard Adult Top 40 chart as “Juicy” went on to famously soundtrack a Desperate Housewives campaign.

Paper Empire followed in 2009 and then the band released their latest album in 2014, All Together Now.

Produced by Tony Hoffer [M83, Beck] it spawned the hit “Crazy Lucky,” which notched 10 million-plus streams.

At the same time, their touring presence burgeoned year after year as Better Than Ezra continue to sell out amphitheaters and arenas worldwide.

A force of nature on stage, the group consistently deliver on tour as countless fans sing along to every word nightly.

Their gigs further uphold a growing legend.

Outside of Better Than Ezra, Griffin established himself as

a sought-after hitmaking songwriter, having songs recorded by the likes of Taylor Swift and Train. He also penned #1 hits for Howie Day and Sugarland in addition to writing with The Struts and Moon Taxi.

In 2015, Griffin co-founded the Pilgrimage Music & Cultural Festival, which counts Justin Timberlake among others as partners.

Along the way, they launched the Better Than Ezra Foundation (www.BTEFoundation.org) in order to support their hometown. Chaired by Drummond, its charity endeavors span coastal restoration projects, after school programs for underprivileged kids, and more. Since 2008, it has raised over \$1.7 million for causes throughout greater New Orleans.

Celebrating 25 years of Deluxe in 2018, the guys reissued the record on double vinyl. Detailing the release, Forbes summed up the group’s influence beyond the nineties scene it helped define.

The outlet wrote, “So many of that decade’s most influential, like supernovas, burned up fast... New Orleans alternative rock trio Better Than Ezra defied those odds.”

In the end, you’ll never forget the songs on Deluxe or any other release from their discography — and that’s better than anything.

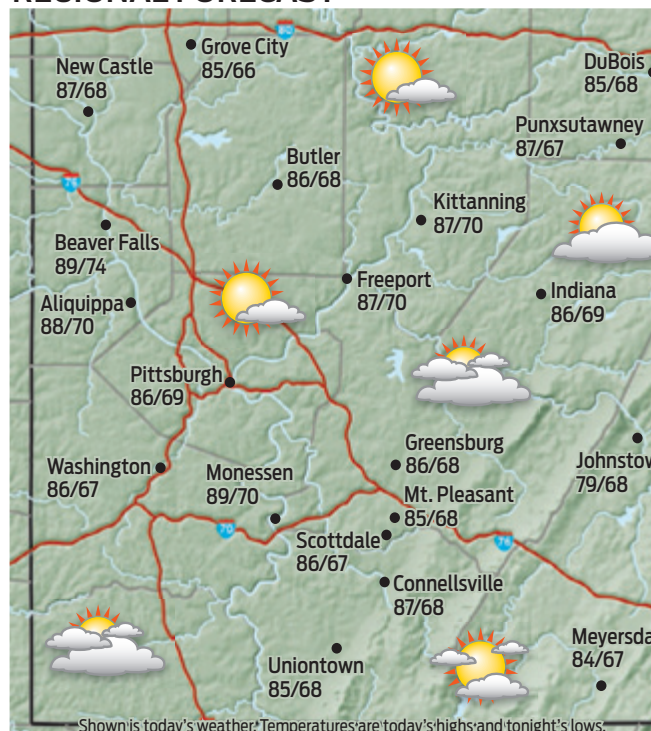
A.J. Panian is the managing editor of the Leader Times. He can be reached at 724-543-1303, ext. 1325, or apanian@leadertimes.com.

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TODAY	TONIGHT	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Mostly cloudy, humid and warmer	Mainly clear and humid	Partly sunny, warm and humid	Partly sunny, a stray t-storm; humid
HIGH 87°	LOW 68°	89° 71°	83° 65°

TODAY’S WEATHER SPONSORED BY

REGIONAL FORECAST



REGIONAL CITIES

City	TODAY	WED.
	Hi/Lo/W	Hi/Lo/W
Bradford	83/63/pc	86/67/pc
Canton	90/73/pc	91/71/t
Cleveland	89/71/s	91/71/t
Erie	84/73/pc	89/72/pc
Greensburg	86/68/pc	88/72/pc
Harrisburg	92/72/pc	94/77/pc
Jamestown	81/66/pc	84/68/pc
Morgantown	86/68/c	90/73/pc
Mt. Pleasant	85/68/pc	91/72/pc
Philadelphia	92/77/pc	95/80/s
Pittsburgh	86/69/s	88/72/pc
Scottsdale	86/67/pc	89/73/pc
Seven Springs	81/66/pc	83/70/pc
Syracuse	89/70/t	93/74/c
Washington, DC	90/77/pc	94/78/s
Wheeling	85/70/pc	88/74/pc
Youngstown	88/69/s	89/68/pc

NATIONAL CITIES

City	TODAY	WED.
	Hi/Lo/W	Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	88/75/t	92/75/t
Boston	88/73/pc	91/76/pc
Buffalo	81/72/pc	87/72/c
Charleston, WV	84/68/c	92/73/pc
Charlotte	92/72/t	95/75/pc
Chicago	92/76/pc	88/70/s
Dallas	108/83/s	106/82/s
Denver	96/63/t	92/66/t
Detroit	90/73/s	91/68/t
Houston	100/78/s	102/80/s
Indianapolis	89/73/s	93/71/s
Las Vegas	108/88/s	109/89/s
Los Angeles	85/65/s	82/63/pc
Memphis	98/82/s	101/80/pc
Miami	92/80/s	91/79/s
New Orleans	92/78/t	94/80/t
New York City	91/76/s	94/77/s
Oklahoma City	108/81/s	104/73/pc
Orlando	94/76/t	95/75/t
Phoenix	110/89/c	109/91/pc
St. Louis	95/80/s	98/75/s
San Francisco	69/55/pc	69/55/pc
Seattle	81/57/s	82/58/s
Tampa	93/81/t	93/80/t

SUN AND MOON

	TODAY	WED.
Sunrise	6:05 a.m.	6:06 a.m.
Sunset	8:44 p.m.	8:43 p.m.
Moonrise	12:09 a.m.	12:32 a.m.
Moonsset	12:46 p.m.	1:50 p.m.

	Last	New	First	Full
	Jul 20	Jul 28	Aug 5	Aug 11

Weather(W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, F-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2022