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FREE WEEKLY

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Love is in the Air: part 1

Volume 3 • Issue 6 | February 9, 2026



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Patricia & William Locke
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Elizabeth & Frank Petiprin
Alex Rosenberg
Michelle & Jeffrey Victor
The Trussalo Family
Anonymous in Jamestown

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Featured Writer

**Francesca
Galbato Moran**



a national holiday fall on the same day truly allowed her creativity to shine. One year, she arranged for our Papa and his fellow Jamestown Harmony Express friends to surprise us at school, singing silly love songs and, of course, "Happy Birthday" to my brother. Chocolate-covered strawberries accompanied the barbershoppers, making it the perfect mix of cheesiness, sweetness, and pure fun. To me, that was the epitome of the holiday.

I also grew up in a family florist, where February 14th was one of our busiest days of the year. I witnessed firsthand people in our community sending fresh arrangements to their spouses, children, parents,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

My brother was born on Valentine's Day, so the holiday was already a big deal in our household. My mother loves a celebration, and having a family birthday and

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Publisher

Lori Cornell

Two years ago, on Valentine's Day, I began writing a love story. It's the story of a girl who met an opportunity, took a chance, and fell in love.

People often ask if I always wanted to be a "journalist," or if my background is in "publishing". These are questions to which I simply smile and respond, "Not at all. My background is in politics." Most of my professional life has been spent right here in Chautauqua County, interfacing with businesses, residents, and organizations in roles that might more accurately be described as community outreach and engagement.

When longtime Gazette founder Stacey Hannon retired and was kind enough to allow me to purchase her then 14-year brainchild---to keep our cherished local weekly out on the streets (and online!) and in your hands---it felt like a natural match made in heaven. I was proud to continue her vision of a true community newspaper and, truly, to pursue my greatest passion: showcasing Chautauqua County.

For the love of our Community

We work hard to connect the dots at the Chautauqua Gazette. We endeavor to well-represent our thriving small

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Distributed in Ashville, Barcelona, Bemus, Cassadaga, Celoron, Chautauqua, Clymer, Dewittville, Dunkirk, Ellington, Falconer, Findley Lake, Fredonia, Frewburg, Gerry, Greenhurst, Irving, Jamestown, Kennedy, Lakewood, Maple Springs, Mayville, Niobe, North Clymer, North Warren, Panama, Randolph, Ripley, Sherman, Silver Creek, Sinclairville, Stockton, Stow, Warren, Westfield

THIS WEEK AROUND TOWN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10 & FEBRUARY 11

Living Voices

Robert H. Jackson Center | Jamestown
For Info: roberthjackson.org/events

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Memory Cafe: Guided Landscape Painting with Leslie

Calimeria | 12 PM-1 PM
Reg Lenna Center for The Arts | Jamestown
For Info: reglenna.com

Galentine's Paint & Sip | 6 PM

The White Inn | Fredonia
For Info: thewhiteinn.com/happenings

Cinema Series: Marty Supreme 7:30 PM

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

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Movies at The Reg: Hamnet 7 PM

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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Fire and Ice Celebration 5 PM-9 PM

Chautauqua Harbor Hotel | Celeron
For Info: thechautauquaharborhotel.com

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Galentine's Day | 6 PM

Art Cloth & Craft | Jamestown
For Info: artclothandcraft.com

Craft & Sip Group | 7 PM-10 PM

Labyrinth Press Company | Jamestown
For Info: Labyrinth Press Company Facebook Page

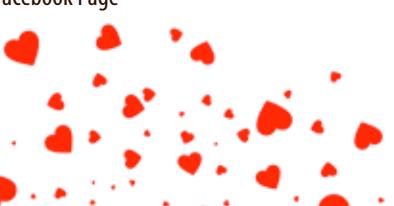
The 1956 Jamestown Premiere of Forever, Darling | 7 PM

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13 & SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Valentine's Dinner 5 PM-10 PM

Guppy's Restaurant & Tavern | Bemus Point
For Info: Guppy's Restaurant & Tavern
Facebook Page



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Galentine's Dinner

5:30 PM-8:30 PM

The Marvin House | Jamestown
For Info: marvinhouse@marvinhouse.com

Movies at The Reg: Marty Supreme | 7 PM

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

Silent Disco Party | 9:30 PM

Wicked Warren's | Jamestown
For Info: Wicked Warren's - Jamestown
Facebook Page

Wine & Chocolate Weekends

12-5 PM

Lake Erie Wine Country
For Info: lakeeriewinecountry.org/events

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13-SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Mayville Winterfest

Lakeside Park | Mayville
For Info: facebook.com/MayvilleWinterFestival

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Wine & Chocolate Weekends

10 AM-5 PM

Lake Erie Wine Country
For Info: lakeeriewinecountry.org/events

Chautauqua Striders Winter 5k Series

Chautauqua Harbor Hotel | Celeron
For Info: runsignup.com/Race/NY/Celeron/2023ChautauquaStridersWinter5KRace4

Winter Craft/Vendor Show 9 AM-5 PM

Chautauqua Suites Hotel & Expo Center | Mayville
For Info: facebook.com/chautauquasuiteshotel

Little Explorers: Tracks and Traces | 10 AM-11:30 AM

Audubon Community Nature Center | Jamestown
From Info: AudubonCNC.org

Cinema Series: Hamnet

7:30 PM

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

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Wine & Chocolate Weekends

10 AM-4 PM

Lake Erie Wine Country
For Info: lakeeriewinecountry.org/events

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16

44th Annual Induction Banquet

Lakewood Rod & Gun Club | Lakewood
For Info: chautauquasportshalloffame.org



2026 Winter Olympics: Everything You Need to Know

WHEN & WHERE

Dates:

- Opening Ceremonies kicked off the XXV Winter Olympic Games
- Competition: February 6-22, 2026 (some events began Feb 4)
- Focus Week: February 9-16, 2026

Host: Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy (the first Winter Games co-hosted officially by two cities)

Opening Ceremony: San Siro Stadium, Milan

Closing Ceremony: Verona Arena

Participating Athletes: Over 2,900 from 90+ countries

Medal Events: 116 across 16 disciplines and 8 sports

Feb 9-15, 2026

This week, the Winter Olympics feature a busy slate of competitions across multiple disciplines. Key events include alpine skiing (men's and women's slalom, giant slalom, super-G, and team events), freestyle skiing (slopestyle, dual moguls, and other aerial events), ski jumping (normal hill, large hill, and mixed team), biathlon (individual and sprint races), cross-country skiing, Nordic combined, short track speed skating (individual and mixed relays), speed skating, figure skating (men's, pairs, and free skate segments), curling (team and mixed events), snowboarding, bobsleigh (including women's monobob), and ice hockey.

Medal events are spread across mountain venues in Cortina d'Ampezzo and surrounding towns, as well as ice venues in Milan.

Where to Watch:

All events are broadcast on NBC, streamed live on Peacock, and include expanded coverage programming like the Olympic Gold Zone.

Looking Ahead After Feb 16

The Olympics continue through Feb 22 with finals in hockey, figure skating, cross-country skiing, and more, then the Closing Ceremony in Verona Arena on Feb 22.

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Editorial with Katrina Fuller

WE ❤️ LORI

**Editor-in-Chief**
Katrina Fuller

Two years ago, the Chautauqua Gazette, then known as the Jamestown Gazette, entered a new era under the ownership and leadership of Lori Cornell, a woman with vision, grit and an uncanny ability to say, "Can we do this?" moments before actually doing it. Lori took the reins from the venerable Stacey Hannon, the Gazette's founder, and kept true to the community-minded leadership Stacey started the paper with.

Since then, she has worn many hats: publisher, owner, idea generator,

cheerleader, problem-solver, occasional last-minute texter and a fountain of ideas for a paper chock full of goodness. If you've ever received a text from Lori that starts with "Can you give me a call?" you know the conversation that follows will be brilliant, and the topics will become a headline, a feature and possibly a community tradition before the week is over. Under Lori's leadership, the Gazette has remained exactly what it claims to be: local, community-oriented and human.

There have been late nights, last-minute changes and moments where everyone collectively asked, "Are we really doing this?" But two years in, the answer has consistently been yes, and Lori is right there in the trenches until the presses are rolling!

Happy second anniversary to Lori: publisher, owner and fearless believer in the idea that local news still matters. We tease because we love, and we love you because you believe in what can be and stand with us to make it happen!

VALENTINE'S DAY

Trivia

1. In which country did Valentine's Day originate?
2. Which Roman festival inspired Valentine's Day?
3. Which Roman emperor banned marriages?
4. What was Cupid's Greek name?
5. In which century were Valentine's cards popularized?
6. Who produced the first mass-market valentines?
7. Which country sends most Valentine's cards?
8. Which two European countries popularized Valentine's Day during the Middle Ages?
9. The first mass produced Valentine's cards were made of what?
10. Which poem first mentioned Valentine's Day romantically?

