



The Centurion

“The Voice of the Students”



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Holocaust Survivor



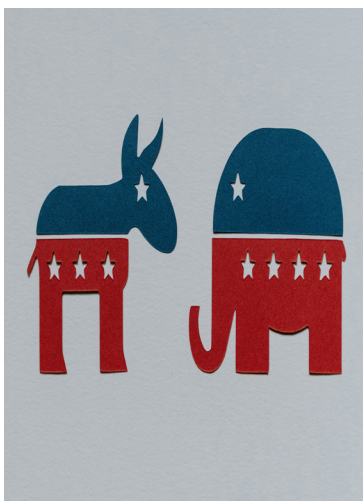
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British Parliament Members Visit Bucks to Seal Transfer Deal With College in Wales



Dr. Jones and several Bucks officials surrounded by members of the visiting British Delegation

Kassandra Castillo

Centurion Staff

On Wednesday, members of the British Parliament visited Bucks County Community College to discuss a new international transfer opportunity made possible through the college's recent partnership with Wrexham University in Wales. The agreement creates a unique pathway for business administration students to complete their associate degree at Bucks and then earn a bachelor's degree at Wrexham in just one additional year.

After two years of negotiation, Bucks announced its first-ever international program. Students who participate will also have the option to remain at Wrexham for a fourth year to complete an accelerated MBA, allowing them to earn a graduate degree in less time than traditional programs.

Founded in 1887, Wrexham University ranks among the top ten institutions in England and Wales for student satisfaction. It currently enrolls approximately 1,500 international students, a number anticipated to grow once Bucks students begin transferring through the new partnership.

Six members of the British Parliament from the Welsh Affairs Committee, along with staff from the British Consulate in New

York, visited the Newtown Campus as part of their regional tour of Pennsylvania and New York. Their visit aimed to encourage additional business relationships and investment in Wales.

Students attending Wrexham University will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in rich cultural history by exploring ancient castles, modern cities, and scenic landscapes. Wales offers a blend of urban and rural life that closely resembles the environment many Bucks students are familiar with.

Surrounding major cities such as Liverpool, London, and Manchester are easily accessible by train, ranging from one to three-hour rides.

Dr. Patrick M. Jones, President and CEO of Bucks County Community College, opened the event by providing an overview of the college and its accomplishments, including its wide range of apprenticeship programs in HVAC, special-needs education, and healthcare.

Board of Bucks County Commissioners member Bob Harvey also spoke, stating, "I'm really proud of the college and all the hard work they've done over the years. This community college is really setting the standard for other colleges out there."

Among the attendees was Dr. Joe Yates, Vice-Chancellor of Wrexham University,

who provided further insight into the partnership via Zoom.

Yates expressed enthusiasm for the collaboration, noting, "For us the relationship with Bucks is going to open up opportunity in Bucks and our students here in Wrexham. What we really want to be able to do is to be able to develop those intimate relationships with like-minded institutions across the globe. I'm just really delighted that I'm able to come along today, or be virtually, just to celebrate what we believe is going to be a really important partnership not just for Bucks, not just for Wrexham but for North Wales and Pennsylvania. It will benefit our students and it will also open up new collaborations around business as well and drive innovation across Bucks and Wrexham University."

After hearing the perspectives of Jones and Yates, media attendees were asked to step out for a lunch break, while the Board of Trustees, members of the British Parliament, and various prominent figures from the Bucks community enjoyed a private, college-catered meal.

Greg Luce, one of the main innovators of the program, continued the event by highlighting the financial advantages for students.

"The tuition for an international student in Wrexham

university is on par with tuition of Pennsylvania colleges because they get their bachelor's degree in just one year of study, they actually save money by studying in Wales. After they complete their studies, they have two additional years to work in the UK. This is just the beginning; this is the very first step we're taking with Wrexham."

Bucks hopes that the success of this agreement will pave the way for similar international pathways in other academic fields, including the arts, engineering, and healthcare.

Tracy Timby, Vice president for Workforce & Strategic Partnership concluded the event by saying, "We envision a day when a student from Bucks says, I started in Newtown, I got my associates degree, I went to Wales from Bucks I graduated with a bachelors and I gained an international perspective that transformed my career."

If you are a business administration student who would like to learn about this amazing international transfer opportunity, visit www.bucks.edu/academics/schools/business/wrexham-bound/ or contact the Business, Innovation, and Legal studies program at 215-968-8227.

A photo spread of the event can be found on page 8, all photos courtesy of Eme Yotko.

Around Bucks

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Come join us in our new location in Rollins 118

Staff Meeting every Thursday from 12:30 p.m - 1:15 p.m.

The Will to Live: A Holocaust Survivor’s Experience

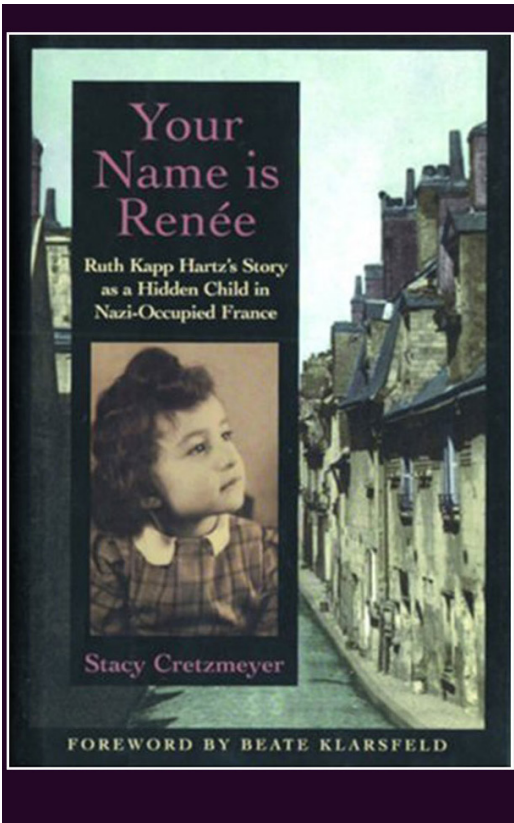
Chelsea King
Centurion Staff

Ruth Kapp Hartz, who as a child managed to who survive the Holocaust, came to Bucks on Nov. 13 to share her story. She endured unimaginable horrors, yet through strength and courage she rebuilt her life and now chooses to tell her story in honor of the millions of innocent lives lost.

