

# Somerset fire kills pair

THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

A fatal fire occurred on the 700 block of East Main Street in Somerset Borough around 6 a.m. Saturday.

Somerset County Coroner's Office could not be immediately reached for comment over the weekend.

But Haunted Hollow and Hickory Hollow Campground - both in Rockwood - made posts

about losing two people associated with their organizations to an accident on Saturday.

Hickory Hollow Campground expressed "profound sorrow and shock," while the folks at Haunted Hollow called it an "unbelievable loss."

Fire departments from Somerset, Listie, Friesen and Rockwood responded to the blaze.

Fire marshals are investigating.



DAVE SUTOR/THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

From left, Lee Sauder, bloomery smelting class instructor from Virginia; Eric Dennis, a student from Vermont; Dan Neville, of the Center for Metal Arts; and Tsvetomir Naydenov, a student from Maryland, test the forgeability of the iron bloom at the Center for Metal Arts in Johnstown.

## IRON

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because it didn't lend itself to the Bessemer process, the new method for making steel."

An earlier attempt at making iron from only Johnstown ore proved unsuccessful.

So, for the second try, the local ore was mixed with ore from Virginia that instructor Lee Sauder brought from his home state to use in the week-long bloomery smelting class.

"The process is kind of mysterious," said Nick Tomlin, a student in the class from Rhode Island. "You hope that you're going to get iron at the end of it, but along the way all kinds of things can happen. You have to sort of let go of your expectations a little bit. Sometimes you get what you want. Sometimes you get a total failure. And sometimes it's really something completely new. Today, we're dealing with uncharted territory - Johnstown ore that we don't know very well, we don't know at all."

Tomlin continued: "This ore is so rich that we didn't get some of the byproduct that we were hoping that would help clear out the impurities. So we added the Virginia ore, which is not as rich as the Johnstown ore, in the second smelt. The Virginia ore helped balance out the chemistry inside the furnace we think."

### Stoking the fire

Sauder, the Center for Metal Arts' Dan Neville and Patrick Quinn, and Tomlin, along with three other students - Mike Moore, from Oklahoma; Tsvetomir Naydenov, a Bulgarian immigrant living in

Maryland; and Eric Dennis, from Vermont - tended to the furnace for about five hours.

Iron ore, hardwood lump charcoal and heat in the 2,375-to-2,450-degree Fahrenheit range all worked together to separate the metal from the slag.

"Iron on the surface of the Earth is all iron oxide," Sauder said. "It's all combined with oxygen, and so it's not as simple as just melting the iron-bearing rock. We need to remove the oxygen from it. The way we do that is to bring it up to a high temperature and expose it to carbon, and that steals the oxygen away. That's very hot, and there's a lot of carbon monoxide inside. And, just as in your body, carbon monoxide would steal all the oxygen from your blood and kill you, it's doing that same process to the iron ore. So it leaves metallic iron behind."

Sauder, a self-employed blacksmith who has taught in the British Isles, Middle East and Africa, has spent decades studying the technique that was used in the Iron Age nearly 3,000 years ago.

He was inspired to learn smelting in order to better connect with the material used in his trade.

"If you eat meat, you should kill something, and slaughter it and eat it one time, just so you appreciate the gift that it is," Sauder said. "So I started to do it, and I realized that nobody knew how to do it really. So I just got kind of possessed trying to figure it out. That was 20 years ago. So it's kind of become my windmill."

Quinn never previously smelted iron ore before last week, but immediately appreciated the historic significance of the process.

"You can't let something like this die," Quinn said. "It's really important to really be in touch with how iron used to be made at the beginning of the Iron Age."

### 'Piles of ore'

Sauder, Quinn, Neville and the students collected the local ore earlier in the week.

"Dan and I have done a lot of exploring over the three years we've been here, so we found spots that had piles of ore, and we kind of knew where old ore yards were and blast furnaces from the Cambria Iron Co. and Bethlehem Steel, so we knew approximately where to look," Quinn said. "We had good luck in finding some in those spots."

Quinn said the iron created by the process was good for artistic use.

"Most of the students here, including the instructor, are sculptors," Quinn said. "So the thing about this iron that they're creating is it's really malleable."

"You can really use it as an additive process to create sculpture, a lot like clay."

The experience of smelting the ore also connected the blacksmiths to Johnstown's rich iron and steel traditions.

"We had the opportunity to explore the hills of Johnstown and find local ore," Neville said. "And then, through Lee's expertise, get the chance to build these furnaces and make iron. It's been really exciting for a lot of reasons. It's just a really big part of Johnstown's history."

"It's really fun to be able to show the community what that history is."

Dave Sutor is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat. Follow him on Twitter @Dave\_Sutor.

