



# CHAUTAUQUA GAZETTE



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★ Make Every Day, Veterans Day ★

Volume 2 • Issue 8 | Week of March 3, 2025

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**On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.**

— Dan Lipinski

## MAKE EVERY DAY VETS DAY

Jennifer Nelsen, one of the founding members of “Healing for Heroes,” a new respite center and retreat for veterans, recently complimented our efforts to honor Chautauqua County’s veterans last November in conjunction with Veterans Day. No doubt we had worked hard on this themed edition and were happy to do so.

However, Mrs. Nelsen followed her observation with a brilliant suggestion: why not honor veterans this winter outside of the “expected” holiday observances. To her point, we proudly present this special edition. In a county that boasts one of the highest percentages of veterans in New York State, we can think of no more worthy message. As our Faith Matters contributing pastor, Rev. Luke Fodor aptly counsels in this week’s Faith Matters’ column: we kick off the season of Lent by “sharing the light” and illuminating some of those most deserving of our gratitude.

In the dead of winter, let us be dedicated to remembering the service, sacrifice and the ultimate dedication of our beloved veterans. They gave so much in service of our nation - it is only right to remember their service throughout the year.

Celebrate our Vets not just on Vets Day, but every day...all year long. Every day is a great day to honor our community’s veterans! Mrs. Nelsen couldn’t have made a better suggestion.



Healing For Heroes-A Disabled Veteran’s and Wooded Oasis, Inc., in the Town of Ellery, opened in 2023 as a nonprofit dedicated toward supporting veterans with the chance to rest, relax and reconnect, in the company of other veterans, without the pressures of daily life. Veterans from across the country are welcomed for up to a one-week stay, free of charge, while enjoying the gorgeous wooded grounds and the type of peaceful therapy that nature best provides. The Charity is run with the generous support of local donations under the leadership of founding Marine Corp veterans: Thomas Nelsen and Kelly Carpenter Jr., along with founding Officer Jennifer Nelsen. For more information on how you can help, call 716-602-5414, email [hfhbemuspoint@gmail.com](mailto:hfhbemuspoint@gmail.com), or find them on Facebook.

## The Impact of Military Service: An Army Vet Reflects

Featured Writer

**Ryan Mrowka**

Brother to Publisher Lori Cornell

What shapes a person the most? Genes, family, education, faith, community? For those who served in the military, that experience becomes a formational part of one's character as well.

I returned from Iraq 20 years ago last week. I had my 23rd and 24th birthdays in the desert. I distinctly remember one of my sergeants telling me I was still “wet behind the ears” when I showed up at our unit as a 2nd lieutenant. Having been an accomplished student and Army ROTC cadet, I was offended at the time, but he was right. Most of us were still “wet behind the ears” back then - mostly 20-somethings and teenagers - even though we were entrusted with rocket launchers, drones, and 70-ton tanks and tasked with neutralizing insurgents, training



Submitted Photos

Captain Mrowka 2004



Civilian Mrowka 2025

the Iraqi military and establishing a democratic government in a foreign land.

I hung up the uniform 14 years ago. Most of us are approaching 40 or 50 years old now and many have kids graduating from high

school, so I’d say we’re not “wet behind the ears” anymore. We’ve had time to reflect on our military careers and deployments. If you were to ask me if it was a positive or negative experience, I’d say it

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 19**

★ Live CHQ. Love CHQ. Read CHQ.

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# This Week Around Town

## MONDAY, MARCH 3

**Free Memory Cafe | 10 AM**  
National Comedy Center  
For Info: ComedyCenter.org/MemoryCafe

## TUESDAY, MARCH 4

**Fat Tuesday Celebration | 3:30 PM**  
Wicked Warren's | Jamestown  
For Info: (716) 484-4070

**Figure Drawing Class | 6 PM**  
Chautauqua Art Gallery | Jamestown  
For Info: 716-294-3027

**The Henry C. Youngerman Center for Communication Disorders: Group Support Meetings | 3 PM**  
Thompson Hall Room E148 | SUNY Fredonia  
For Info: (716) 673-4618

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

**Movies at The Reg: Nosferatu | 7 PM**  
Reg Lenna Center for The Arts | Jamestown  
For Info: 716-484-7070

**THURSDAY, MARCH 6 (10 AM - 5 PM),  
FRIDAY, MARCH 7 (10 AM - 5 PM), &  
SATURDAY, MARCH 8 (10 AM- 3 PM)**

**Closing Sale!**  
Country Woods Country Store & Antiques  
Jamestown  
For Info: 716-483-1276



## FRIDAY, MARCH 7

**First Friday | 11 AM - 12 AM**  
Audubon Community Nature Center  
Jamestown  
For Info: auduboncnc.org

## FRIDAY, MARCH 7 - SUNDAY, MARCH 9

**Free Snowmobiling Weekends**  
Chautauqua County  
For Info: iloveny.com/winter

## SATURDAY, MARCH 8

**Fredonia Winter Farmers Market  
10 AM - 1 PM**  
Fredonia Masonic Lodge | Fredonia  
For Info: (716) 965-2716

**Little Explorers | 10 AM - 11:30 AM**  
Audubon Community Nature Center  
Jamestown  
For Info: auduboncnc.org

**Animal Rabies Immunization Clinics  
10 AM -12 PM**  
Chautauqua County Humane Society  
Jamestown  
For Info: 716-665-2209 | Pre-Register:  
HealthyCHQ.com/Rabies

## SUNDAY, MARCH 9

**Yoga & Brunch**  
Hideaway Bay Resort | Silver Creek  
For Info: hideawaybayresortny.com

# Chautauqua County Veterans Service Agency



## Featured Writer

### Greg Carlson

Director, Chautauqua County Veterans Service Agency

The Veterans Service Agency serves the 10,000 plus veterans of Chautauqua County, and their eligible family members. Though we are accredited veteran representatives credentialed to file claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), we do not work for the VA. We're employed by Chautauqua County and work with our veteran population to help them access the benefits they've earned through their service to our country. We have offices in Jamestown and Dunkirk where veterans, and eligible beneficiaries can be screened and file for VA benefits. Additionally, we operate the PFC Dwyer Program. This program is a non-clinical peer to peer veteran support group that connects veterans through a variety of informal activities and settings, and you don't have to qualify for VA benefits to participate. Our dedicated Service Officers and Administrative Aid primarily focus on assisting veterans gain access to VA healthcare, VA disability compensation, needs based VA pension, and burial benefits.

The most commonly sought out benefit is VA healthcare. The VA healthcare system is not insurance, but rather a direct provider of comprehensive healthcare to a unique demographic of American citizens. Throughout the United States there are VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics, VA Medical Centers, and VA Hospitals that take care of our veterans. We're very lucky in Chautauqua County to have two Community Based Outpatient Clinics located in Jamestown and Dunkirk. Neighboring our County on three sides is the Erie, PA VA Medical Center, the Buffalo, NY VA Hospital, and the Warren, PA VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic. Some of our county veterans also use these VA facilities for their care. In addition to healthcare, many veterans are eligible for VA disability compensation.

VA disability compensation is a monthly tax-free benefit paid to veterans who have a disability caused by, or diagnosed concurrent

with military service. To receive the benefit the injury or illness must not be a consequence of the veteran's own willful misconduct, and a medical exam including a thorough review of the veterans private and military medical records must be conducted to determine the severity. This is not to be confused with social security disability, as many disabled veterans are still gainfully employed. In most cases VA disability compensation ratings are not enough to live on, but still provide a great supplemental income to offset any work impairment the veteran may have. VA disability compensation is not the only financial benefit a veteran may be eligible for, war era veterans and surviving spouses may be eligible for a needs-based program called pension.

VA pension is needs based as opposed to criteria based VA disability compensation. Factors such as age, assets, income, and recurring monthly medical expenses are all considered in determining eligibility. In most instances VA pension is awarded when an older veteran or surviving spouse requires assistance with tasks of daily living, and require institutional or in-home care. However, there are some cases where an indigent veteran, or a veteran who suffers from a non-service-connected disability may still qualify. Each veteran's case is unique, and the best way to determine eligibility is to talk to a Service Officer. In addition to VA healthcare, disability compensation, and pension our office handles VA burial benefits.

VA burial benefits don't offset the entire cost of a funeral and burial, but is a financial benefit that can be paid to an eligible next of kin based on the circumstances of the veteran's death and military service. In addition to monetary burial benefits, an American flag, bronze marker for the headstone, and Presidential Memorial Certificates may be authorized.

The VA does have other programs like VA home loans and educational benefits, but these benefits are not processed through our office like healthcare, disability compensation, needs-based pension, or burial benefits. This article is just a very brief overview, and any veteran or family member who wants to be screened for benefits should call our Jamestown office at (716) 661-8255, or our Dunkirk office at (716) 268-6030 and set up an appointment. Our dedicated staff; Carrie Finnerty, Cindy Reidy, Mike Rauh, and Greg Carlson are waiting for your call. At the Chautauqua County Veterans Service Agency every day is Veterans Day!

