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# Local Love, Plus Happy 5th Anniversary For Newtown City Lifestyle

This time of year, I find myself torn between resisting the commercialization of another greeting card and indulging in all the sweet excuses to enjoy the season.

To celebrate Valentine's or Galentine's out or enjoy a cozy night at home? To buy a card or just say a kind word? I usually land somewhere in between. We'll each arrive at different answers based on our preferences and personalities, but what we hold in common is an opportunity to make sure those around us know we love them. Regardless of how you choose to celebrate, we hope the pages of this month's magazine will help you do just that as we highlight what's to love in our local community.

We hope you do join us for our Women's Wellness Huddle on Feb. 13 (see Events page), as co-hosted by *Newtown City Lifestyle* and barre3 Newtown.

While we teeter between the chill of February winter and the excitement of spring, we hope you'll be inspired to take a moment to come together with the people in your life. The ones in your home and on your street. In our neighborhood.

This concept of "Love local" means local businesses, but it also means loving what's near. We've always believed what we can do together is so much more than what we can do apart. And we continue to see that demonstrated through the many stories told in these pages month after month.

We're proud to share that we published our **61st edition** and celebrated our **5th anniversary** during this past December. (See pictures on City Scene pages.) We send love and gratitude to our readers, all the ad partners who make it possible for us to compose and publish hyper-local content, to our editor, Julie, who keeps it all together, and lastly our writers and photographers who are our feet on the street, along with our social media coordinator. Thanks for letting us be a part of the life you're building, whatever that may look like. Our hope is that we inspire you to love it just a bit more than you did before.

Happy February!

DANA WEISSENBERG, PUBLISHER  
@NEWTOWNCITYLIFESTYLE



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# NEWTOWN

CITY LIFESTYLE™

February 2025

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**Proverbs 3:5-6**

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# inside *the issue*

FEBRUARY 2025 | LOVE LOCAL



## Featured

### 14 Secure Romantic, All-Around Authentic Meals

Ristorante LUCCA: Fall In Love With Exceptional Menu Choices, Magical Music And Fine Dining Service

### 18 Pickleball Passion Year-Round

The Picklr: "Where Pros Are Made" At Brand-New, Premium Indoor Courts In Newtown

### 24 Valentine's Day Recipes

Consider Serving Special Oysters On The Half Shell And Strawberry Whip

### 28 Vonderful Goot 'Dutch Blitz'

This Highly Interactive, Energetic, Family-Friendly Card Game Hails From Bucks County

## On the Cover

Strawberries are a traditional Valentine's Day food for many reasons, including their heart shape, red color and association with love and romance. Even in ancient Rome, wild strawberries symbolized Venus, the goddess of love.

Photography:  
Becky Diamond

## Departments

- 4 Lifestyle Letter
- 8 City Scene
- 12 Business Monthly
- 14 Chef's Selection FOOD + BEVERAGE
- 18 Get Active SPORTS + RECREATION
- 22 Chef's Selection FOOD + BEVERAGE
- 24 Culinary Creations FOOD + BEVERAGE
- 28 Trend Setter ENTERTAINMENT
- 30 How To LIFE + CULTURE
- 34 Events

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FEBRUARY 2025

# city scene

WHERE NEIGHBORS CAN SEE AND BE SEEN



1: White Christmas Party was held to celebrate milestone 5th anniversary of Newtown City Lifestyle magazine. 2: New BodyRok owners, John and Kimberly Patten; Tom and Caroline Erikson; and Debra Sparks. 3: John and Renie Gibbons, Jennifer Fife, Denise McPoyle, Flavia Danastorg. 4: Flavia Danastorg; Amali Elabed, Piccolo Tratoria co-owner; Roxanne Fitzgerald, Nothing Bundt Cakes owner. 5: Heather and Rich Lazar, United Veterans Roofing; Dana Weissenberg, Newtown City Lifestyle owner/publisher. 6: Tracy Nucera and Kate Golden, co-founders, The Well Lounge in Newtown. 7: April Amodie and Jen Ottles.