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook — /chautauquagazette

Instagram — @jamestowngazette

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Thursdays at 5:00 pm

DISTRIBUTION

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

Some Time I've Spent in Reverie

A Sonnet by Paul Leone

Some time I've spent in reverie,

Since first your beauty I'd admired;

Some reason have I to lament,

What then I'd thought your love required.

Now I've engaged your private eyes,

Or, rather, you have engaged mine,

No longer need I to disguise

My faulty reasoning's design.

And you, your passion once concealed,

Now granted me admission to,

Our petty poses are revealed,

Our lies are made confession to.

In reverie once more adrift,

I cherish now your chastening gift.



To my Valentine
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"It is better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all."

- Alfred Lord Tennyson, poet

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Faith Matters

LOVE

is patient, love is kind. It does not envy,

it does not boast, it is not proud.

It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking,

it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil

but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts,

always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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.



Valentine's Day

Continued from Front Page

neighbors, and friends. Or the high schools that organized carnation sales, which I couldn't wait to participate in. It was heartwarming to see the support for my family's business, but even more touching to watch people take that extra step to make someone else's day feel special. I will die on the hill that there are few things better than being surprised with fresh flowers. Maybe I'm biased, but I still get teary-eyed every time my husband brings home a bouquet. On many birthdays, my parents sent me flowers wherever I lived, from Baltimore to Pittsburgh, to Manhattan, and Buffalo. And even the times my nieces hand-picked flowers, mostly dandelions, from the backyard. To me, getting fresh flowers brings instant butterflies.

I'm now in the jewelry industry, and for the past few years, my Februarys have been spent delivering custom engagement rings and deeply sentimental pieces to clients, with the occasional heart-shaped gemstone mixed in. It's the sentimentality that first drew me to fine jewelry. I love that a single piece can be worn every day and still carry a story. Maybe it's a strand of a grandmother's pearls, brought over by a grandfather while he was stationed in Asia. Perhaps it's a bracelet set with a birthstone for each child and grandchild, or a modern engagement ring crafted with a diamond passed down from Great Aunt Betty. Being trusted with these milestones fills my (admittedly sappy) heart. And I've noticed that people feel especially inspired to create meaningful, sentimental jewelry from November through February - a season when love, reflection, and connection feel front and center.

Over the years, I've met people who "despise" Valentine's Day because it makes them feel lonely or acutely single. But I firmly believe the holiday isn't reserved for romantic love alone. Yes, that's the most obvious form, but there's something powerful about celebrating all the love in our lives. A little extra attention and appreciation have never hurt anyone. If anything, the world could use more love now than ever. Whether you're single or have been married for sixty years, consider this your sign to embrace Valentine's Day to the fullest. And to help you do just that, I've gone ahead and compiled a few Valentine's Day dos and don'ts:

Do: Support Local

It's hard to miss the commercialization of Valentine's Day in nearly every retail store. While you're planning your gifts, consider skipping online shopping and big-box stores. Instead, visit your local florist, gift shop, jewelry store, candy shop, spa, salon, restaurant, bakery, coffee shop, or even a museum. With Valentine's Day falling on a Saturday, there are endless opportunities to spend time with your loved ones out and about. Remember, the small businesses in our community are the same ones

sponsoring your child's soccer team or donating a basket to your fundraiser's silent auction. And if you're unsure what to give or plan, a gift card is always a thoughtful (and foolproof) option.

Do: Add an Element of Surprise

Surprises don't have to be grand to be meaningful. Having flowers delivered to a loved one's workplace is a guaranteed way to brighten their day — but maybe this year, you sign them up for a monthly flower subscription instead. If you've already decided on a restaurant for dinner, call ahead to have champagne waiting at the table. Thoughtful surprises show extra effort, and that intention goes a long way in making the holiday feel special.

Do: Show Love to as Many People as Possible

Mail a letter to your grandmother. Send flowers to your recently widowed aunt. Put together a gift basket for your nephew. Bring your coworkers a Valentine's sweet. Take your parents out to dinner. Plan a movie night with your best friend. Give your sister a spa day. Send a barbershop quartet to your brother. You get the idea, spread the love. And while you're at it, don't forget the first tip: support local whenever you can.

Don't: Wait Until the Last Minute

If you're reading this on Monday, February 9th, you're ahead of the game. And if it's Friday, February 13th... don't panic. There's still time. Many local businesses extend their hours and bring on extra staff to accommodate the holiday rush. Let all that preparation work in your favor.

Don't: Worry If It's Cheesy

Half the fun of Valentine's Day is the cheesiness, so lean into it. Get dressed to the nines for dinner, gift a silly stuffed animal, or watch a marathon of rom-coms. I promise, those are often the moments that end up being the most memorable.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Francesca Galbato Moran is the founder and designer behind Ann Augustine Fine Jewelry. With a background in fine jewelry and gemstone expertise as a Graduate Gemologist, she offers a highly personalized, concierge approach to custom engagement rings and bespoke fine jewelry, blending timeless design with deeply personal storytelling. A Lakewood native and Southwestern High School graduate, Francesca proudly grew up in her family's businesses, Brigiotta's Farmland Produce & Garden Center and Francesca's Floral Design.



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“Wetlands” Public Meeting #14

9:30-11:00 am, Saturday, February 14
The Lawson Center, Bemus Point, NY



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CLPOA+ Wetlands Litigation
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Coffee, water, and snacks will be served

ZOOM ID: 634 650 3547, PWD: clpoa

WCA Foundation Hosts SOUPer Bowl Challenge



Submitted Photo

Jamestown-Nothing beats a hot bowl of soup on a cold day. The **WCA Foundation** challenged area restaurants to compete in the Best Soup in Chautauqua County at the SOUPer Bowl Sunday XI, held at the Celoron American Legion on Sunday, February 1st. 2 Gingers Inn located at 1118 E. Second Street, Jamestown won the Championship for Best Soup in Chautauqua County. The second-place winner was GameTime Sports Bar & Grille located at 850 Foote Avenue. Nearly, \$4,000 was raised to benefit UPMC Chautauqua's Medical Lab Science Program. Pictured: L-R, UPMC Chautauqua Med Lab Coordinator, Kyle Jordan; Michele Harms, UPMC Chautauqua Med Lab Director, 2 Gingers Inn Chef, Shaibu Bilar Alfa; 2 Gingers Inn Owner, Lisa Painter; Medical Lab students, Kyle Owings, Cleo McDermot, Kayla Martinelli. Area restaurants who competed were Group Ther-Happy, Buddy Brewster's Ale House, Studio D Catering, UPMC Chautauqua Cafeteria, UPMC Chautauqua Kitchen, Kidder Farms Market. Phil- N- Cindy's Lunch, and 3 C's Catering. Sponsors of the event included Media One, WellNow, Shults Auto Group, and the Celoron American Legion. A special appreciation to all gift basket donors, guests, and event volunteers. For more information about the WCA Foundation and to make a donation, contact WCA Foundation, at 716-664-8665 or visit wcajamestown.org.



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Your health is a priority and finding the best care should be too. So, it's good to know you have access to expert care every step of the way — from prenatal visits and labor and delivery to menopausal care and advanced, minimally invasive gynecological procedures. In partnership with GLPP, UPMC Chautauqua is the only hospital in the county offering women's care, with state-of-the-art facilities for new moms and for women at every stage of life.

To schedule an appointment, call 716-664-8510, or visit UPMC.com/HereforHer.

UPMC Chautauqua was recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a Maternity Care Access Hospital.



UPMC | CHAUTAUQUA

Pat's Pen with Pat Locke

Happy Valentine's Day



Contributing Writer

Pat Locke

Valentine's Day is one of those holidays that carries layers of meaning, depending on where you're standing in life.

At its simplest, it's a day set aside to honor love and connection. It's a day with heartfelt messages, roses and chocolates. For some it's a joyful and affirming, yet for others it can feel bittersweet when love has been lost, changed or complicated. The day doesn't just celebrate love; it exposes how much we value it.

At its best, Valentine's Day is less about grand gestures and more about intentional care which could be a phone call, a shared memory or a simple kindness. Love doesn't stop existing when it's quieter, older or shaped by absence. In fact, many people discover its deepest meaning then. In that way, Valentine's Day is not only about who you're with, it's about what love has meant to you



Many of you know me as a personal friend and as author of this special column, "Pat's Pen". But I also invite you to enjoy my unique blog that features people, places, and preservation in our community. To those who already follow my blog, thank you. To those who might have interest, simply tap on the word, FOLLOW upon entering the blog site: offshoremuse2023.blogspot.com. I appreciate your help in increasing my readership.

Sincerely - Pat Locke.

Pat's Picks: Must See Movies with your Valentine

If watching a movie with your sweetheart is in your plans

this Valentine's Day, here are a few swoon-worthy film choices.

