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*Sunday Dispatch*

*An edition of* TIMES LEADER

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 2018



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# Making 'Sox' proud

By Tony Callaio

For Sunday Dispatch

PITTSTON — By the time Laura Mudlock graduated from Pittston Area in 1996, the track and field standout knew she wanted to be an athletic trainer, so the West Chester University class of 2000 received her degree in Sports Medicine: Athletic Training, but she had an underlying interest — mortuary science.

Mudlock, 40 of Pittston, always had an interest in anatomical sciences through high school and for her, being an athlete and liking the sciences, the logical degree would be in sports medicine. "When I was at West Chester, I began helping a friend who had a livery service, picking up bodies and taking them to funeral homes or the airport," Mudlock said.

When she was on summer break from college in 1997, she decided to become a volunteer with the Pittston Ambulance Association. It was with her first ambulance partner when her second line of work would be sealed. "My first partner was Jimmy 'Sox' Ruane who was a funeral director and we became instant friends and then family," Mudlock said. "We had a mutual adoption of each other."

Within days of their friendship, Sox asked Mudlock if she would like to assist him at the funeral home. "The very next day, I went out on a call with Sox," said Mudlock.

Since 1997, Mudlock has been associated with the Ruane Funeral Home.

Eventually, Sox persuaded Mudlock to go to mortuary school where she enrolled at American Academy McAllister Institute in New York City. In 2012, she became a licensed funeral director in October 2012, but it was bittersweet. Sox, the man that was a big influence in her life, was a mentor, friend and family to Mudlock, died a few months earlier.

Mudlock took over the funeral home in 2013 as a director and eventually became a supervisor changing the name to Ruane & Mudlock Funeral Home, Inc.



See MUDLOCK | 4

Laura Mudlock was one of the principals behind throwing the late Jimmy "Sox" Ruane a surprise party in 2010.

Tony Callaio | For Sunday Dispatch

## MUDLOCK

From Page 3

Sox's widow, Mother Mary as Mudlock affectionately calls her, still resides above the funeral home, is proud of Mudlock and her accomplishments. "Laura does a great job and I'm very proud of her," Mary said.

Mudlock enjoys her current status of servicing the living with her sports medicine degree and servicing the dead with her funeral home supervisor's position.

One interesting fact about the Ruane & Mudlock Funeral Home, a funeral director by the name of John Burns once owned it and practiced his trade at the 18 Kennedy St. location. Years earlier before owning the funeral home, Burns was a mortician while serving in World War II and was called to Luxemburg to embalm U.S. Gen. George S. Patton.

Mudlock is excited about the future of Ruane & Mudlock Funeral Home, but will never forget how she got to where she is and the influence Sox Ruane had on her. "I'd like to keep it going as a tribute to him and to Mother Mary as long as I can and as long as Mother Mary is around, it will be around," Mudlock concluded.



Ruane & Mudlock Funeral Home, Inc. is located at 18 Kennedy St., Pittston.

Tony Callaio | For Sunday Dispatch



Tony Callaio | For Sunday Dispatch



Tony Callaio | For Sunday Dispatch

Laura Mudlock, owner/supervisor of the Ruane & Mudlock Funeral Home, 18 Kennedy St., Pittston, looks over a death certificate at her office desk.

Laura Mudlock sits with her service dog, Phoebe Snow, and "Mother" Mary Ruane, widow of Jimmy "Sox" Ruane.

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# Saporito, Falcone & Watt continues to grow and change after 72 years

By Tony Callaio

For Sunday Dispatch

PITTSBURGH — Many businesses have come and gone over the last 72-years, but the law firm created by the late Joseph Saporito, Sr. still stands today. Now known as Saporito, Falcone & Watt, the latest incarnation of the law firm, will move forward into the future for many years to come.

Today's firm is made of up Samuel A. Falcone, Jr., William J. Watt and Maura A. Armezzani, along with legal assistant Carlo Saporito, the son of founder Joseph Saporito. Saporito, Falcone & Watt specialize in the areas of personal injury, criminal defense, family law, elder law, real estate law, and business law.

"Our firm's founder, Joe Saporito, Sr., subscribed to a very basic, but effective model, be prepared for and respectful to the court, be civil to opposing counsel and treat your clients like family," Falcone said.

Falcone said his parents, Sam and Yolanda Falcone, instilled the values of integrity, hard work and dedication. "Together, these traits describe what each attorney and employee of our firm strives to accomplish each day, one case, one client at a time."

The firm is led by senior attorney and partner Samuel Falcone, a Pittston native, who has over 20-yrs. practicing law. Falcone currently serves as defense counsel for the Luzerne County Drug Treatment Court and the Luzerne County Specialty Court for mental health.

Atty. Falcone has previously served as a conflict counsel for indigent criminal in Luzerne County where he has litigated hundreds of criminal cases from simple misdemeanors to homicide trials. Attorney Falcone currently serves as solicitor to a number of municipalities and municipal authorities.

William Watt, also a partner, has been practicing law since 2007. He currently serves as a CJA federal criminal defense attorney in the U.S. District Court for Middle District of PA. He is a former part-time assistant public defender in Luzerne County.