*Photography by Brian Wagner / BWags Photography*



8: Dana Weissenberg; Nancy and Matt Shiff. 9: Danielle Brody Wellness crew. Event included food, cocktails, music, dancing and fundraising for Shamrock Reins. 10: Sara Micklas and Deanna Kolb, and members from Salon LC. 11: Tracy Nucera, Kaitlin Leahy, Shannon O'Connor, Lindsay Poffarl from the Well Lounge. 12: NCL's anniversary party was held at Piccolo Trattoria. The magazine's first edition launched December 2019. 13: Christine Toy-Dragoni and Flavia Danastorg. 14: Mark Gatta, Lindsay Levitas, Volan Andic.

*Photography by Brian Wagner / BWags Photography*

CONTINUED >



15: Anna and Elisha, founders and hosts of 'We Have GOT to Talk'; Dana Weissenberg (middle). 16: Roe Masso, RMP Events & Photography owner; Amali Elabed, Piccolo Trattoria co-owner. 17: Representing nonprofit fundraiser beneficiary Shamrock Reins was Tori Aughe (speaking) and Dakota Sheehan.

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# business *monthly*

A ROUNDUP OF NEWS FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES



Photography by Impeccably Designed Homes by Donna Hoffman

## Leader, Team Of Local Luxury Interior Design Firm Earn Awards

Donna Hoffman and the Impeccably Designed Homes team recently received three prestigious, [correction from December 2024 edition] first-place design awards from the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) in the Entertainment/Living Room, Bedroom and Home Office categories. Donna is deemed a design thought leader in *Forbes*, *Real Simple*, TV and radio. She's also called the "nation's No. 1 design coach," after founding [TheInteriorDesignAdvocate.com](http://TheInteriorDesignAdvocate.com) online courses that empower DIYers and design professionals internationally.



Scan to read more



## Guinness World Record For Largest "Macarena" Dance?

Newtown Business Association asked everyone at the McCaffrey's Newtown Holiday Parade to gather in the middle of Sycamore Street after the parade to perform the dance moves associated with the 1996 Bayside Boys' Macarena song. The current record for the largest "Macarena" dance stands at 2,219 people, set in 2011 at England's Eggbuckland Community College. At press time, evidence from Newtown's record attempt, including drone-based videos, was submitted to Guinness World Records for review.



Photography by Holy Family University

## Holy Family University Set To Renovate Building, Expand New Offerings

Holy Family University received a \$1.5 million state-funded investment for expanding the Newtown West campus. This transformative project will feature a state-of-the-art nursing simulation corridor, biotechnology labs, Business Entrepreneurship Center and AI/cybersecurity programs. University officials thanked Sen. Steve Santarsiero and Rep. Perry Warren for supporting and advancing this innovative vision for students and the Bucks County community. The money will be used to convert an existing building on University Drive, formerly used by LaSalle University

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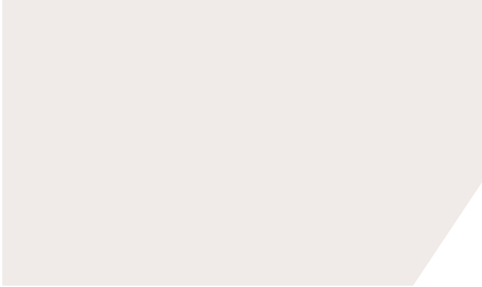
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Ristorante LUCCA Executive  
Chef Maurizio Peccolo.



Risotto Parmesan

# SECURE *romantic*, ALL-AROUND *authentic* MEALS

With gentle piano melodies, decadent dinners, delectable drink options and a goal of VIP treatment, Ristorante LUCCA & Piano Lounge has the makings of romantic Valentine's Day meals.

At the best restaurants, VIP treatment begins long before food lands at the table. According to managing partner William Burris, the Valentine's Day dining experience at Ristorante LUCCA is all about setting the scene for a perfect night.

