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Love is still in the Air: part 2

Volume 3 • Issue 7 | February 16, 2026



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FEBRUARY



Editor-in-Chief
Katrina Fuller

February, often hailed as the Month of Love thanks to the popular Valentine's Day holiday, inspires us to celebrate and admire the

SEE PAGES 12-14

relationships that have stood the test of time. In this special wedding edition of the Gazette, we're honoring the Golden Couples of Chautauqua County: the couples who have cherished each other through decades of joy, challenge and change. In this special feature, we asked them to offer words of wisdom, share their stories and share the love they have grown over their years together. These incredible couples provide insights into what makes their relationships work, and hopefully, provide readers with a few ideas on how to cultivate such bonds in their lives.

THREE BROTHERS, TWO WEDDINGS, ONE FRONT-ROW SEAT



Marketing Director
Shannon Nixon

I never really got weddings. I didn't understand all the hullabaloo.

Sure, in theory, I knew they were beautiful and meaningful. But I was more preoccupied with the sheer cost any time I was a guest or bridesmaid.

"This could have been a very nice trip to Europe," I would mutter, like the Ebenezer Scrooge of weddings, while I poked at a dry slab of chicken that I estimated must have cost \$50 per plate.

I didn't grasp why people described them as "the most beautiful, the most magical day of their lives." That is, until last August, when my brother got married in Colorado. And suddenly, it really was

the most beautiful, the most magical day. And it wasn't even my day.

Friends and family flew in from all over the country. For a few days, we all bunked together in a couple neighboring townhomes: cousins on couches, my brothers' better halves (my soon-to-be sisters) and I swapping hair and makeup products as we scrambled to get ready on time, late-night chats that felt like a mix of childhood sleepovers and adult therapy sessions. It was loud. It was messy. It was magic.

On the day of his wedding, I watched my brother stand at the altar, calm and composed, looking adoringly at his new bride. This was the same guy who threw a tub of yogurt in my face when we were kids (I deserved it). The same guy who uploaded a 15-minute-long video of himself eating a raw onion (it's still on YouTube if you're interested). He was a kid, and then a teenager, and then a man ready to make the most significant promise of his life. And his bride was a woman who had woken up the day of her wedding to go for a run, buy flowers from the farmer's market, and arrange her bouquet herself. I was thoroughly impressed with her practical

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



WE ❤ OUR FRIENDS!

PROUDLY ANNOUNCING OUR 2026 MEMBERS! PLEASE JOIN US TODAY.



GOLD: \$500 & UP

Timothy Carlson
M.L. Feather
Sandra & Daniel Gullotti
Troy Hine
Lamae & Doug McCullor
Yvonne McNallie
Thomas Skerl

SILVER: \$250 & UP

Timothy DAngelo
Nancy Kerrin
Patricia & William Locke
Linda & David Melquist
Rita & Gary Mrowka
Greg & Cindy Peterson
Susan & Douglas Seamans
Kate & Dan Smith
Peter Stark
Janet Wahlberg

BRONZE: \$100 & UP

Linda & Lawrence Adams
Elizabeth & John Anderson
Donna Beal
Pat & Chuck Brininger
Suzanne & Kennie Campbell
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Millie & Mike Coon
Linda & Paul Demier
Lillian & Ned Divine
Bruce & Joan Erickson
Claire & Andy Felong
Paulette & Norm Green
Lane & Mat Hagberg
Carol Hay
Donna Higgenbotham
June & Todd Jacobson
Jill & Chad Jaquith
Patricia Kinney
Frances Lapinski
Elizabeth Lasser
Jennifer Martin
Marge & Mike Metzger
Chuck & Sharon Nazzaro
Mark Nelson
Diane & Donald Nelson
Elizabeth & Frank Petiprin
Alex Rosenberg
Michelle & Jeffrey Victor
The Trussalo Family
Anonymous in Jamestown

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THIS WEEK AROUND TOWN

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Snow Camp | 9 AM-3 PM
Audubon Community Nature Center | Jamestown
For Info: auduboncnc.org

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Free Classic Movie: The Man Who Knew Too Much | 7 PM
Lake Shore Center for the Arts | Westfield
For Info: lakeshorecenterforthearts.com

Cinema Series: Hamnet 7:30 PM

1891 Fredonia Opera House Performing Arts Center | Fredonia
For Info: fredopera.org

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Snow Camp | 9 AM-3 PM
Audubon Community Nature Center | Jamestown
For Info: auduboncnc.org

Movies at The Reg: Little Amelie or The Character of Rain | 2 PM

Reg Lenna Center for The Arts | Jamestown
For Info: reglenna.com

Ash Wednesday Prayer Vigil 4 PM-6:30 PM

Christ First United Methodist Church | Jamestown
For Info: christfirstjamestown.org

St. John's Fish Fry Dinner 4:15 PM-6:30 PM

St John's Church | Jamestown
For Info: stsuscenter.org

Movies at The Reg: If I Had Legs I'd Kick You | 7 PM

Reg Lenna Center for The Arts | Jamestown
For Info: reglenna.com

Observatory Lecture: Artemis II and Beyond | 7:30 PM

Martz-Kohl Observatory | Frewsburg
For Info: martzobservatory.org

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Craft & Sip Group | 7 PM-10 PM
Labyrinth Press Company | Jamestown
For Info: Labyrinth Press Company Facebook Page

Songwriters Circle | 7:30 PM

Lake Shore Center for the Arts | Westfield
For Info: lakeshorecenterforthearts.com

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Wine & Chocolate Weekends

12-5 PM
Lake Erie Wine Country
For Info: lakeeriewinecountry.org/events

"Close to Home" Exhibit 5 PM-7 PM

Patterson Library Octagon Gallery | Westfield
For Info: pattersonlib.org

Movies at The Reg: F1 | 7 PM

Reg Lenna Center for The Arts | Jamestown
For Info: reglenna.com

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Wine & Chocolate Weekends

10 AM-5 PM
Lake Erie Wine Country
For Info: lakeeriewinecountry.org/events

How Sweet The Sound: A Celebration of Black Music in America | 4 PM

Chautauqua Lake District Auditorium | Mayville
For Info: Chautauqua Lake Central School Facebook Page

Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County Fundraiser: Live Music

6 PM-10 PM
Frewsburg American Legion | Frewsburg
For Info: mhachautauqua.org

Wine & Chocolate Weekends

10 AM-4 PM
Lake Erie Wine Country
For Info: lakeeriewinecountry.org/events

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Dr. Jeffrey Victor: What Unitarian Universalists Believe 10:30 AM

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown
For Info: uujamestown.org

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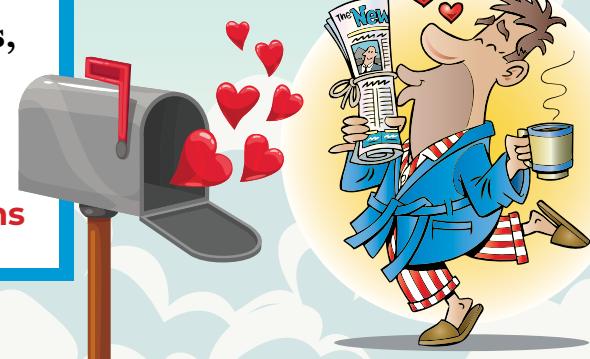


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Editorial with Lori Cornell

THE WEDDING EDITION



Publisher
Katrina Fuller

Fun(ny) Fact: Once upon a time, I wanted to be a wedding planner...or maybe at least operate a little event-planning side hustle. (Rest assured to all the real wedding professionals out there, that thought now makes me want to jump off the nearest cliff in terror. I'm not your future business competitor!)

But back in the day, I was an extreme bride, and my passion for the process started there. I wouldn't say I was a "Bridezilla," but more of an extreme organizer. First, we had the engagement party, followed by five showers, a bridesmaid weekend, and a five-day "wedding weekend" itinerary all sketched out in my several-hundred-page "wedding binder" with information from every wedding vendor from here to Olean. I likely tried on 100 bridal gowns before settling on a fully redesigned gown by the former Bridal Shoppe on Fluvanna Road, made way puffier and way longer, with a gorgeous train so heavy that my bustle broke halfway through the reception. We invited over 400 guests and couldn't just pick one of the 20-some regular wedding venues I visited. Nope. We instead welcomed our guests to a blank-slate, lakefront parcel that we turned from

scratch into a beautiful tent wedding, every component brought in or homemade on our tight budget by my exceptionally patient parents. My husband, Chuck, drew the line when I started exploring fireworks options.

If you ask my mom and sister, I'm probably still an extreme planner, and my Gazette teammates are likely reading this, thinking my crazed attention to detail sounds all too familiar. I have trouble doing things small scale. My mind is a busy builder of what, at least I like to think, are creative and passionate projects. Pomp and circumstance, "for better or worse," might just be my trademark. Hence, I offer my sincere appreciation for the many planning and events-related businesses that we proudly feature in this edition. My M.O. with my own wedding, now over twenty years ago, was likely just based upon the innate feeling that most of us have: weddings are important. Whether grand or intimate, weddings, to most of us, represent a precious moment in time, a monumental life change, and a ceremonial promise forever. Weddings are a big deal.

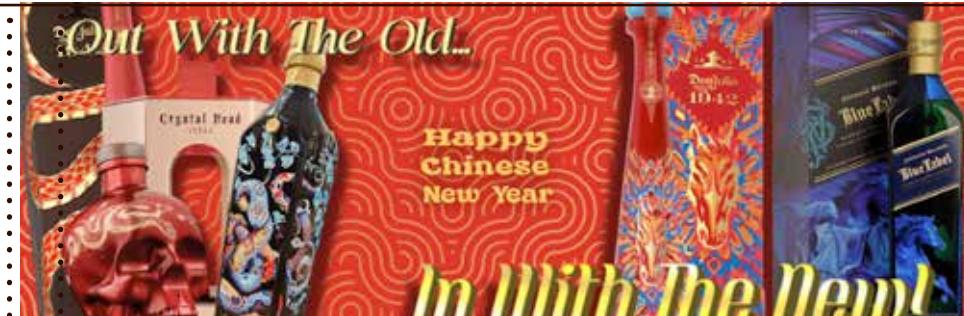
That is why this week, we are proud to recognize and showcase some exemplary longtime couples and talented wedding-related professionals who help make Chautauqua County couples' dreams come true. In this "month of love," we bid you a "Happy Wedding" edition! Maybe you're planning something special yourself, or maybe you're just reminiscing...but either way, thank you for recognizing this special moment in time and for supporting some of our most creative local businesses!

At last, my love has come along. My lonely days are over, and life is like a song.

- Etta James



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Thursdays at 5:00 pm

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The Chautauqua Gazette is a locally owned free weekly, community newspaper that highlights the notable events and remarkable people who make our region a unique and vibrant place to live. The Chautauqua Gazette is published every Monday and distributed to dealer locations in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties in New York and in Warren County, Pennsylvania.

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Brought to you by: L. Cornell and Company, LLC

WEDDING Trivia

1. In what country did the tiered wedding cake originate?
2. In which country did the tradition of throwing rice at weddings begin?
3. What ancient civilization is credited with originating formal marriage contracts?
4. In what country did the honeymoon tradition originate?
5. What month is statistically the most popular for weddings in the United States?
6. In ancient Rome, what herb symbolized fidelity in weddings?
7. What ancient Celtic practice involved tying hands together during marriage?
8. Which Roman goddess was associated with marriage and weddings?
9. What gemstone was historically used in engagement rings before diamonds dominated?
10. What English monarch wore a white wedding dress in 1840, influencing Western bridal fashion?