- **Love Story** (1970) starring Ryan O'Neal and Ali McGraw. Recall the famous quote, "Love means never having to say you're sorry."
- **The Notebook** (2004) starring Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams. In the Notebook what really brings on the tears is the relationship between their older characters played by James Garner and Gena Rowlands.
- **Sleepless in Seattle** (1993) starred Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks.
- **Dirty Dancing** (1987) starring Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey. Grab your favorite dance partner and have the 'time of your life' with this '80s iconic flick.
- **Casablanca** (1942) starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman
- **An Affair to Remember** (1957) starring Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr.
- **Titanic** (1997) starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet.

and still does.

As the author of this column, and having been married to my husband, Bill, since 1970 we have learned that Valentine's Day feels less like a single date on the calendar and more like a quiet pause. It's a chance to remember the love that shaped us and still does. Valentine's Day asks less of us than we think. Only that we notice where love has been, where it lingers, and how it continues to matter.

Happy Valentine's Day!

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how much a heart can hold."**

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



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"Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get .. only with what you are expecting to give .. which is everything."

~ Katharine Hepburn, actress

Senior Scene with Dana Corwin

STAR: School Tax Relief Made Simpley



Contributed by

Dana Corwin

Director of Chautauqua County
Office for Aging Services

School property taxes can be a significant expense for homeowners. New York State's School Tax Relief (STAR) Program helps eligible homeowners lower the school tax portion of their property taxes on their primary residence (the home you live in). STAR does not apply to rental properties, second homes, or seasonal residences.

Next, let's look at how the STAR Program operates. STAR provides tax relief in one of two ways: it reduces the taxable value of your home for school taxes by providing a STAR credit to your school tax bill, or as a direct deposit from New York State.

There are two types of STAR programs to consider: Basic STAR and Enhanced STAR.

BASIC STAR is for homeowners of any age. However, you must own and reside in the home as your primary residence. Your household income of \$500,000 for a credit, \$250,000 or less for the exemption. The benefit is a reduction in your school taxes through a STAR credit or existing exemption. This is based on 2024 tax returns.

Starting in 2026, eligible seniors with the Basic STAR exemption are automatically upgraded to Enhanced STAR without needing to reapply, as the state will directly verify income and age eligibility. If

you currently receive the Basic STAR exemption, the Department of Taxation and Finance will notify your assessor when you now qualify for the higher Enhanced benefit. You may also receive a letter (RP-5300) that states you no longer need to submit the income information and that you have been found to be ELIGIBLE with the last few years of submissions—good work, people! We have had a few older adults contact us regarding letters they received from the NY State Department of Taxation and Finance. These letters stated that the agency determined they no longer need to verify your income to determine if you are eligible for the STAR exemption programs. Wow-great job!

ENHANCED STAR is for homeowners age 65 or older (only one owner must be 65+). You must live in the home as a primary residence. Your combined income of resident owners and spouses is \$110,750 or less. The benefit provides a larger school tax reduction than Basic STAR. There are important changes beginning in 2026. A few things to know:

Age Requirement: At least one owner must be 65 or older by Dec. 31, 2026.

- No local application required to move from Basic to Enhanced STAR

- Automatic upgrades when eligibility is met, and income information is current
- Income rules simplified to include only owners and spouses who live in the home

You should make sure that the information on your property and the STAR or Enhanced STAR program is correct! Please monitor your information on the following website. Check or update your information using the Homeowner Benefit Portal. It is on the web at <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/>

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



**MARTZ-KOHL
OBSERVATORY**

Artemis II and Beyond



NASA / ESA

Submitted Photo

Contributing Writer

Andy Felong

Public and Media Relations
Martz-Kohl Observatory

As NASA enters a historic new era of deep-space exploration, the Martz-Kohl Observatory is proud to announce a very timely presentation by Stephanie Buskirk Dudley, NASA's Moon to Mars Exploration Operations Deputy Director. The event, titled "Artemis II and Beyond: Science and Research," will take place on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 7:30 p.m. EST.

Marking the first human return to the lunar vicinity in over fifty years, the Artemis program represents a pivotal shift from lunar visitation to long-term pioneering. This presentation will offer the public an insider's look at the rigorous scientific research that will define these upcoming voyages and lay the groundwork for the eventual human exploration of Mars.

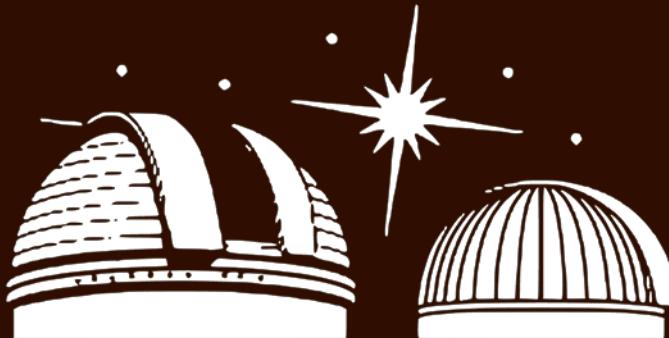
The session will provide a comprehensive deep dive into the objectives of Artemis II, a ten-day mission that will propel a crew of four into deep space. Attendees will learn how the crew will gather critical survival data regarding radiation and human biology. Ms. Dudley will also illuminate the ambitious goals of Artemis III, the historic mission destined to land the first humans near the lunar South Pole. This mission will see astronauts explore permanently shadowed craters to search for vital resources such as water ice.

Stephanie Buskirk Dudley brings a wealth of NASA leadership experience to the observatory. In her current role as Moon to Mars Exploration Operations Deputy Director, she oversees the integration of complex mission

profiles. Her distinguished career includes serving as the Mission Integration and Utilization Manager for the Gateway Program and several key leadership roles within the International Space Station Program. A structural engineer by training, Ms. Dudley holds three degrees from the University of Florida and is a licensed private pilot. Her passion for space was ignited as a child while watching Space Shuttle launches from her own backyard.

This event offers a rare opportunity for the public to engage with a key architect of modern spaceflight as NASA turns the dream of a long-term lunar presence into a reality. This talk will be shown on the big screen at the Martz-Kohl Observatory and available online via Zoom. You are encouraged to come to the observatory to virtually meet Stephanie and join in our always lively Q&A after her talk. The observatory is located at 176 Robbin Hill Rd, Frewsburg, NY 14738. If the weather permits, there will be public viewing opportunities. While our lecture room is heated, you should dress for outside weather for tours and viewing. More info: <https://martzobservatory.org>

The Martz-Kohl Observatory is managed by the Marshal Martz Memorial Astronomical Association, Inc., a non-profit organization comprised of amateur astronomers. The association is committed to observational astronomy, with a particular emphasis on educational outreach, citizen science initiatives, and the enjoyment derived from stargazing.



**MARTZ-KOHL
OBSERVATORY**

Observatory Lecture Series Artemis II & Beyond Science and Research

Wednesday
February 18, 2026
7:30 PM

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Voters Reminded: Valentine's Day is the Deadline to Change Party Enrollment for Primary Elections



Submitted Photo

Contributed by
Chautauqua County

An application to change one's party enrollment for the Primary Election in any year must be received by the Board of Elections no later than **February 14th** of this year.

The Board of Elections office will observe special hours on Saturday, February 14th for this deadline from 9AM to 5PM. The Board of Elections is open daily from 8:30AM to 4:30PM during the week and would like the public to be aware that changes submitted through the NYS DMV must be made by **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH AT 2:00PM**, in order for the DMV to transmit the data to the Board of Elections timely. A change of enrollment received by the BOE no later than Feb. 14th or after June 30th would be effective immediately, per Election Law §5-304(3). "It should be noted that this year, the MotorVoter portal, operated by the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles will stop allowing voters to make changes at **2PM on Friday, February 13th.**" states Commissioner Torres and Ellis. The DMV's online system will be taken offline for scheduled maintenance, as announced by the Chautauqua County Clerk and NYS DMV.

"Voters who do not have a change of enrollment by **5PM on Saturday, February 14** or online by 11:59PM will remain their current political party affiliation until Tuesday, June 30," adds Commissioner Luz Torres.

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Peace, Hope and Joy with Linda Kent

Special Choices



Featured Writer

Linda Kent

Something we did on our mission trip was a vacation bible school for the little school where we stayed. Another group had it planned; we were the extra helpers, which was good because they were the main Spanish speakers. There was a language barrier, but we all understood smiles and hugs.

As a gift for the children, I brought most of my daughter's and my old Beanie Babies. I had 80 in all, jumbled and tied in a sheet. At the end of their craft session, each child was permitted to choose one Beanie. I can barely begin to describe the joy that followed.

Some just ran up, grabbed one and left. Many took their time and picked carefully to get exactly what they wanted. The girls especially, sorted through various cats, bears, and dogs to get just the right colors and textures. One little boy whooped with joy when he found the scorpion Beanie. Thrilled, he went running back to show his friends. Another found a multicolored cat and beamed with pride at his treasure.