## The numbers

Pennsylvania had more than 208,000 cases and a total of 8,812 deaths connected to the coronavirus outbreak as of Saturday, the most recent day figures were released. Here are some statistics on COVID-19 statewide and in our region:

**Statewide data:**  
 ■ **Negative tests:** 2,282,828  
 ■ **Positive tests:** 208,027  
 ■ **Deaths:** 8,812  
 ■ **Recovered:** 76%

**Southwestern counties:**  
 ■ **Cambria:** 1,203 positives, 28,015 negatives (9 deaths)  
 ■ **Somerset:** 461 positives, 12,657 negatives (3 deaths)  
 ■ **Bedford:** 447 positives, 5,540 negatives (7 deaths)  
 ■ **Blair:** 1,376 positives, 21,946 negatives (32 deaths)  
 ■ **Indiana:** 1,197 positives, 11,318 negatives (17 deaths)  
 ■ **Clearfield:** 497 positives, 9,662 negatives (7 deaths)  
 ■ **Westmoreland:** 4,472 positives, 52,234 negatives (103 deaths)  
 ■ **Allegheny:** 15,796 positives, 212,164 negatives (419 deaths)  
 ■ **Beaver:** 2,325 positives, 24,996 negatives (140 deaths)  
 ■ **Butler:** 1,840 positives, 27,796 negatives (28 deaths)  
 ■ **Centre:** 4,272 positives, 36,902 negatives (18 deaths)  
 ■ **Fayette:** 1,061 positives, 19,055 negatives (15 deaths)  
 ■ **Greene:** 263 positives, 5,234 negatives (1 death)  
 ■ **Washington:** 2,136 positives, 30,501 negatives (37 deaths)

**Hardest-hit counties:**  
 ■ **Philadelphia:** 39,716 positives, 337,462 negatives (1,892 deaths)  
 ■ **Montgomery:** 14,301 positives, 178,676 negatives (895 deaths)  
 ■ **Delaware:** 13,888 positives, 132,998 nega-

tives (771 deaths)  
 ■ **Bucks:** 10,445 positives, 119,547 negatives (626 deaths)  
 ■ **Lancaster:** 9,877 positives, 97,478 negatives (479 deaths)  
 ■ **Berks:** 9,562 positives, 64,609 negatives (425 deaths)  
 ■ **Chester:** 8,223 positives, 101,683 negatives (376 deaths)  
 ■ **Lehigh:** 6,811 positives, 72,348 negatives (366 deaths)  
 ■ **Northampton:** 5,568 positives, 66,325 negatives (315 deaths)  
 ■ **Lackawanna:** 3,846 positives, 38,804 negatives (219 deaths)  
 ■ **Luzerne:** 5,542 positives, 56,121 negatives (206 deaths)  
 ■ **Dauphin:** 4,960 positives, 55,062 negatives (196 deaths)  
 ■ **Monroe:** 2,069 positives, 27,073 negatives (135 deaths)

**Estimated case counts by age group:**  
 ■ **Ages 0-9:** 5,071.  
 ■ **Ages 10-19:** 18,571.  
 ■ **Ages 20-29:** 39,942.  
 ■ **Ages 30-39:** 30,219.  
 ■ **Ages 40-49:** 27,003.  
 ■ **Ages 50-59:** 30,529.  
 ■ **Ages 60-69:** 23,788.  
 ■ **Ages 70-79:** 14,850.  
 ■ **Ages 80-89:** 11,324.  
 ■ **Ages 90-99:** 6,272.  
 ■ **Ages 100+:** 321.

**Case counts by gender:**  
 ■ **Female:** 112,587 cases.  
 ■ **Male:** 94,196 cases.  
 ■ **Not reported:** 1,236 cases.

**Estimated case counts by ethnicity:**  
 ■ **Black:** 25,067 cases.  
 ■ **White:** 85,775 cases.  
 ■ **Asian:** 4,196 cases.  
 ■ **Other:** 2,141 cases.  
 ■ **Not reported:** 90,848 cases.

- To view Pa. Dept. of Health maps and other information, visit: [www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx](http://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx).

## VIRUS

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for both priests and the Prince of Peace and Holy Name faith communities."

Also, an individual who attended the 9 a.m. Mass on Oct. 25 at Visitation of the

Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Johnstown has tested positive.

The four churches involved in the cases are being cleaned.

All total, more than 1,200 cases have been recorded in Cambria County, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. There were 461 positives in Somerset County and 447 in Bedford County, as

of Saturday.

More than 208,000 cases have been reported statewide with 76% of those individuals recovered.

Pennsylvania has topped 8,800 COVID-related deaths since the start of the pandemic.