# Community Foundation Announces Inaugural Grant Process is Open for the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trails Maintenance Fund for Western New York

Article Contributed by  
Community Foundation for  
Greater Buffalo

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo is now accepting applications for the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trails Maintenance Fund for Western New York grant process. The deadline to apply is April 4, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

In 2018, as part of the 100th anniversary of Ralph Wilson, Jr.'s birth and celebration of his legacy and community devotion, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation announced a \$100 million Parks & Trails initiative in Western New York. This centennial commitment included allocating \$10 million towards the sustainability of regional trails. In 2022, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation fulfilled this commitment by establishing an endowment fund at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo to provide support for reconstruction, restoration,

rehabilitation, and maintenance projects that benefit Western New York trails and greenways.

"Since 2018, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation has been partnering with local and state agencies and community organizations to better connect and grow the regional trail system across Western New York," said JJ Tighe, Sr. Director of the Parks & Trails Initiative for the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. "With these capital investments our trustees equally saw the importance of seeding support for the long-term sustainability of these trails so they can be enjoyed for generations."

Any 501(c)(3) public charity located in or serving the eight counties of Western New York is eligible to apply. For detailed eligibility information and to apply, please visit <https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/ralph-c-wilson-jr-trails-maintenance-fund-for-western-new-york/>



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## In Loving Memory

### February 15

Donald W. "Don" Raymond, 69  
Frewsburg  
Peterson Funeral Home

### February 19

Edward R. "Ed" Derby, 98  
Little Valley  
Peterson Funeral Home

### February 20

Mary Michele Sadlack, 78  
Bemus Point  
Lind Funeral Home

### February 22

Charles "Chuckmann" W.  
Crossley, III, 61  
Bemus Point  
Lind Funeral Home

Judith Clayton Johnson, 88  
Jamestown  
Lind Funeral Home

### February 23

Charles Frontuto, 83  
Jamestown  
Riccardi's Family Funeral Home

### February 23 (cont.)

JoAnne Bartoo Brickley, 73  
Jamestown  
Lind Funeral Home

Major Richard T. "Dick" Best, 80  
Jamestown  
Lind Funeral Home

Michael Steven Hargis, 65  
Bemus Point  
Lind Funeral Home

### February 24

Rita Kester, 84  
Ashville  
Lind Funeral Home

Kevin S. Olmstead, 62  
Jamestown  
Falconer Funeral Home

### February 25

Felicita Alicea, 92  
Jamestown  
Lind Funeral Home



## Memorial Photo

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"Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere  
who bravely bears his country's cause."

- Abraham Lincoln



## Faith Matters

SHARE THE LIGHT LENTEN SERIES

# Share the Light



Featured Writer

**Rev. Luke F. Fodor**  
Saint Luke's Church

Whether you were raised in a tradition that commemorates the season of Lent or not, you are probably at least familiar with the concept from popular culture. Lent is often portrayed as an austere season of fasting, accountability, self-examination and giving things up. You know the usual list: no chocolate, no alcohol, no meat on Fridays, etc. And while those are many of the traditional practices, that is not all that Lent is about. These traditional practices are meant to clear space for what Lent is really about. YES, the Season of Lent is really about LIGHT.

I don't know if you noticed but the amount of daylight has been increasing rapidly recently. Each day we add about 2 1/2 minutes of daylight. The very word "Lent" is of Anglo-Saxon origins and it literally means: "lengthening"—as in: "the season of lengthening days." I also think it is a time to lengthen our spirits as we recommit to grow in grace. We open up more space to witness the light when we stop distracting ourselves with things that lack ultimate importance.

Lent (like its sister season of fasting, Ramadan) is the perfect time to pay attention to the light.

For we have been living in dark times for a while now, so much so we can come to imagine that's all there is. Another day of gray skies and snow, make it so we hardly notice the increasing light. It is easy to lose hope and to forget to experience the light's ability to create a spacious capacity. When we are feeling the constriction of fear and darkness, Mr. (Fred) Rogers famously encourages us, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' " And that is what I want to invite you to do this Lent: to look for the light created by the helpers in our community. I want to invite you to help lengthen the light in your own life and find ways to share the light.

In the coming weeks, I will draw your attention to some of the people and groups that are spreading light in our community. Over the next six issues, I will feature the light-spreading efforts of Chautauqua Striders, the New Neighbors Coalition, the Audubon Community Nature Center, the Jamestown Farmers Market and other local organizations that give you an opportunity to help spread your light this Lent.

*The Chautauqua Gazette is proud to feature different faith leaders from throughout Chautauqua County 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](mailto:cornell@CHQgazette.com).*



# ★ TOGETHER, FOREVER ★

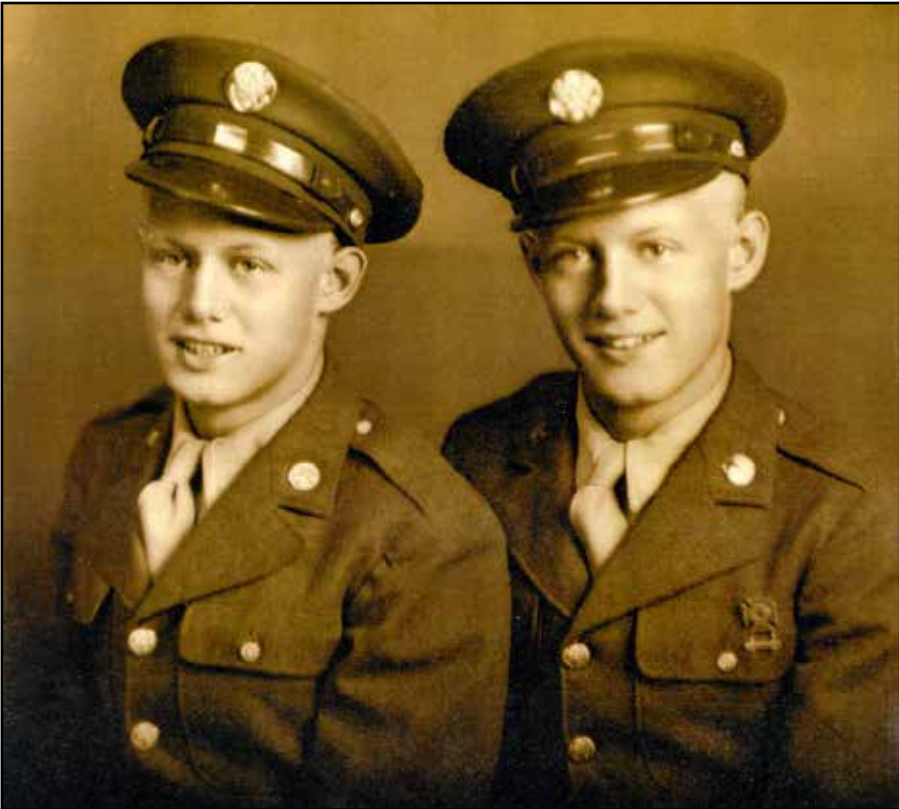
*The heartbreaking story of PFC Carl H. Carlson and PFC Clarence H. Carlson, twin brothers from Jamestown, New York, who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II*



*Featured Writer*  
**John Dekhane**

The heartbreaking story of PFC Carl H. Carlson and PFC Clarence H. Carlson, twin brothers from Jamestown, New York, is one of devotion, sacrifice, and an unbreakable bond. They shared more than just a birthday, they shared a connection so deep that not even war could sever it. Their journey from a quiet childhood in Chautauqua County to the fateful waters of the English Channel is a testament to the courage and selflessness of a generation that gave everything in the name of freedom.

Born on February 16, 1926, Carl and Clarence Carlson were inseparable from the start. They attended Jamestown High School, each carving out a path shaped by his own passions. Carl found his voice through art, sketching the world around him with remarkable detail. Clarence, on the other hand, found joy in music, his accordion filling their home with melodies of hope and aspiration. Though their talents differed, their spirits remained intertwined—two halves of a whole, bound by an unbreakable brotherly bond. Like so many young men of their time, their futures held promise. Carl might have pursued a career as an artist, capturing the world’s wonders through his brush. Clarence might have shared his love of music with audiences, his accordion playing a soundtrack to a life well lived. But the world was at war, and dreams had to be set aside.



The Carlson Brothers

On May 5, 1944, at just 18 years old, Carl and Clarence enlisted in the U.S. Army. They did so together, as they had done everything in life, bound not only by duty but by love for each other. Their commitment to serve was not just an obligation—it was a calling. Assigned to the 262nd Infantry Regiment, 66th Infantry Division, they trained at Camp Blanding, Florida, before being sent to England for final preparations. They were about to enter the unknown, but they faced this uncertainty side by side, knowing that they would always be there for each other.