The one that really stood out was the girl who picked the orangutan. I was watching her face as she pulled it out and I saw the sparkle come into her eyes. I can't blame her, that little guy is adorable. She stepped back from the others and cradled and cooed at the Beanie, then lifting it, smiled with pure joy as she showed others how sweet her choice was. Then she saw me watching her. I don't know how, but the smile got bigger as I nodded and mimicked her rocking her prize. She scampered back to her table and the group was dismissed. The kids played with those Beanies the rest of the week.

We all wondered what we would do with our Beanie Babies once the craze died down. Clearly, they weren't going to make us rich like some thought. But they sure made those kids happy, and that's a richness I can live with.



Submitted Photo

Becoming an Elder in Dangerous Times

When **Alex Holt** speaks virtually at the **Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown's 10:30 a.m. hybrid service this Sunday, February 15**, he will address the subject, "Becoming an Elder in Dangerous Times." The retired UU minister asks, "What is the difference between 'elder' and 'old'? Most importantly, do we who survived the turmoil and revolutionary times of the '60's still have anything to offer as we move through this very dangerous time in America and the world? What did we learn that might be useful today?" All are welcome to the service at 1255 Prendergast Avenue. To participate virtually, use the link at UUJamestown.org/calendar.



Submitted Photo

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo Accepting Applications for 2026 Competitive Grant Process

Contributed by

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo is accepting applications for its 2026 competitive grant process beginning **February 6, 2026** through **March 6, 2026, at 4 p.m.** This process has been revised for 2026 and is now a one application process with no letters of intent. Interested organizations should read the detailed guidelines and additional information that can be found online before submitting an application: <https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/community-foundation/>

An information session on this process will be held on February 10, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. Organizations can find details and register to attend here: <https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/communityfoundation/>.

Applications must address one of the solutions listed under the Community Foundation's four Community Goals:

Goal I: Achieve racial/ethnic equity

Solutions:

- 1. Promote civic engagement and leadership.

Goal II: Promote economic mobility through educational achievement, workforce readiness and access to family sustaining jobs for residents living in low-income households

Solutions:

- 1. Improve the school readiness, academic achievement and postsecondary completion of students living in low-income households.
- 2. Promote civic engagement and leadership.

Goal III: Steward significant environmental resources

Solutions:

- 1. Protect and restore the region's waterways.
- 2. Strengthen environmental organizations and collaboratives to support climate resilience and sustainability with a preference for addressing the needs of vulnerable communities and climate education.
- 3. Promote civic engagement and leadership.

Goal IV: Promote regional vibrancy through architecture, arts and culture

Solutions:

- 1. Promote equitable access to long-term arts instruction for children and youth living in low-income communities.
- 2. Promote civic engagement and leadership.
- 3. Promote cultural tourism by restoring and leveraging significant historic buildings and architectural landmarks (Defining historic as official recognition by State/National Register of Historic Places or local preservation ordinance.)

Special funding is available to support programs that serve the visual, speech or hearing impaired that also aligns with one of the Solutions (~\$10,000).

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo Competitive Grant application details:

- **Process Opens:** February 6, 2026
- **Information Session (in-person and virtual options) for interested organizations:** February 10, 2026 at 3:30 p.m.
- **Deadline to apply:** March 6, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. (no exceptions)
- **Decision notifications:** Late June 2026

Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in or serving one of the eight counties of Western New York (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming).

For more information about eligibility requirements, to access the application, and to register for the information session, organizations should visit <https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/community-foundation/>.

About the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

For more than a century, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo has enhanced and encouraged long-term philanthropy in the Western New York community. A 501 (c)(3) organization, the Community Foundation's mission is: Connecting people, ideas and resources to improve lives in Western New York. Established in 1919, the Community Foundation has made the most of the generosity of individuals, families, foundations and organizations who entrust charitable assets to the Community Foundation's care. Learn more at cfgb.org.



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E2CCB Students Help 4-H Club Build Homes for Bats



Submitted Photo

Members of the Ellery Hilltop Farm Kids 4-H Club are pictured with the bat boxes they recently made with the help of Construction Technology students from Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES.

Contributed by

Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES

When the Ellery Hilltop Farm Kids 4-H Club wanted to help bats, they turned to skilled builders: seniors in the Construction Technology program at Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES.

Under instructor Brennan Morrison, the Career & Technical Education students from the Hewes Educational Center measured and cut 200 pieces of plywood — enough for 28 bat boxes — turning their classroom into a hub of hands-on learning and community service.

The 4-H members then assembled the boxes at a club meeting.

The finished bat boxes will provide safe, cozy homes for these nighttime environmental superheroes, which help control pests, pollinate plants, and support healthy ecosystems.

"We appreciated the Construction Technology students' help," said 4-H leaders Holly Reed and Andrea McAdoo. "Their work let our members focus on safe assembly while building teamwork, confidence, and appreciation for skilled trades."

Learn more about Career & Technical Education programs at E2CCB: www.e2ccb.org/programs/career-technical-education/

A Fee Will Be Charged for BPU Yard Waste Stickers in 2026

Jamestown Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Solid Waste residential customers who want to utilize the BPU Yard Waste Site in the coming season will need to pay \$20 for their Yard Waste Site stickers at the BPU Customer Service Office.

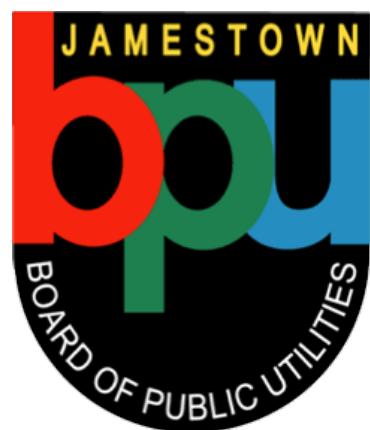
According to BPU officials, the new charge in 2026 is necessary to help prevent rate increases for all Solid Waste residential customers.

Maintaining the Site at 1001 Monroe Street in compliance with New York Department of Environmental Conservation standards, as well as the rising cost of grinding yard waste, tree parts and brush, are additional reasons for this change.

The Yard Waste Site, open annually from spring to fall, accepts leaves, grass clippings, brush, twigs, sticks

and branches up to eight inches in diameter. Residential Solid Waste customers who want to use the Site must display a current BPU Yard Waste Site sticker on the rear driver-side window of their vehicles.

The Site will reopen in 2026 on the second Saturday of April and on the second Wednesday of May.



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

~ Loretta Young, actress



Warm & Well at Home Initiative Launched to Help Seniors Maintain Safe, Reliable Home Heating



Submitted Photo

Dana Corwin, Director of the Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services; Bridgette Paoletta, NY Connects Coordinator; and Josh Freifeld of the Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation announce the launch of the 2026 Warm & Well at Home initiative, a new program designed to help older adults maintain safe, reliable home heating and age safely in place across Chautauqua County.

Contributed by

Chautauqua County

The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services (OFAS) is pleased to announce the launch of the **2026 "Warm & Well at Home"** initiative, a new campaign designed to help older adults **remain safely and comfortably in their own homes** while maintaining and improving their properties.

This initiative focuses on **preventative home maintenance**, particularly annual cleaning and safety inspections of home heating equipment, helping to reduce safety risks, improve energy efficiency, and prevent costly emergency repairs.

Offered in partnership with the **Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC)**, Warm & Well at Home connects older adults with **trusted, vetted contractors** and **available funding** to ensure heating systems are in good working order.

"Most older adults want to age in place, but the cost and complexity of home repairs or services can be a real barrier," said **Dana Corwin**, Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services Director. "The 2026 Warm & Well at Home initiative works to remove those barriers so older adults can live safely, stay healthy, and remain connected to their communities, while also strengthening neighborhoods across Chautauqua County."

Many older adults live on **fixed or limited incomes**, relying on Social

Security, pensions, or savings. Rising costs for utilities, food, healthcare, and property taxes often leave little room for routine home maintenance. As a result, essential services like heating system inspections may be **delayed or skipped**, increasing safety risks and the likelihood of system failure during extreme weather.

"Through this partnership, residents can access funding and trusted contractors to make their homes safer, warmer, and more energy-efficient, while also contributing to vibrant, thriving neighborhoods," said **Josh Freifeld, CHRIC representative**.

Program Eligibility and Focus:

- **Age:** 60 years and older
- **Property:** Owner-occupied primary residences only (no second homes or rentals)
- **Purpose:** For older adults struggling to afford or manage essential home maintenance, including this one time heating system cleaning and safety inspection.

The program is **funded on a first-come, first-served basis**, with goals to serve residents **most in need**. Funding is **limited**, and we will continually be monitoring the demand for this service.

"We are here to guide seniors and caregivers through the application process, making it simple and supportive," said **Bridgette Paoletta, NY Connects Coordinator**. "Our

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Senator George Borello Announces His Candidacy for Re-election to the 57th State Senate District



Submitted Photo

Senator Borello at the Mayville Fourth of July Parade in 2025

Contributed by

Senator George Borello

Senator George Borello today officially announced he is seeking re-election to represent the 57th District in the New York State Senate.