1. England 2. Ancient Rome 3. Mesopotamia 4. Great Britain 5. October 6. Rosemary 7. Handfasting 8. June 9. Sappho 10. Victoria

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Faith Matters

ASH WEDNESDAY

*Featured Writer***Pastor Sherry Maher**

Christ First UMC, Jamestown, NY

There are moments in life when we find ourselves standing at a threshold. A doorway between what has been and what is coming next. A pause before we step forward. A moment where we sense that something new is beginning- but we're not quite sure how to enter it.

Lent is one of those moments. Before we rush toward Easter's celebration, Lent invites us to stop, to breathe, to take an honest look at our lives and our relationship with God. It is not a season meant to weigh us down, but to help us make room- room for grace, truth, and transformation.

Ash Wednesday stands right at the threshold.

It reminds us of our humanity as we hear the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." But it also invites us into grace through repentance as we hear the words, "Repent, and believe the gospel." To repent, to turn around, is to reorient our lives toward God again. Not in shame, but in hope. Not in fear, but in trust. For many of us, the hardest part of faith is not believing- it's slowing down enough to listen. Life moves quickly. Our days are full. Our minds are busy. And even our prayers can begin to feel rushed or routine. That is why this year, we are offering **something a**

little different as we begin Lent.

On **Wednesday, February 18th, from 4-6:30pm**, the Prayer Team at **Christ First United Methodist Church** has created an **Ash Wednesday Prayer Vigil**, which is **open to everyone**. Rather than a single, scheduled service, the space will be arranged with eight prayer stations, each designed to offer an opportunity to pause, reflect, and pray. A place to breathe, encounter and connect with God, and experience the threshold into Lent. We anticipate and open ourselves to how God will move in our lives throughout the 40 days of Lent and beyond.

You are welcome to **come at any point during those two and a half hours**. You may stay briefly, or linger. Among the stations will be an opportunity for the **imposition of ashes**, reminding us of our shared humanity, and also a station to receive **Holy Communion**, reminding us that grace always meets us at the threshold.

If your life feels full... or noisy... or heavy...

If you're not sure what direction God is calling you...

If you desire a deeper experience of Lent...

If you simply need a quiet moment to catch your breath...

Come, and prayerfully participate on Ash Wednesday.

Lent doesn't ask us to have everything figured out, but invites us to pause long enough to breathe deeply, trust that God will meet us there, and to step forward into wherever and however God is leading. My hope is that this prayer vigil will be for all of us a sacred threshold where we can breathe, pray, and move forward on a transformative journey together.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Sherry

The Chautauqua Gazette is proud to feature different faith leaders from throughout the Greater Jamestown area each week, in an effort to connect and inspire. We endeavor to provide a variety of religious and faith perspectives well-aligned with our diverse community and values. If you are a faith leader and wish to contribute, please contact publisher Lori Cornell at cornell@CHQgazette.com.

**"Nobody has ever measured, even poets,
how much a heart can hold."**

~ Zelda Fitzgerald, socialite and wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald



St. John's Fish Fry Dinners Return in Support of St. Susan Center



St. Susan Center Lenten Dinners

—♥ Filling Each Bowl with Love ♥—

Contributed by
St. Susan Center

A beloved Lenten tradition is returning to Jamestown this February as **St. John's Fish Fry Dinners** make their comeback in support of **St. Susan Center**, following a two-year hiatus.

The first Fish Fry will be held on **Ash Wednesday, February 18**, with additional dinners taking place **every Friday from February 20 through March 27**. All dinners will be **drive-thru takeout only** and hosted at **Holy Apostles Parish – St. John's Church**, located at **270 Newton Ave. in Jamestown**.

Meals will be available for pickup between **4:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.**, with phone orders accepted from **3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** Online pre-orders will be available through **stsusancenter.org** until the day before each dinner.

The Fish Fry is being prepared by the experienced **St. John's Fish Fry Team**, a group with more than **20 years of history** serving the community. This year's event is chaired by **Toni Indriolo**, St. Susan Center Board member, who emphasized the importance of both tradition and purpose behind the

dinners.

"These Fish Fry dinners are about more than food," said Indriolo. "They bring people together while directly supporting the mission of St. Susan Center and the individuals and families it serves."

Menu options include **fried fish, broiled fish, shrimp combinations, and veggie lasagna**, along with classic sides such as salad, rolls, coleslaw, and applesauce. Adult dinners are priced at approximately **\$18** and child portions are **\$16**. No substitutions will be offered. Proceeds from the Fish Fry dinners directly benefit **St. Susan Center**.

For phone orders or questions, the public is asked to call (716) 490-0456.

Event Details at a Glance:

- **First Dinner:** Ash Wednesday, February 18
- **Recurring Dinners:** Fridays, February 20 – March 27
- **Pickup Time:** 4:15 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- **Location:** St. John's Church, 270 Newton Ave. Jamestown, NY
- **Ordering:** Online at stsusancenter.org or by phone at (716) 490-0456

For more information about St. Susan Center or the Fish Fry dinners, visit stsusancenter.org.



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Register:
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~ Julia Childs

Nick Langworthy

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Congressman Langworthy Introduces Recycled Materials Attribution Act to Modernize Recycling Rules and Support American Innovation

Congressman Nick Langworthy recently announced the introduction of the Recycled Materials Attribution Act, a bipartisan bill aimed at updating federal recycling standards to reflect modern technology, protect consumers, and support American manufacturers investing in more sustainable production.

As new technologies have made it possible to recycle materials that were once considered unrecoverable, federal rules governing recycled content claims have fallen behind. That has created confusion for consumers, uncertainty for businesses, and inconsistent standards across the marketplace. Congressman Langworthy's legislation would establish clear, national guidelines for recycled labels.

"Advanced technology in recycling is transforming how we recover and reuse materials that would otherwise end up in landfills, but our regulations have remained stagnant," said Congressman Nick Langworthy. "This much-needed legislation changes that by modernizing and updating the rules with a uniform national standard that protects consumers from misleading claims while giving American manufacturers the certainty they need to invest, innovate, and compete. This legislation is a no-brainer for businesses, consumers, and our environment."

Advanced recycling uses innovative processes to turn hard-to-recycle materials, such as certain plastics and packaging, into building blocks for new products. But outdated federal guidance has made it difficult to consistently verify recycled content claims, raising compliance costs and creating uncertainty that can slow new investment.

The Recycled Materials Attribution Act formally recognizes advanced and chemical recycling technologies and allows certified mass-balance accounting to verify recycled content. The legislation also directs the Federal Trade Commission to update its "Green Guides," which have not been revised since 2012, so federal guidance keeps pace with current technology and is applied consistently nationwide.

By modernizing these rules, the bill is expected to help keep more material

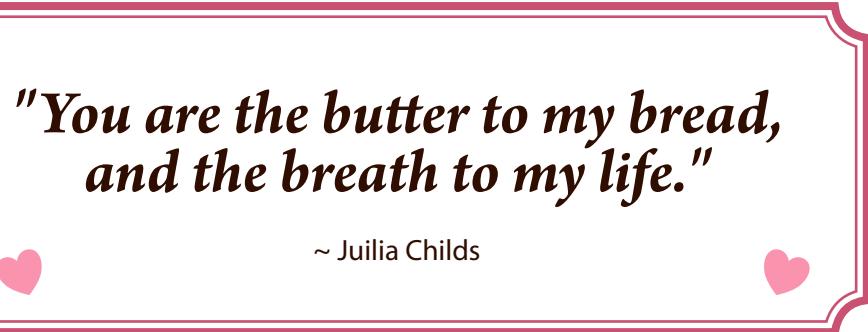
out of landfills, support the growth of domestic recycling infrastructure, and strengthen supply chains by encouraging more sustainable manufacturing here in the United States. Just as importantly, it ensures that when companies make environmental claims, those claims are accurate, science-based, and independently verifiable.

The legislation has drawn bipartisan support, with original cosponsors including Reps. Jonathan Jackson (IL), Vincente Gonzalez (TX), Randy Weber (TX), Gabe Evans (CO), Don Davis (NC), Dan Crenshaw (TX), Marc Veasey (TX), August Pfluger (TX), and Henry Cuellar (TX).

"We commend Congressman Langworthy and all of the cosponsors for championing legislation that will establish clear national recycling standards and definitions. This is important for the makers of America's favorite household brands and consumers to reduce confusion and improve recycling rates," said Melissa Hockstad, CEO of Consumer Brands Association. "This is a building block toward modernizing America's recycling system, reducing plastic waste and spurring innovation and domestic manufacturing jobs."

Recycling Leadership Council spokesperson and Senior Vice President John Hewitt said, "The Recycling Leadership Council welcomes the introduction of the Recycled Materials Attribution Act. This bipartisan legislation is a critical step toward addressing the growing challenge of plastic waste in the United States and we are grateful to Congressman Langworthy and the bill's eight original co-sponsors for their leadership. The RMAA will help unlock solutions needed to recover and reuse more materials, strengthen domestic manufacturing, and keep plastic out of landfills and the environment."

Ross Eisenberg, president of America's Plastic Makers, said "This legislation would clarify federal policy to help scale recycling solutions so more used plastics are turned into new products instead of being discarded. We thank Congressman Langworthy for his leadership and the bipartisan group of cosponsors that joined him in supporting this important bill."



Infinity Visual and Performing Arts Welcomes New Instructors

Contributed by
Infinity Visual and Performing Arts

Infinity Visual and Performing Arts is excited to announce the addition of two new instructors to their team!



Hillary Belin

Hillary Belin is a dedicated theater artist and educator who believes in the power of performance to inspire confidence, creativity, and community. She has developed and led youth performing arts programs at YWCA Jamestown, where she combined storytelling, movement, and collaboration to help young people express themselves on stage and in life.

In addition to her work as an instructor, Hillary is an active performer in the local arts scene. She has recently appeared in productions with Little Theatre and Warren Players and has also performed with Jamestown Community College. These experiences keep her connected to the stage and bring fresh, real-world insights into her teaching. Hillary's approach blends professionalism with play, creating a supportive environment where every student can shine.



Rachel Lykins

Rachel Lykins is an Equity Actor and Teaching Artist from Huntington, West Virginia. She received her BA in Communication Studies from Marshall University and MFA in Acting from The University of California, Irvine. She has worked, studied, and lived across the United States and United Kingdom. She is a board member of the Children's Advocacy Program, and formerly served as a founding member of the Marshall University Dance Theatre. When she's not working, she likes to read and spend time with her cat Kiki. Rachel believes that the arts are for everyone and can be an incredible tool for empathy, collaboration, and self-expression.

Infinity Visual and Performing Arts is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to providing quality instruction in the visual and performing arts to students of all ages and abilities. They offer a variety of classes and workshops in music, dance, theater, and visual arts.

For more information about Infinity, or to register for lessons with any of the instructor mentors at Infinity during their 2025-2026 Program Year, please visit www.infinityperformingarts.org/register

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How Sweet the Sound: A Celebration of Black Music in America

An Evening of Poetry, Song, and Storytelling at Chautauqua Lake District Auditorium

Contributed by
Chautauqua Lake Central School

On Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 4:00 p.m., the Chautauqua Lake District Auditorium will come alive with How Sweet the Sound: A Celebration of Black Music in America. This free event, in celebration of Black History Month, is open to the public and promises to be a powerful and joyful exploration of Black musical traditions that have shaped the American cultural landscape.

Presented by Emmy-award winning producer and New York Times bestselling author Kwame Alexander's Big Sea Entertainment, in partnership with the literacy non-profit One Word at a Time, the Chautauqua Lake School District, and hosted by Cousin Sean, the new Director of the African American Heritage House at Chautauqua, this one-of-a-kind event brings together nationally recognized artists, poets, musicians, and students for an afternoon that blends spoken word, spirituals, gospel, blues, jazz, Broadway, soul, R&B, rock and roll, and hip hop—honoring both the roots and the ongoing evolution of Black music in America.