On December 24, 1944, the twin brothers found themselves aboard the SS Léopoldville, a troopship set to carry them from Southampton, England, to Cherbourg, France. The Léopoldville had been tasked with transporting American troops to the continent as part of the ongoing efforts to defeat the forces of evil. It was Christmas Eve, a night meant for warmth, family, and the comfort of home. Instead, it became a night of tragedy. At exactly 5:54 p.m., just

five miles from the French coast, a German U-boat fired a torpedo that struck the ship with devastating force. Chaos erupted as soldiers struggled to escape the vessel which sunk by the stern. The attack was catastrophic. Of the 2,235 American servicemen aboard, approximately 515 were killed instantly, and many others perished in the frigid waters of the English Channel. Among them were PFC Carl H. Carlson and PFC Clarence H. Carlson, who were just 18 years old at the time. Their bodies were never recovered, leaving their parents to endure the unimaginable grief of losing not one, but both of their sons—without even a grave to visit, without the chance to say goodbye.

Today, their names are etched into the Tablets of the Missing at the Normandy American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, a solemn tribute to their sacrifice. In Lakewood, New York, two memorial markers can be found in Sunset Hill Cemetery, ensuring that though they were lost to the sea, their memory remains anchored close to home.

Carl and Clarence never had the chance to fulfill their dreams, never had the opportunity to see the peace they fought for. But their sacrifice was not in vain. They were part of a generation that understood the true cost of freedom, young men who gave up everything so that others might live without fear. Their story is not just one of loss, but of love—the love of two brothers who stood together until the very end.

Every soldier lost in war is a reminder of the price paid for liberty, but the legacy of the Carlson twins carries a special weight. They entered the world together, walked through life side by side, and, in the end, left it as one. Their bond, their bravery, and their sacrifice remain an enduring testament to the unbreakable power of brotherhood. Though their lives were short, their memory lives on, forever woven into the fabric of history.

John Dekhane grew up in Paris before moving to the South of France. He works for a sport organization in Monaco. Since he was a child, he has always been interested in World War II with particular emphasis on American soldiers. In order to honor them, over the past years, he has located and purchased WWII U.S. artifacts in Europe and donated these items to more than a hundred museums in the United States.

*John Dekhane grew up in Paris before moving to the South of France. He works for a sport organization in Monaco. Since he was a child, he has always been interested in World War II with particular emphasis on American soldiers. In order to honor them, over the past years, he has located and purchased WWII U.S. artifacts in Europe and donated these items to more than a hundred museums in the United States. Dekhane discovered the Chautauqua Gazette online and submitted his article for publication.*



Submitted Photos

Carl H. Carlson's memorial marker in Lakewood, NY.



Clarence H. Carlson's memorial marker in Lakewood, NY.



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# Rand Community Philanthropic Foundation Announces Annual Golf Tourney to Benefit Police, Fire & Veterans Organizations



Healing for Heroes, Bemus Point, NY (Find us on Facebook)  
Thomas Nelsen, President; Jennifer Nelsen, Secretary & Treasurer;  
Kelly Carpenter Jr., Vice President

## Article Contributed by Rand Community Philanthropic Foundation

Since 2021, the Rand Community Philanthropic Foundation has been committed to supporting those who keep our safe: Police, Fire and Veterans’ Organizations. The Foundation began its annual PO-FI-VE (PO-lice, FI-re, VE-terans) Charity Golf Tournament in an effort to raise dedicated funds toward this mission each year.

Since its inception, they have donated over \$50,000 to local organizations, with the money being used for a wide range of investments including weapon improvements, tactical gear, firefighting equipment, lifesaving technology and local programming. All investments are designed to further benefit the Greater Jamestown area. Last year’s efforts produced a record number of golfers, volunteers and sponsors, and ultimately led to \$16,500 in distributions to local beneficiaries.

This year’s 2025 PO-FI-VE Golf Tournament will take place on Saturday, June 14, 2025 at Chautauqua Golf Club - Lake Course. The tournament distributions will benefit: Jamestown

Police Department, Ellicott Police Department, Ellington Volunteer Fire Department, Randolph Fire Company Inc., Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project and Healing for Heroes.

Jennifer Nelson, Secretary & Treasurer of Healing for Heroes, is just one recipient grateful to help utilize these funds for their expansion. She thanked the Foundation for the chance to be a part. “It’s our great honor to have been selected as a beneficiary of the 2025 Rand PO-FI-VE Charity Golf Tournament. As a fairly new Disabled Veterans Charity, we are excited to have been chosen and are working hard to get sponsors, volunteers, and golf teams as these efforts directly influence our award.”

Rand encourages the entire community to mark their calendar and get involved. Anyone interested in participating as a Sponsor, Golfer and/or Volunteer may contact: [pofive@randmachine.com](mailto:pofive@randmachine.com) or 716-665-5217. Specific donation and golf packages are outlined in our brochure; custom donations outside of the packages listing shall be reviewed by the Tournament Committee.

## SUDOKU

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

### 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: Intermediate

## CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
14					15							16		
17					18							19		
20						21						22		
23					24				25		26			
			27			28	29	30						
31	32	33			34					35			36	37
38				39					40			41		
42			43			44					45			
		46			47					48				
49	50								51			52	53	54
55					56		57	58	59		60			
61					62					63				
64					65							66		
67					68							69		

### CLUES ACROSS

1. Cut a little bit off

5. State with confidence

11. River in NE Scotland

14. Not narrow

15. Lacking social polish

16. Amount of time

17. Frame

19. Automobile

20. Toadstools

21. High school dances

22. Utilize

23. Challenged

25. One-sided

27. Showing extreme greed

31. Potted plants

34. Everyone has one

35. Lake in Botswana

38. E.T. rode in one

39. Juniors’ parents

41. Small amount
42. Mother of Perseus

44. Ornamental box

45. Gov’t investigators

46. Uncertain

49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish

51. The vast grassy plains in S. America

55. Your consciousness of your own identity

56. Noted consumer advocate

60. Spanish sports club

61. Body part

62. Tractability

64. Woman (French)

65. Ready and willing to be taught

66. Muslim ruler title

67. Depressed

68. Gradually gave way

69. Clear-thinking

### CLUES DOWN

1. Brushed aside

2. Water sprite

3. Ones to look up to

4. Monetary units

5. A number everyone has

6. Marine invertebrate

7. One who takes you to court

8. Indicates outer

9. Parallelograms

10. Strains

11. Cross

12. A way to remove

13. Some pages are dog-\_\_

18. Ukraine city

24. A citizen of Denmark

26. Summer month (abbr.)

28. Hindu queens

29. Jewelry brand

30. Fictional rider of Rohan

31. Wet dirt
32. Russian city

33. Observed

36. Furious

37. Drivers’ licenses

39. Musical composition

40. Auction

43. They \_\_

45. Women

47. Inspire with love

48. Japanese ankle sock

49. Appears

50. Old World lizard

52. The leading performer

53. Type of protein

54. Pennsylvania town

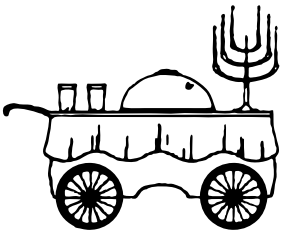
57. Art \_\_: around 1920

58. \_\_ Blyton, children’s author

59. Abnormal breathing

63. A place to sleep

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 27



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Peace, Hope and Joy with Linda Kent

# Old Neighborhood



Featured Writer

Linda Kent

My walks recently have been taking me through the neighborhoods I grew up in. The memories coming back to me as I walk some of those same sidewalks become stronger each time. What precious memories they are, too.

I now live one block away from my childhood home, so when I walk, I walk mostly the same places I walked as a child. The houses have pretty much all stayed the same in these past fifty-some years. The colors may have changed, and additions may have been made, but it's still essentially the same neighborhoods. One house had a basset hound whose deep booming voice scared me, so I always

hurried past this house, especially if I happened to be alone. On one corner, there was a small, wooded lot we used as a shortcut and often stopped in to play. The woods are now gone and it's just a mown lawn. Looking at the tiny lot, I realize how small that bit of wood must have been despite how large it seemed to my childish eyes.

My home street hasn't changed much, especially the sidewalks. Almost all are the same ones I frequented as a child. Many still have the original DPW stamp. The neighbor kids, my brother, and I all rode our bikes for hours on them. In front of our old house, I walk the sidewalks that I roller skated on. Played hopscotch on. Pushed doll strollers on. Oh the stories those sidewalks could tell.

It's absolutely amazing to me how these memories come back clearer every time I walk through. Cherished memories, as my brother is no longer around to help me remember the things we did as children. Sharing these stories now is a way of making old, happy memories of innocent times more real and current. It makes me smile to remember the fun we had in our neighborhood.