Presented by the School of Social and Behavioral Science and the Holocaust and Genocide Studies certificate program, in collaboratoin with the Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center, Kapp arrived to the Gallagher Room as the subject of the book “Your name is Renée: Ruth Kapp Hartz’s Story as a Hidden Child in Nazi-Occupied France” by Stacy Cretzmeyer.

Hearing her firsthand account of one of the most unfathomable mass persecutions in history was impactful. The Holocaust was one of the darkest chapters Europe has experienced in the past century. A time marked by unimaginable suffering, loss, and immorality. has been forever engrained in history. Sharing these stories of survival remains to shine as powerful reminders of resilience and hope.

When the Nazis invaded a country, the Jewish people had very limited options. Like many Hertz and her



Ruth Kapp Hartz, Photo courtesy of Bucks website

family hid in Nazi-occupied France in hope that a last name change could possibly save them. Since surnames are commonly indicators of heritage, her family changed theirs to Renée, which means “reborn” in French. Which emphasizes the dedication and hopes they still had for life.

She and her family were helped by the Fédou family, who lived above them. Hertz would be accompanied by their two daughters who would walk with her to school when it was safe for her to attend.

She was then sent to a convent where the Mother Superior understood her Jewish identity. Since the convent was regarded as an orphanage, she then lived there as one of its orphans.

A women named Méré

Nativité hid her from the Nazi’s. She took the children to the chapel and told them to go down to the cellar under the floor for protection.

Hertz overheard the conversation clearly as the Nazi soldier confronted Mother Superior.

“We understand you may be sheltering Jewish children,” he stated. And Mother Superior answered, “I? Hide Jewish children? Why would I risk such a thing?”

She shared the quote, ‘Whoever saves one life saves all of humanity, reminding us that helping even a single person has immense value and is far better than doing nothing at all.

Hertz went on to live a full and joyful life. She married, raised two wonderful children, and later wel-

comed six beloved grandchildren into the world. She cherishes every moment spent with her family, especially when sharing stories from her past.

Later in life, she searched for the people who had saved her. When she finally found the Fédou family, they fell into each other’s arms, weeping as the memories of all they had endured washed over them.

She ended her speech with the quote, “I have told you this story not to weaken you but to strengthen you. Now it is up to you. Never Again! I wish I could say never again, but unfortunately, it’s ever again.”

She hopes with all her heart that history will not repeat itself, wishing for a future untouched by the mistakes of the past.

Offering a Rich Array of Music, Canadian Guitar Virtuoso Adam Cicchillitti Makes Area Debut at the Zlock Performing Arts Center



Adam Cicchillitti Photo Couresy Zlock

Timothy Ditro
Centurion Staff

In their second collaboration with Bucks County Community College, the Philadelphia Classical Guitar Society held a concert at the Zlock Performing Arts Center on Saturday Nov. 8, which showcased the diverse rich array of music from Canadian classical guitarist Adam Cicchillitti, as he performs for the first time in the greater Philadelphia region.

The one-person concert opened with an introduction from Artistic Director of the Philadelphia Guitar Society, Jordan Peterson, who was one of many responsible for procuring Cicchillitti’s involvement.

“Luckily,” Peterson states, “we worked with Peter Chiovarou,” Director of Community Programming & College Events here at Bucks in introducing Cicchillitti to the Philly region.

Peterson, a Bucks alumni who attended alongside John Sheridan, a current professor of Music and Multimedia here at the school, states that choosing the venue itself came secondary in

the organization’s planning when compared to the task of securing the artist.

As for the artist himself, Cicchillitti, 38, grew up in French-speaking Quebec and has been playing guitar for over 26 years - since the age of 12, a passion he cites his mother as having influenced him in pursuing.

“My mom got me involved, she was a singer-songwriter and I grew up around Broadway music.” Cicchillitti states

Growing up, Cicchillitti tried pursuing other interests and as a teenager, had a brief phase playing for an amateur band. Eventually, he got involved with classical music and began experimenting with other instruments before settling on the classical guitar.

Music performed by Cicchillitti is derived from pre-existing works originally intended for the piano or violin, now rearranged for the guitar. In addition, his songs are from a variety of cultures ranging from Paraguay, to Spain and France, to a Celtic-influenced piece from Newfoundland.

Like most classical guitarists, Cicchillitti primar-

ily equips himself with an acoustic guitar comprised of nylon strings. His experience in guitar-playing is evident due to his timely performances.

In his farewell to the audience before ending the event, Cicchillitti expressed thanks towards those involved in planning such as the event organizers, various stage crew members and the audience for attending. He admitted that when performing in front of a crowd, “I’m able to go deeper and share” more when compared to practicing alone.