Featured artists include Maritri Garrett, acclaimed vocalist and pianist; Justin Bell, operatic tenor; Jordan Holmes, poet; D'Jena Kelly-Perry, actress; and Jillian Hanesworth, Poet Laureate Emeritus of Buffalo. The program also proudly features The Chautauqua Lake High School Choir, and the SUNY Fredonia Chamber Choir. There will be a special sculpture exhibition of black history, "An American Story" by Award winning artist, Dare Coulter.

Through live performances, poetry, and curated video moments featuring influential voices and artists, How Sweet the Sound traces the lineage of Black music—from spirituals sung in resilience and hope to the rhythms and styles that continue to influence contemporary music today. The evening concludes with a collective finale that invites performers and audience alike to reflect on the shared journey, endurance, and joy found through music.

"Black music is a part of America's heartbeat—breathing freedom into a nation that didn't always know how to listen. Every note is a memory, every rhythm a roadmap, reminding us that even in our deepest sorrow, we created songs strong enough to carry us—and this country—forward. I'm excited to help bring this program to a community that has welcomed me, inspired me, and fed my heart with so much happiness." Kwame Alexander, Distinguished Fellow, African American Heritage House at the Chautauqua Institution

Event Details

What: How Sweet the Sound: A Celebration of Black Music in America

When: Saturday, February 21, 2026 4:00 p.m.

Where: Chautauqua Lake District Auditorium

Who: Featuring Kwame Alexander, Maritri Garrett, Justin Bell, Jordan Holmes, D'Jena Kelly-Perry, Jillian Hanesworth, Cousin Sean, and the Chautauqua Lake High School Choir, Fredonia Chamber Choir

This event is free, open to the public and appropriate for all ages.



"If I had to choose between breathing or loving you, I would say 'I love you' with my last breath."

~ Shannon Dermott



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the bills. I never expected the way
seeing my ring on her finger would
knock the breath
out of my lungs."*

~ from "The Keeper"
by Ana Huang



Documents to bring to your tax preparer

Contributed by

Metro Creative

In many parts of the country, April marks a return to warm temperatures, landscapes marked by blooming foliage and perhaps even a colorful flower or two. April also signals tax season, a notion that may elicit different reactions than warmer weather and budding plants, particularly among those who do not anticipate receiving a tax refund.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, the deadline to file a 2023 tax return is Monday, April 15, 2024. Individuals who file more complicated returns or those who simply don't have the time to file on their own typically look to tax preparation professionals to ensure their returns are filed correctly and on time. As the tax deadline draws closer, taxpayers who work with tax preparation professionals can make that partnership go more smoothly by ensuring they bring along these necessary documents and details to their appointments.

- Social Security numbers:** Individuals who are filing as single or jointly with a spouse will need to list the Social Security numbers of each person on the return. Taxpayers with dependents will need to provide the full names and Social Security numbers of each dependent as well as their own Social Security numbers.

- Identification:** A copy of a form of identification, such as a driver's license or passport, also must be included in a tax return. The identification confirms a person's identity and the name on the ID provided must match the name associated with the Social Security number provided.

- Income statements:** Tax preparers need a copy of each taxpayer's W-2 form, which employers must provide by the

end of January. Taxpayers with more than one job must provide a W-2 from each employer. Additional income statements, such as forms indicating gambling winnings or retirement account distributions, also must be provided to the tax prep pro. Taxpayers who have such income should contact their tax preparation pro prior to their appointment to determine which additional income form they need to file.

- Tax deduction documents:** Tax deductions save taxpayers money, and taxpayers may be eligible for a range of deductions. For example, homeowners who finance their home purchases with mortgages will receive a 1098 form from their mortgage provider each January. That form is a mortgage interest statement that can help homeowners reduce their tax obligations. Donations, student loan interest payments and college tuition costs are some additional potential deductions. Charities, student loan servicing firms and colleges or universities should provide tax deduction documents by the end of January, and taxpayers can turn these forms over to their tax preparation professional so they earn all eligible deductions.

- Receipts:** Some expenses are eligible for tax deductions. Taxpayers can contact their tax preparation professional to determine if any medical bills, business expenses, charitable contributions, or additional expenses are deductible. Receipts may be required, and individuals are urged to hold on to any receipts they might be able to use to earn a tax deduction.

Tax season has arrived, and taxpayers are urged to provide all relevant documents to their tax preparers to ensure their returns are filed correctly and on time.

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Senator George Borrello Announces Scholarship Opportunity for Students in 57th District

A total of four \$3,000 scholarships to be awarded in academic and athletic categories

New York State Senator George Borrello announced that the New York Conference of Italian American State Legislators is accepting applications for four \$3,000 scholarships, two academic and two athletic.

Scholarships are available to residents of the 57th Senate District who are current college students or high school seniors entering college. Students can access the application by visiting: <https://www.nyiacs.org/apply-for-scholarship-form>

The application deadline is Monday, March 16th.

"This scholarship is a great opportunity for high school seniors and college students in the 57th Senate District who have shown a strong commitment to their education, a drive for excellence, and a dedication to their future success," said Senator Borrello. "As college costs continue to rise, this support can make a real difference for students and their families. I encourage all eligible students who

have worked hard and stood out through their achievements to apply and take advantage of this valuable opportunity."

Applicants should have a grade point average of 85 or higher; be active in community service as well as extracurricular activities and demonstrate financial need. In addition to these qualifications, students applying for an athletic scholarship must also be involved in an organized sport (s).

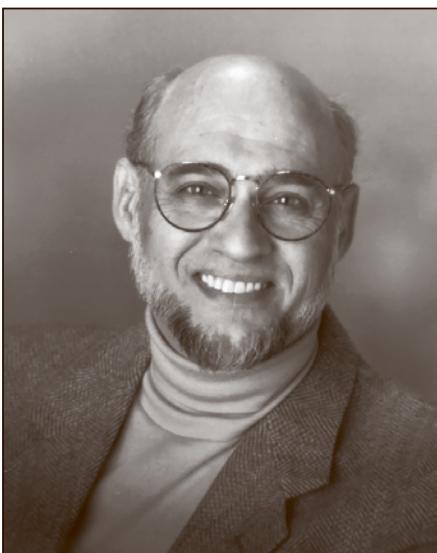
Applicants need not be of Italian American heritage to apply.

Scholarship recipients will be announced in April, and the winners will be honored at a ceremony in Albany on May 18th, when the Conference's Italian American Day Celebration will take place.

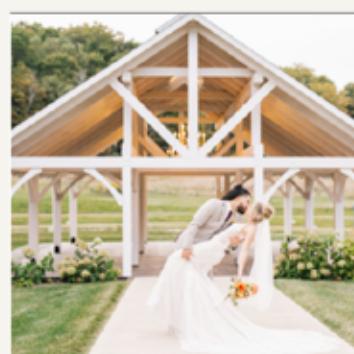
The New York Conference of Italian American State Legislators is a bipartisan organization of state Assembly and Senate members who actively promote and celebrate the state's Italian American community.

Dr. Jeffrey Victor Explores What Unitarian Universalists Believe

Without a required set of beliefs or a creed, sometimes even Unitarian Universalists can be unsure about what joins them together. At the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown's 10:30 a.m. hybrid service this Sunday, February 22, Dr. Jeffrey Victor will explain how the shared values of UUs are drawn together by actions from their proud history: "We are what we do, not what we profess." The sociologist and long-time Jamestown Community College professor will offer evidence of shared values from surveys of UUs and suggest that these shared bonds are a product of the internal force that "birds of a feather flock together." Active in the Jamestown church since becoming a member in 1965, Victor says that UUs don't convert to a doctrine, they remain who they have always been. All are welcome to the service and coffee hour that follows at 1255 Prendergast Avenue. To participate virtually, use the link at UUJamestown.org/calendar.



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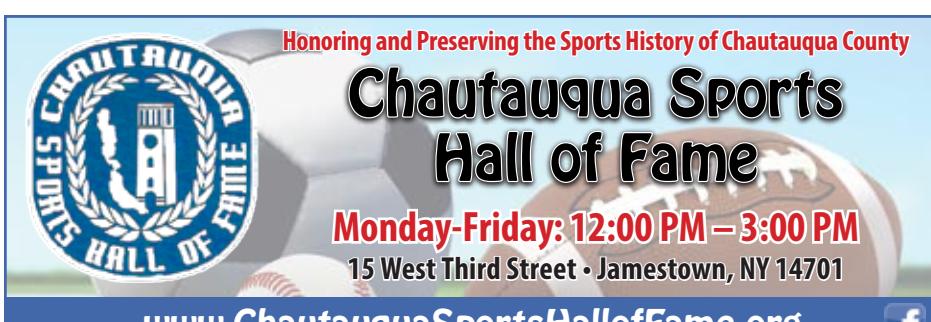
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'Close to Home' Exhibit opens February 20 at Octagon Gallery



Arkwright, NY-based artist Elizabeth Booth uses a photographic technique called cyanotype to create unique prints on paper and textiles. Her exhibition "Close to Home" opens at the Octagon Gallery in Westfield on Friday, February 20.

Contributed by

Octagon Gallery

"Close to Home," an exhibition showcasing contemporary botanical cyanotype works on paper and textiles by Elizabeth Booth, opens with a reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Friday, February 20, at the Patterson Library Octagon Gallery in Westfield.



The exhibition runs through March 20. The gallery, which is open during regular library hours, is located at 40 South Portage St. in Westfield, NY. See www.pattersonlib.org for more information.

"Close to Home" is a collection of cyanotypes created using plants gathered from the woods, fields, and gardens surrounding the artist's home in Arkwright, NY.

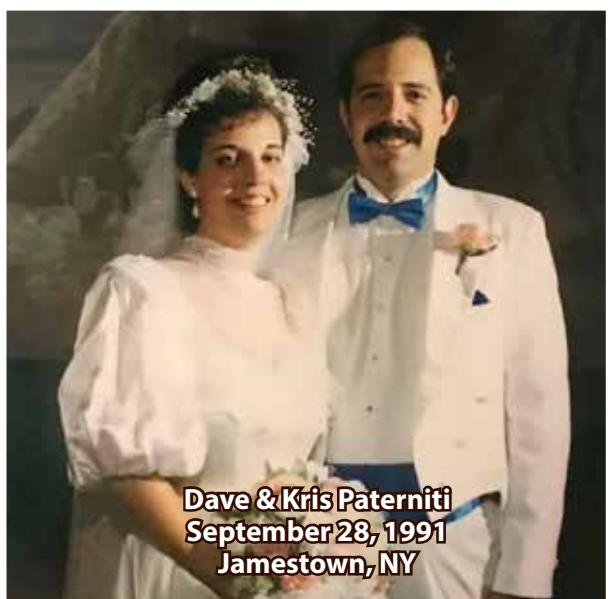
Cyanotype, a photographic process dating to the mid-1800s, is known for its distinctive Prussian blue tones. In this exhibition, Booth reinterprets this historic process through a modern lens, creating works that bridge alternative photography, painting, and textile art. The results range from delicate botanical impressions on paper to larger scale works on fabric.

The exhibition highlights the versatility of the process, including both traditional cyanotypes and more experimental work using multiple exposures and color manipulation.