## Rotary District Governor Visits Jamestown



Submitted Photo

Article Contributed by

### Rotary Club of Jamestown

Rotary Club of Jamestown President Marion Beckerink introduced Assistant Governor Michael Harrington from the Mayville-Westfield Club to introduce an honored guest. Harrington has been President of the Mayville-Westfield Club three times, a Paul Harris Fellow, and currently serves as an Assistant District Governor and serves on the Stewardship subcommittee for Rotary District 7090's Foundation Committee as well. He will serve as the Foundation committee's chairman beginning in June 2025.

Harrington introduced Dave Alexander, District Governor of 7090 which includes more than 75 clubs in both southern Ontario and western New York and he is a member of the Rotary Club of Welland, Ontario. He joined Rotary in 2008 and served as club president in 2018-19. Prior to joining Rotary, he was a JayCee for 15 years. Dave came to District leadership first through the International Committee and then the Rotary Leadership Institute as a trainer. At the RI Convention in Toronto in 2018 he became interested in the Environment and Sustainability Rotary Action Group with his new friends from around the world, currently working on the newest area of focus, the environment. At the RI Convention this past May in Singapore he was proud to represent District 7090 as a session speaker. Alexander has served on the board of the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities board, judge of the Canadian Sustainable Community Award and as Chair of Leadership Niagara. He has also served two terms with the Welland City Council.

Alexander shared samples of "Coffee Crisp Mini's" with each member. He has visited this area several times, especially enjoying the fall season and the Comedy Center. Dave stressed he is a "club member" first. His goal as District Governor is

to support each club and hear the members' voices. He supports the Rotary Club Runner app as a good tool to reach him and others in all the clubs. Prior to his visit to Jamestown, he researched the history of the local club on its website and hopes the Club can solve a mystery for him. Jamestown has had two District Governors Daniel Lincoln and James Riggs, Sr. Mr. Riggs worked on many initiatives and became DG right after women were able to join Rotary and which he assisted in making happen. However, there is a gap where Mr. Riggs is not mentioned in the 80s or early 90s. Alexander would like some background on James' story to solve the mystery. (If anyone has information on James Riggs, Sr. and his wife Janet, please contact Club Historian, susanjones369@gmail.com.)

Facts about the Rotary Club of Jamestown are it was the 8th club in the district; local members hosted the district conference 3 times, 1927, 1933 & 1952; in 1927 1,000+ Rotarians came to Jamestown for the district conference.

This year's Rotary District 7090 Conference is April 5th in Niagara Falls, Canada (the conference alternates each year between the US and Canada, as does the home of the District Governor.) This conference will support Rotary and its community partners to have a broader conversation to chart new opportunities. Speakers and panels are planned. Participants will listen to best practices and learn about new projects and how to make them a reality.

The DG encouraged every member to continue to look at the Lighthouse award as it serves as a goal-setting mechanism for each year's work. He spoke about the continuing polio eradication campaign and said Rotary will continue the fight. He then moved to questions from the members.

President Beckerink then surprised DG Alexander with a Paul Harris Fellow Award.

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# Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder

## How the Winter Blues Impact Mental Health



Featured Writer

Jennifer Hickman,  
LCSW; CASAC-2

Owner, Hope Counseling, LCSW, PLLC

As the days grow shorter and the temperatures drop, many people find themselves feeling down and sluggish. For some, these feelings go beyond a case of the "winter blues" and develop into Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a type of depression that occurs at specific times of the year, usually in the fall and winter months when there is less natural sunlight.

### Recognizing the Symptoms of SAD

Seasonal Affective Disorder manifests in a variety of symptoms that can affect daily life. Some of the most common signs include:

- Persistent feelings of sadness or depression most of the day, nearly every day.
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed.
- Low energy and constant fatigue.
- Sleep disturbances, including excessive sleeping or difficulty sleeping.
- Increased cravings for carbohydrates, which can lead to

- weight gain.
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions.
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, or worthlessness.
- In severe cases, frequent thoughts of death or suicide.

### How SAD Differs from Major Depression

While both Seasonal Affective Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder share similar symptoms, there are key differences between the two conditions.

- **Seasonal Affective Disorder** follows a seasonal pattern, typically appearing in fall and winter and improving during spring and summer. Its symptoms often include increased sleep, carbohydrate cravings, and weight gain. Researchers believe that changes in sunlight exposure affect serotonin levels, melatonin production, and circadian rhythms.
- **Major Depression** can occur at any time of the year and is not tied to seasonal changes. It tends to be more persistent, lasting at least two weeks or longer, and is often influenced by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors.

### Why Winter Worsens SAD

The impact of reduced sunlight and prolonged winter months plays a

significant role in the development of SAD.

- **Lack of Sunlight:** Sunlight helps regulate serotonin, a neurotransmitter that influences mood. With shorter daylight hours, serotonin levels can drop, leading to feelings of depression. Additionally, decreased sunlight disrupts our body's circadian rhythm, which can cause sleep disturbances and mood fluctuations.
- **Melatonin Overproduction:** Less sunlight can lead to an overproduction of melatonin, the hormone responsible for regulating sleep. This can result in excessive drowsiness and fatigue, making it harder for individuals to stay active and engaged.
- **Isolation:** The colder temperatures and snowy conditions in many areas limit outdoor activities and social interactions, increasing feelings of loneliness and depression.

### Coping Strategies and Treatment Options

Despite its debilitating effects, there are effective treatments available for Seasonal Affective Disorder. These include:

- **Light Therapy (Phototherapy):** A specially designed lightbox that mimics natural sunlight can

help regulate serotonin and melatonin levels, alleviating symptoms in many individuals.

- **Psychotherapy:** Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and other forms of talk therapy can help individuals develop coping strategies and manage symptoms more effectively.
- **Medications:** Antidepressants, particularly selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), can be prescribed to help regulate mood.
- **Lifestyle Changes:** Engaging in outdoor activities during daylight hours, maintaining a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and staying socially connected can all help combat the effects of SAD.

### SAD in Western New York: A Growing Concern

In Western New York, where winters are long and sunlight is scarce, over 1 million residents suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder. This condition is most prevalent in individuals aged 20-30 and can lead to cognitive impairment, loss of interest in hobbies, and increased isolation during the colder months.

If you or someone you know is experiencing signs of Seasonal Affective Disorder, seeking professional help is crucial. Early intervention can lead to effective treatment and improved quality of life, even during the darkest months of the year.



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## Springville P-Tech Construction Technologies Students Tour BPU Power Plant & Substation



Submitted Photos

P-Tech students from Springville visit a BPU substation with BPU Electrician Pat Shay and Electrical Engineer Jarrett Devereaux, right.



P-Tech students visit the BPU power plant with BPU Engineer Rob Roush (yellow hard hat) and Business Development Coordinator Ellen Ditonto, right.

### Article Contributed by

**Rebecca I. Robbins**

Communications Coordinator  
Jamestown Board of Public Utilities

Students and faculty from the Electrical Construction and Maintenance Electrician programs at the Careers in Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) P-Tech Academy in Springville, NY, recently visited the Jamestown Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to learn about the utility's services, career opportunities in the electrical field and to tour the BPU power plant and an electric substation.

BPU Electricians Pat Shay and Jake Prince, Transmission and Distribution Supervisor Tye Flurie and Electrical Engineer Jarrett Devereaux spoke to students about their positions and the types of tasks and challenges they deal with on a daily basis. Business Development Coordinator Ellen Ditonto detailed future clean energy jobs. Human Resources Director Tammy Anderson described BPU jobs, the utility's application process and the skill level required for various positions.

BPU General Manager David L. Leathers said it is important to encourage students in electrical trade

programs to investigate regional career opportunities.

"We were pleased to host the P-Tech students and to provide an important overview of the work we do and the community that we serve," he said. "The students were able to connect with our staff to learn more about jobs in the public power sector."

P-Tech students have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma, an associate's degree through Alfred State and valuable industry certifications—all while gaining hands-on experience in advanced manufacturing. In addition to technical skills, the CAM

P-Tech program strongly emphasizes professional development, workplace readiness, and career exploration.

P-tech instructor Jason Fitzner believes field trips like the one to the BPU are critical to help students understand the practical application of skills they are learning at the Academy.

"It is so important to have a business like the Jamestown Board of Public Utilities that we can partner with to show our students that the knowledge they are acquiring is put to practical use in the industry," Fitzner said.

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# CCIDA, CCPEG Report Successful Year of Development in Chautauqua County

## CCIDA and CCPEG-Related Projects Exceed \$300 Million in Investments

Article Contributed by  
**County of Chautauqua  
Industrial Development Agency**

At its February 25, 2025 meeting, the County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA) Board of Directors reviewed the Choose CHQ 2024 Annual Report, highlighting accomplishments for the past year. The report not only provided year-in-review details for the CCIDA, but also the 2024 accomplishments of the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG), an initiative under the CCIDA’s component agency, the Chautauqua Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC).