Dave Sutor is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat.

## GREENHOUSE

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but provide produce for the college to donate to area food pantries and other organizations.

The greenhouse is set to be ready for the summer of 2021.

Kathleen Morrell, executive director of institutional advancement and public relations, said that goal may be "aggressive."

"It's a lot bigger of a deal than we initially thought it was going to be," she said.

College officials are in the design and permitting portion and the structure itself is set to be larger than initially planned as well.

Morrell said that's because the college wants to "grow into it" and not wish it had been built differently.

Tentatively the greenhouse will be placed in a flat spot next to the faculty and employee lot near the door leading to the indoor garden.

Myers said this makes the most sense for the location because of the proximity to the utilities.

To help with fundraising for the project, the college is going to add a donation option for the greenhouse to the PHCC Foundation annual campaign this year.

Myers said the additional facility will complement the existing hydroponics room already on

campus, which also grows food that's donated.

In the ground-floor classroom, vegetation can be seen growing like weeds out of the hydroponic garden Myers created.

It's made up of reservoirs on the floor that pump nutrient-rich water to the roots of the plants above, which get 16 hours of artificial light every day.

Everything from lettuce and tomatoes to peas, beans and basil is grown in the facility and this area benefits the students in the SHARE program.

Myers said the acronym stands for "sustainability, hydroponics, agriculture" and "rural entrepreneurship."

The year-old program consists of 17 courses comprised of curriculum Myers wrote and can lead students to either a certificate for SHARES or an associates degree designed for the agricultural workforce.

Penn Highlands is also the only college in this part of the state that offers coursework for a horticultural apprenticeship program through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

"This is my baby," Myers said.

These classes are also open for the public to take - the only course with a prerequisite is the horticulture class.

Joshua Byers is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat. Follow him on Twitter @Journo\_Josh.

## FUND

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helping to select the toys," said Rick Bausher, store manager.

"We're helping all these children in the community who might not have anything otherwise."

Bosco's has been involved with the Santa Fund since its inception, and it's a partnership Bausher said they hope to continue.

"We wouldn't do this during our busiest time of the year if we didn't think it was necessary, and we want to support this to the best of our ability," he said.

On Dec. 6, toys will be transported from Bosco's to 1st Summit Arena @ Cambria County War Memorial, where

"That is something they can take with them into the future. In Girl Scouts we really stress to them to have a kind heart, be compassionate and be caring."

ROXANNE TUINSTRAS, GIRL SCOUTS SERVICE UNIT MANAGER

volunteers will begin the tasks of matching children by age and gender with gifts.

Roxanne Tuinstra, service unit manager with Girl Scout Service Unit 4651 in the Johnstown area, will have 10 Girl Scouts on hand to help with the sorting and packing.

"We've been doing this for at least six years and it's festive and fun," she said. "A lot of the girls have it in their heart to know maybe what it's like to go through the holiday season without, and they want to make sure that these girls and boys are provided with at least something. They want to bring joy into these girls and boys' lives."

Tuinstra said the hope is

by volunteering, the girls will learn the joy of giving back.

"That is something they can take with them into the future," she said. "In Girl Scouts, we really stress to them to have a kind heart, be compassionate and be caring."

Gifts will be distributed to families from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dec. 9 at 1st Summit Arena @ Cambria County War Memorial, 326 Napoleon St., downtown Johnstown.

To add a festive mood, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts from Westmont plan to decorate the area with a holiday theme.

Due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns, those attending are asked to wear masks and social distance between individuals and families. Plexiglass will be installed to protect people at check-in and pick-up spots.

Kelly Urban is a reporter with The Tribune-Democrat. Follow her on Twitter @KellyUrban25.

## TURNOUT

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Individuals who received mail-in ballots but who now want to cast a vote in person must bring the ballot they received, along with the envelope, to be surrendered and voided. The voters will then get new ballots to fill out on site.

"They have to have all of the balloting materials," Crowl said. "The envelope and the ballot

have got to be included in that. Not one or the other, but both."

Even with the large amount of mail-in ballots used, tens of thousands will be flocking to local polling places on Tuesday where COVID-19 precautions will be in place, including hand sanitizer, gloves and Plexiglass shields.

"We're asking our voters to please wear masks when entering the polling place, but, of course, we can't require it," Prittis said.

Pennsylvania Secretary of

State Kathy Boockvar spoke to the mitigation efforts, saying, "We want voters to feel safe going to the polls on election day to exercise their constitutional right to vote. In addition to all the precautions that counties are taking, voters should follow common-sense measures, such as wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing at the polls."

Dave Sutor is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat. Follow him on Twitter @Dave\_Sutor.

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