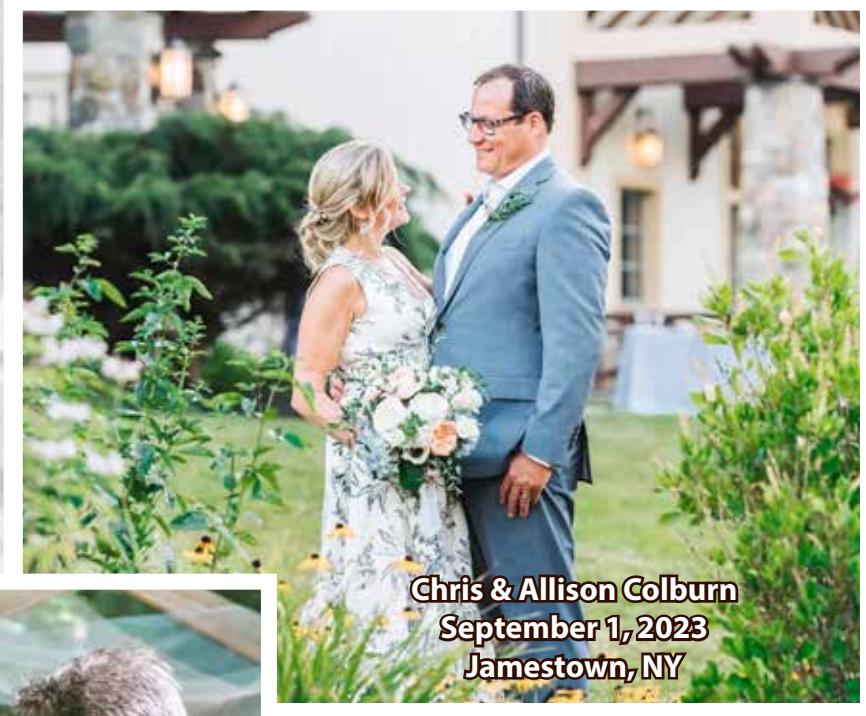
"What I enjoy about the cyanotype process is that it invites a balance between control and chance," says Booth. "The process is slow and tactile, requires no darkroom, uses relatively safe chemistry, and can be developed with sunlight and water."

"I chose to create these place-focused works as a way to reinterpret the natural landscape of my home. I find that cyanotype is an excellent way to help me reflect on my relationship with the place I live."

Booth has been creating cyanotypes since 2019, and has had her work included in multiple juried exhibitions, including the Southern Tier Biennial in 2025 and Artscape in Jamestown in 2023, 2024, and 2025. Last year, one of her cyanotypes was selected for an exhibition by the Griffin Museum of Photography in Massachusetts honoring Anna Atkins, who is credited with being the originator of botanical cyanotypes. She has also exhibited her work at Hallwalls, the Tri-County Arts Association, and the North Shore Arts Alliance member shows.



Dave & Kris Paterniti
September 28, 1991
Jamestown, NY



Chris & Allison Colburn
September 1, 2023
Jamestown, NY



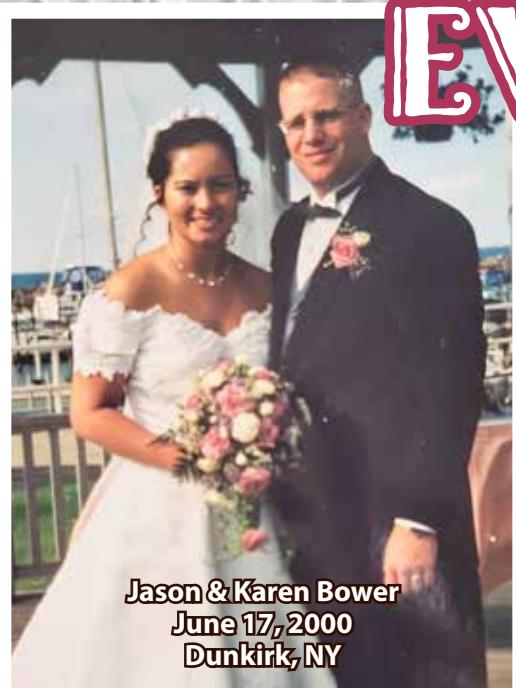
Ashley & Zac Hnatyszyn
May 12, 2012
Jamestown, NY



Scott & Sarah Samuelson
June 4, 2022
Brocton, NY



John & Colleen Finley
May 15, 2010
Cassadaga, NY



Jason & Karen Bower
June 17, 2000
Dunkirk, NY



PJ & Tina Hall
July 3, 1993
Dunkirk, NY



Kevin & Kim Wozniak
June 14, 1997
Buffalo, NY



Dave & Addie Waller
September 5, 2012
Salida, CO



Adam & Hannah Stahlsmith
June 21, 2025
Russell, PA

Golden Couples of Chautauqua

To celebrate the Month of Love, we asked some of Chautauqua County's longest-married couples to reflect on their relationships. Each pair shared how they met, what they remember about their wedding day, the little habits that keep them close and the wisdom they've gained over decades together.

Joe & Joanne Scapellite



Married: February 2, 1974



Still celebrating in Jamestown, 52 years later.

Children:

Gina Cunningham and Laurie Reynolds

How did the two of you meet, and what were your first impressions of each other?

We hung around all the same people. We used to go dancing all the time. We started out as great friends. We both thought we each had a great sense of humor

What do you remember most clearly about your wedding day?

All our family and friends were enjoying the day with us. Great reception, beautiful ceremony and SNOW!



What is a small, everyday habit or tradition that has helped keep your marriage strong?

Family comes first. Pasta and meatballs every Sunday! (Especially during football season)

How have you both changed over the course of 50+ years, and how has your love adapted with those changes?

Have calmed down over the years and learned not to sweat the small stuff. We have found over the years that our love for each other is what matters. Not who's right or wrong

What advice would you give to younger couples who hope to build a lasting marriage?

Like I said..don't sweat the small stuff. Think before you react. Keep God at the center of your lives and always keep your family close.

John & Rose Taddio



Married: April 11, 1970



Still Celebrating in Dunkirk, 56 years later.

Children:

AJ Taddio, Tara Taddio and Adrienne Incitto.

How did the two of you meet, and what were your first impressions of each other?

John sang in a local band in the late 60's-70's and in December of 1968, we met at Sandy's in Fredonia while he was singing. A mutual friend introduced us. Me and my girlfriends began to follow the band that frequented many local bars in Dunkirk, Fredonia, Sheridan and Irving, NY.

It was love or lust at first sight! I graduated high school at 17 years old. I was only 17 years old when I frequented these places for a few months until I turned 18 years old in January. We dated for a year before John asked me to marry him. I was only 19 years old and John was 22. How naïve we were about a life-long commitment.

What do you remember most clearly about your wedding day?

What I remember most clearly about my wedding day was the celebration of our friends and family joining in to make it such a "special day"! My father walking me down the aisle in the church where I was baptized, made my First Communion and Confirmation at Mt. Carmel in Silver Creek. Seeing John at the front of the church to take my hand and begin a new journey. John's best friend beside him as best man and John's sister walking down the aisle before me as my

Maid of Honor. Our friends outside decorated our car. Enjoying a day-long reception at the Hanover Motor Boat Club, dancing to the music of Tubby Wallace Band. Visiting John's grandfather (in his 90's) in the county home. We left for a short honeymoon to Niagara Falls the next day. The funny part is we never got out of the car at the Falls because it was a nice sunny day and very overcrowded. John said, "Can you see the falls from the car?" and we turned around and came home. John was never a traveler and never liked leaving home. That was my first clue I should've run home.

What is a small, everyday habit or tradition that has helped keep your marriage strong?

Over the years, there have been many different habits that helped make our marriage strong. Whether it was a look, a smile, a pinch, a cup of coffee/breakfast or just discussing things about our children and grandchildren. A close-knit family on both sides was very strong and a big part of our marriage. At the young age of 29, John's father (Edo) passed away suddenly at the age of 53 years old. It changed our lives drastically. John's mother became a widow at the young age of 50 years old. We added a small apartment onto our home and she came to live with us in 1979. She lived with us well over 40 years. I had three little kids. I wouldn't trade those memories for anything. My children loved having

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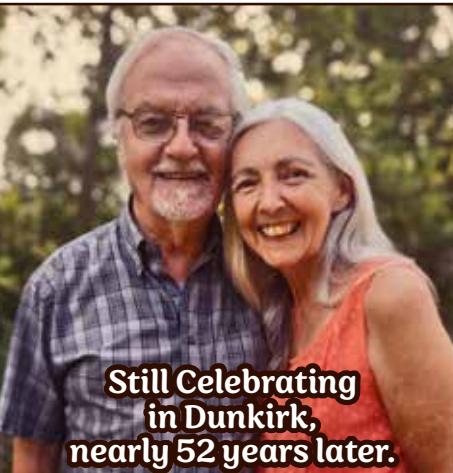
Celebrating more than 50 years of marriage and sharing their love and wisdom with us



Tom & Andrea Gestwicki



Married: April 11, 1970



Still Celebrating
in Dunkirk,
nearly 52 years later.

Children:

Jason, Paul, Stefan, Mark and Monica Gestwicki, MaryAlice Elam and Lucy Evans

How did the two of you meet, and what were your first impressions of each other?

We met while preparing to tape a TV show for St. Mary's Catholic Church in Dunkirk in 1970. We found we had many interests in common - especially music and nature - so our friendship grew.

What do you remember most clearly about your wedding day?

Tom's clearest memory of our wedding day involves his Dad and great uncles gathering around him and singing Stolat - a Polish song of blessing and good wishes. Andrea remembers being overwhelmed all day by the love and support of family and friends who brought us to that day and would continue to be with us into our future. It seems those are shared feelings of being loved!



What is a small, everyday habit or tradition that has helped keep your marriage strong?

Our Catholic faith and making music together are two shared interests that have kept us strong. Grace before meals and attending Mass are a constant and we have sung for more Masses, weddings and funerals than can be counted.

How have you both changed over the course of 50+ years, and how has your love adapted with those changes?

Everyone changes over time, so we were profoundly pleased during Covid's isolation to find that we still greatly enjoyed each other's company! And retirement has given us time to enjoy more time together. We highly recommend it!

What advice would you give to younger couples who hope to build a lasting marriage?

Every marriage is different, as all people are different. We have always had things we did separately as well as things we did together, which we think is healthy. We learned early in our marriage to make a big deal about the things we like about the other, rather than to be negative. And we hold hands a lot!

Herb & Charlotte Rice



Married: June 29, 1968



Still celebrating
in Bemus Point,
nearly 58 years later.

Children:

Karen, David and Emily Rice Cama and our AFS daughter from Australia, Dayl Workman

How did the two of you meet, and what were your first impressions of each other?

The first time we ever saw each other was in a grocery store during my short-lived summer job as a cashier. I noticed Herb's beautiful blue eyes and he thought I was "pretty and friendly!"

What do you remember most clearly about your wedding day?

Our wedding day started out with beautiful weather and a church filled with family and friends. After our reception, as we left for our honeymoon, the skies opened up!

What is a small, everyday habit or tradition that has helped keep your marriage strong?

A tradition of ours that has endured for many years involves stuffed peppers in a heart-shaped pan. Using a recipe gifted to us for our wedding by a friend, it is served on every special occasion - Valentine's, birthdays and whenever we want a pick-me-up.

How have you both changed over the course of 50+ years, and how has your love adapted with those changes?

Of course, we have changed in many ways over the past years. We have changed careers, homes, made many special friends and have enjoyed fun adventures boating, cycling and cheering for the Bills. We've dealt with setbacks and lost loved ones just like anyone else, but we continue to share exciting times, especially with our grandchildren. Our love for each other has expanded to include them, and for this, we are so grateful.

What advice would you give to younger couples who hope to build a lasting marriage?