During the meeting, Mark Geise, Deputy County Executive for Economic Development, CCIDA CEO, and CCPEG Co-Chair, shared the CCIDA’s Top 10 Accomplishments for the year, along with its top 10 goals for 2025. Geise noted that the CCIDA was involved in 18 separate development project that will provide, if fully realized, an investment of over \$311 million in the County. These projects would also result in the retention of 771 jobs, the creation of 166 new permanent jobs, and also provide 561 construction jobs. Projects that involve PILOTs (payments in lieu of taxes) will result in \$4.9 million in new revenue for taxing jurisdictions over the terms of the PILOTs, which wouldn’t have been realized had these projects not moved forward.

Some of the key 2024 accomplishments include: Wells Ice Cream Phase III Expansion (\$175 million); Southern Tier Environments for Living Gateway Lofts project (\$67 million); Silver Creek Apartments project (\$20.2 million); Dahlstrom Rollform’s purchase by local ownership (\$9 million); and the opening of Wicked Warren’s (\$2.3 million). In total, the CCIDA board approved 12 loans to local business totaling \$4.5 million. CCIDA also continued its focus on creating a \$16+ million Shovel-Ready Industrial Site in Ripley and the development of a Talent Attraction/Retention Campaign, which launched as “Live CHQ” in April of this year. CCIDA and its affiliate agencies, including CCPEG, were also rebranded through the launch of the “Choose CHQ” brand and website. Another key accomplishment for CREDC was securing more than \$1.5 million in funding from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to extend and enhance the impact CCPEG has had on the county.

The annual report also included the Top 10 economic development goals for the involved agencies. These aspirations



The cover of the 2024 Choose CHQ Annual Report, providing a recap of 2024 for both the County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA) and the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG).

included aggressive proactive business retention and expansion; completing the shovel-ready sites in both Ripley and Ellicott; reactivating properties of community importance, including the Furniture Mart building in Jamestown, the former Silver Creek High School, Lakeshore Hospital in Irving, the mothballed NRG Plant in Dunkirk, and the former Truck-Lite plant in Ellicott; assisting both ImmunityBio (Dunkirk) and Electrovaya (Ellicott) to ramp up operations; and continuing to focus on implementing recommendations from the County’s Economic Development Strategy through CREDC and CCPEG.

“Through all of the uncertainty posed by a dynamic political and economic climate, the CCIDA team has once again delivered on its mission of attracting new businesses while promoting the retention and expansion of existing businesses,” Geise said. “While we no doubt see ebbs and flows in our organization and in our local, regional, state, and federal economies, the CCIDA and Chautauqua continue to evolve toward a better future.”

In addition to the CCIDA and CREDC accomplishments and goals, the 2024 Annual Report also provided an update on various projects and activities involving CCPEG. According to Nathan Aldrich, County Economic Development Coordinator and CCPEG Manager, over \$2.4 million in grant funding was secured by CCPEG to assist with its effort to advance 35 different projects focusing on economic development and placemaking initiatives across the county. These projects included the completion and launch of the Live CHQ Talent Attraction and Retention initiative; the completion of a county-wide Housing Market Assessment and Development Strategy; the launch



Submitted Photos

In April, the County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA) and the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG) launched the Choose CHQ and Live CHQ Campaign, a rebranding effort and marketing initiative intended to promote the benefits of living, working, and doing business in Chautauqua County. Pictured from left to right are: Nathan Aldrich, County Planning Coordinator and CCPEG Manager; Monica Simpson, CCPEG Partner Engagement Coordinator; Paul “PJ” Wendell, Chautauqua County Executive; Mark Geise, Deputy County Executive for Economic Development and CCIDA CEO; and Jason Sample, CCIDA and CCPEG Marketing & Communications Coordinator. (Submitted Photo)



Wells Enterprises’ Phase III expansion effort was one of the top projects involving the CCIDA in 2024 and was the culmination of more than \$500 million being invested in the Dunkirk operation during the past five years. (Image courtesy of Wells Enterprises)

of CHQTrails.org, the Chautauqua County Interactive Trails Map; continued upgrades and remediation to the Chautauqua County Overland Trails; and the successful launch of the Chautauqua County Grape & Grain Trail marketing initiative.

CCPEG also provided nearly \$250,000 in funding to 14 different partner-led economic development projects located across the county – which helped to leverage an additional \$1.6 million from other sources to ensure those projects could move forward. Those projects included: the Hartley Park Waterfront Revitalization & Improvement Project in Lakewood; Theater Seats & Auditorium Improvements at the Reg Lenna Center for the Arts and the Key Market Growth Project for the National Comedy Center, both in Jamestown; the Advanced Manufacturing Program at Dream It, Do It Western New York; and a Strategic Growth Master Plan in Bemus Point.

“CCPEG has lived up to its mission

of serving as the catalyst and broker of resources for advancing economic development and placemaking efforts across the county,” Aldrich said. “It was gratifying to see so many of our projects cross the finish line in 2024, but thanks to renewed support from the Wilson Foundation and other funders, our work is only getting started.”

“I am really proud of the work we are doing in assisting our partners, including municipalities, in undertaking transformative and meaningful projects,” Geise added. “Between the work we do at the CCIDA and through CCEPG, we have an extremely dynamic and gifted team. This has been illustrated through all the work we did in 2024, and we look forward to keeping the momentum going to help strengthen the economy in Chautauqua County in 2025 and in the years to come.”

The complete Choose CHQ 2024 Annual Report, featuring information for both the CCIDA and CCPEG, is available at ChooseCHQ.com.



# Art in the Wilds Issues Last Call for Artists for Annual Art Show

Article Contributed by

**Corinne Howard**

PromoteArtInTheWilds@gmail.com

The 2025 Art in the Wilds will take place on June 28 & 29, 2025, in Evergreen Park, Kane, PA. Applications are now open, and the deadline for artists to apply to exhibit their work in the show is March 1, 2025. Don't miss your chance to be a part of this year's event.

A panel of judges will carefully review submissions, evaluating works for their quality, strong visual impact, and mastery of craft. The committee strives to create a balanced showcase of diverse media, highlighting the exceptional talent of artists from our region and beyond.

Selected artists will be notified by the end of March. New artists are especially encouraged to apply!

Kane's annual art show will run rain or shine, with artist setup available on the afternoon of Friday, June 28, followed by an artist reception that evening.

Art in the Wilds is dedicated to showcasing original, handmade art. Some items, however, are not eligible for the show. They include commercial or mass-produced items; works made from kits, molds or patterns; items featuring logos; or dried florals, calendars, personal care products or edible goods.

Artists can apply online through Zapplication.com (accessible via [www.artinthewilds.org](http://www.artinthewilds.org) or directly at [www.zapplication.org](http://www.zapplication.org), search "Art in the Wilds"). Applications must include an artist statement, a description of the creative process (particularly for unique media), and seven high-quality images of the artist's work.

For additional details on application requirements, visit the Art in the Wilds website: [www.artinthewilds.org/artist-info.html](http://www.artinthewilds.org/artist-info.html).

Art in the Wilds is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation committed to supporting fine art and fine craft. Donations to support this mission are tax-deductible. Learn more at [www.artinthewilds.org](http://www.artinthewilds.org).



# Chautauqua County Responds to Rising Homelessness Crisis, Highlights Local Resources

Article Contributed by

**Justin Gould**

Chautauqua County  
Media Information Officer

A recent report from the New York State Comptroller's Office, led by Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, has revealed a staggering increase in homelessness across the state, with numbers more than doubling since 2022.

New York now accounts for nearly 20% of the nation's homeless population, second only to California. While much of this surge has been driven by conditions in New York City, the crisis is also affecting counties across the state — including Chautauqua County, where homelessness has spiked by over 100% in just two years.

"The findings from the Comptroller's Office confirm what we've been witnessing firsthand — this crisis is not just a big-city issue, it's here in our own communities," said Chautauqua County Executive Paul M. Wendel Jr. "While we are doing everything we can at the county level, we need stronger support from the State to ensure resources are reaching rural areas like ours. We need more funding for emergency shelters and mental health services to truly combat this growing problem. Chautauqua County will continue to step up, but we cannot fight this battle alone."

The report highlights that between January 2023 and January 2024, homelessness in New York increased by 53.1%, more than four times the rate of growth in the rest of the nation. Notably, the number of homeless children in the state has more than doubled since 2022, with 32.1% of the homeless population now under the age of 18.

"Homelessness is more than just a housing crisis—it's a human crisis. Behind every statistic is a person, a family, or a child facing uncertainty and hardship," said Carmelo Hernandez, Director of Community Mental Hygiene Services and Commissioner of Social Services. "Many individuals experiencing homelessness are also struggling with mental health challenges, making it even harder for them to find stability. It is imperative that those in need accept the support available to help them overcome these obstacles. We are here to offer not just shelter, but guidance, treatment, and a path forward. No one should feel like they have to navigate this alone—we are ready to help."