The Philadelphia Classical Guitar Society, a non-profit formed in 1967, has only recently begun its partnership with Bucks, which provides audiences a dynamically dazzling abundance of artists from all scopes of life, with Peterson remarking that the Zlock Performing Arts Center: “It’s a beautiful venue that makes the guitar shine.”

Head over to Zlock’s website, bucks.edu/tickets to check out all upcoming shows and performances ranging from Choral Concerts to Improv Comedy.

Around Bucks

Madeline Marriott Named 2025 Bucks County Poet Laureate

Chelsea King
Centurion Staff

Madeline Marriott of Holland was named Bucks County Poet Laureate, a freelance journalist and independent bookseller who writes mainly about herself and others as a form of expression.

A poet laureate is an award given to a poet whose work is recognized for its national significance. This title has historical roots tracing back to the 17th century. While it no longer carries specific duties, it remains a prestigious honor in the literary community.

Marriott understands this honor more than anything. “I take my poetry very seriously, I even got it tattooed on me,” said Marriott. With the poems she submitted to the contest that contains the themes such as love, heart-break, relationships, and change. “I write a lot about my own experience, such as the young-adult transition into being an adult,” said Marriott. “I also write about being a witness to the difficult things my friends are going through as well.”

With her poem’s reflection of both herself and others, her poetry was enough to stand out to the final judge, poet Jennifer Tseng. “Here the ‘me’ is always con-

nected to another; the ‘me’ is always part of a ‘we,’ Sonically subtle and satisfying, these are the poems of someone who has the power to see the ‘we’ everywhere, in everything,” said Tseng.

Marriott was also placed as a runner-up last year when she first entered the contest. She said that the monthly poetry group meetups at Bucks Newtown Bookshop have been an incredible inspiration for her works. “I feel so honored, since I’m around poets from the area all the time at the bookshop, and they’ve been so helpful to me,” said Marriott. “I’m relatively new to this area’s poetry group, and to writing poetry and putting my work out there, so having their wisdom is just awesome.”

Marriott, at the age of 23, is currently the second-youngest laureate in the 49-year-old Bucks County Poet Laureate contest, this year being named 2025 Bucks County Poet Laureate by Bucks officials. On Nov. 15, at Bucks Newtown Campus in Tyler Hall, Marriott was commemorated with a reading and reception in the afternoon. Marriott was also joined by 2024 Poet Laureate Lake Angela, and preliminary contest judge Nicole Greaves with a few more visitors that



Photo courtesy of www.bucks.edu.

were invited to the event by the judges that named her laureate.

With a Bachelor’s degree in English and pursuing a master’s degree in writing. This is nothing new to her in writing; Marriott often looks back to when she would write stories on her fathers desktop computer. Her father was an English major as well, and with that he

would read her Robert Frost poems that often introduced her to an appreciation for literature.

As she got older, her love for writing just expanded. In college, she not only co-founded the English Club, but she also started the yearly Poetry Slam at Lafayette College. She has had her poems appear in the Turning Leaf Journal,

Engine Idling, and more. She’s soon to release her first children’s book in May next year.

Though in her free time, when not writing or reading, she enjoys pursuing other interests by coaching kindergarten and first-grade soccer, watching Philly sports teams, and tracking down whatever the best latte is in town.