"Representing the people of Western New York is the honor of my life, and it's a responsibility I work to earn every day," said Senator Borello. "Albany continues to be dominated by New York City politicians whose priorities are far removed from the realities and values of rural communities like ours. I go there with one mission: to be a strong, unapologetic voice for our residents."

Borello pointed to a record defined by direct constituent service and outreach as well as high-profile policy fights.

"In 2025 alone, my office helped nearly 3,000 constituents cut through red tape and get answers from state government," he said. "Behind those numbers are real families, seniors and small business owners who needed help navigating an often-unresponsive bureaucracy. That kind of hands-on service will always be a top priority," said Borello. "I've also made it a point to stay accessible, hosting town halls in every county across the district and attending as many community events as possible, because the best way to represent people is to listen to them."

Looking ahead, Borello said the defining issue in the 2026 legislative session and the years ahead will be Democrats' controversial Climate Act and its impact on affordability and economic growth.

"The Climate Act and the mandates that have followed may be our biggest

fight yet," he said. "Since its passage, energy prices are up more than 50 percent and New York now has among the highest electric rates in the nation. This isn't coincidence; it's the result of Albany trying to overhaul our entire energy economy without a serious feasibility study or cost analysis."

Borello has been a leading voice against industrial wind turbines in Lake Erie and the unchecked expansion of massive solar projects consuming prime farmland across Western New York.

"We can pursue environmental goals without sacrificing our shoreline, our farms, and local control," he said. "Covering productive farmland with solar arrays and pushing offshore wind projects that threaten local industries is not balanced policy; it's ideology overriding common sense."

He noted that ratepayers have already absorbed billions in Climate Act-related costs, with projected totals reaching into the hundreds of billions of dollars.

"Our strong advocacy against the All-Electric Buildings Act, which would have effectively banned natural gas in new construction and driven housing costs even higher, lead to the governor 'pausing' this disastrous law," Borello said. "But a pause is not a repeal. The economy and the future of New York hinge on whether we restore balance, transparency and common sense to this agenda."

Borello also emphasized his longstanding commitment to protecting New York's farmers and agricultural economy, a cornerstone of the 57th District.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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"The best thing to hold onto in life is each other."

~ Audrey Hepburn, actress

WE ❤ CHQ

Continued from Front Page

business community, along with the many dedicated organizations and exciting events that make this such a great place to live, work, and welcome visitors. We theme each edition to fit the season and the spirit of our place in time, considering every collaborative tie-in and creative angle we can.

Speaking of connecting the “DOTS” (pun fully intended for gift boutique owner Julie Wooten, hee-hee!), we exist only because of the generous support and confidence of our business and organizational partners. As a free paper, we rely on their willingness to entrust us with their marketing and to turn their hard-earned advertising dollars into a worthy investment. We can’t love them enough.

For the love of our Readers

Your loyalty and love mean everything. We create for you, and our business partners support us because you read. This long-cherished relationship underscores the simple truth that local journalism lives on in Chautauqua County because our community loves. We value connection. We cherish our neighbors. We roll up our sleeves and we thrive.

In this edition, we are especially proud to unveil our 2026 Friends of the Gazette list and welcome any reader who is able to join us. Our Gold, Silver, and Bronze sponsorship levels are another critical way readers can help ensure that we remain possible for a long time to come.

For the love of our Team

Lastly (and perhaps most important-

ly), this love is sustained by deadlines met, sweat equity given, and the steady drive of our dedicated Chautauqua Gazette team. Our sensational seven are among the most talented professionals with whom I’ve ever worked.

At the top is April Colburn, our Art Director and the “secret sauce” behind our beautiful newspaper and one-of-a-kind design. She works long, late night hours until each painstakingly perfect finish. Editor-in-Chief Katrina Fuller generously shares her experience as a well-respected journalist and deeply connected community leader with a huge heart.

Shannon Nixon, our Marketing Director, holds far more than a recognizable and beloved Chautauqua County surname. She is one of our community’s most promising rising stars, with genius that spans marketing and creative talent.

Our web development guru, Marc Scapelite, brings both technical brilliance and patience well beyond what I usually deserve. Pat Locke and Jordan Nicholson round out our volunteer team of contributing writers, each with a special knack for storytelling that brings our community to life.

Last, but never least, is the man who brings it all home to you: Matt Emmerling, our Distribution Director. One of the most organized and essential workers we could imagine, his dedication is unparalleled. Wind, sleet, or snow, he never lets us down.

And so, happy anniversary to us. All of us. WE ❤ YOU

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“Love is like the wind, you can’t see it, but you can feel it.”

~ Nicholas Sparks, author



Jamestown Figure Skating Club Takes Two Empire State Winter Games Medals

More than 800 Figure Skaters Highlight the 46th Annual Empire State Winter Games

Contributed by

Jamestown Figure Skating Club

and beyond competing in more than 20 winter sports in Lake Placid, Wilmington, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake, Utica, and Malone.

For more information about the Empire State Winter Games, go to <https://empirestatewintergames.com/>.

Fans and athletes can also follow on Facebook, Instagram, and X, using @ESWGAMES and #ESWGAMES.

Photos of the 46th Annual Empire State Winter Games can be found [HERE](#).

Perebeinos’ program featured a series of double rotation jumps to include a double loop, double lutz, and double flip, en route to a final score of 28.31 points by the panel of five judges.

Lilyann Hewitt, from the Skaneateles Figure Skating Club, won the competition’s gold medal, with 61.97 points, and Annabelle Hattori, who skated for the Genesee Figure Skating Club, won silver. Her final score was 37.46.



 Community Bank

The ADKSC cultivates strong partnerships with event stakeholders, participants, and communities by actively engaging in meaningful dialogue and aligning with their unique needs. This approach enables us to craft genuine, economically beneficial, and socially impactful experiences that resonate with the values and aspirations of all involved.

Petscher won the novice women’s singles silver medal with a final score of 59.75. A triple salchow and a combination double axel and single toe loop highlighted her performance.

Annabelle McKenzie, from the Skating Club of New York, captured the event’s gold medal. Skating the competition’s most technical program, which featured a double lutz, double toe loop and double loop jump combination, she earned 65.93 points from the judges.

The bronze medal was awarded to Skate Canada’s Rose Artelle. The panel of judges awarded her 54.96 points after she completed her program that featured one triple jump combination and two double jump combinations.

Complete figure skating competition results are available [HERE](#).

The 46th Annual Empire State Winter Games continue through Sunday. The United States’ longest-running, multi-winter sports and festival features 2,500 winter athletes, ages eight to 80, from throughout the Empire State, New England, the northeast,

About the Adirondack Sports Council
The Adirondack Sports Council (ADKSC) is a not-for-profit organization established in New York’s Olympic region that combines decades of sport event management leadership, sustainability expertise, and creative engagement strategies to deliver impactful world-class experiences to communities and organizations across New York State and beyond.

The ADKSC cultivates strong partnerships with event stakeholders, participants, and communities by actively engaging in meaningful dialogue and aligning with their unique needs. This approach enables us to craft genuine, economically beneficial, and socially impactful experiences that resonate with the values and aspirations of all involved.

About the Empire State Winter Games
Founded in 1980, the Empire State Winter Games (ESWG) are a multi-day winter athletic competition headquartered in Lake Placid, NY. Amateur athletes of all ages and from all over the Northeast and Canada compete in more than 30 winter sports competitions over three days every February. The Empire State Winter Games are a community-driven event, courtesy of a partnership between the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST); the towns of North Elba, Wilmington, Tupper Lake, Harrietstown and Brighton; the villages of Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, Paul Smiths, Wilmington, and Saranac Lake; the counties of Essex and Franklin; the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA). Connect with the Games on www.EmpireStateWinterGames.com, Facebook.com/ESWGAMES, and Instagram.com/ESWGAMES.

BOUTWELL HILL SKI CLUB



Submitted Photo

Contributed by
Boutwell Hill Ski Club

Cross-country skiers and outdoor enthusiasts are invited to celebrate winter at a ski party hosted by the Boutwell Hill Ski Club on Sunday, February 15. The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Boutwell Hill State Forest land at the Ruttenbur parking lot in the Town of Arkwright. The parking area is located at 2099 Ruttenbur Road, at the intersection of Ruttenbur and Rood Roads. Roadside signage will be posted to help attendees find their way. Food will be provided during the event, offering a warm and welcoming gathering point for participants.

The Boutwell Hill Ski Club (BHSC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to maintaining and grooming trails for cross-country skiers and snowshoers in Chautauqua County. Founded in

2015 by a group of passionate cross-country skiers, the club received permission from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to develop ski trails in one of the county's most snow-rich areas.

Starting with the County's East Side Overland Trail, BHSC volunteers have built four additional trails, creating more than five miles of skiable terrain. This progress has been made possible entirely through volunteer labor and successful fundraising efforts, including securing the resources needed to purchase an ATV for trail grooming.

