

IN

Norwin

HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

● Norwin Knights Baseball Team
Competes on Improved,
State-of-the-Art Field



School District News

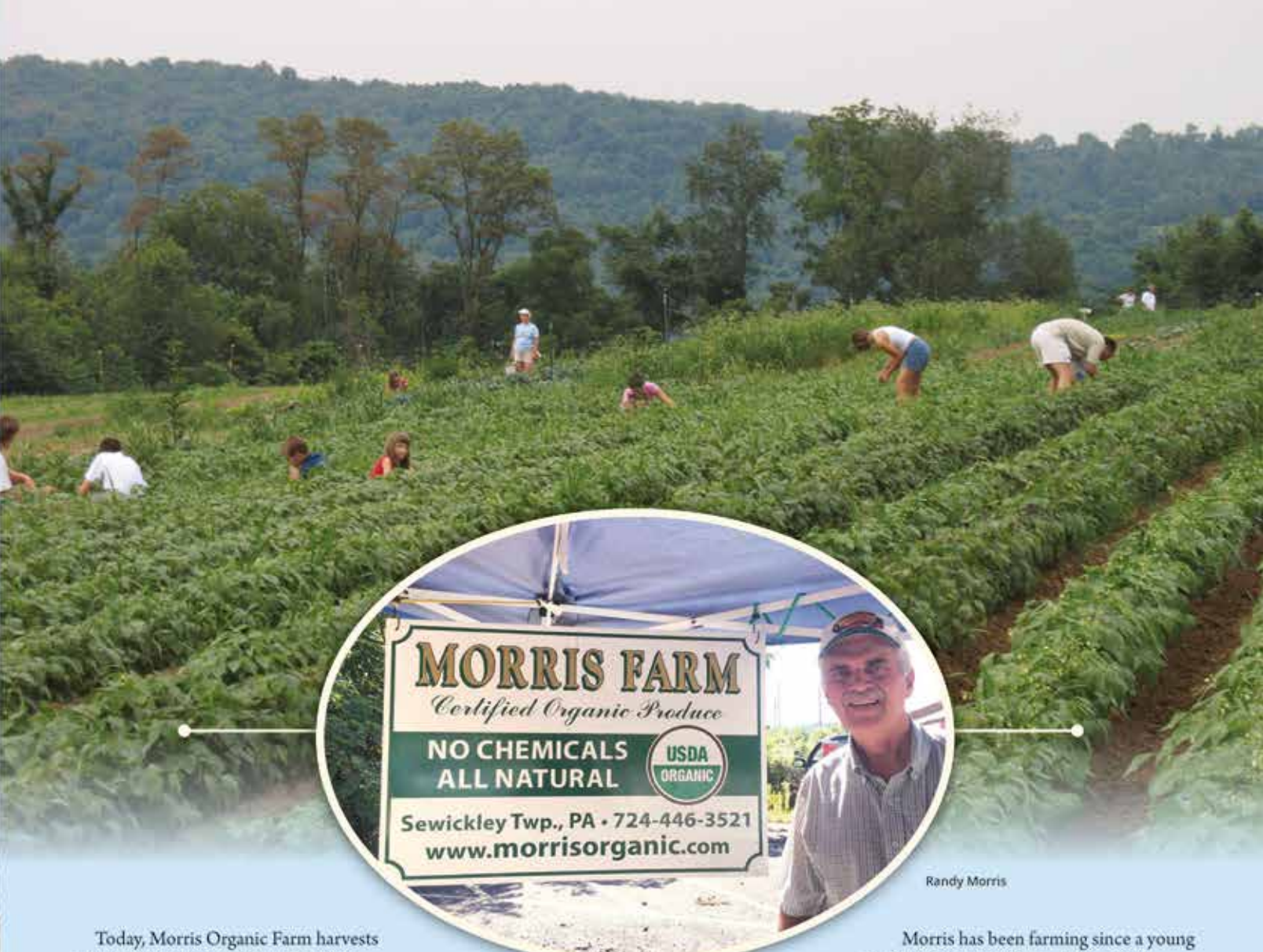
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Randy Morris

Today, Morris Organic Farm harvests nearly 50 types of produce, including different varieties of beans, peppers, potatoes, leafy greens, squash, tomatoes, onions, cucumbers and melons. He also grinds and sells his own whole-wheat flour and cornmeal.

During the summer months, Morris Organic Farm becomes a pick-your-own-produce farm, and customers are welcome to visit during weekday evening hours or on Saturday afternoons to harvest their own produce. In addition to running the farm, Morris works full time as a manufacturing representative, so having customers come to the farm to pick their own produce eliminates much of the time and costs associated with picking, sorting, washing and packaging items, he says.