"Each couple will be greeted with a rose to begin their special evening with us," William says. "World-class musicians capture the room with awe-inspiring talent and ambiance that is evocative of a more luxurious era."

The restaurant, named in honor of the Tuscan region's medieval, jewel city along the Serchio River, hosts musical talent every night, not just for romantic holidays. Typical performers include local musicians, such as Dean Schneider and Steve Kramer on piano, as well as a weekly jazz group on Thursdays.

CONTINUED >

*Ristorante LUCCA: Fall In Love With Exceptional Menu Choices, Magical Music And Fine Dining Service*

ARTICLE BY MADELINE MARRIOTT | PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY RISTORANTE LUCCA & PIANO LOUNGE



Limon Cello Cake



Dean Schneider, Ristorante LUCCA musical and entertainment director.

In addition to the regular à la carte menu, which features signature items, such as the Pollo alla Lucca served in a white wine sauce with olives, capers and cherry tomatoes, Valentine's Day at Ristorante LUCCA will include a prix fixe menu curated by executive chef Maurizio Peccolo.

Maurizio, who learned to cook in Venice kitchens, has been named one of the best Italian chefs in the world by the Italian embassy, and has earned the honor of serving as a judge for the Tiramisu World Cup.

Wines available to accompany meals are curated by the restaurant's sommelier Daniel Bossi. The staff's collection of more than 300 bottles, nearly two dozen of which are exclusive to LUCCA, is "the most enviable, robust wine cellar of any restaurant in all of New Jersey," confirms William.

It's not just wine, either: LUCCA boasts a wide menu of cocktails created by a staff of talented mixologists, including seasonal specials, variations on the classic espresso martini and non-alcoholic offerings.

For a glimpse behind the curtain, a few dishes are prepared tableside, including a classic Caesar salad for two, a pan-seared and filleted dover sole and cacio e pepe, a traditional pasta dish made with pecorino Romano cheese and freshly grated black pepper.

With a separate vegan menu and gluten-free options available, LUCCA strives to have the perfect dish for guests of all dietary restrictions.

"Service to excess is standard at Ristorante LUCCA," William says. "From table-side preparation, to expertly guided wine pairings, to our emphasis on remembering the subtle details about our valued VIP guests, we make every experience at Ristorante LUCCA unforgettable."

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## Pickleball Passion Year-Round


*The Picklr: "Where Pros Are Made" At Brand-New, Premium Indoor Courts In Newtown*



Ready to get low, dink, smash, flick, poach, slice and enhance footwork during 2025?

Eleven, state-of-the-art indoor pickleball courts were just created at The Picklr in the Newtown Shopping Center, next to retailer Staples. The 20 West Road location was the former Bed, Bath & Beyond store. It is the Picklr's first location in Pennsylvania.

Picklr Newtown co-owners John Williams and Tom Bannar indicate the new location will bring "an unparalleled pickleball experience" to local players. Its 2,800-square-foot mezzanine features a community hangout room, conference room, private bathroom and grab-and-go food or beverage options. At press time, the Picklr was slated to open during January.



"As former Planet Fitness franchisees, we believe The Picklr will change the pickleball industry forever, bringing indoor high-end facilities at an affordable price for all ages and skill levels," John says.

Arnold Poblete, The Picklr Newtown club coordinator, says the location also offers professional-grade outdoor surfacing, pro shop, private event area, league play, tournaments and drop-in play, court reservations, locker rooms and showers.

"My favorite part of pickleball is its social aspect. It's so fun to play, and I love how it can create and foster a tight knit community with everyone that plays," says Arnold.

Tom says Picklr annual founding memberships start at \$1,595, and include adhering to a code of conduct that covers fair play, safety, behavioral expectations and sportsmanship. Leagues, open play tournaments, clinics and guest passes are part of that membership.

*Fun Facts:* Pickle is a warning shouted by a server to alert all players that they are about to serve. Pickled is the equivalent to getting "skunked"

in other sports, scoring zero points in a whole game. If losing a pickleball game 11-0, one has been "pickled." An Erne is when a player hits the ball over the non-volley zone, also known as the kitchen, and lands outside the court.