The Boutwell Hill Ski Club can be found on Facebook, and donations are welcome. Contributions may be sent via Venmo or by mail to BHSC, PO Box 192, Cherry Creek, NY 14723. The organization is a registered 501(c) (3) nonprofit.

FEBRUARY AT AUDUBON COMMUNITY NATURE CENTER



Submitted Photos



At Little Explorers this Saturday morning, you and your favorite 3 to 8-year-old(s) might find "Tracks and Traces" of this red fox that lives at Audubon Community Nature Center. Register by Thursday, so you don't miss it!

Audubon Snow Camps are a great way for kids ages 4 to 12 to enjoy the winter holidays on Monday or Wednesday, February 16 or 18, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Enrollment is limited, and paid reservations are required by Thursday, February 12 for the Monday camp and Monday, February 16 for the Wednesday camp. For more information and to register for any of these, call (716) 569-2345 or go to AudubonCNC.org/Events.

The Nature Center is at 1600 Riverside Road, one-quarter mile east of Route 62 between Jamestown and Warren.

Come Celebrate Winter with us!
CROSS COUNTRY SKI PARTY
hosted by Boutwell Hill Ski Club

Sunday February 15 • 11am-2pm
Boutwell Hill State Forest Land • Town of Arkwright
Ruttenbur parking lot • 2099 Ruttenbur Rd
(intersection of Ruttenbur and Rood Roads)

Food will be provided during the event.

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Best Picture nominees Hamnet and Marty Supreme to show at Reg Lenna Center for The Arts



Contributed by
Reg Lenna Center
for The Arts

From Academy Award® winning writer/director Chloé Zhao, **Hamnet** (Wed., February 11 at 7 p.m.) tells the powerful story of love and loss that inspired the creation of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, Hamlet. The film is nominated for 8 Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Actress - Jessie Reilly. **Hamnet** is rated PG-13 and is 125 minutes long.

Marty Supreme (Fri., February 13 at 7 p.m.) is the Academy Award Best Picture nominee from director Josh Safdie. Marty Mauser (Best Actor nominee Timothée Chalamet), a young man with a dream no one respects, goes to hell and back in pursuit of greatness. The film is nominated for 9 Academy Awards



Marty Supreme is rated R and is 149 minutes long.

Upcoming Movies at The Reg include Best Actress nominee Rose Byrne in the dark comedy *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You* (Feb. 18 at 7 p.m.), Brad Pitt in the car racing drama and Best Picture nominee *F1* (Feb. 20 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.

Warm & Well at Home Initiative Launched to Help Seniors Maintain Safe, Reliable Home Heating

Continued from Page 12

goal is for residents to know that help is available and accessible."

Energy Efficiency Matters:

- Energy-efficient homes **cost less to heat and cool**, are safer and more comfortable, and support better health outcomes
- Lower energy costs are especially important for older adults on fixed incomes
- Residents are encouraged to participate in the **2026 Clean Energy Series**, offered in partnership with the **WNY Regional Clean Energy Hub**, featuring education and interactive sessions in May, July, and November 2026

"Programs like this reflect our dedication to supporting seniors

and strengthening communities through partnerships that make a real difference," said Chautauqua County Executive PJ Wendel.

Funding and Support:

The Warm & Well at Home initiative is made possible through **Unmet Needs funding from the New York State Office for the Aging**, and the **Governor's Office**, demonstrating a strong commitment to helping counties address the most pressing unmet needs of older adults.

Residents interested in learning more or applying are encouraged to contact **NY Connects through the Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services** at 716-753-4582.



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Senator George Borello Announces His Candidacy for Re-election to the 57th State Senate District

Continued from page 13



Submitted Photos

From top left: joining striking corrections officers at Attica in February 2025, Speaking with constituents at a Town Hall meeting in LeRoy in 2024, At a Veterans Outreach event in Batavia in 2024, Speaking with farmer Roberto Fred of Fred Farms at the Fredonia Farmers Market

"Agriculture isn't just an industry here, it's a way of life," Borello said. "I've worked across the aisle to support programs like Nourish NY, which connects our farmers with food banks and hunger relief organizations, a true win-win that supports both food-insecure families and local producers."

He also noted that he has consistently pushed back against harmful legislation and costly labor mandates that increase food prices and place added strain on family farms. When Democrats lowered the overtime threshold for farm workers, Borello was among the most vocal opponents of the change. While the mandate ultimately passed, sustained advocacy helped pressure the Hochul administration to establish a tax credit to help farmers offset the significant new labor costs it imposed.

Public safety remains a core priority as well.

"When our corrections officers stood up during the 2025 strike to demand safer working conditions and accountability for policies like the HALT Act, I stood shoulder to shoulder with them," Borello said. "We must repeal HALT as well as the failed bail and discovery laws and restore balance to a system that has

tilted too far toward criminals at the expense of victims and law-abiding citizens."

Despite serving in the minority, Borello noted that results matter.

"I was recently ranked the most effective Republican legislator in the New York State Senate by the Center for Effective Lawmaking," he said. "Even in the minority, you can fight, deliver results, and make a difference."

"There is too much at stake to sit on the sidelines," Borello added. "I am running for re-election because I believe deeply in this region and in the values we share. I will continue fighting every day to make New York more affordable, more accountable, and safer for our families."

Senator Borello has represented the 57th District since winning a special election in 2019 and being re-elected in 2022 and 2024. The district, one of the Legislature's largest geographically, encompasses Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Genesee and Wyoming counties, as well as a portion of Allegany County.

More information is available at www.georgeborello.com and @BorelloforNY on Facebook.

"Love is that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own."

~ Robert A. Heinlein, author

"Authors are Rock Stars": Acclaimed Novelist James Kennedy Ignites Creative Spark at Panama and Southwestern Schools



Submitted Photos

Contributed by
Good Neighbor Bookstore

Literature leaped off the page and onto the stage this week as James Kennedy, the celebrated author of the YA fantasy novel *The Order of Odd Fish*, visited 5th and 6th-grade students at Panama Central Schools and Southwestern Middle School. The visit, which turned traditional assemblies into high-energy masterclasses in storytelling, was made possible through a collaboration with Bob Lingle of Good Neighbor Bookstore.

storytelling and presentation style. Students instantly connected with his creative energy. Their eyes were just twinkling with excitement. He enthusiastically encouraged all of them to read, write and create with passion and authenticity. His presentation far exceeded any expectations. I would love to host him again! A ginormous thank you also goes out to Bob Lingle, from the Good Neighbor Bookstore, for his support of this amazing opportunity."

Mary Zdrojewski, Southwestern Middle School, added:

Bringing Literature to Life

Known for his vivid imagination and engaging presentation style, Kennedy didn't just talk about writing, he performed it. By sharing the "life adventures" that inspired his work, like the time he had to fend off a wild snake during his brief career as a 6th grade teacher, he bridged the gap between the classroom and the professional creative world, leaving students eager to pick up their own pens.

Voices from the Classroom

The impact on the students was immediate and visible. Educators from both districts noted a level of engagement that was nothing short of "electric."

Liz Gruber, Panama Central School, shared:

"Author James Kennedy dazzled my students with his incredible

"I have never seen our students as engaged as they were when James read excerpts from his book. They hung on every word and booed and cheered along with the characters. Through James Kennedy's presentation, our students watched literature come to life. James showed them not only that books are windows into fantastic adventures, but that authors are rock stars. Thank you so much to Bob and Good Neighbor bookstore for making this experience possible!"

A Partnership for Literacy

The events were coordinated in partnership with Good Neighbor Booksstore, highlighting the vital role local independent businesses play in enriching our community.

Bob Lingle, owner of Good Neighbor Bookstore, noted:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



CHAMBER CORNER

Membership Matters to Your Business

Article Contributed by

Daniel J. Heitzenrater

Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce
President and CEO

What comes to mind when you think about improving your business brand? Do you think about marketing or advertising? Your brand is much more than a logo. It's your reputation, and reputation has a lot to do with the company you keep.

When you join the chamber of commerce, your business is in good company. A 2024 Harris Poll survey conducted on behalf of the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) found that 81% of adults in the US agree their local chamber of commerce is a trusted resource and partner for business. 90% feel their local chamber has an impact on growing the local economy, and 64% are more likely to purchase goods and services from a business they know is a member of their local chamber.

These poll results all speak to the issue of trust – demonstrating that consumers put more trust in a business that is a member of the local chamber of commerce. Here in Chautauqua County, the CHQ Chamber is focused on supporting our local businesses in a variety of ways and connecting businesses with the community. Our mission is to build vital connections, provide professional resources, and champion our local businesses in Chautauqua County. We know that when our local businesses thrive, the community thrives.

If you are a member, you can take advantage of that by making sure the CHQ Chamber member window cling is visible when customers come to your business. We also have a downloadable version you can use on your website – easy to find at www.chqchamber.org/our-brand. If you're not a member, it's easy to join. See the online form available from our website homepage. If you have questions, please reach out to us at the CHQ Chamber.