Watt has been appointed to serve as a divorce master in complex divorce matters and routinely gets appointed by the Court to serve as counsel for individuals in guardianship and other estate related matters.



Atty. Samuel Falcone takes a phone call from a fellow lawyer while at his office in Pittston. Tony Callaio | For Sunday Dispatch



Three secretaries at Saporito, Falcone & Watt are kept busy at the 490 N. Main St., Pittston office. Tony Callaio | For Sunday Dispatch

## LAW FIRM

From Page 6

Atty. Watt has been named a Rising Star Super Lawyer four times since 2012.

Maura Armezzani is an associate at Saporito, Falcone & Watt. Prior to joining the Pittston law firm, she served as a law clerk to the Honorable A. Richard Caputo in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

Atty. Armezzani is currently is employed as a part-time as a public defender representing indigent clients in criminal matters in Luzerne Co.

Saporito, Falcone & Watt have you covered in all areas of general civil litigation, business formation and business transactions, real estate matters, estate administration, municipal law and general personal injury litigation.

They have experience in death penalty homicide trials, complex divorce and custody trials, car accident and estate planning and litigation, criminal litigation, and domestic matters.

The three attorneys have represented clients in criminal jury trials ranging from simple summary offenses to complex felony cases, all areas of family law, and criminal law.

Saporito, Falcone & Watt is located at 490 N. Main St., Pittston. Call 570-654-4643 if you need answers to legal question.



Tony Callaio | For Sunday Dispatch

Legal assistant Carlo Saporito researches for another case handled by Saporito, Falcone & Watt.



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Carmen's florist on Wyoming Ave in Exeter.

Aimee Dilger|Times Leader

# Carmen's Flowers & Gifts has been area staple since 1926

By Geri Gibbons  
For Sunday Dispatch

EXETER – Carmen's Flowers and Gifts on Wyoming Avenue has been an area staple since 1926.

Helen Mauriello, along with her children Andrea and Carmen Mauriello, own the business, with emphasis both on tradition and continuing growth.

The secret to the business' success, the owners say, is catering to the needs of their customers, offering both time-honored favorites and contemporary arrangements.

"It's like all businesses," Carmen Mauriello said. "It's a lot of hard work and knowing the needs of customers."

The business was started by Carmen's

grandparents Carmen and Catherine Mauriello, Italian immigrants who came to America for a better life.

"My grandfather was working in a flower show for a short time, and he wanted to provide for his family," he said. "So he opened his own flower shop."

From the beginning, the shop offered flowers for funerals, weddings and holidays, which remain much the same to this day.

Other offerings have been introduced in response to customers' needs and requests.

"One thing that is really popular are the balloons," said Mauriello. "We do a lot of creative things, including archways for weddings and

other events."

Andrea Mauriello also emphasized the business consistently keeps up with current trends.

"For example, we also carry plants," she said "Perfect to send if someone is opening a business or celebrating an anniversary."

The flower shop carries potted plants in a variety of sizes, perfect for a windowsill or a desk top.

Both Andrea and Carmen said the business brings a sense of continuity to its customers, with many coming back year after year, marking a range of family events from the celebration of births to funerals.

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## CARMEN'S

From Page 8

Floral designer Joan Alexander has been with the business for 35 years, with a knowledge of both flowers and customer needs, making her invaluable to the business.

"It's really a combination of long-time customers and new customers," said Carmen Mauriello. "We serve a broad area. Some customers just found out that we're here."

The owners say their location, a main thoroughfare on the West Side of the Susquehanna River with a central location between Wilkes-Barre and Scranton, provides great benefit, with the business delivering daily to both cities and the surrounding area.

The business has a website that allows customers to go online for same-day delivery.

"But, if you want something today, it's probably best to call us," said Carmen Mauriello. "We know what flowers are in stock and we can give suggestions of what might be the best fit for your needs."

Andrea Mauriello said the business is all about flowers and about family.

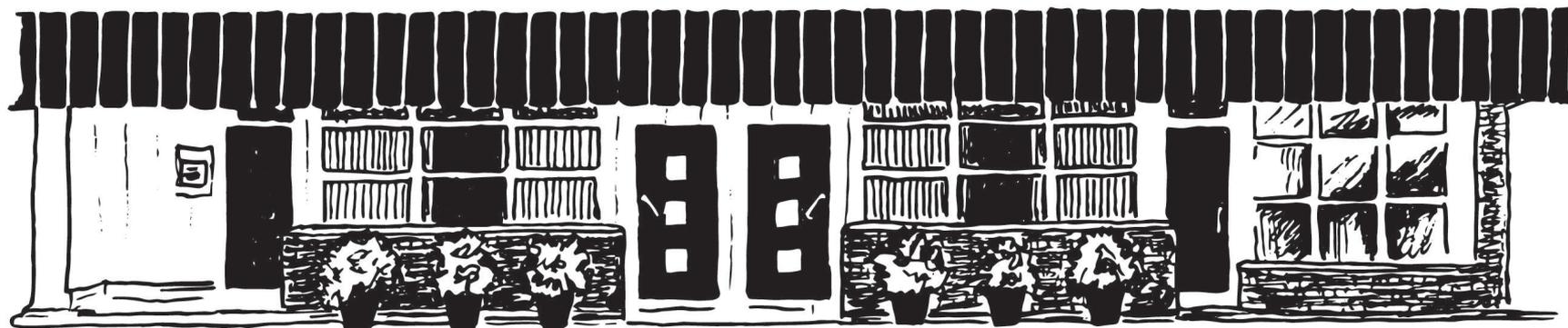


See CARMEN'S | 10

Joan Alexander prepares a bouquet at Carmen's Florist in Exeter.