"Not only do we save a lot of time and money, but our customers get exactly what they want, in the quantity that they want. It works out very well," he explains. "People like the fact that they can get an assortment at the farm, instead of doing their weekly shopping at the grocery store. Produce tastes best right after you pick it."

The farm attracts customers from all over the Pittsburgh area and beyond; some of his customers travel from as far away as Johnstown and Seven Springs.

In addition to inviting customers to the farm, Morris sells his produce at area farmers markets. He runs the Farm Fresh Farm Market in Irwin, which is held on Saturday mornings from June through October. His farm also operates a stand at the Murrysville Farmers Market on Thursday afternoons from June through September.

Morris has been farming since a young age. Growing up in Plum—he's a 1971 graduate of Plum High School—his family had a backyard garden. When he moved to the Norwin area after college, he farmed on property off of Barnes Lake Road, then near Indian Lake and in nearby Sewickley Township before settling on his current location. From the beginning, he says, he wanted to "do things correctly" and follow the guidelines and procedures that would lead to organic certification. His farm is certified by Pennsylvania Certified Organic, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"When you eat produce that's shipped in from other places, it may look nice, but it's nutritionally void," Morris notes. "With conventional farming, plants aren't getting the nutrients and minerals that they need to be fully nutritional. The organic matter in our soil creates microbes that help our plants grow and thrive."

Customers have responded to this message in kind. The farm is full of activity during the summer months, requiring extra help. And while some of his methods have become mechanized, much of the work still requires the toil of human hands.

"The summertime allows for extra daylight, which helps, but we still need a few part-time employees and a lot of volunteers," he says.

Outside of normal summer visiting hours, Morris welcomes customers to make an appointment to visit the farm. Whole-wheat flour and cornmeal are sold year-round.

Morris Organic Farm is located at 110 Slebodnik Road, off of Mars Hill Road in Irwin. For more information, visit morrisorganic.com. ■



TROTT Takes Reading on the Trail

Public libraries inspire patrons to TROTT through local trails.

By Jennifer Brozak • Photos by Naomi Cross



Libraries throughout Westmoreland County want to encourage patrons to explore their offerings in an entirely new way—while taking in the splendor of local parks.

Through the Take Reading on the Trail (TROT) program, participants are invited to walk, bike or run on a different trail every Saturday morning throughout June and July. Each week, a representative from a local library will be on hand to greet patrons.

The nine-week program was founded last summer by Rostraver Public Library Director Naomi Cross as a way to promote all of the resources that local libraries have to offer. She enjoys spending time on the trails with her own family, she says, so she thought it would be a great idea to take the program countywide.

“We had a great response to the program last year, with one patron even attending all nine weeks,” says Cross. “It was a great learning experience for everyone.”

This summer, public libraries in Rostraver, Murrysville, Scottdale, Penn Area, Manor, Mount Pleasant, Delmont, Ligonier Valley and Norwin will participate in the program. Participants will explore a variety of trails across Westmoreland County, including the Great Allegheny Passage, the Coal and Coke Trail, Bushy Run Battlefield, the Ligonier Valley Trail, Duff Park and the Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve. Pets are welcome on some of the trails, and most are wheelchair accessible.

“The Trail TROT not only gives our patrons a chance to check out all of Westmoreland County’s amazing trails and parks, but also helps to spread the word about all of the resources we offer, in addition to print materials,” says Barbara Flynn, Norwin children’s librarian.

Westmoreland Library Network member libraries offer more than 800,000 items available to check out for free, including audio books. Digital books can be downloaded from local libraries onto mobile devices via the free Overdrive app, which is available through Amazon, the App Store or Google Play. Member libraries encourage program participants to download audiobooks to listen to while hiking the trails.

“We’re trying to present the idea that we’re more than just books,” says Cross. “This program helps us push our audio and digital books and lets participants get to know what our community has to offer.”