Business Builder Workshop: AI for Your Business

The CHQ Chamber invites you to learn about how artificial intelligence can benefit your business. Our first Business Builder Workshop of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

year will focus on AI for Your Business, featuring two guest presenters who have real-use experience with AI.

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.

Chambers to Hold Collaborative Event at Audubon

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,

Mentors Are the MVPs in Our Community: Speakers and Students Share Powerful Stories at Mentor Recognition Dinner



Submitted Photos

Contributed by

Striders

Chautauqua Striders held their annual Mentor Recognition Dinner on Thursday, January 22 at the Harbor Hotel. It was an evening filled with gratitude, reflection, and powerful reminders of the difference mentors make in the lives of young people. Mentors, students, families, legislators and community supporters gathered to celebrate the individuals who consistently show up for students in our area, offering guidance, encouragement, and belief when it matters most.

This year's theme, "Mentors Are the MVPs in Our Community," came to life through the words of the speakers and student stories that highlighted the dedication, consistency, and care mentors bring to every relationship as they work behind the scenes, helping students navigate school, relationships, and life's challenges while building confidence and resilience.

Melinda Sanderson from the New York State Mentoring Program, Mason Palude from Assemblyman Molitor's office, and Chautauqua County Sheriff Jim Quattrone all shared appreciation for Striders mentors who are investing in the next generation and making our community stronger.

The keynote speaker, Josh Roth, owner of Kinetix Combat Sports, talked about the difference mentors have made in his own life, believing in him and helping

him achieve his dream of playing for the Buffalo Bills. He said, "Nearly every meaningful success that I've had can be traced back to a mentor. Someone who believed in me, someone who held me accountable, someone who refused to let me settle for anything less than I was capable of." He also shared about the lasting impact mentors have: "Having someone walk alongside you can make all the difference in the world. It's about creating community, a place where people feel seen, valued, supported. That foundation creates well-being, creates confidence, creates resilience."

The most impactful moments came from mentees themselves who shared how much having a mentor means to them. Student speaker Carlous Blake shared how much his mentor Anna Gassman means to him, describing their meetings as a highlight of his week. As a senior preparing for college, Carlous emphasized how valuable it is to have a trusted adult to lean on. "We talk about everything - college stuff, life stuff, and random silly things. Having someone like my mentor to talk to makes all of it way less stressful," he shared. Carlous also spoke about being a peer mentor himself and seeing the impact of mentoring come full circle.

Laura Arnold reflected on being matched with her mentor, Mikayla Certo, since elementary school, and underscored the importance of long-term commitment. "From the very beginning, my mentor made me feel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

WE ❤️ OUR COMMUNITY

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.

"Authors are Rock Stars": Acclaimed Novelist James Kennedy Ignites Creative Spark at Panama and Southwestern Schools

Continued from page 17

"Over the years I've enjoyed building relationships with not only our local school districts, but with authors from around the country. I was excited to connect those relationships by bringing James Kennedy to two school districts that we have worked closely with over the years."

Call for Young Filmmakers: The 90-Second Newbery

Beyond his novels, Kennedy is the founder and curator of the **90-Second Newbery Film Festival**, an annual video contest where young filmmakers create short movies that tell the entire story of a Newbery-winning book in about 90 seconds.

During his visit, Kennedy encouraged local students to pick up their cameras and submit their own creative masterpieces. The next regional screening is scheduled for **April 25, 2026, at the George Eastman Museum's Dryden Theatre in Rochester**. Local entries are due

by **March 20, 2026**. More information, including rules and submission forms, can be found at 90secondnewbery.com.

Kennedy's books can be found at Good Neighbor Bookstore, 124 Chautauqua Ave. Lakewood, NY. And online at GoodNeighborBooks.com.

About James Kennedy James Kennedy is the author of *The Order of Odd Fish* and *Dare to Know*. He is renowned for his eccentric and deeply imaginative presentations that encourage students to embrace their own creative instincts.

About Good Neighbor Books **Store** Owned and operated by the Lingle Family, Good Neighbor Bookstore is located in the historic Village of Lakewood. With a focus on fostering empathy, they work on curating titles for the community that promote understanding, diversity, and creativity.



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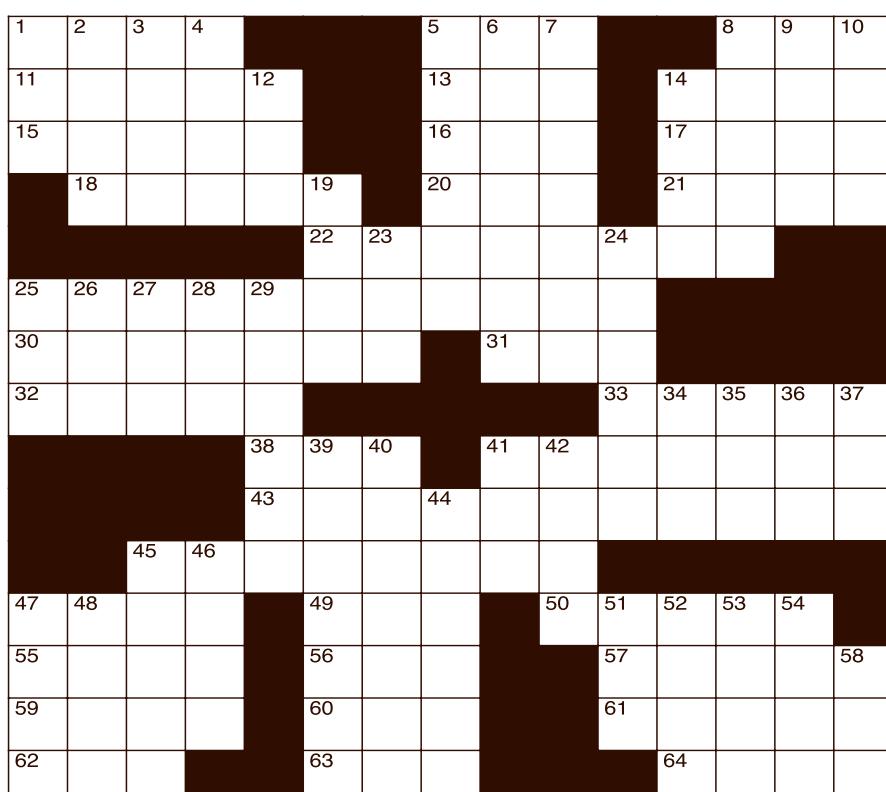
6	1	4			5	3		8
			5	2	8			9
8								4
			8	4	6			9
4		2	5	7				3
7		6	4		8	3		
	3							7
	4							2

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. Breezed through	33. Another name for sesame plant
5. Consumer protection agency	38. Disallow
8. Criminal syndicate	41. Provide greater detail
11. Moves back from	43. Inaccessible
13. Satisfaction	45. Evoke emotions
14. Feel concern or interest	47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
15. Monetary units	49. Celtic punk rockers
16. Congressman (abbr.)	50. A fencing sword
17. Israeli city	55. Actor Idris
18. Restaurants	56. Affirmative (slang)
20. 2,000 lbs.	57. Afflicted in mind or body
21. Grandmother	59. One point north of northeast
22. North, South and Central	60. Born of
25. In an early way	61. Social media hand gesture
30. Foes	62. Hong Kong food stall __ pai dor
31. Social networking platform	63. Opposite of beginning
32. Early term for basketball player	64. Email function

CLUES DOWN

1. Sign language	28. Woman (French)
2. Fashionable	29. Short route aircraft
3. Borough in Helsinki	34. Pitching statistic
4. Inability to hear	35. Pointed end of a pen
5. More quickly	36. Popular sports league
6. An idea accepted as a demonstrable truth	37. Body part
7. Shrewdly	39. Inoffensive
8. Rooney and Kate are two	40. Yellowish cotton cloth
9. Mediterranean port	41. Feline
10. Benedictine monk	42. Does not tell the truth
12. Midway between south and southeast	44. Seduced
14. Town in Galilee	45. Spiritual leader
19. Satisfy	46. Abba __, Israeli politician
23. Mice genus	47. Repair
24. Brass instrument	48. Olive genus
25. Chest muscle (slang)	51. Swiss river
26. Transmits genetic information from DNA	52. Prejudice
27. Records electric currents generated by the brain	53. C. European river
	54. Keep under control
	58. Father

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 21

Chamber Corner**Continued from page 18**

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 wonder, 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@wccbi.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.

CHQ Chamber Seeks Stories of Your Membership

Have you been a member of the CHQ Chamber for a short time, or for a long time? What benefits have you found from your membership? What do you want to tell other businesspeople about your Chamber membership? The CHQ Chamber is gathering stories from its members, and you can participate. Just visit our form online and fill in some simple question boxes. You can even upload a photo or a logo if you like, and we will be happy to share your story (with your approval) in our social media and our other materials. Find the form online at www.chqchamber.org/member-story-form. Thank you for participating.

STAR: School Tax Relief Made Simpley**Continued from page 8**

[property/homeowner-benefit-portal.htm](http://www.ny.gov/property/homeowner-benefit-portal.htm)

Watch your mail for notices from New York State.