Finals Season at Bucks: Students Find Their Own Paths to Focus

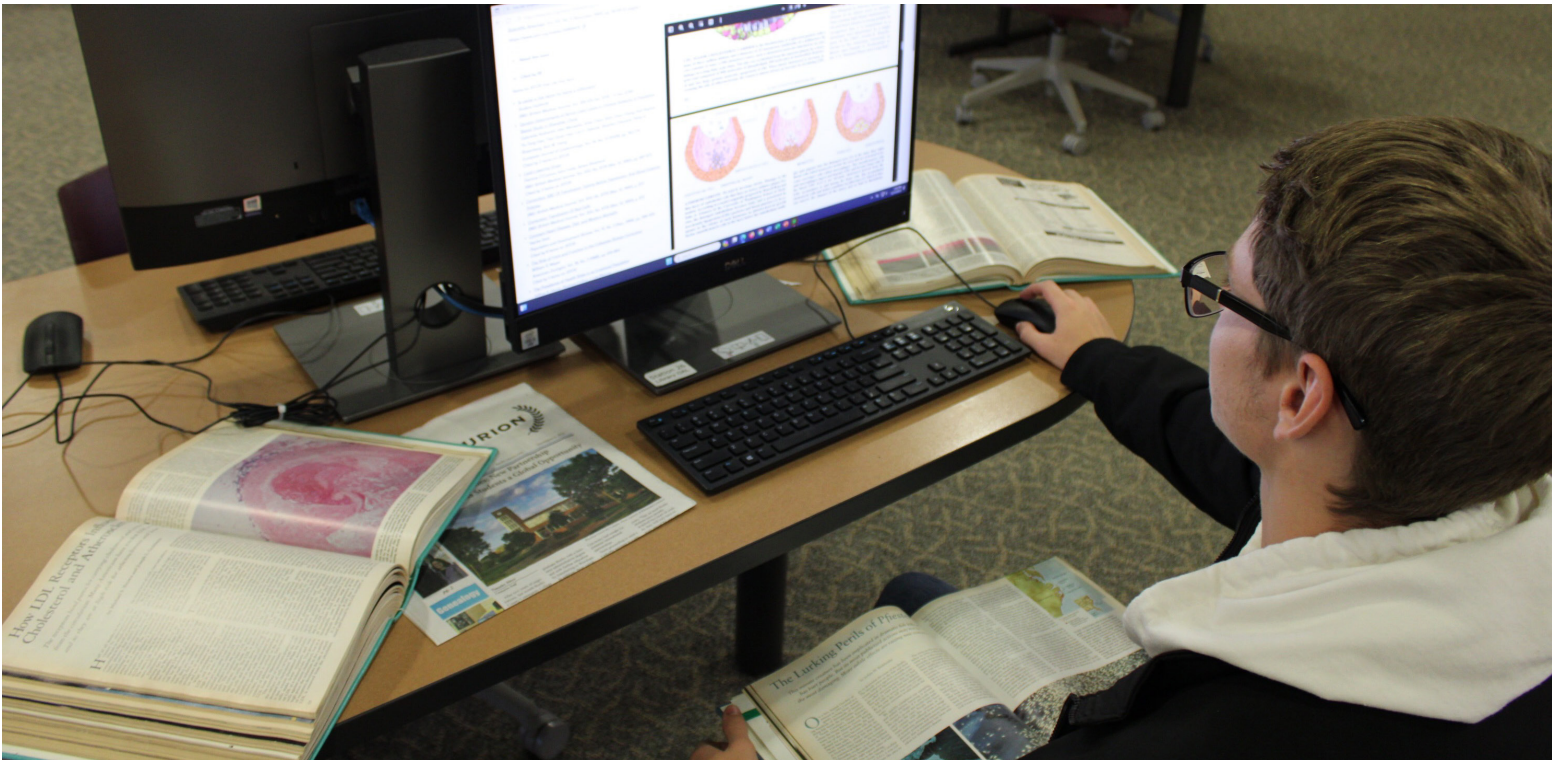


Photo courtesy of the [Zacchary Crain](#)

Lia Peralta Joa
Centurion Staff

Full and part time students are preparing for their upcoming finals as the Fall Semester at Bucks comes to a closing end, some feeling confident, some anxious or both.

Some students expressing feeling great and prepared while there are some feeling anxious and nervous for their finals. Feeling these emotions are considered normal and a common occurrence around those times of the college year.

Though there are some methods of studying that students take and do to prepare for their finals, many suggestions and ideas can

differ between students. Some methods can stem from such as studying in the library — a decent quiet place, in a café where some noise can persist, studying with flash cards, a friend or partner to study with and many more methods. Some may prefer all kinds of noise around them, they can prefer utter silence and some may prefer any kind of method.

When asking students what their go to study tips are when preparing for the finals, 19-year-old Bucks student, Grace Hill, said “Chunking and flash cards. Doing even just 15 minutes of studying each day over the course of a couple weeks helps with my recol-

lection better than cramming a couple days in advance. Flash cards are also great. I think they challenge me more to remember answers or definitions than reviewing notes.”

On the other hand, 25-year-old Bucks student, Jane Gonzalez, feels that her best tip for studying is repetition. “I find that writing things by hand helps me retain information better. I write things down multiple times and I repeat the topics that I find harder,” she said.

Finding a quiet place to study or even getting in the zone can be challenging. As you walk around the campus you see students huddled in the study rooms or by themselves in a lounge chair.

19-year-old Bucks student, Gabby Long, prefers to study at home. “I rather study at home than school or a cafe. It’s more calming to study in your own environment,” Long said.

Hill says the opposite. “Cafes are the most helpful to me personally. I feel like if I go out of my way to drive somewhere, I at least have to make the drive worth it and do some studying. It’s a better motivator than when I’m in the comfort of my own home,” she said.

With hours of studying, one might find themselves getting easily distracted. To study effectively many need to understand and know what distracts them and

what doesn’t.

When asking Gonzalez, Hill and Long what’s one thing they avoid doing while studying, they all said that they turn off or put away their phones to avoid getting distracted. Gonzalez is aware that if her phone is not put on “do not disturb” her eyes might wander to the screen.

Leaving your phone on “do not disturb” can solve one distraction but there are still plenty to deal with. Some students need complete silence to study while others need background noise. “I enjoy studying with a television show in the background. Just one where I don’t have to pay attention and can just have it there for reassurance,” said Long.

Hill said “Usually with complete silence, but sometimes I use music as well. The music can’t have any lyrics though or I’ll get distracted. It can help stimulate my brain a little bit on days where I’m less motivated than usual. I’ve used this one playlist that has all of the songs from Mario Kart and it has oddly helped a lot when studying or finishing assignments.”

If you’re having difficulties sitting down and studying, try out some of your peer’s suggestions. If it works for them, it might just work for you.

Current Events

Security Director Explains Purpose and Process of Campus Fire Drills

Aidan Kegel
Centurion Staff

The Executive Director of Bucks County Community College’s Security and Safety, Dennis McCauley, shared on Nov. 6 all the relevant information for students to be aware of about the school’s fire drills and how they serve their purpose in training everyone on how to be safe and prepared in case of a real fire emergency.

We do at least one fire drill per campus per semester and have for many years as a matter of fire safety,” said McCauley.

For how they work, McCauley also says that as soon as a fire drill commences, which is caused by the activation of the fire alarm of one of the campus’ buildings, and any person within said building or the surrounding area is expected to evacuate until the drill is over. The timing of such an event is unannounced for more effective results.

While the safety of all students and faculty is a primary objective, another important role of the fire drills is to also educate

everyone on how to safely respond to an actual fire that were to occur at any point in time.

“That understanding of how to react ultimately makes students safer on campus,” McCauley expressed when discussing the importance of teaching proper responses of how to react to an actual fire

Considering that fire drills have been a staple of every educational institution, it is worth noting that not a single fire related incident where someone has been hurt or killed has ever occurred on campus grounds.