According to the report, Chautauqua County experienced a 103% increase in overall homelessness between 2022 and 2024, with a 150% rise in homeless families and a 141% increase in children without stable

housing. This mirrors trends seen across the state, where homelessness among families nearly tripled during the same period.

Several key factors, have contributed to this crisis, including:

- **The Expiration of Pandemic Protections:** With the end of New York's eviction moratorium in 2022, eviction filings surged, reaching over 191,000 cases statewide in 2024.

- **Lack of Affordable Housing:** Over 38% of New Yorkers are considered cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

- **Influx of Asylum Seekers:** While much of this impact has been concentrated in New York City, statewide migration patterns have also influenced housing instability in upstate communities. Chautauqua County maintains an Emergency Order seeking sustainable migration.

- **Mental Health and Substance Use Challenges:** The report notes that 10% of the homeless population in New York struggles with severe mental illness or chronic substance use, highlighting the need for integrated support services.

In response to the growing need, Chautauqua County has expanded its homelessness support network, offering a range of services designed to provide emergency relief and long-term solutions. The Code Blue Warming Center, operated by Recovery Options Made Easy, offers overnight shelter during extreme weather conditions, ensuring that no individual is left out in the cold.

In addition, the County Department of Mental Hygiene and Social Services provides:

- **Emergency Housing Assistance:** Short-term shelter solutions for individuals and families facing immediate crisis.

- **Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment:** Counseling, rehabilitation, and intervention programs for those struggling with related challenges.

Residents in need of assistance can access these services by visiting [CHQGov.com/CodeBlue](http://CHQGov.com/CodeBlue) or calling the Department of Mental Hygiene and Social Services at 716-661-8200.



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Pre-Med Senior Mia Piede to Receive Prestigious Lanford Presidential Prize

Article Contributed by

Lisa G. Eikenburg, APR

Associate Director of Marketing and Communications  
Assistant Editor, Fredonia Statement  
The State University of New York at Fredonia

An enduring “intent on giving back to the community” has guided Mia Piede, recipient of the 2025 Lanford Presidential Prize at the State University of New York at Fredonia.

It has positioned the Dunkirk, N.Y., native to receive the highest distinction SUNY Fredonia grants to a graduating senior who attains balanced achievement and the university’s ideals. She will be honored at Commencement in May.

“The requirements for selection are rigorous and the recipient exemplifies excellence in and out of the classroom,” President Stephen H. Kolison Jr. said of the award generously created and endowed by the late President Emeritus Oscar E. Lanford and Mrs. Lanford through the Fredonia College Foundation.

Excelling both “in and out of the classroom” is what Ms. Piede has accomplished ahead of the next chapter in her education, a journey that begins this fall at the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the State University at Buffalo. She has enrolled in the M.D. program and has an interest in women’s health but is open to other specialties.

Piede, a daughter of Chris and Tonia Piede – both SUNY Fredonia graduates – enrolled in classes at Jamestown Community College while attending Dunkirk High School, where she was class valedictorian.

“Growing up in Dunkirk has shaped the person I am today. The people I had the privilege of working with (teachers, coaches, classmates, etc.) have impacted me in inexplicable ways that I am forever grateful for,” she said.

A pre-med student and candidate for a B.S. in Biology with a second major in Psychology, and a minor in Chemistry, Piede entered her last semester at SUNY Fredonia with a 3.96 GPA. She’s logged over 100 hours of shadowing experience at 11 clinical sites in the areas of obstetrics/gynecology, emergency medicine and private practice. Piede also had the opportunity to “scrub in” and observe



Submitted Photo

Lanford Presidential Prize recipient Mia Piede, with President Stephen H. Kolison Jr.

open-heart surgery at the renowned Cleveland Clinic.

Piede volunteered at two medical brigades in Honduras during 2023. In rural, low-income communities there, Piede engaged in the in-take process and collection of vitals, collaborated with fellow peers, pharmacists, nurses and doctors and also shadowed doctors. She became skilled in taking blood pressure, pulse, temperature and blood glucose readings, hearing heartbeats and lungs with a stethoscope and listening for vocal cord abnormalities.

Ahead of brigade duty, Piede was able to become proficient in Spanish so she could communicate with patients.

The greatest takeaway from brigade experiences for Piede was a case of two patients. Both were around the same age yet lived completely different lives. One was a diminutive 15-year-old girl who had a child and was pregnant with another, the other a boy who didn’t know his birthday, despite knowing his age.

“I was astounded and heartbroken to see two different sides of the spectrum in these children who were so close in age. When I consider these moments, I am grateful for the opportunities I have been given in my life,” Piede said. “It was truly a life-changing experience.”

Piede devoted the 2024 summer to biochemistry laboratory research at the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, where she gave oral and poster presentations to faculty in the State University at Buffalo campus community.

As a research exposition presenter in the field of pandemic health at SUNY Fredonia, Piede showcased a poster to the campus that presented silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic; she cited increased exercise, pet adoptions and closer relationships within families.

Piede’s research experience at SUNY Fredonia has been undertaken in a genetics laboratory, a biochemistry laboratory and Advanced Organic Chemistry II laboratory. She has served as a research student in Dr. Scott Ferguson’s genetics lab since her sophomore year. For her senior capstone project, Piede is engaging in another aspect of genetics research, working directly with Dr. Ferguson in his lab, that represents an extension of research she does in the more structured genetics laboratory class setting.

She pursued campus engagement through the Biology Club (President), Psychology Club (Secretary) and Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology (Public Relations Chair). She was a member of Fredonia for Friends of Honduran Children Club and a mentor in the International Student Buddy Program, working with students from China, Iran, Malaysia and Japan, helping to make them feel more at home while studying. She also mentored new Psychology students, aiding them in the transition to new college life. In addition, she is a participant in the Fredonia Honors Program and a member of the Beta Beta Beta Biology Honor Society.

Piede has been the recipient of multiple academic honors through the Fredonia

College Foundation. These include the Carnahan Jackson Scholarship Award, Foundation Commuter Scholar Award, SUNY Fredonia Honors Award, Adele Maytum Hunter Scholarship Award, Kara Grace Hall Memorial Scholarship, Fredonia-Honduras International Scholarship and the James D. Burdick Memorial Scholarship. She is also the recipient of a NYS Scholarship of Academic Excellence and a Special Donation Scholarship.

Piede was awarded a Kaplan MCAT Prep Course Scholarship, valued at \$2,800, and received a Special Donation Scholarship and Faculty/Staff Scholarship.

Away from campus, Piede plays clarinet and sings in the choir at Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, her home church. Piede was inspired by a choir member, who was unable to walk to the altar due to mobility issues, to become a Eucharist minister, and now provides her with the Eucharist every weekend. Teaching religious education classes and serving as a Eucharistic minister “are both dear to my heart as a community member and in my faith as a whole,” Piede said. “Being able to bring others closer to God has brought a new light to my faith.”

As part of the Special Topics course, PSY 380: Psychology of Prejudice, Piede and fellow classmates developed a set of recommendations to help underrepresented groups to feel seen and to be encouraged to be a part of the campus community.

“I believe in the importance of representation, as I feel that it fosters an environment in which patients and staff feel a sense of safety and respect,” Piede said.

“My hometown, Dunkirk, has greatly influenced my morals, generosity and humility. As a result, I have been intent on giving back to the community that shaped me into the person I am today. From coaching to volunteering, or working in Dunkirk/Fredonia, I want to provide the same influence on this community as it has had on me,” she said.

Piede also expresses immense gratitude to her parents, siblings [Angelina, Anthony and Isabella], as well as boyfriend [Bradley LaGrow] for their never-ending support. “They’re a huge part of who I am, and I would not be where I am if it were not for each and every one of them.”



Niko

Chautauqua County Humane Society Pets of the Week

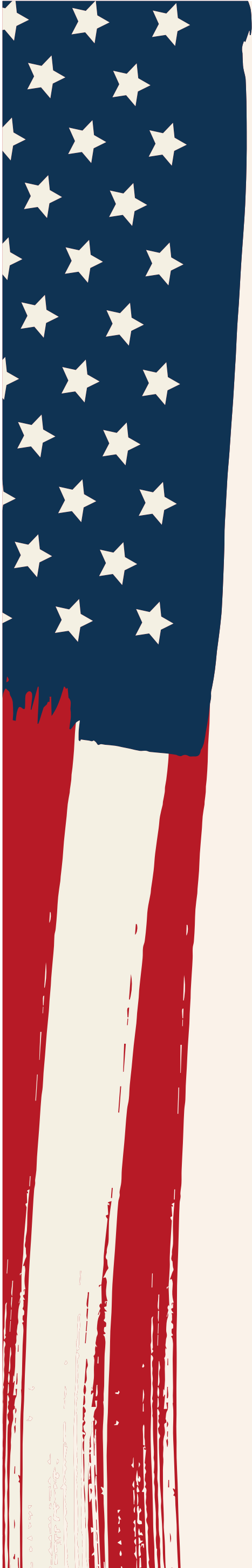
Niko is one of a kind. This friendly, happy go lucky dog is sure to charm himself right into your heart. A little shy at first but he warms up quickly and is eager to please, play and learn. You’re sure to be winning at life if you adopt him. Meet Niko soon at CCHS. Shelter No. RR179.