You can contact the NY State Tax Department by phone at 518-457-2036 weekdays between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM. If there is a change in ownership, or your STAR benefit is missing. They can help you set up an account! That is prompt #4.

You can save money with this benefit! Basic STAR often saves several hundred dollars per year, and Enhanced STAR can save over \$1,000 per year for eligible seniors. If you need help or have questions, the Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services can help older adults understand STAR and other property tax relief programs. Give us a call at the NY Connects helpline at 716-753-4582. Or ccnyc@chqgov.com.

IN SUMMARY

- STAR reduces school property taxes
- Basic STAR is for eligible homeowners of any age
- Enhanced STAR is for eligible seniors aged 65+
- Most seniors no longer need to apply
- Keeping your information up to date is essential

If you have questions about services, programs, or benefits for older adults and caregivers, you can contact the NY Connects Helpline: 716-753-4582. Or ccnyc@chqgov.com.

The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services is here to guide, connect, and advocate for older adults, helping them remain in the community with dignity and strength. Education, information, and action are our tools—plan today to age well at home.

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Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation Invites Community to Nominate Local Changemakers for Footprints Award



Submitted Photo

Jim and Sue Mintun, 2025 George B. Weaver Jr. Footprints Award recipients, are pictured with NCCF Executive Director Diane Hannum and past Board President Dave Travis.

Contributed by
Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation

The Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation (NCCF) is excited to announce that nominations are now open for the 2026 George B. Weaver Jr. Footprints Award. This annual award celebrates individuals who have made significant contributions to their community through philanthropy and community service, leaving "footprints" for others to follow.

"We are seeking nominations for those who dedicate their time and resources to improving our community," says Diane Hannum, NCCF's Executive Director. "It's not about the amount of resources donated, but the impact they've made through their commitment and actions. Often, these individuals are unsung heroes, working quietly for the betterment of northern Chautauqua."

Nominees should demonstrate a strong history of community service, philanthropic efforts (where financial support is not measured solely by dollar amounts), and activities that have positively influenced northern Chautauqua County. Previous award recipients include George B. Weaver Jr.; Dallas Beal; Robert Maytum; Jim & Carol Boltz; Donald Q. Eno; the founding NCCF Board of Directors & the first elected Board of Directors; Richard S. Johnson; Edwin L. Hamlet; Doug & Ann Manly; Richard Anson; Steve & Helen Baran; Steve & Sue Cobb; Dick & Carmen Gilman; Wayne, Elaine & Laurel Hoteling; James & Marcia Merrins; Alona

Forbes; Peter D. Clark; Kathy & Peter George; Steve & Mary Rees; Dan Reininga; David Hazelton, and Jim and Sue Mintun.

Community members are strongly encouraged to submit their nominations for the committee's review. Repeat nominations are accepted. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the NCCF website at www.nccfoundation.org/impacting-community/footprints-award or requested by calling our office at 716-366-4892 or emailing nccf@nccfoundation.org. Completed nominations can be submitted by mail to 212 Lake Shore Drive W., Dunkirk, NY 14048, by fax to 716-366-3905, or by email at nccf@nccfoundation.org. The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2026.

Since its incorporation in 1986, the NCCF has invested over \$23 million in northern Chautauqua County through strategic grantmaking, targeted scholarships, and leadership and community collaborations. The NCCF is a tax-exempt charitable organization inherently committed to enhancing the northern Chautauqua community and encouraging local philanthropy. As a nationally accredited community foundation, the NCCF has proven compliance with the National Standards for U.S. Community

Foundations, demonstrating integrity, equity, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in meeting the needs of its community. For more information on the NCCF, visit www.nccfoundation.org or call 716-366-4892.

Mentors Are the MVPs in Our Community: Speakers and Students Share Powerful Stories at Mentor Recognition Dinner

Continued from page 18



CHAUTAUQUA STRIDERS
EDUCATE EMPOWER EXCEL

safe and happy," Laura said. "Even when I didn't always know how to say what I was feeling, she listened."

She shared how simple moments together can carry lasting meaning. "Even something simple like breakfast can mean a lot when you're with someone who really cares," she added. Laura emphasized how powerful it is to have someone who never gives up. "Knowing someone has had your back since elementary school is a really big deal."

Student Patience Sprague spoke about her newer mentoring match with Sam Gast and how quickly it has become something she looks forward to each week. "We meet every week for lunch, and that's something I really look forward to," Patience said. "No matter how my day is going, I know lunch with my mentor is going to make it better."

She added that having someone consistently show up makes a bigger difference than many adults realize. "It's nice knowing there's someone who shows up every week just to spend time with me and support me."

Another student speaker, Lilly Scarsone, shared how mentoring creates a lasting ripple effect. "From offering advice on schoolwork to coping with stress, mentors give their mentees the tools they need to face obstacles head-on," Lilly shared. She spoke about the deep connection she shares with her mentor, Hannah Swan-Leuze, and their time spent together giving back to the community. "She is a huge part of my life," Lilly said, adding that mentoring inspires

former mentees to become mentors themselves.

Student Kevonian-Davis highlighted a quality of his mentor, Carlye Montgomery, that resonated strongly with the evening's theme: consistency. "She always shows up, she always remembers what's going on with me. She's there every week, no matter what, and that means a lot," he said. "She knows how to push me in a good way - like 'do your best and don't be lazy.' She jokes around, but she also gives solid advice and actually listens."

Students Emma Couse, Cheryl Kozma, and Gianna Stokes also shared how much they appreciate their mentors. Together, the students' voices painted a powerful picture of why mentors are truly the MVPs of the community. Their commitment, presence, and belief not only change individual lives but strengthen families, schools, and the community as a whole.

The Mentor Recognition Dinner highlighted how much mentors are appreciated and valued by members of the community, and served as a reminder that mentoring changes lives.

THANK YOU to all of the current Chautauqua Striders mentors, and to everyone who has served as a mentor in the past!

There are many more students on our waiting list who would love to be matched with a mentor! Visit chqstriders.org, call 716-489-3483, or email erika@chqstriders.org for more information.

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched..they must be felt with the heart. What we have once enjoyed we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us."

~ Helen Keller, author

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

A	C	E	D		F	T	C	M	O	B
S	H	I	E	S	A	H	A	C	A	R
L	I	R	A	S	S	E	N	A	R	A
C	A	F	E	S	T	O	N	N	A	N
P	R	E	M	A	U	M	E	R	E	R
R	E	M	A	T	R	E	L	E	R	E
E	N	E	M	E	R	E	L	E	R	E
C	A	G	E	R	R	E	L	E	R	E
B	A	N	E	R	R	E	L	E	R	E
U	N	A	V	A	R	E	L	E	R	E
R	E	S	O	N	A	T	E	L	E	E

PUZZLES ON PAGE 19

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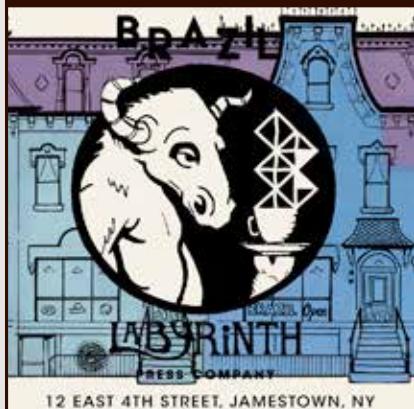
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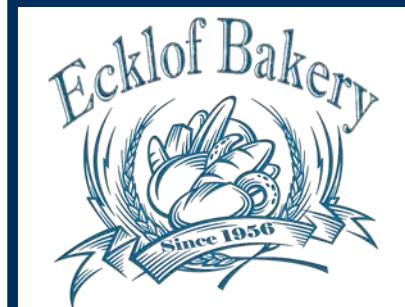
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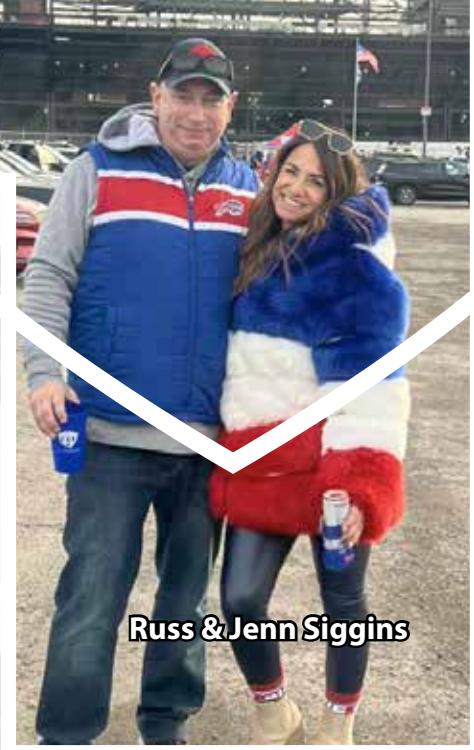


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