McCauley stated that “every college and university conduct fire drills in a similar manner to what we do here at Bucks.”

With everything learned by both sides of these practices, Bucks continues to use every piece of knowledge to further strengthen their methods in ensuring that future generations will be able to perform all the safety requirements to help others and themselves avoid being severely harmed by random fire occurrences.



Dennis McCauley, Photo courtesy of Aidan Kegel

In Possible Sign for Midterms, Democrats Sweep Pennsylvania and Bucks County in Off-Year Elections



Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Sarah Yanchunas
Centurion Staff

Democratic candidates in Pennsylvania and Bucks County saw sweeping victories in the 2025 off-year election with major wins in state supreme court judicial retention and election of Democratic Bucks County district attorney and Sheriff.

In the face of Republican-controlled federal government with President Trump’s second term, a Republican-controlled senate and house of representatives, Democrat candidates in this year’s off-year elections saw significant wins in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Virginia among other states.

Associate professor of Language and Literature at Bucks and faculty advisor to the Bucks College Demo-

crats Dr. David M. Venditto gave his opinion as to the possible political or cultural shift that led to widespread democratic victory saying, “I think Democratic voters are reacting to the tumultuous presidency of Trump. Between ICE raids, tariffs, and executive overreach, people are motivated to vote and change things.”

The Pennsylvania statewide election saw the successful retention of state supreme court justices Christine Donohue, David Wecht, and Kevin Dougherty, all registered with the Democratic party.

Had the justices not be retained, the three judicial seats would be vacant until the term’s end or filled with interim justices appointed by Democratic Governor Josh Shapiro each with

two-thirds approval of the Republican-controlled state senate. In effect, until the following state supreme court partisan election to be held in 2027, the court would fall to an even 2-2 split and could potentially lead to a Republican majority following the 2027 elections with potential influence on the 2028 presidential race, as argued by ABC News’s Emily Chang.

Venditto says the retention was “important because it can act as a safeguard against questionable or outright harmful actions taken by the Trump administration.”

Likewise, a key issue often pointed to for voters in the retention election was reproductive freedom in light of the 2022 overturning of Roe v Wade. State

courts often determine access to abortion and reproductive care, as evidenced by the state supreme court’s 2024 ruling that abortion coverage bans violated the Pennsylvania state constitution on the basis of sex-discrimination.

Planned Parenthood in a Nov. 4 press release on the successful retention calls the state supreme court “Pennsylvanians’ last line of defense against attacks on reproductive health care.”

On the results of the retention election, President and CEO of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund Alexis McGill Johnson writes, “This election sent a clear message: Pennsylvanians demand control over their bodies and their health care”

In Bucks county, the Democratic Party observed significant wins in the elections of Democrats Joe Khan as Bucks County District Attorney and Danny Ceisler for County Sheriff.

According to the Bucks County Board of Election’s unofficial results, Ceisler won against Republican incumbent Sheriff Fred Harran by approximately 10 percent margin. Of this Democratic victory, Venditto said, “I think it’s a reaction to the previous sheriff’s cooperation with ICE. After Fred Harran’s deal with ICE, he was voted out just a few months later. ICE is extremely unpopular across

much of the country.”

Venditto’s statement regarding Harran working with ICE is factual. In April, Harran partnered with United States’ Immigration and Customs Enforcement through its 287(g) program. This agreement under the “Task Force Model” Harran selected for Bucks County, according to an ICE webpage, allows officers to “enforce limited immigration authority while performing routine police duties, such as identifying an alien at a DUI checkpoint and sharing information directly with ICE.”

Ceisler in an interview for the Bucks County Courier Times agrees that Harran’s partnership with ICE was, “the driving factor for a lot of people and it convinced a lot of Republicans to vote for Democrat this year.” According to the article, Ceisler has voiced his intention to withdraw Bucks County from the program starting with a moratorium.

Partisan club leaders for the Bucks College Republicans (which does not currently have a faculty advisor) and Bucks College Democrats were contacted for comment on the election results. They did not reply in time for this article’s publication. Neither did the Bucks Republican nor Bucks County Democratic Committees.

Current Events

Bill Aims to Aid Home Construction and Lower Housing Costs



Photo Courtesy of Unsplash

Sydney Spagnolia

Centurion Staff

In communities across the nation, complex and restrictive land-use regulations, permitting processes, and other regulatory burdens hinder housing production, causing a spike in housing cost. These regulations have contributed to an acute housing supply crisis with an estimated shortage of nearly 5 million housing units.

On November 5th, Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick introduced the new Accelerating Home Building Act, bicameral legislation, which will make housing more

affordable for buyers in Pennsylvania and across the country. It has been known that for years, Pennsylvania has fallen behind the nation in new home construction.

This pushes higher prices and homeownership further and further out of reach. In Bucks and Montgomery counties, home builders, community stakeholders, and advocates are clear; stating that without more efficient pathways to advance responsible projects, families will continue to struggle finding sustainable and affordable homes.

Across America, many communities are starting to

adopt a more modernized approach, known as pattern zoning. This is where architects and local governments collaborate on pattern books of pre-approved, standardized designs such as duplexes, triplexes and multiplexes.

The Accelerating Home Building Act builds on that by establishing a federal grant program. By providing a middle ground between rigid design rules and unpredictable pattern zoning speeds up the construction of new homes, which strikes a balance between rapid building and community design goals.

It establishes a HUD administered grant program to fund the creation of pattern books, with a focus on missing middle and infill construction. It provides set-asides for rural communities and prioritizes high opportunity areas and locals working to reduce barriers in housing development.