In addition to Pennsylvania, Utah-based company The Picklr also has facilities in Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The Picklr founder and owner Jorge Barragan since January 2021 states that the company partners with Pickleball Inc. and Super Bowl Champion Drew Brees. He says the business has more than 275 locations across America with plans to go international. "It's all because of people who believed in our vision. Some of our executives today are people who showed up at the grand opening of our first location. Pickleball is that powerful in connecting people," he adds.

[ThePicklr.com/location/Newtown](https://ThePicklr.com/location/Newtown)

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# smart SWEETS



The beginning of the year is packed with inspiration and motivation to get back on track after a sweet-filled holiday season. It can feel extreme, and it also can be depleting to cut oneself off from everything indulgent after weeks of eating favorite sweet and savory recipes. For sugar lovers who believe going cold-turkey feels intimidating or overwhelming, nutrition-packed desserts are a great way to stick to healthy food goals without the guilt.

This recipe is a classic favorite. If you cut the bars into 16 pieces, they are around 270 calories each. They are very filling, packed with healthy goodies and taste oh so delicious. If you can't finish them yourself (it makes a lot!), bring samples along to your next workout class to share the love. Your accountability group will be asking you for the recipe! These come in handy for a quick breakfast on-the-go or an afternoon snack. You'll want to taste these out of the oven once they cool a bit... simply scrumptious.

*Combine:*

- 1 cup wheat flour
- 2 cups cooked quinoa, cooled
- 2 cups oats
- 2/3 cup of your choice of chopped nuts

- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 2/3 cup raisins
- **Optional:** chocolate chips as desired
- **Optional:** add additional seeds or nuts on hand such as pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, etc.

**Notes:** Boil quinoa at a 2:1 water to rice ratio. For estimating, 1/3 cup of uncooked quinoa yields 1 cup cooked quinoa.

*Add this mixture slowly to combine:*

- 2 eggs
- 2/3 cup peanut butter, almond butter or sunflower butter
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 banana
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes, or until the edges get golden brown. Bake in a 9x13-inch glass dish. After they cool, slice and enjoy. Keep them covered to maintain freshness.

Quinoa **BREAKFAST** Bars



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Local content

# VALENTINE'S DAY RECIPES

ARTICLE BY BECKY DIAMOND, AUTHOR,  
"THE GILDED AGE COOKBOOK"

*Consider Serving Special  
Oysters On The Half Shell  
And Strawberry Whip*

Deliciously briny and juicy, dripping with the salty taste of the sea, oysters have long been a prized delicacy, especially from the Delaware Bay. Throughout the nineteenth century, a lavish meal always featured oysters as a first course, with oysters on the half shell a particular favorite. Often a choice appetizer today, they're a perfect way to kick off a Valentine's spread.



Oysters On Half Shell (from *The Gilded Age Cookbook*) / Photo by Heather Raub of FrontRoom Images; Food Styling by Dan Macey of Dantasticfood

**INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4):**

- 24 oysters
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges
- Chopped shallots or prepared horseradish
- Salt
- Pepper

Oysters On Half Shell (from *The Gilded Age Cookbook*) / Photo by Heather Raub of FrontRoom Images; Food Styling by Dan Macey of Dantasticfood

# OYSTERS ON THE HALF SHELL

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Wash, shuck oysters (or ask fishmonger to shuck).
2. Remove and discard upper shell. Detach each oyster from lower shell and set back inside shell.
3. Arrange six oysters on each of four round plates or shallow bowls filled with crushed ice. Place a lemon wedge in the middle of each dish.
4. Put remaining lemon wedges in a small bowl and serve with oysters, alongside chopped shallots or horseradish and salt and pepper.