Participating libraries and dates are as follows. Please contact the host library for information about the specific trail on which to meet. ■

T.R.O.T.T. 2017 Take Reading on the Trail

- June 3** Penn Area..... Bushy Run
1253 Bushy Run Rd., Jeannette
- June 10** Norwin..... Braddock’s Trail Park
3699 Turner Valley Rd., Irwin
- June 17** Scottdale..... Coal & Coke Trail/Kendi Park
500 Mt. Pleasant Rd., Scottdale
- June 24** Delmont..... Westmoreland Heritage Trail
Athena Dr., Delmont
- July 1** Murrysville..... Murrysville Community Park
4056 Westertown Rd., Export
- July 8** Rostraver..... GAP/Cedar Creek Park
By Boat Launch
453 Evergreen Dr., Belle Vernon
- July 15** Manor..... Manor Park
Brush Creek Rd., Manor
- July 22** Mt. Pleasant..... Coal & Coke Trail
By American Architectural Salvage
23 W. Main St., Mt. Pleasant
- July 29** Ligonier..... Ligonier Valley Trail
Bouquet St., Ligonier





Keeping it Inline

Norwin Inline Hockey Club celebrates growing membership.

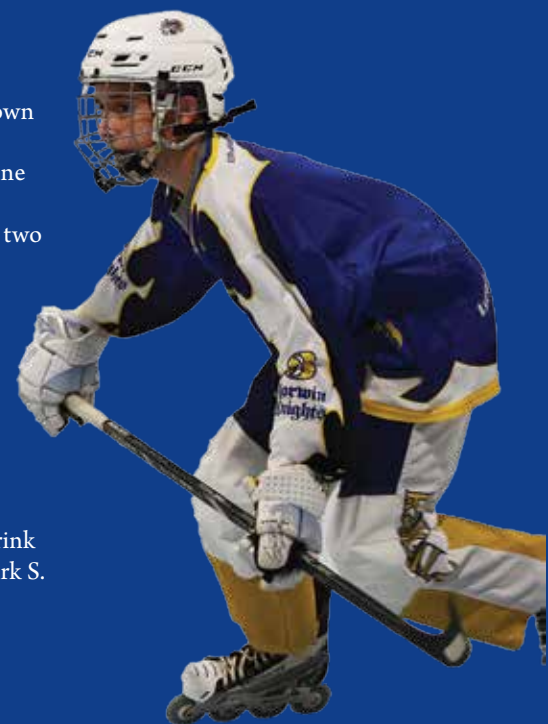
By Jennifer Brozak • Photos by Ray Adams

More than 20 years ago, a hodgepodge of youth athletes from surrounding communities banded together to form a Christian inline ball hockey league. Known as “Uv.Me&G,” which stood for “You versus Me and God,” the club has since morphed into an organized league that includes the rapidly growing Norwin Inline Hockey Club.

Today, around 30 players participate in NIHC, including one middle school team and two high school teams. While the majority of players come from Norwin schools, the team also welcomes students from other districts who don’t have their own club teams; this past year, for instance, the club included players from both Yough and Southmoreland school districts.

At the youth level, the club is co-ed and is part of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Roller Hockey League, which includes 98 teams from 18 school districts.

The original club, which began in 1996, was based in White Oak. Eventually, participants from McKeesport, North Huntingdon, Elizabeth, Manor, Penn Township, Export and Greensburg joined, and the league soon swelled to more than 400 players in kindergarten through ninth grade. They initially played in parking lots using a portable rink system before moving indoors to the old Blazers Fitness Center in Irwin and then the Kirk S. Nevin Arena in Greensburg.





The team now practices at Hot Shots Sports Arena in Mt. Pleasant, and also travels to Alpha Ice in Harmarville, Robert Morris University's Island Sports Center and the Bridgeville Roller Rink for games. The season begins in August with weekly practices. Games begin in September, and the season culminates with playoffs in March.

While the fundamentals of the game are similar, inline hockey and ice hockey have significant differences, according to Chris Recelle, the club's vice president.

"The game is faster because there is no 'off sides' or 'icing,' which keeps the game flow moving," he explains. "There is no contact or checking, and the padding for protection is lighter."

Inline hockey is played four-on-four, unlike ice hockey, which is five-on-five, not counting the goalie, and pucks are made of plastic, not rubber.


Players can join by registering through the website or in person at one of the club's open houses. Tryouts are not required, but coaches do evaluate player skills to ensure they're placed on the appropriate team. There are four skill levels per division at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The club also has plenty of opportunities for parents to become involved as board members, coaches and volunteers.

The club has achieved great success in recent years; the Elementary Division Team 1 won first place in their division during the 2015-2016 season, and the High School Division 3 Team won first place in their division during the 2016-2017 season.

"The kids are the best part of the sport, watching them grow and develop friendships through the season," says Recelle.

"We are the most proud of the determination and teamwork the players exhibit both on and off the rink," adds Pam Gračan, fundraising coordinator. "There is a real sense of family within NIHC."

For more information or to register, visit norwininlinehockey.com. ■




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