Pattern Zoning is creative and cost-effective. Communities may lack the funds and capacity to implement pre-reviewed designs effectively.

“Housing is a real and growing concern in our community. Families are being stretched thin, young people are struggling to put down roots, and seniors are being priced out of the neighborhoods they’ve long called home. This bill clears a path for local governments to get homes built faster, more affordably, and in ways that reflect the needs of the communities they serve. It’s a bipartisan solution that puts more homes directly in our community, supports smart growth across the country, and keeps opportunity within reach for the next generation,” said Fitzpatrick in a recent press release.

It is endorsed by The American Planning Association, Congress for the New Urbanism, Up for Growth Action, National Apartment

Association, Smart Growth America, Main Street America, and finally the National Association of Realtors.

“NAR is grateful that Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick, Janelle Bynum, Bryan Steil, and Chris Pappas introduced the bipartisan Accelerating Home Building Act to help address the nation’s housing affordability crisis through streamlined construction approval processes,” said Shannon McGahn, NAR Chief Advocacy Officer and Executive Vice President.

“NAR recognizes that reducing regulatory barriers and streamlining approval processes are essential steps toward addressing the housing shortage affecting communities across the country. We support this legislation as part of comprehensive efforts to increase housing supply and improve affordability.”

Overall, the Accelerating Home Building Act aims to increase housing supply by providing grants to local governments to streamline construction and “cut red tape”. It will seek to tackle the housing crisis by encouraging more efficient construction practices and reducing regulatory barriers at the local level.

After Federal Shutdown, PA Races to Deliver Delayed SNAP Payments

Lia Peralta Joa

Centurion Staff

Governor Josh Shapiro has been working hard with his administration to provide the millions of Pennsylvanians the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits they deserve and need.

Payments are already being processed into the electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards of those who didn’t receive their November deposits. Additionally, it was reported that \$100 million worth of benefits were sent to Pennsylvania’s SNAP vendor.

DHS Secretary Val Arkoosh mentions that this wouldn’t have been possible without the help of our communities. Arkoosh said “I want to thank our food banks, food pantries, and every Pennsylvanian who has stepped up in some way to support our neighbors and communities.”

He adds, “I am relieved we can issue November benefits, but there is still more work to do to ensure stability for December and beyond.”

Although the Federal officials’ intent was to reverse these payments from many other states including Pennsylvania, the courts denied it.



Photo courtesy of Unsplash

The federal court mandated that the Trump Administration will give 100 percent of SNAP funds to all citizens.

Shapiro states “No Pennsylvanian should go hungry because of federal inaction and Congressional Republicans’ failure to pass a budget.”

According to the press release from the state, “Governor Shapiro joined 24 other states and Washington, D.C., in suing the Trump Administration for unlawfully suspending SNAP payments and failing to use billions in Congressional-ly approved contingency

funds available to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).”

Nevertheless, Shapiro is helping approximately 2 million families, seniors, and children who rely on SNAP benefits. More specifically over 713,000 children and 697,000 older citizens.

It doesn’t end there. Shapiro has given \$5 million in state funding to local food banks to help support the two million families that need to feed their children and themselves. Shapiro has also successfully set in motion the SNAP Emergency Relief Fund. The fund has already accumulated up to

\$2 million.

Shapiro emphasizes that he will continue to work hard to stabilize the SNAP benefits. “Despite the daily chaos and confusion from the Trump Administration around SNAP, my Administration is working quickly to get payments moving for nearly two million families, seniors, and children who rely on SNAP to help put food on the table. Our work is not done here: we will continue doing everything we can to protect access to food for Pennsylvanians.”

SNAP benefits have been going on since 1964. Many people depend on these

monthly benefits to put food on their tables. Each month, about 42 million people in the U.S. rely on and receive these benefits.

It is still unsure how benefits will look like in December if the federal government isn’t able to reopen by the end of November.

If you or someone you know is requiring any kind of immediate need during this time, go to pa-navigate.org to find helpful resources. One can also call 211 to receive some local help. Furthermore, by visiting feedingpa.org, one will locate food assistance programs and local food banks.

Current Events

PA Budget Passes on Veterans Day With Major Education Funding Increase and New Tax Credit, But No Deal on Revenue Sources

Sarah Yanchunas
Centurion Staff

On Veterans’ Day, Governor Josh Shapiro signed the PA 2025-26 budget into law, featuring tax cuts for working families and historic increases in public education, ending a months-long Senate impasse fueled by partisan budgeting dissent.

The budget totals \$50.1 billion, a \$565 million increase to public education, including cyber charter school reforms projected to save public school districts \$175 million. The creation of the Working Pennsylvanians Tax Credit is expected to provide nearly \$193 million in tax relief to about one million residents in its first year. Social safety-net programs see increases as well, including an \$11 million increase toward food security.

Despite proposals to raise new revenue through marijuana, sports betting and online gaming., no new revenue sources were agreed upon; the budget keeps the state \$7.4 billion rainy day fund while drawing almost \$4 billion from unused funding reserves from previous years.

Sen. Steve Santarsiero



State Sen. Santarsiero (left) Gov. Shapiro (right) Photo courtesy of WikiCommons

writes in a press release, “This budget represents a compromise that still delivers on our key caucus priorities: affordability, education, public safety, and the economy. I’m happy to report that this budget secures a major win for working families with our new Working Pennsylvanians Tax Credit. It provides additional funding for childcare and for programs to help our food banks, as folks are struggling

with the suspension of SNAP benefits by the Trump Administration. Affordability for Pennsylvanians is the throughline of this budget.”