We say maintain your independence, cultivate your interests but always prioritize what you have in common with your spouse. For us, an example of this would be our pursuit of fitness through our participation in the Senior Spin class at the Lakewood Y, where Herb has volunteered as instructor for the past 10 years. It won't always be easy, but it will surely be worth the effort. Every marriage experiences highs and lows. Work through the lows and you will enjoy the highs!

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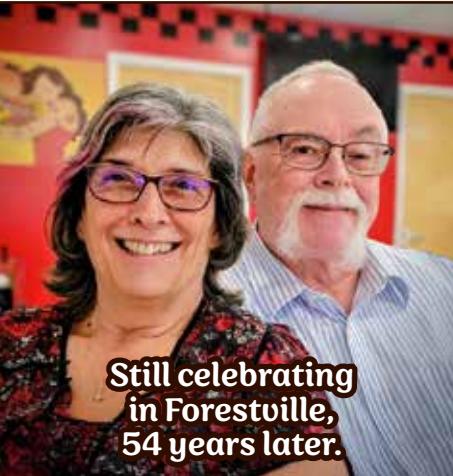


Golden Couples of Chautauqua

Lance & Kathie Parker



Married: August 14, 1971



Still celebrating in Forestville, 54 years later.

Children

Tina Hall & Sarah Beckwith

How did the two of you meet, and what were your first impressions of each other?

We met on Halloween 1970, at the Caboose in Fredonia, NY. We just clicked, knew he was the ONE. And he knew I was the ONE!

What do you remember most clearly about your wedding day?

Lance was unsure of getting to the church on time, due to the best man's car trouble!! Pure excitement and love are my best memories of that day. (Kathie)

What is a small, everyday habit or tradition that has helped keep your marriage strong?

Always saying "I love you", never going to bed angry and sharing household chores.

How have you both changed over the course of 50+ years, and how has your love adapted with those changes?

We went from best friends with each other, then we became parents and were immersed in raising them and back to concentrating on each other's needs. Our love stayed strong the whole time. We have had very few disagreements over the years, backed one another in all decisions with our kids and in other situations. Our marriage has been such a wonderful ride; we still hold hands and respect one another's feelings.

What advice would you give to younger couples who hope to build a lasting marriage?

Work at it. Marriage is 60/40 both ways. Marriage should not be "disposable." Compromise always, remember that words hurt and can't be unsaid.

Dan & Marcia Scapelite



Married: June 24, 1972



Still celebrating in Jamestown, nearly 53 years later.

Children

Danielle Scapelite LaMancuso and Marc Scapelite

How did the two of you meet, and what were your first impressions of each other?

We met at Daniel's first cousin's house, where we were both asked to babysit her children. We were set up! We were attracted to one another from that evening, and it continues through today.

What do you remember most clearly about your wedding day?

It was the great floods of 1972! Many of our relatives could not come because the roads were closed down.

What is a small, everyday habit or tradition that has helped keep your marriage strong?

We try to eat together at our dining room table and did the same with our children until they left the house.

How have you both changed over the course of 50+ years, and how has your love adapted with those changes?

Although our physical appearances have changed a lot, we still love each other as we did on our wedding day.

What advice would you give to younger couples who hope to build a lasting marriage?

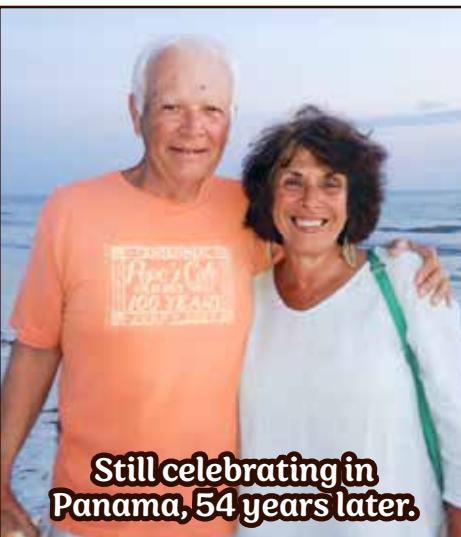
No one is perfect, and your marriage will never be perfect. A marriage can only last if you accept each other for who they are. It is important to listen and have an open mind.



Sandra & Craig Weston



Married: July 3, 1971



Still celebrating in Panama, 54 years later.

Children:

Jonathan Weston & Jessica Weston

How did the two of you meet, and what were your first impressions of each other?

We met in Buffalo, NY. We moved to Chautauqua County when we purchased Panama Rocks in 1979



What do you remember most clearly about your wedding day?

We had to leave our reception early as we had a flight to Europe for our honeymoon.

What advice would you give to younger couples who hope to build a lasting marriage?

Patience, compromise and respect are definitely needed in a lasting relationship



Business of the Week

Celebrating Local Businesses & Giving them the Spotlight!

Time & Tradition at Chautauqua County's only Bridal Boutique: Marquise Offers Dream Dresses, Flawless Service

Wedding dresses are not an everyday affair for most people, but Ashley Whippo lives and breathes them. Ashley, owner of Marquise Bridal Boutique in Lakewood, is thrilled to help brides find the wedding dress of their dreams right here in Chautauqua County. She comes by her interest in the field naturally, as her great aunt owned a bridal shop in Bolivar, NY. True to tradition, Ashley is following in her great aunt's footsteps.

"I always loved to visit and help out at the shop," she said. "When life gave me lemons with my healthcare job, I decided to make lemonade and fill a hole in the community, becoming the only bridal boutique in Chautauqua County and the surrounding communities."

Ashley said she is proud to carry beautiful wedding gowns from designer Justin Alexander.

"These gowns are made here in America, over in NYC, and are very budget-friendly but amazing quality," she said.

The shop, located at 117 Chautauqua Ave., is open only by appointment only, which allows for a very unique, specialized approach. Ashley said she focuses on the comfort and confidence of every bride-to-be.

"Each bride gets a one-on-one bridal experience with me in the boutique," she said. "With the new bridal experience appointment, we try on different silhouette styles and try to find the style that best flatters each bride's body type. I push comfortability for each bride as it's a long day on your wedding day."

When a bride books a new bride appointment at the boutique, they are asked to fill out a questionnaire on the shop's website that helps Ashley understand what they are looking for. The questionnaire asks for the style or vibes the bride is going for, as well as the silhouette, straps and neckline of their dream dress.

"I also give a spot where they can upload a Pinterest board or photos off line that they are liking," she said. "However, sometimes a bride will come in thinking she knows what she is looking for, and then falls in love with something completely different. So, it's important to go into your bridal appointment with an open mind."

Brides have various appointment options, including a new bride appointment, a bride tribe appointment, where a bride can narrow down her choices; a say yes to the dress appointment, where the bride and guests can review the details and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



Hailey Delong



Emily Allston



Toni Ann Barretta & Ashley Whippo



Proud owner: Ashley Whippo



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NY Connects and the Office for Aging Services in the New Year

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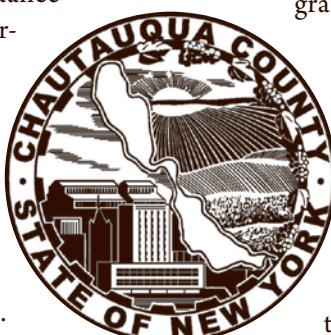
Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services

With the start of the New Year us here at Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services and NY Connects would like to start it off right and remind everyone of what services and assistance we can help to provide and/or connect you or your loved ones with to assist in healthy and safe aging at home.

NY Connects is run in partnership with the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) and is designed as a "No Wrong Door" (NWD) system. This means that whether you contact us by phone, in person, or via email, you will be connected to the correct and appropriate information by our operators who serve as a one-stop access point for objective, free guidance about long-term services and supports for people of all ages or with any type of disability, including caregivers and professionals, as well as many other local services and resources.

One of the main goals of NY Connects is to help individuals and families understand their options before, during, and after planning for long-term needs such as in-home care, transportation supports, caregiver assistance, and more. Please note we are NOT emergency services but work to provide you with the best options available to you regardless of the situation you may be in.

At its core, NY Connects serves a broad group of people, including older adults seeking support to maintain independence and quality of life, individuals of any age with disabilities who may require long-term services, caregivers and family members looking for resources to support loved ones, as well as professionals assisting clients with care planning and benefits navigation. NY Connects offers up-to-date, comprehensive information on long-term services such as in-home



home delivered meals, the

Local Roots program and our very

popular Dining Out Program.

As well as offering general information and assistance for the community, our local NY Connects acts as both a navigator and advocate—translating complex systems into clear options for families and individuals. By providing free, unbiased information, coordinating services, and empowering people to make informed choices, it helps users preserve independence and quality of life, avoid unnecessary institutional care when community-based options are appropriate and reduce stress for caregivers and families.

Chautauqua County NY Connects can be reached by phone at 716-753-4582, by email at ccnyc@chq.gov.com or by visiting your nearest Office for Aging Services location during normal business hours.

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John & Rose Taddio

Continued from Page 12

Grandma right next door. She baked her heart out with her homemade Italian recipes. It allowed me to go back to work and she was home when my children came home from school. We celebrated many birthdays, holidays and family events. We kept busy with our children's sporting events.

How have you both changed over the course of 50+ years, and how has your love adapted with those changes?

John and I both have changed over the course of 56 years. We had to make the adjustment of both of us having a structured work life 24/7. John worked 57 years at the steel plant as a maintenance pipefitter in Dunkirk and I worked for over 40 years at Brooks Hospital as a patient access manager. We are both retired from our full-time jobs.

We had to make the adjustment from bringing up our children and going through the empty-nest syndrome. We have had to redefine our purpose as a couple.

The last 10 years have brought some health issues for both John and myself at various times, which can put a strain on any relationship. We now spend most days going to doctors' appointments, making sure that medicine is taken regularly, and trying to eat



a healthy diet and exercise to our capabilities.

What advice would you give to younger couples who hope to build a lasting marriage?

The advice we would both like to give younger couples who hope to build a lasting marriage is never give up on each other. Always have patience, and take a breather when put to the test. You will have disagreements—learn to become mature about it. I always tell John there's that song, "There's no good guys, there's no bad guys, there's just you and me and sometimes we just disagree!" Save for tomorrow because before you know it, tomorrow is here. Work hard and rely on each other. Financial stability is very important, which took us a long time to learn. We've never had an argument over money.

If we didn't have it, we worked till we did. It's healthy and good to have outside interests and friends, but always make time for each other. It took us a long time to learn to eliminate jealousy and build trust. The real secret behind John and my marriage is having a sense of humor. I tell John, all the time, "I know I could've done worse, but you couldn't have done any better!" He agrees with me on that. He always says I was the mature one in our relationship. **SENSE OF HUMOR IS MOST IMPORTANT! DAILY PRAYERS THANKING GOD FOR BLESSING US DAILY!**

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Time & Tradition at Chautauqua County's only Bridal Boutique: Marquise Offers Dream Dresses, Flawless Service

Continued from Page 15

add accessories; and a bridal try-on appointment. Booking for all of these appointments is available online.

Ashley said there are various trends that are popular at this time in the bridal scene, including modern chic, boho and whimsical styles.

"There is a style for everyone at the boutique," she said. "I carry three lines of the Justin Alexander family of gowns. Ranging from the modern chic bride, the romantic classic bride, to the boho/ whimsical and country vibes."

The lines include Adore, Lillian West and Sincerity.

Despite being a bridal shop, Ashley said grooms have not been forgotten, as she also has rental or purchasing options for tuxedos through Generation Tux.

"It's an amazing company that will ship your tux or suit pressed and ready to wear in a box right to your door and then when you're done with your event, you would drop it off in the pre-UPS bag to any UPS location," she said.

Ashley offered a bit of advice to the brides as they search for their dream gowns.