CONTINUED >



# STRAWBERRY WHIP

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 (16-ounce) package fresh strawberries, washed, hulled
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 egg whites (room temperature)
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ cup powdered sugar



*Photo by Heather Raub of FrontRoom Images; Food Styling by Dan Macey of Dantasticfood*

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Place strawberries and lemon juice in large, deep bowl. Gently crush berries with fork or pastry cutter until they're a chunky, soupy consistency. Set aside.
2. Beat egg whites in large bowl with electric mixer on low until foamy, about 3-4 minutes. Add cream of tartar; increase speed to medium, continue beating until whites form softly curling peaks. Slowly add sugar; increase speed to medium-high until whites form fluffy, firm peaks that curl slightly at tips. Add strawberries; mix until combined.
3. Spoon into individual dishes and garnish with mint.



*Strawberry Whip / Photo and recipe adaptation by Becky Diamond*



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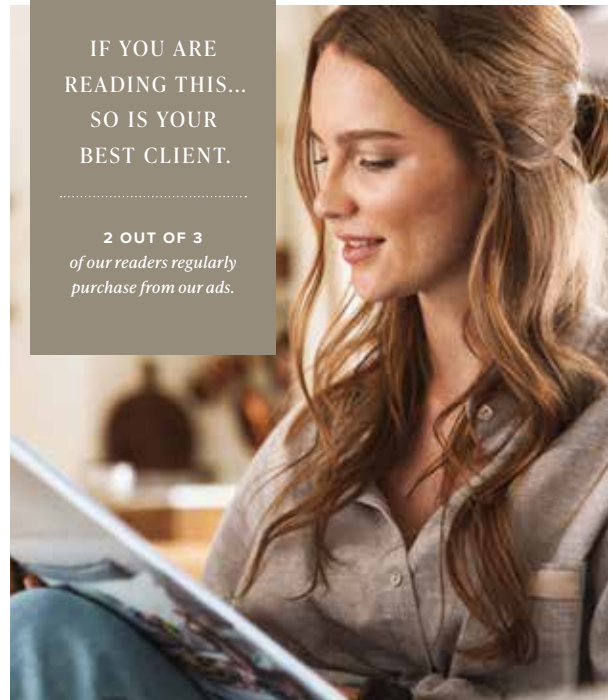


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# VONDERFUL GOOT 'DUTCH BLITZ'

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY JULIE BROWN PATTON



## This Highly Interactive, Energetic, Family-Friendly Card Game Hails From Bucks County

Looking for fast, competitive entertainment? Test skills, smarts and speed via a worldwide popular card game that originated right in Bucks County.

Named Dutch Blitz, it started as a family-owned-and-operated business, and remains that today. It was created during the 1960s by the late Werner Ernst George Muller, a German immigrant and optometrist living in Bucks County. He reportedly made the game to help his children learn colors and numbers faster.

Today, Dutch Blitz fans can be found in every corner of the world. Current co-owners since 2010 are spouses and Erdenheim residents Mary and Mike Fisher, who relay that the game can be purchased at 200-plus locations in 11 different countries. It's also sold via Barnes & Noble, Target, Amazon and "mom and pop organizations."

Three generations of the Fisher family now are involved in the game's operations and enthusiasm. Mary, who at the time worked with a company associated with Werner, eventually got the chance to purchase the game. Now both retired, she and Mike run the operations full time. Mary says she still talks to Werner's son a couple times a year to maintain that connection.