The key settlement of the deal was that PA Senate Democrats made for Senate Republicans to end the ongoing attempt since 2019 to make Pennsylvania the only major fossil fuel-producing state to limit the carbon emissions companies are permitted to emit.

The deal marks the end of the four-month impasse since the June 30 budget deadline, which delayed approximately \$5.3 billion in funding payments to Pennsylvania public schools, according to the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

At a press conference following the signing, Shapiro told reporters at a press release conference following the budget’s signing, “I could have stood here on

June 30 and brought you a budget that looked really different, that didn’t have education funding, that didn’t focus on our workforce development, didn’t have a tax credit for working families,” he said. “The key when you’re in these positions — I know the leaders feel the same way — is staying at the table.”

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Current Events

Steps Made Towards Further Addressing The Mental Health Crisis in School Settings

Timothy Ditro
Centurion Staff

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that as of 2024, “4 in 10 students had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness” and “2 in 10 students seriously considered attempting suicide and nearly 1 in 10 did attempt suicide.”

In today’s age were opening up about mental health has been highly destigmatized and often encouraged. Has come with the ever-increasing need for mental health professionals inside and outside of schools. Pennsylvania Republican Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a longtime advocate for children’s mental health, recently helped lead a bipartisan resolution designating the week of Nov. 3, 2025, as National School Psychology Week.

Ultimately, the resolution is intended to honor the professionals responsible with fostering a safe learning environment for students-- which can help lead them to

overcome barriers and reach full their potential. “Our nation’s future is shaped in our classrooms,” says Fitzpatrick, who argues that those supporting “the emotional and cognitive development of our children” are indispensable to the mission of supporting students’ welfare to the extent of conditioning them for great potential.

Assisting Fitzpatrick in pushing measures which would honor such workers essential to their schools’ learning environment are California Democratic Reps. Jimmy Panetta and Congresswoman Judy Chu—of whom is a trained psychologist and former educator.

“As the only psychologist in Congress,” Chu says, “I remain committed to pushing for additional support to address this shortage and ensure every student can thrive.” She goes onto explaining the necessity for these positions be filled, considering the recent youth mental health crisis as well as the national shortage of such professionals, ultimately causes a loss in resources

for students to seek.

In addition to congressional officials, the resolution has earned other supporters such as Dr. Julia Szarko, who is a resident of Bucks County and a personal friend of Fitzpatrick.

In a recent Nov. 4 press release Szarko is quoted as saying, “Being a school psychologist is not just a career, it’s a calling to invest in the well-being of students, educators, and communities every day.” She insists that such individuals are key in ensuring students’ mental health needs are met by breaking down the possible barriers they are facing. She elaborates: “In recent years, that work has become even more challenging as our nation faces a significant shortage of school psychologists.”

Another major supporter for these measures is the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), an organization representing over 35,000 school psychologists that work as well as provide support for educators, students



Photo courtesy of Unplash

and families. The organization’s president Shawna Rader Kelly is thankful for those such as Fitzpatrick and his colleagues in Congress for their support, stating that the NASP is grateful for “the leadership of this resolution designating National School Psychology Week and recognition of the ways that school psychologists take an active role in helping their com-

munities determine paths to learning, growth, and overall well-being that meet students’ unique needs.” She goes onto state that she and her colleagues look forward to “continuing our work with Congress to address the nationwide shortage of school psychologists so we can meet the needs of all children.”

Disappearances Continue to Destroy Hope in Mexico



Monument in Mexico City used to honor the disappeared
Photo courtesy of WikiCommons

Cristopher Ramirez
Centurion Staff

Missing persons cases are a major problem in Mexico, which are often linked to criminal organizations or being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

According to Mexico’s National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons (RNPNO), there are about 118,000 active cases of disappearances, but that number may not be entirely reliable, considering the number of cases that go unreported due to fear or lack of trust in the government. A large number of the missing persons cases in general are from 2007 onwards, which coincides with the rise of more unpredictable and militarized cartels.

Comparing the number of cases in Mexico to the United States, there are over 25,000 open missing persons cases, according to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons Systems (NamUs). This means Mexico has more than four times the number of active

missing persons cases than the U.S.

Estefani Tovar, a 25-year-old secondary school teacher from the outskirts of the city of Celaya, has had a couple of students who have had a parent disappear. “The mother of one of my students disappeared two years ago. It left him broken, and he doesn’t trust people anymore because there wasn’t much done to find her. It’s a lamentable situation, and it made it difficult for him to learn,” Tovar said.

Tovar continues, “An important point is how much people lose hope because of these cases and how much they don’t believe in good people anymore. Kids are left without parents and are put in a vulnerable position. Meanwhile, we don’t know what institutions are supposed to handle all of these cases.”

A common trend is the distrust of police officers when looking for missing persons in Mexico. Some

people think they don’t do anything, or they think the officers are in on it due to corruption.

Mayra B., a 24-year-old dental assistant from Celaya, is not fond of how the police handle missing persons cases. “A person is supposed to be considered missing after 72 hours, and even after that, they (the police) don’t go out to look. They don’t show you that they’re doing anything at all. They’re very insignificant in that aspect,” she says.

A notorious case that fueled the distrust of public officials was in 2014, when 43 students who attended Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College disappeared, inciting massive outrage and a huge cover-up by the Mexican government. The local police, military, and a local cartel were allegedly involved. What happened to a majority of the students is still unknown.

Maribel A., a 52-year-old

originally from the state of Tamaulipas, says, “Sometimes people are kidnapped to be put to work for criminal groups, and the police don’t do anything because they’re certainly in the same line of work.”