"My best advice is to keep an open mind," she said. "You do not try on wedding gowns every day, so trust the process and try on different silhouettes and styles. See what flatters your body type the best. Find what you feel comfortable and beautiful in."

Marquise Bridal Boutique is proud to be hosting a special vendor "Sip and See" event on Feb. 26 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., which will offer brides a chance to visit with local vendors and see their offerings. Ashley said the event is very popular and offers a unique sneak peek at bridal offerings from around the area.

For those who can't make it to the event, a community vendor guide is available at www.marquisebridalboutique.com. To book a new bride appointment for a bridal experience with Ashley at her boutique, please visit her website to see the availability and book your experience today! If you have any questions, please reach out via email or call 585-808-2771.

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~ E. Leventhal

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Oscar nominees Little Amélie, If I Had Legs I'd Kick You and F1 to show at Reg Lenna Center for The Arts



Contributed by
**Reg Lenna Center
for the Arts**

Academy Award® Best Animated feature, *Little Amélie or The Character of Rain* (Wed., February 18 at 2 p.m.) shows as a Winter Break family matinee. The world is a perplexing, peaceful mystery to Amélie until a miraculous encounter with chocolate ignites her wild sense of curiosity. As she develops a deep attachment to her family's housekeeper, Nishio-san, Amélie discovers the wonders of nature as well as the emotional truths hidden beneath the surface of her family's idyllic life as foreigners in post-war Japan. *Little Amélie* is rated PG and is 78 minutes long.

Academy Award® Best Actress nominee Rose Byrne stars in *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You* (Wed., February 18 at 7 p.m.) With her life crashing down around her, Linda (Byrne) attempts to navigate her child's mysterious illness, her absent husband, a missing person, and an increasingly hostile relationship with her therapist. *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You* is rated R and is 113 minutes long.

Brad Pitt stars in the Best Picture nominee *F1* (Fri., February 20 at 7 p.m.) Racing legend Sonny Hayes is coaxed into leading a struggling Formula 1® team-and mentoring a young hotshot driver-while chasing one last chance at redemption. The film is nominated for 4 Academy Awards. *F1* is rated PG-13 and is 155 minutes long.

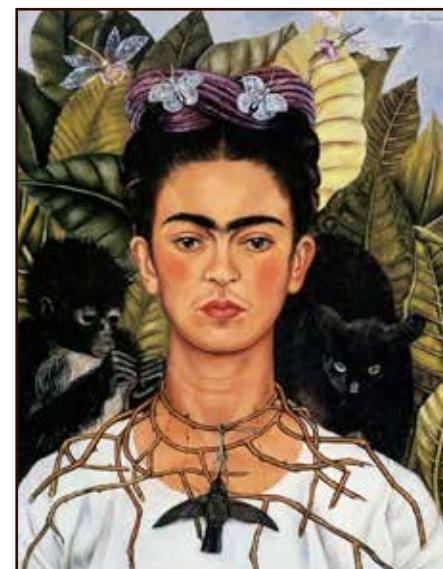
Upcoming Movies at The Reg include Elizabeth Olsen and Miles Teller in the afterlife romantic comedy *Eternity* (Feb. 25 at 7 p.m.), and Ralph Fiennes in the British WWI historic drama *The Choral* (Feb. 27 at 7 p.m.)

Tickets for most Movies at The Reg are \$8 in-person at the box office and \$10 online (reglenna.com) & by phone - 716.484.7070. Family showings are \$7 in-person at the box office and \$9 online & by phone. Special engagements are priced differently. The theater and box office at The Reg are located at 116 E. 3rd St. in Jamestown, NY. The box office is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 12 - 5 p.m. and one hour before movies and events.

Opera House Presents *Frida: Viva la Vida* as Part of Arts in the Afternoon

Contributed by
**The 1891 Fredonia
Opera House**

The 1891 Fredonia Opera House will present *Frida: Viva la Vida*, a special cinematic exploration of the acclaimed Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo, on Sat., Feb. 21, at 1 p.m. The screening is part of the Opera House's Arts in the Afternoon series of events, sponsored by Dr. James M. & Marcia Merrins.



on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and the United Arts Appeal of Chautauqua County.

For this production, the Opera House is equipped with assistive listening headsets for the hearing-impaired. Simply request one from any usher or Opera House staff member.

The 1891 Fredonia Opera House Performing Arts Center is a member-supported not-for-profit performing arts center with a mission to "present the performing arts for the benefit of our community and region ... providing access to artistic diversity ... and high quality programming at an affordable price." It is located in Village Hall in downtown Fredonia. For a complete schedule of events, visit www.fredopera.org

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The Chautauqua Gazette is committed to supporting nonprofit organizations across Chautauqua County that strengthen our communities and enrich local life. From community services and arts initiatives to education, health, and advocacy, the many organizations of Chautauqua are the backbone of our county and their impact deserves to be seen, celebrated, and supported.

Think of the Gazette as your partner in amplifying your mission by raising awareness, promoting upcoming events, and sharing your latest news with a broad local audience. Our mission is to shine a spotlight on the organizations that give so much to our community. To learn more about customizable collaboration opportunities, contact cornell@chqgazette.com or call 716-720-1845.



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Three Brothers, Two Weddings, One Front-Row Seat

Continued from Front Page

sensibilities.

Please note that while I will gripe about how expensive such things as weddings are, I am as lazy as I am grumpy, and will be purchasing *my* floral arrangements from **Pea Pod & Juniper**, **Secret Garden**, **Bough and Bend**, **Blue June Blooms**, or **Francesca's Floral**. Not assembling them myself. And certainly not running anywhere. The morning of my wedding, I'll be found at **Chautauqua Medical Aesthetics** getting my glow from a Botox touchup, not a run to the farmer's market.

But, back to the magic. The day itself was indescribably happy for all involved. Happy tears during the vows and speeches and first dances...followed by a memorable reception that may or may not have involved hours of mosh pit-style dancing, crowdsurfing, and rapping the entire 9 minutes of Ye's *Runaway* (the Nixons are a notoriously rowdy bunch). Miraculously, no glassware was harmed on this day.

Before that day, I viewed weddings as garish, gratuitous, commercialized logistical nightmares (I'm great at parties, especially weddings. Can't you tell?). But something shifts when it's someone you love standing at the altar. I felt my heart expand in ways I didn't know it could.

And now, we get to do it again.

Just before Christmas, another brother proposed to his girlfriend of nearly a decade. The thought and care he put into the proposal were unmistakable. The vintage ring, imported from an antique shop in London, was stunning. He took her back to the spot where they first met, this time staged beautifully for a proposal.

After she said "yes," he brought her back to her parents' home, where we were all waiting for a surprise engagement celebration. I was more nervous for him than I've been for anything in years. Watching them walk in hand-in-hand, officially

stepping into this next chapter, filled me with those same warm fuzzies I felt at my brother's wedding.

The excitement of the planning stage, which he and my soon-to-be sister are in now, is palpable. They are already immersed in dreaming up the day, from imagining decor to scouting venues. Who knows? A gorgeous fall wedding at **Whittier Apple Farm** or **The Red House** could be on the horizon, or a reception at **Morning Glory Wedding Venue** (doubles as accommodations for out-of-town wedding guests). Or we could set up a party tent from **James-town Awning**, lakeside for a beautiful summer sunset wedding. And though my brother is a professional cameraman, he'll need to take the day off and trust the documentation to **Nazareth Video**.

Couples, whether my brother and his fiancée, or anyone else in Chautauqua County, might also consider other vendors for their celebrations: **Marquise Bridal Boutique** for gorgeous bridal gowns, **Ann Augustine** for jewelry to beautifully accessorize their gown, **St. Elmo Spa** for a spa day with the bridal party, and **Dot's Gift Boutique** or **Sweeterson Farms** for local party favors and thoughtful gifts. Maybe a rehearsal dinner at the **Splash** (again, think of the lakeside views!). You can't have a wedding without entertainment, and my recommendation is **Synergy Entertainment**. If all of this sounds overwhelming, hand it over to the professionals at **Headin to the Party**.

Standing at these milestones with my brothers, watching them choose their partners, build their families, and share joy with everyone around them, makes me feel lucky. I am lucky to have a front-row seat. Lucky to welcome incredible women into our family. Lucky to watch my wild little brothers become devoted husbands. Most of all, I feel lucky that after decades, my sisters and soon-to-be-sisters finally outnumber the boys...and even luckier that they are in our lives now so they can be present at my wedding.

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Live music by Brian K. Chase (pictured) and Daniel Nordin will add to the excitement at the Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County's fundraiser on Saturday, February 21, 6-10 p.m. at the Frewsburg American Legion, 9 Meadow Lane.

Admission is free, with basket and gift card raffles, a 50/50 drawing, and food and beverages available for purchase. The MHA is a peer recovery center offering support groups and individual coaching for people looking to improve their lives, deepen wellness, thrive in recovery, or support those on a recovery path. For more information, call (716) 661-9044 or visit MHACHautauqua.org or Facebook.com/MHACHautauqua.

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CHAMBER CORNER

The Value of Membership

Contributed by

Daniel J. Heitzenrater

Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce
President and CEO

We sometimes get asked "what does the Chamber do for local businesses?" The answer usually takes longer than the questioner expected.

As a countywide business association, the CHQ Chamber builds vital connections, provides professional resources, and champions our local businesses in Chautauqua County. That's our mission, and that's the work we focus on.

Connections come in a variety of forms – sometimes physical connections as we hold Business After Hours networking events that allow local businesspeople to interact directly with one another, and sometimes they are as simple as providing a widely-read weekly email newsletter to connect our members with other businesses and organizations countywide. Our online Business Directory also provides thousands of referral connections each day as customers find our members based on location, category listing, or keyword searches.

Providing resources is a critical part of our work for businesses. With a growing series of Business Builder Workshops, the CHQ Chamber is tackling topics that local businesspeople care about. Our first this year will focus on AI for Your Business, with others set to include discussions of corporate culture, tax preparation, and marketing. Another important resource for local businesses is the ShopLocalCHQ Gift Card, accepted by over 160 local businesses. In 2025 the CHQ Chamber sold over \$150,000 in ShopLocalCHQ Gift Cards – money that goes directly to local businesses to improve our economy.

We champion local businesses through ribbon cuttings and grand openings, social media, gamified online passes that encourage shoppers to visit small businesses, hold an annual Business Awards Banquet to recognize some of our best and brightest, and offer a series of advocacy events that allow businesspeople to meet with and ask questions of business leaders and local elected officials.

This is not a comprehensive list, but a quick overview of how the CHQ Chamber is working each day on behalf of our local business community. Some of our programs and events are open only to our members, but all

local businesses reap the rewards of a stronger economy and better business climate that the Chamber provides. If your business is not a member yet, we encourage you to reach out to learn more about membership will benefit you.

Business Builder Workshop: AI for Your Business

The first CHQ Chamber Business Builder Workshop of this year is filling up fast and we urge you to register to secure a seat before it is sold out. The topic is AI for Your Business, and it will feature two guest presenter who have real-use experience with Artificial Intelligence.

Rachael Wiley-Steffen and B.J. Monacelli will provide practical and meaningful tips for using AI in a variety of ways. Rachael Wiley-Steffen is an AI Certified Consultant, marketing strategist, licensed real estate professional, and the co-owner of the Bemus Point Golf Club and Tap House. She has more than 20 years of experience in operations, marketing and customer experience and focuses on helping teams use AI as a supportive tool, not a replacement, so they can work smarter and better serve their customers and communities. For the past nine years B.J. Monacelli has been working at Robo Enterprises Inc. helping to manage day-to-day operations. Outside of that role he collaborates with small and mid-sized businesses on practical AI and automation projects, helping them identify their biggest workflow bottlenecks and implement tools or technology that reduce manual work, improve consistency, and find or fulfill more customers. B.J. is also a member of Playmakers AI, an AI & Automation community led by entrepreneur and podcast host Chris Koerner, where he stays current on automation tactics and implementation best practices specifically for businesses.