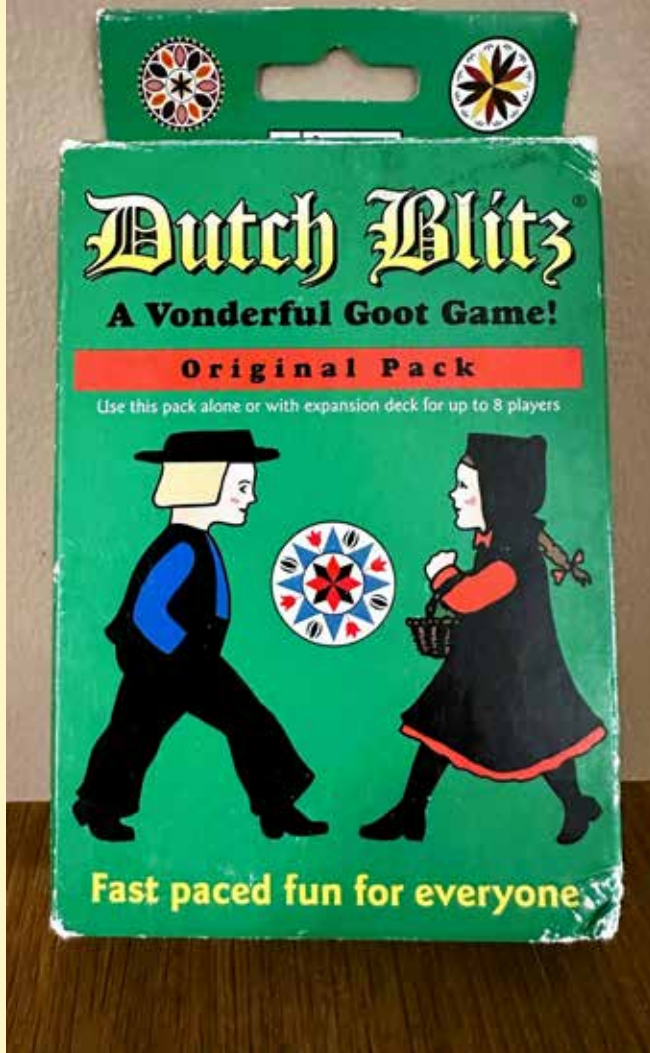
"Now our grandchildren, with the oldest one 8, are starting to play the game, but our adult children (35-39 years old) are truly the champs of it," Mary confides.

Mike says they launched a Dutch Blitz mobile app during November 2024. "Currently, app users are playing with three computers, but we're working toward the program allowing people to play with friends located anywhere."

Mike adds that college students even play full-contact Dutch Blitz, with huge cards they've created, along with unique and modified rules. "People post or send us examples, and it's hilarious how much they get into it. During Greek Week, they set up tournaments and move Dutch Blitz armies around."

Regardless who wins, Mike says the fun is in the Dutch Blitz journey.

[DutchBlitz.com](http://DutchBlitz.com)





# top 10 tips to find forever love in 2025

*Advice Editorial: Professional Matchmaker Expands Into New Hope With Second Office*

ARTICLE BY MANDEE HAMMERSTEIN

VIP matchmaker Brigitte Weil, acknowledged for her personalized matchmaking services tailored to busy professionals, shares her expert advice to help singles find love through her "Top 10 Tips for Finding Forever Love in 2025" guide for those ready to approach dating with purpose and positivity.

## 1. Shift to Positive Mindset.

Approach dating as an exciting opportunity to learn about yourself, meet new people and clarify what truly matters.

## 2. Be Authentic.

Honesty is sexy! Pretending to be someone you're not only leads to misunderstandings and missed opportunities.

## 3. Ask Interesting Questions.

Spark engaging conversations by asking unique questions like, "What's your all-time favorite movie?" "What's

something most people don't know about you?" Move beyond standard topics to build real connections.

## 4. Be Open-Minded.

Don't dismiss a potential match if they don't check all boxes. Focus on reasons to like them instead of dwelling on perceived shortcomings. Leave room for surprises.

## 5. First Impressions Matter.

Put effort into appearance. Make eye contact, arrive on time and skip athleisure for polished, confident looks.

## 6. Date NATO/Not Attached to Outcome.

Let dates unfold naturally without forcing agendas. Being present and open to possibilities can lead to unexpected rewards.

## 7. Separate Wants from Needs.

Identify what truly matters in a partner. Is physical appearance as import-

ant as kindness? Clarifying priorities focuses on meaningful qualities.

## 8. No Chemistry? No Problem!

Sparks don't always fly instantly. If you like the person, exchange numbers and consider building friendship or becoming each other's dating accountability partner.

## 9. Break Routine.

Switch up habits: try new coffee shops, attend different events or explore unfamiliar settings to expand social circles.