Churro is a young kitty and has so much to learn about the world. He is a little shy and would like to take his time to get to know new surroundings and new friends. Churro is not one to rush into things, but once he’s comfortable, his curiosity knows no bounds! Meet Churro soon at CCHS. Shelter No. RR179.



Churro





# HEY, VETERANS...

*Did you  
Know...*

## ABOUT THESE BENEFITS?

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Eligible veterans must be legally blind (20/200 vision in the better eye or 20-degree field of vision), a New York resident, and have served at least 90 days of active duty (unless discharged for a service-related disability). Wartime service or an expeditionary medal is required. Acceptable residency proof includes a driver's license, voter card, utility bill, mortgage, lease, or tax bill. Surviving un-remarried spouses may also qualify.

### 2. NY State Veterans Cemetery – Finger Lakes

Located in Romulus, NY, on the historic grounds of the former Sampson Naval Training Station, this cemetery provides free burial for eligible veterans, spouses, and dependent children. Veterans must have an honorable or general discharge and, if enlisted after 1980 or commissioned after 1981, must have served 24 consecutive months (unless KIA or discharged due to hardship/disability).

### 3. Gold Star Parent Annuity

Gold Star Parents of fallen service members may receive an annuity payment with annual increases based on VA benefit adjustments. To qualify, the parent must be a NY State resident and meet Gold Star criteria (loss of a child in war, conflict, or certain service-related incidents).

For applications and more details, visit [veterans.ny.gov](http://veterans.ny.gov) or call (716) 785-8577.





★ M A T T H E W   D A M C O T T ★

*Exemplary Veteran, Corrections Officer & Member of our Community*



## Featured Writer

***Michele D. Starwalt Woods, CPM***

MDStar Presentations  
Boys & Girls Club of Northern  
Baltimore County, Board Member

The humble servitude, honor, and pride of our veterans, and those active in our Armed Forces continue to strengthen and uplift our communities. Men and women who made the altruistic choice to serve their country continue to guide and lead in all career paths right here in Chautauqua County.

Becoming a Corrections Officer is a vocational path that many Veterans and active reservists have followed. The military ethics that they embody are present in the field of Corrections: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless service, Honor, and Integrity.

At our own Lakeview Shock Incarceration Correction Facility in Brocton, the once young boy who dreamed of enlisting in the military is now an Air Force Reservist and Corrections Officer (CO). Matthew Damcott's Associates Degree in

Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement, combined with his military service, are akin to his career as a CO; he appreciates the discipline, structure, and the uniform.

Matthew is an Air Force Reserve Master Sergeant who was deployed during COVID to work in the morgue at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. Married to his lovely wife, Jamie, for 25 years and a father of two grown sons, Matthew's hope is that the inmates he works with will leave their former lives behind and start anew once they have finished their sentence. He encourages them to "think positively and move forward".

We salute Matthew, all veterans, and especially those who have entered the world of Corrections - they certainly have done their time and we are forever grateful.

As we give thanks to Matthew and his colleagues, it is impossible not to mention that New York State citizens have become painfully aware of the plight that our honorable CO's like Matthew have faced. They believe they can no longer provide exceptional service to inmates in their charge and to their colleagues, for a multitude of grave reasons.

CO's in New York State have become victims of physical attacks and injuries, and have had feces and urine thrown at them by inmates. These incidents have increased dramatically since the HALT Act took effect in 2022. All the while,



**Submitted Photo**

Matthew Damcott

CO's are being mandated to work 16 to 24-hour shifts. Even with these atrocities and many more, our CO's at Lakeview Shock are still giving back to the community.

While advocating for increased fair labor laws and actual corrective measures for violent inmates, our CO's are peacefully protesting their working conditions. Standing around and being idle wasn't quite agreeing with our service minded

men and women. In one grand and combined effort, Lakeview Shock CO's secured wood, materials, and tools to build picnic tables for local Not-For-Profits, including the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Chautauqua County.

We owe our respected veterans, CO's, and Reservists gratitude for their humanity with glory and honor! We solemnly pray for them, the inmates, and our local and state leaders.



*"The land of the free  
because of the brave."*

- Unknown



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& Board President Ron Waid**

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Westfield, NY 14787  
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**JOHN W. DILL POST 434**  
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Brocton, NY 14716  
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**CHAPTER 978**  
Chapter President Stan Collver  
PO Box 401  
Frewsburg, NY 14730  
716-499-4266



# ★ A LETTER FROM HOME ★



Featured Writer

**Janet Wahlberg**  
Fenton History Center

The Fenton History Center Research department answers all kinds of inquiries about families, businesses and a great variety of Jamestown information.

An inquiry came in from a gentleman in Massachusetts. He asked about John Henry Mann. It so happens that John was **Chautauqua County's first casualty of World War II**. He was born on June 16, 1919, to Fred and Emma Primrose Mann in Seattle, Washington. At some point in time before 1925 John and his family moved back to Chautauqua County and settled in Stow. John attended Chautauqua High School and was a member of the Hurlburt Memorial Church in Chautauqua.

He enlisted in the United States Army in November 1939 and his first assignment was at Fort Niagara. He re-enlisted and was assigned to Hickam Field in Honolulu Hawaii where he was promoted to Sergeant in January of 1941.

We do not know what the specific job title he held was. We only know that he was killed there during the Japanese attack. At the time of his death, he was serving as a Staff Sergeant in the 22nd Material Squadron, 17th Air Base Group at Hickam Field in Hawaii. It seems he was part of a group of six buddies who were stationed at Hickam Field and were there on the morning of December 7, 1941. Of the six, only one survived the bombing of the field. His name was Michael Toms and he wrote to the families of his five buddies who were killed in the attack, sharing kind remembrances of them. This young man, Mike, was the father-in-law of Mr. Gerald Matthews who originally contacted us.

Mrs. Mann wrote back to Mike who kept her letter. Recently we received the original letter from Mr. Matthews. The letter will be donated to the Harmony Historical

Society as John Henry Mann was from Stow.

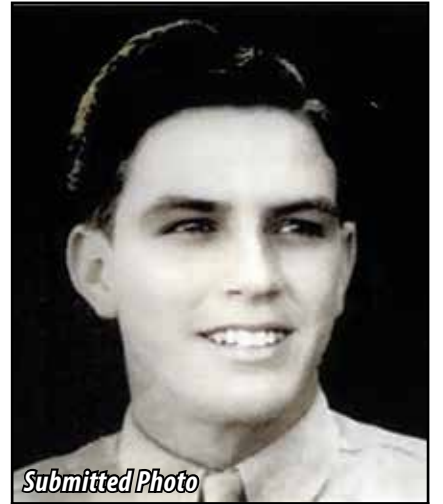
The transcribed letter from Mrs. Mann:

*Dear Mike. Your dear kind letter reached us a few days ago. I do thank you for your letter and your kind words, and so glad that my son did not suffer. I still cry lots... I think John would not want it so. \*Ruth [John's sister] has written to the Navy and Army, she hopes to get in soon. I'm going to miss her. Nights are the hardest to bear for I dearly loved John, I only lived for him. I worried so often about him and just these last two weeks have learned that he was in an airplane crash. The school paper put a very nice piece in with lots of nice things about John. We don't know where John lies, but his spirit is here with me. It makes the awful hurt less to bear. I am proud he is my son and pray God only to let me help in my own way so that John's death will be remembered as part of the great sacrifices expected of us all. I thank you most sincerely,*

(signed by E. Mann)

Originally, John was listed as MIA (Missing In Action). Then his mother received a telegram notifying her that he was KIA or Killed In Action. He was awarded the Purple Heart, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Army Presidential Unit Citation, Army Good Conduct Medal, and the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal. He was buried in the Tablets of the Missing at Honolulu Memorial.

The Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii is a collection of white stone tablets that honor American service members who went missing or were lost at sea in the Pacific



Submitted Photo

John Henry Mann

Theater of War. There are over 18,000 men and women listed on the tablets.

The tragedy of John's death was compounded by a series of tragedies for his widowed mother. His brother Alfred died four years previously following an operation and another brother Fred was killed in an automobile crash the previous year to John's death. One bright spot at this time was that his sister Ruth's commissioning as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army in October 1942. She trained at WCA.