This workshop will be held Wednesday, February 25 from 9 to 10:30am at the Southern Chautauqua Federal Credit Union Community Training Center, 100 Mall Blvd., Lakewood. It is free to attend but advanced registration is appreciated, and space is already filling up. This workshop is sponsored by the Southern Chautauqua Federal Credit Union, State University of New York at Fredonia, and Media One Radio Group. Register now through our web calendar at www.chqchamber.org.

Business After Hours at Audubon Community Nature Center

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

Building Future Leaders: Success for Falconer FBLA at Districts



Falconer Central School Future Business Leaders of America

Contributed by
Falconer Central School

While temperatures outside reached bone-chilling lows, the Future Business Leaders of America members from Falconer Central School were just warming up. Students recently traveled to the 2025 Spring District Competition, delivering "sizzling" performance against peers from Clymer and Randolph Central Schools.

The competition tested members across three categories: objective testing, professional performance, and real-world role-play scenarios. The results highlight a bright future for Falconer students who secured top three finishes in categories ranging from Agribusiness to Public Speaking.

HS FBLA winners were Carson B. (1st Intro to Decision Making, 3rd Intro. to Business Procedures), Patrick B. (1st Agribusiness), Andrew C. (1st Intro to Public Speaking), Finley D. 2nd Job Interview), Matisonn D. (3rd Personal Finance), Colleen F. (1st Intro to Business Presentation), Ella G. (2nd Public Speaking, 3rd Economics), Haven Kaltenbach (1st Impromptu Speaking), Savannah

M. (1st Economics; 3rd Journalism), Lilli S-W. (1st Customer Service), and Sharlie Q. (1st Personal Finance; 2nd Customer Service, 3rd Hospitality & Event Management).

This year we had one FBLA Middle Level member in attendance and he stepped up to the challenge: Jason R. (1st Exploring Business Issues, 1st Exploring Customer Service, 3rd Middle Level Digital Citizenship).

Carson B, Andrew C, Finley D, Ella G, Haven K participated in District Elimination Events. By securing first or second-place finishes, they each earned the opportunity to represent District 13 at the State Leadership Conference this April.

The students' performances left a lasting impression on the panel of professional evaluators. "I love judging the local FBLA competitions," said performance judge, Nina Gustafson, AVP-Area Retail Manager-Cattaraugus County Bank, "I am so impressed by the students and their capabilities. It is such a wonderful program." Congratulations to these students on their hard work and success as they prepare to compete at the state level.

SUDOKU

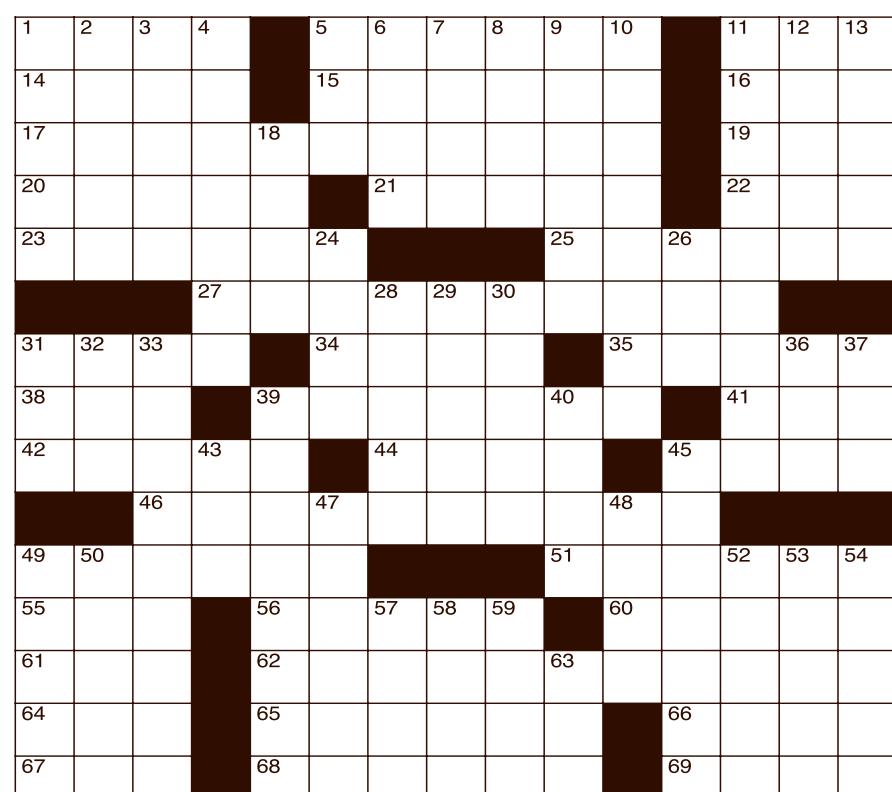
9	4		6	1				
6			8	3		2		
3	5		4	2		7	1	
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1			2	7	3	4		
8	3	6	4		1			
				6	5			
7		3	5	2				
	2							

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Level: Beginner

CROSSWORD



1. Cut quickly	41. Small amount
5. A way to state clearly	42. Daughter of Acrisius
11. River in NE Scotland	44. Ornamental box
14. Expansive	45. Government agents
15. Lacking social polish	46. Uncertain
16. Amount of time	49. A cotton fabric with a satiny fini
17. Frame	51. Treeless plains
19. Automobile	55. One's sense of self-importance
20. Toadstools	56. Consumer advocate
21. High school dances	60. Type of lounger
22. Utilize	61. Body part
23. Experimented with	62. Can be persuaded
25. One-sided	64. Woman (French)
27. Acquisitive	65. Ready and willing to be taught
31. Potted plants	66. Arab ruler title
34. Everyone has one	67. Unhappy
35. Kalahari Desert lake	68. Gradually went away
38. Unidentified flying object	69. Able to think clearly
39. People 65 and over	

CLUES DOWN

1. Brushed	32. Southwestern Russia city
2. Small water spirit (Germ.)	33. Observed
3. Heroes	36. Angry
4. Monetary units	37. Drivers' licenses
5. Some don't want to share theirs	39. Musical composition
6. Free-swimming invertebrate	40. Auction
7. Litigates	43. They __
8. Outer	45. Women
9. Parallelograms	47. Be filled with love for
10. Uneasy feelings	48. Thick-soled sock
11. Cross	49. Appears
12. A way to remove	50. Old World lizard
13. Pages can be dog-__	52. The leading performer
18. Ukrainian city	53. Protein
24. A citizen of Denmark	54. "Gunga Din" script writer
26. Month	57. Art __, around 1920
28. Hindu queens	58. __ Blyton, children's author
29. Group of chemicals	59. Abnormal breathing
30. Rider of Rohan	63. A place to rest
31. Wet dirt	

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 25

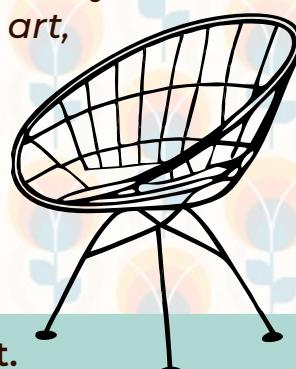
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Hospital Foundation Celebrates Successful 2025 Fundraising Year



Contributed by
Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation

The Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation Board of Directors (BOD) is pleased to announce the success of its 2025 fundraising efforts, raising nearly \$255,000 in support of high-quality, local healthcare for the residents across the region.

This achievement was made possible through generous grants from Five Star Bank, Lake Shore Bank, the Lenna Foundation, M&T Charitable Foundation, the Robert S. and Janet L. Miller Family Foundation, the Ripley Community Heritage Fund, and the Jessie C. Wilson Memorial Trust. Additional support came from WMH associates, medical staff, Foundation, hospital and auxiliary board members, individuals, businesses, civic and service organizations, and other community partners.

Foundation Board President Kathryn S. Bronstein, Ph.D., who has led the board since 2018, emphasized the importance of community support in rural healthcare. "In rural areas, healthcare is personal – and this year demonstrated just how deeply our neighbors care for one another," said Bronstein. "Every contribution helps keep essential services local, supports our caregivers, and improves access to care for families throughout our region."

To date, the Foundation has allocated donations from 2025 to fund equipment and systems improvements throughout the hospital. Investments include three new treatment tables for the Physical Therapy (PT) Department, a slim design colonoscope in the Operating Room (OR), and Operating Room (OR) light repairs, and supplies supporting breast cancer awareness initiatives in the Radiology Department. On-going efforts to acquire new treadmills and recumbent elliptical bicycles in the PT Department along with new flooring in the Med Surg area on the second floor of the hospital continue.

"This past year proved that being a good neighbor, is more than a phrase – it's action,"

Bronstein added.

Hospital Administrator, Dr. Rodney J. Buchanan, noted the direct impact fundraising has on patient care. "In a rural area, keeping care local means everything," Buchanan said.

The hospital's service area includes Ashville, Bemus Point, Brocton, Chautauqua, Clymer, Dewittville, Findley Lake, Mayville, Panama, Portland, Ripley, Sherman, Stockton, and Westfield as well as visitors to our region. The hospital served close to 32,000 patients in 2025.

Patricia Gaughan DiPalma, Executive Director of the WMH Foundation, highlighted the community's response to the campaign. "The positive response to the 2025 campaign reflects the strength of our community and shared belief in neighbors helping neighbors," said DiPalma. "We are fortunate to benefit from the resources of the larger Allegheny Health Network while maintaining the trust, accessibility, and personal connection of a local community hospital. Many critical services and advanced equipment are only possible because of continued donor support through the Foundation," DiPalma continued.

Earlier this month, the hospital introduced new outpatient MRI services, reducing the need for patients – particularly seniors – to travel out of town for care.

Westfield Memorial Hospital remains committed to protecting access to healthcare across Chautauqua County, while the WMH Foundation, now in its 47th year, continues its mission of strengthening local care through community support.

For more information about how to give to this year's Annual Campaign, please contact Patricia DiPalma at (716) 793-2338.

Contributions to the Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation are tax-deductible and can be made securely online at: www.westfieldhospitalfoundation.org.

Checks may be made payable to the **Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation** or the **WMH Foundation** and mailed to 189 East Main Street, Westfield, NY, 14787.

Chamber Corner

Continued from Page 22

For the second year in a row the CHQ Chamber and the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry are collaborating with Audubon Community Nature center to provide a region-wide Business After Hours event. It will be held Wednesday, March 25 from 5:30-7:30pm.

All local businesspeople are invited to attend this special networking event, which will include complimentary appetizers and beverages, with tip proceeds to benefit Audubon Community Nature Center's mission of connecting people to nature. Bring business cards for networking and door prize drawings.

Attendees are invited to stay for a special private viewing of Audubon Lights after the networking event. The display features a half-mile trail of won-

der, where visitors can walk among thousands of lights—from twinkling trailside luminaries to towering trees bathed in color.

CHQ Chamber member organizations can send two people free of charge to all Business After Hours events. Non-members or anyone above the two-person limit will be \$10. Registration for CHQ Chamber members is open online now through the Chamber's web calendar at www.chqchamber.org. Members of the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry should email Savannah Casey at szimmerman@wccb.org to register free of charge. Business After Hours at Audubon Community Nature Center is sponsored by the Media One Radio Group, and State University of New York at Fredonia.