Aimee Dilger|Times Leader

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## CARMEN'S

From Page 9

"This is now the third generation of the business providing flowers to customers for proms, weddings, and other events," she said. "We serve anyone who comes through the door for whatever they might need."

A new addition to the business is balloon artist Dominick Bartoli who came out of retirement to continue sharing his creativity with others.

Bartoli said he's still having fun designing balloons and helping customers choose balloons perfect for any occasion.

Bartoli is quick to respond to the needs of the customer, even if that means cancelling an occasional order.

"I've had a balloon release scheduled for a wedding and I noticed that it was going to rain," he said. "So, I called and said, 'You might not be able to do this.'"

Carmen's father, Andrew Mauriello, who served as the borough's mayor for over 30 years, passed away in 2006, but Carmen's mother Helen, 91, still pitches in during Memorial Day preparations.

"It's our busiest day," said Andrea. "So she's here designing flowers."



Joan Alexander picks flowers for a bouquet at Carmen's Florist in Exeter.

Aimee Dilger|Times Leader



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Jimmy Fisher | Sunday Dispatch

Petro Ace Hardware is filled with a friendly staff. Pictured, from left, Thom Petro, co-owner; MariaEllen Petro, Robert Boney and Joe Petro, co-owner.

# Petro Ace Hardware has been turning customers into friends for the last 50 years

By Gene Axton  
For Sunday Dispatch

INKERMAN — Petro Ace Hardware co-owner Thom Petro said operating a hardware store is like “seeing the flow of life.”

“You help people through projects and they go from one project to another,” said Thom, 66, of Exeter. “You become friends and acquaintances over the years. Then people move away and new people move in—you make new friends, you lose old friends. It’s life.”

For 50 years, the Petros have turned customers into friends from their 640 S. Main St.,

Inkerman location. The building started as a showroom for Thom’s father, homebuilder and remodeler Thomas J. Petro Sr., until Thomas decided to also carry a small selection of products to sell visitors. In 1972, the construction business folded and the showroom became a dedicated retail space for hardware and building supplies.

Thomas passed in 1979, leaving his wife, Helen, in control of the business. In 1981, at the urging of Thom, they aligned themselves

with Chicago-based Ace Hardware. Ace is a retail cooperative—its members are more like business partners than franchisees, each contributing to a partnership that allows stores to buy low and sell at competitive prices.

Thom said the marketing muscle of Ace’s recognizable brand also factored into the decision.

See PETRO | 12

# PETRO

From Page 11

"I always felt we were up against some tough competition with some of the larger suppliers and lumber lards," Thom said. "Basically, I felt we needed something larger than ourselves to promote an image. That's when we made the move to Ace. We were tied with a national entity and a national identity and that helps a lot."

In 1993, Thom and his brother Joe, 63, of Pittston, became co-owners of Petro Ace Hardware. Despite changes throughout the years, Thom said he and Joe never lost their focus on customers.

"We like to have them leave with exactly what they need to do the job they come in about, whether they know what they need or not, and everyone leaves with, 'Thank you,'" Thom said.

Inkerman resident Jo Graf said she started shopping at Petro Ace Hardware a year ago. She said she kept coming back because Petro Ace Hardware offered hands-on service and a first-name basis customer relationship.

See PETRO | 13



Thom, left, and Joe Petro, co-owners of Petro Ace Hardware.

Jimmy Fisher | Sunday Dispatch

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## PETRO

From Page 12

“They’re friendly, their prices are good they always have what I want—and they always help me because I’m stuck on stupid when it comes to anything in here,” Graf said.

As for Petro Ace Hardware’s future, Thom said he and Joe aren’t sure how much longer they’ll continue to observe the flow of life through the lens of a hardware store.

“Basically, that’s where we’re at now—we don’t know what we’re going to do,” Thom said. “We have no idea what the future will hold for the business. As far as I’m concerned, I’m not going to do this forever.”

Until their next project comes, Thom, Joe and their six employees will be in Inkerman, ready to help with their customer’s next projects. They’re also hiring. Desired skills include the ability to remember first names and the drive to end every interaction with a sincere, “Thank you.”



Jimmy Fisher | Sunday Dispatch

Petro Ace Hardware co-owner Joe Petro stands behind the counter at his business in Inkerman.



Petro Ace Hardware is located at 640 S. Main St., Inkerman.

Jimmy Fisher | Sunday Dispatch

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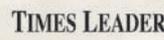
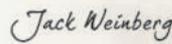
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