“When my daughter was in high school, she walked out one day after school and saw people in a truck threatening a group of other students. A young man from the group was taken right in front of her. He was only a little bit younger than her.”

Maribel continues, “She came home crying and frantic. She was so scared, and to this day, we don’t know what happened to him. We don’t know whether he was forced to join a criminal group or if he was murdered.”

Across Mexico, there are groups, most notably the Madres Buscadoras (Searching Mothers), dedicated to finding missing persons. Although many of the people in these groups have lost hope that they would find their loved ones alive, finding the bodies gives them the closure they desperately need after going through that insurmountable pain.

Both Mayra and Tovar said one of the first things they would do if a loved one went missing is contact one of the dedicated search groups and spread the news through social media.

One of Mayra’s cousins disappeared, and she detailed how scared she was due to his alleged involve-

ment in the drug business and the state he was found in. “He got involved in drugs, and one day, one of his sisters reported him missing. There was nothing for four months, until his body was found with the head chopped off,” she said.

“A lot of the time, you don’t know what to wait for, if the person is already, or if you should have that hope that they’re still alive. It’s very complicated, and it’s hard to know where to look. Then there are the rumors, no matter if they’re innocent or not, people will always say that they were involved with drugs,” Mayra said.

Tovar suggested that the Mexican government needs to work with the families, not just to help with finding the missing, but also to help them deal with the emotions associated with losing someone in that manner. “The government needs to find a way to keep us safe. Not only that, there should be social organizations to help families and kids deal with what they’re going through. It all starts with education,” she says.

As of May 2025, RNPNO has already reported almost 12,000 missing persons cases, with about half of them being active cases, so it seems that families in Mexico will continue to suffer from these disappearances that have not slowed down. On August 30, thousands protested across Mexico for the International Day of the Disappeared.

Bucks Seals Deal With Wrexham University



President Jones and Member of Parliament Ruth Jones



President Jones after receiving a gift from the British Delegation



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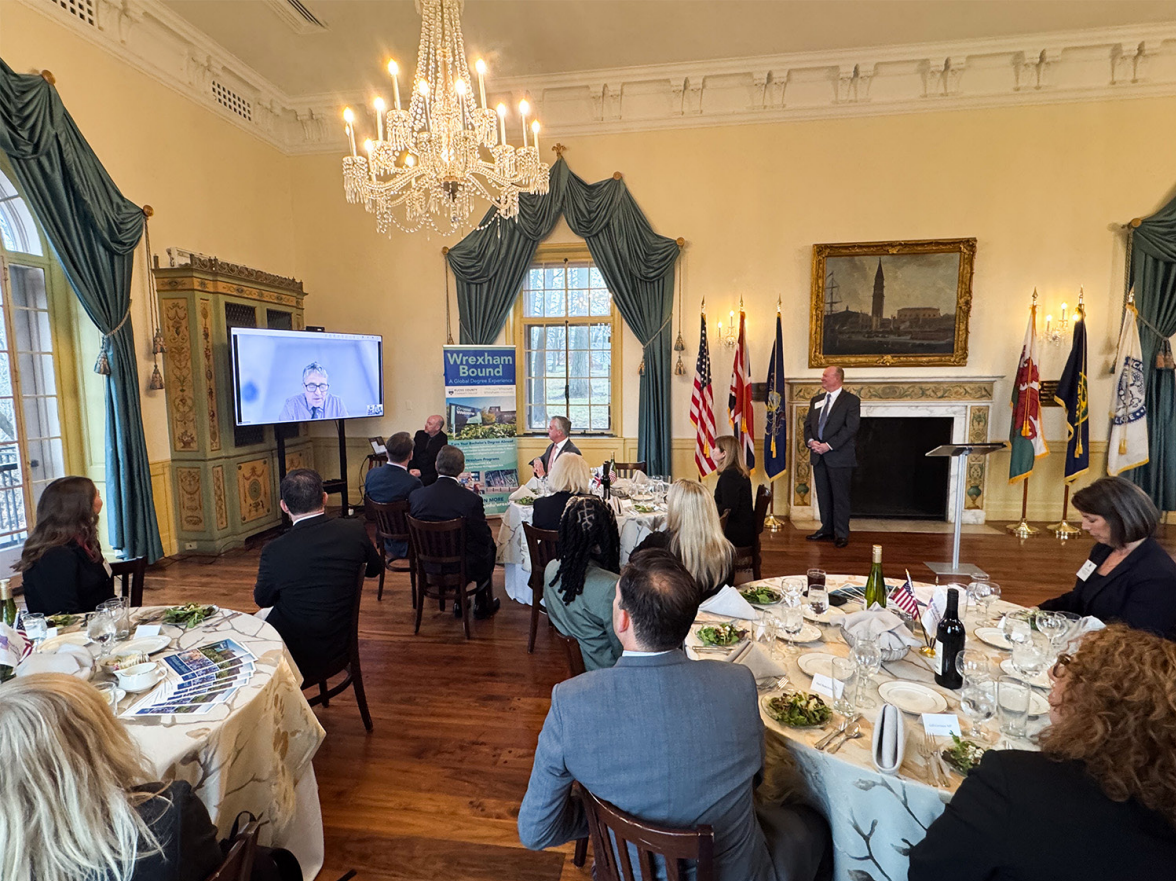
State Senator Steven Santarsiero



Bucks Officials Greg Luce and Tracy Timby



Parliament members Andrew Ranger, Ruth Jones, Dr. Jones



Dr. Joe Yates, Vice-Chancellor of Wrexham University, Via Zoom



Board of Bucks County Commissioners member Bob Harvey