## 10. Practice Makes Perfect.

Dating is a skill that improves with intention and self-awareness. Each date brings one closer to understanding and finding a partner who aligns with your values.

[BrigitteWeil.com](http://BrigitteWeil.com)



*"Dating in today's world can be challenging, especially for professionals juggling demanding schedules," says Brigitte. "But with the right mindset and approach, finding a meaningful connection is absolutely possible. My tips are designed to help singles shift their perspective, fine-tune their dating strategy, and ultimately find the love they deserve."*



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FEBRUARY 2025

# events

A SELECTION OF UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

FEBRUARY 4TH

## Soul Custody Live Performance

*Bowman's Tavern / 6:00 PM*

Head to New Hope for a 3-hour performance by the duo or trio of Soul Custody. This band delivers an eclectic mix of cover tunes, rock, soul, R&B and blues. They've been based in Bucks County since 2007. Enjoy Ed and Eli on the Baby Grand piano that resides in the bar area. Visit [BowmansTavernRestaurant.com](http://BowmansTavernRestaurant.com) to check food menu options.

FEBRUARY 6TH

## Lecture: Restoring Nature to Restore Ourselves With Tania Roa

*Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve Hosted But Virtual Event / 2:00 PM*

Tania Roa is part of Soul Fire Farm's Speakers Collective, an Afro-Indigenous centered community farm and training center dedicated to uprooting racism and seeding sovereignty in the food system. This 1-hour lecture is slated to be held virtually using Zoom. Program fee is \$15. Zoom invitations will be sent to the email used to register for the event via [education@bhwp.org](mailto:education@bhwp.org).

FEBRUARY 13TH

## Women's Wellness Huddle (Free Attendance, Community Donation Encouraged)

*Barre3 Langhorne (Newtown), Summit Shopping Center / 6:30 PM*

Colleen Faltot will share tools for tackling stress. Join a results-driven, empowering evening about practices to calm the mind, ease tension in the body and build resilience. Nervous system regulation is about helping bodies shift out of 'fight or flight' mode and finding a state of deep rest and safety. Register online: [Eventbrite.com/e/Womens-Wellness-Huddle-barre3-Newtown-Langhorne-tickets](https://Eventbrite.com/e/Womens-Wellness-Huddle-barre3-Newtown-Langhorne-tickets); donations encouraged for 'A Woman's Place' organization.

FEBRUARY 19TH

## February Book Club

*Washington Crossing Historic Park Hosted But Virtual Event / 5:30 PM*

Museum Curator Kimberly McCarty will lead a discussion of the book club's next selection: *The Great New York Fire of 1776: A Lost Story of the American Revolution* by Benjamin Carp, chapters 8-11. Book club meetings are free and open to all. Members should provide their own books. This meeting will be virtual using Zoom; register on [Events.DCNR.PA.gov](https://Events.DCNR.PA.gov).

FEBRUARY 23RD

## BCRR Staggered Start Run

*Tyler State Park / 9:00 AM*

Dive into an epic journey with this unique staggered start format, where personal challenges are truly individual. Whether a seasoned athlete or weekend warriors, this series offers a fresh, dynamic approach to winter racing. Meet like-minded enthusiasts, push limits and bask in the exhilarating post-race glow. Runners gather at 8:45 a.m.; leave at 9 a.m.; pancakes served at 10 a.m.

FEBRUARY 28TH

## Comedian Rich Vos

*The Newtown Theatre / 8:30 PM*

Rich Vos has four specials on Comedy Central and more than 100 television appearances. He has been seen on HBO, HBO Max, Netflix, Showtime and Starz. He's a two-time writer for the Academy Awards. Tickets include one drink (beer, wine, canned cocktail or nonalcoholic options). All tickets are general admission. The show concludes at 10 p.m.

The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a modern, two-story house with a swimming pool. The house has white walls, dark window frames, and a dark roof. A swimming pool is visible in the foreground, reflecting the sky. The landscaping includes various plants and a wooden bench near the pool. The text is overlaid on a dark, semi-transparent background on the left side of the image.

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