"Love is sharing your popcorn."

~ Charles Schultz

Audubon Opens Summer Day Camp Registration and Photo Contest



Audubon Community Nature Center opened registration for Summer Day Camp and some camps already have waiting lists. For the brochure with all the details and scholarship information, go to AudubonCNC.org/summer-camp. Audubon is also accepting entries in its 2026 Nature Photography Contest. With \$1,600 in prize money, youth and adults compete separately in the categories of Close-ups, Wildlife in Action, and ACNC Outdoors. Pictured is 2025 Adult Single Bloom winner "Dragonfly on Waterlily" by Michael Weishan of Cattaraugus, N.Y. Contest information is at AudubonCNC.org/Photo-Contest.

For a great outdoor experience and indoor adventures, come to the Nature Center at 1600 Riverside Road, one-quarter mile east of Route 62 between Jamestown and Warren: AudubonCNC.org.



CHQgazette.com

County Executive PJ Wendel Appoints Emily Woodard as Chautauqua County Attorney

Lifelong County Resident & Veteran Prosecutor Appointed to Lead Chautauqua County Attorney's Office



County Executive PJ Wendel welcomes Emily Woodard, Esq. following her appointment as Chautauqua County Attorney.)

Contributed by
Chautauqua County

Chautauqua County Executive PJ Wendel has appointed **Emily Woodard, Esq.** as the new **Chautauqua County Attorney**, bringing more than a decade of legal experience and a deep commitment to public service in Chautauqua County to the role.

Woodard has served in the Chautauqua County District Attorney's Office since January 2015 and currently holds the position of **Second Assistant District Attorney**, where she manages a felony caseload and prosecutes crimes throughout the County. Her work has included reviewing

investigations, presenting cases to the grand jury, conducting hearings and trials, preparing legal briefs and memoranda, and working closely with law enforcement agencies and victims of crime. In addition, Woodard has supervised support staff, implemented office-wide administrative policies, and coordinated countywide law enforcement training programs.

"Emily Woodard brings a strong combination of legal expertise, professionalism, and dedication to public service," said **County Executive PJ Wendel**. "She has demonstrated reliability, sound judgment, and the ability to work collaboratively across departments—qualities that are essential for the County Attorney's Office. I am confident she will serve Chautauqua County with integrity and distinction."

Woodard will officially begin her role as Chautauqua County Attorney on Thursday, February 19, 2026.

A lifelong Chautauqua County resident, Woodard grew up in the City of Dunkirk and has deep family roots in the community. She and her husband currently reside in the Village of Fredonia, where they are raising their two children. Woodard says her personal connection to the County reinforces her commitment to serving its residents.

"Chautauqua County is my home, and it is an honor and privilege to serve this community," Woodard said. "I am proud of the professional relationships I have built across County government, and I look forward to continuing that work in the County Attorney's Office by providing reliable, thoughtful, and collaborative legal counsel."

Woodard was admitted to the **New York State Bar in January 2015**. She earned her Juris Doctor from the **University at Buffalo School of Law, SUNY**, in 2014, where she participated in the Buffalo Public Interest Law Program and was the Editor-in-Chief of the Buffalo Public Interest Law Journal. She holds a **Bachelor of Arts degree in English**, graduating **summa cum laude**, from **St. John Fisher University**.

As County Attorney, Woodard will serve as the chief legal counsel for Chautauqua County, providing legal advice and representation to County Executive, County departments and agencies.

Weatherization Speakers Present Program for Frewsburg Lions Club



Frewsburg Lions Club President Don Dove (left) is pictured with January 12 speakers Craig Rodgers, the manager for the weatherization assistance program (center), and outreach coordinator Jared Strickland (right), who presented on the Chautauqua Opportunities Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps improve energy efficiency for low-income households through Department of Energy funding. The club raised \$1,500 from its Lions Pie Sale and will host its annual Drive-Through Chicken BBQ on April 18, catered by 3C's Catering. Pictured from left: Don Dove, Craig Rodgers, and Jared Strickland.

Free Books Barn Dance/ Pizza Party Fundraiser Saturday, February 21

Frederick's Joe Swiatkowski is the caller for the old-time country Barn Dance this Saturday, 4-7 p.m., at the North Warren Community Center, 3 Church St., North Warren. With Swiatkowski's calling and a live band, the 4-6 p.m. dancing is guaranteed to be easy and fun for all ages! Tickets for this fundraiser for Free Books for Kids Town can be purchased at the door or presale at Warren Antiques and Styles Unlimited in Warren or Bean Bank in Youngsville, Pa. Prices are \$18 for adults, \$15 for seniors and teens, and \$8 for children. Admission includes the 6-7 p.m. pizza party with pizza donated by Wicked Warren's.



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*"Love isn't something you find.
Love is something that finds you."*

~ Loretta Young

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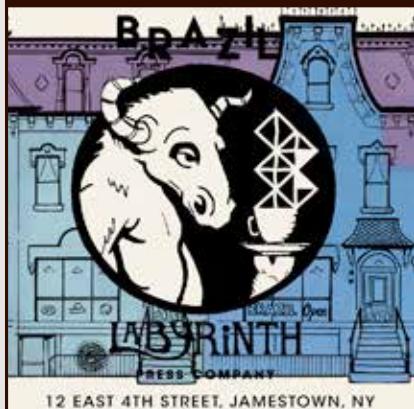
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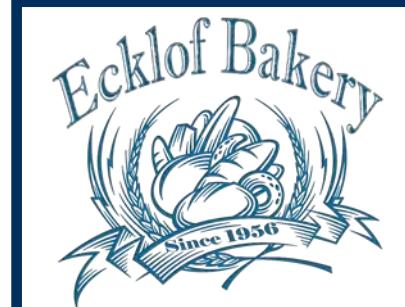
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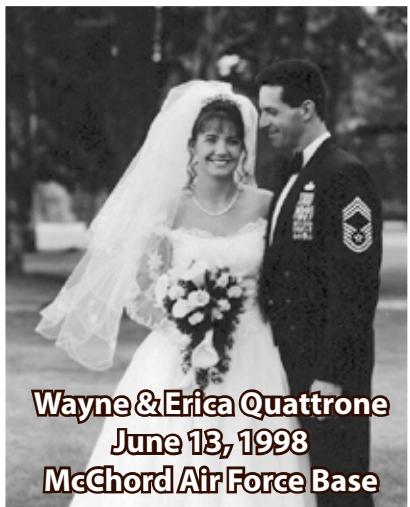
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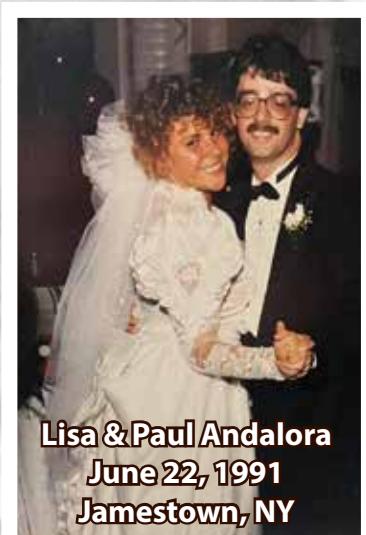
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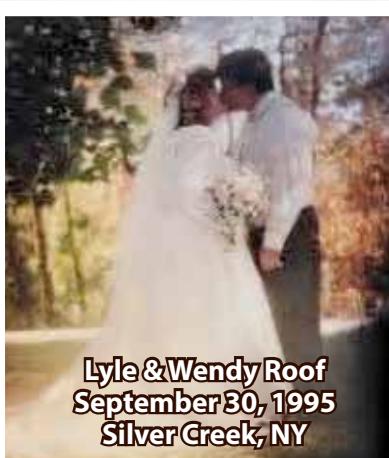
Wayne & Erica Quattrone
June 13, 1998
McChord Air Force Base



Lisa & Paul Andalora
June 22, 1991
Jamestown, NY



Erika & Adam Pezzulo
August 28, 2021
Warren, PA



Lyle & Wendy Roof
September 30, 1995
Silver Creek, NY



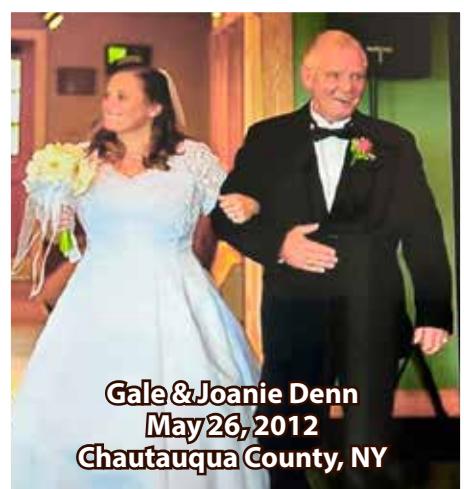
George & Margie Coulter
March 11, 1995
Jamestown, NY



Tom & Martha Lukasik
February 24, 1968
Dunkirk, NY



Derrick & Katie Raynor
August 25, 2018
Bemus Point, NY



Gale & Joanie Denn
May 26, 2012
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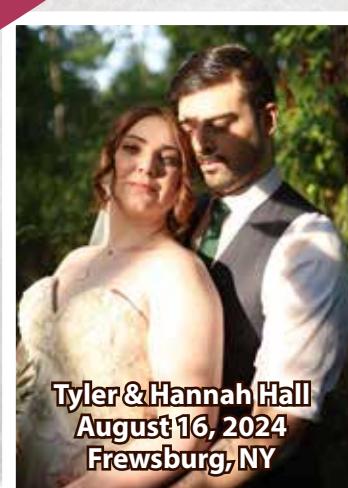
Chris & Nicole Morrison
July 6, 2003
Las Vegas, NV



Ron & Sheila Lemon
June 2, 1984
Frewsburg, NY



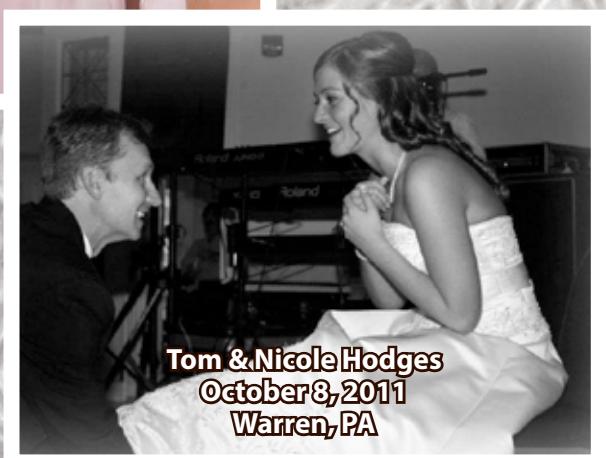
Heather Long & Tina Cornell
May 17, 2025
Chautauqua Institution



Tyler & Hannah Hall
August 16, 2024
Frewsburg, NY



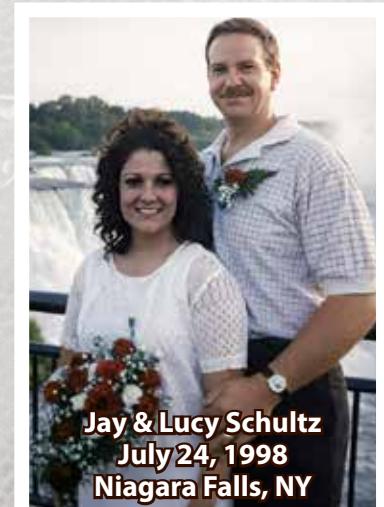
Lee & Heidi Marshall
August 8, 1998
Warren, PA



Tom & Nicole Hodges
October 8, 2011
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James & McCall Freeman
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