John's mother, Emma, became active in the salvage drives that were a part of the home front work. She wrote to the Jamestown Salvage Headquarters asking them to send a truck to her house for the scrap that she had collected, including a junk bed. She passed away in 1946 and was noted in her obituary as the first Gold Star Mother in Chautauqua County.

With the priceless gift of Mrs. Mann's letter, we are privileged to learn a little more about the many sacrifices of the men and women who stepped up to support our country at this terrible time in history. Thank you to Mr. Matthews for his gift of history to our local community.

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# The Impact of Military Service: An Army Vet Reflects

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

was most definitely a combination of both.

No doubt, military service is always tough on families: the time away from home, the dangers faced during deployment (and even training) and the frequent moves. Spouses leaving behind jobs and connections, and kids leaving behind schools and friends every few years is always challenging. Then, there are the people you serve with: some of America's best and some you care not to remember. I'll leave it at that.

When it comes to long-term effects, the veterans' mental health crisis is no secret to anyone. The things service members have had to face in service to their country can impact them for years to come - including the desensitization they may have had to adopt to simply get through it. There are also tragedies that are a part of many service members' experiences. These issues have made everyday life challenging for many. Service to one's country can also take a toll physically. There is much wear and tear on our bodies with lasting effects.

On a positive note, however, my fellow servicemen and women and I have had some pretty extraordinary experiences. I did ROTC so I had a job straight out of college, a solid paycheck, and I was given more authority and job responsibility immediately upon graduation in comparison to my university classmates. I had excellent job security and free healthcare. Above all, I had the chance to proudly wear the American Army uniform, to serve my country, and to earn the respect of my fellow service members and civilians.

I traveled to countries and interacted with some cultures that many Americans do not typically have the opportunity to experience. Discipline and organization were ingrained. Years later, I still feel guilty when I don't make my bed in the morning or get a haircut when it gets shaggy, and it feels weird calling my boss by her first name. When I see job postings that say, "can handle high-stress environments" or "remains calm



Submitted Photos

20-year reunion of Ryan Mrowka's 2-63 Armor Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, Operation Iraqi Freedom

under pressure," I always think to myself: If my military peers and I don't check that box, who does?!

I have certainly had some unique experiences that make "Never Have I Ever" a fun game to play - jumping out of perfectly good airplanes, driving a tank, building poncho hooches, rappelling down the side of buildings, and driving Humvees in the pitch dark with only night vision goggles. I have no shortage of crazy stories to tell (and some to keep secret). Here are some of the highlights: the time a whole toilet trailer exploded from a faulty water heater; the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) I crashed, even though I wasn't authorized to fly it; the time I had no choice but to use the toilet on the Iraqi army base; the sergeant major whose snoring made the cement walls vibrate; The strange skin infection I got on a field exercise ("field problem") that created giant blisters on my hand and several doctors couldn't

diagnose - only a special forces medic did. Last but not least, I could never forget to mention the time I stepped in my battle buddy's...use your imagination!

I've made some lifelong friends and meaningful connections. Our fantasy football league just finished its 20th season and had a reunion in the Florida Panthers President's Box last spring. Civilian friends always get a taste of the military me, from event (mission) planning to my constant itch to be active. Before my first daughter was born, I ran a fitness boot camp with 180 members, because I missed physical training with my unit. I've lost count of the number of random civilian friends over the years with whom I've decided to practice the fireman's carry just for fun.

I guess the question is: Would I do it all over again? That's for me to know. One thing is for sure though: the military played a major part in shaping me into the person I am today. I'm forever grateful for

the opportunity to call the United States of America my home and am proud that I helped to serve and protect the American people.

Ryan Mrowka grew up in Dunkirk and graduated from Boston College in 2003 where he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army. He served as the Medical Platoon Leader for 2-63 Armor Battalion of the 1st Infantry Division 2003-2005, deploying to Iraq February 2004-February 2005. He then served as the Headquarters Detachment Commander and Operations Officer for the 93rd Medical Battalion until 2007 - serving both at home and in Germany. Captain Mrowka joined the U.S. Army Reserves as the Executive Officer for the 810th Medical Company in North Carolina until 2011. He was a high school history teacher from 2008-2019 in Virginia and then moved to back to Germany to work in International university admissions. He is father to two young daughters, and incidentally, brother to publisher Lori Cornell!





## Petitioning for Local Offices

*Officials Notify Residents About Signature Collection Process*

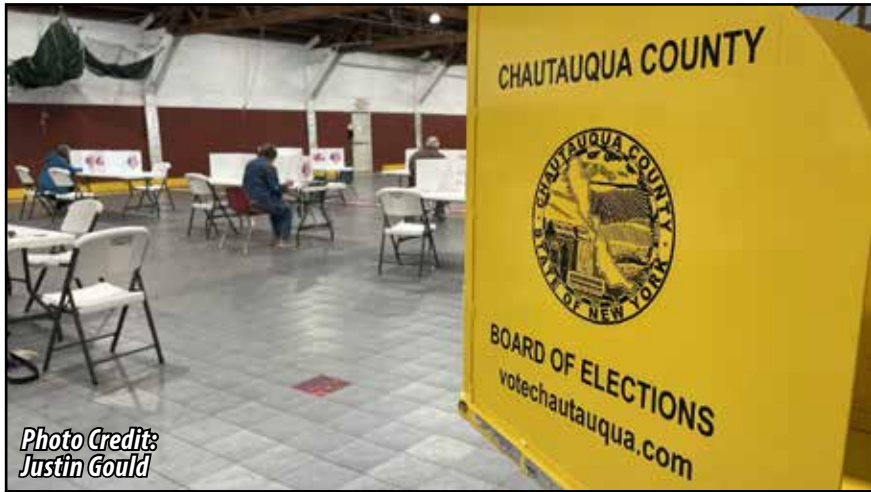


Photo Credit:  
Justin Gould

Voting in Chautauqua County, NY.

*Article Contributed by*

**Justin Gould**

Chautauqua County  
Media Information Officer

The Chautauqua County Board of Elections and Sheriff's Office are notifying residents that the petitioning process for the 2025 Election Cycle began Tuesday, February 25, with candidates and volunteers going door-to-door to collect signatures needed to secure a place on the ballot.

"We would like to let voters know that individuals will be going door to door, collecting signatures to designate people to run for office," explained Sheriff James B. Quattrone.

Petitioning for the 2025 Election Cycle begins on Tuesday, February 25th and ends on Thursday, April 3rd.

"Each year, candidates must collect signatures from registered voters in the area they are seeking to run and for the party they are circulating petitions for," noted Commissioner Luz E. Torres. "Collecting signatures can be a time-consuming and labor-intensive process and candidates often face challenges such as tight deadlines and limited access to voters. Also, weather conditions can limit access to certain areas can further complicate the signature collection process."

"Collecting signatures is a crucial step in getting candidates on the ballot for elections. It ensures that candidates have a baseline level of support from the community before they can officially run for office," adds Commissioner Nacole L. Ellis. "When residents engage with petitioners, they not only learn more about the candidates but also become more involved in the process allowing a deeper understanding of local issues allowing everyone to make more informed decisions at the polls."

"Each year, there are volunteers that work hard to get candidates Elected to local offices. We want to let the public know that this process will be happening, to lessen the potential confusion and concern regarding this process," closes Sheriff Quattrone.

Voters who need to update their address or change their political party affiliation can do so by visiting the Board of Elections website, [www.votechautauqua.com](http://www.votechautauqua.com). It is now too late to change your political party affiliation for the Primary Election Cycle – but any change of enrollment will be placed in a pending status until July 1st.

A complete list of Offices up for Election, can be referenced at [www.votechautauqua.com](http://www.votechautauqua.com).

## American Democracy Project to Explore Critical Issues

*Article Contributed by*

**Lisa G. Eikenburg, APR**

Associate Director of Marketing and Communications  
Assistant Editor, Fredonia Statement  
The State University of New York at Fredonia



The American Democracy Project at the State University of New York at Fredonia is launching a new series, "Civic Engagement in Practice: Empowering Students to Lead Social Change."

"Democratic Setbacks and Civic Education," the first panel in the series, will be held Monday, March 10, from 1 to 1:50 p.m., in the Williams Center Room S204. Light refreshments will be served.

The thought-provoking spring panel series focuses on the role of civic engagement in shaping democratic processes, emphasizing the importance of advocacy, activism and practical action in driving meaningful social change. The panels will explore critical issues surrounding civic engagement and provide actionable strategies for students to make a tangible impact in their communities.

"The Spring 2025 series will urge attendees to think critically about the challenges facing democracy and how they can engage in the process of change," said Associate Professor Angela McGowan-Kirsch, who serves as chair of the American Democracy Project. "This series emphasizes how students, as active participants in our democracy, can take leadership roles in addressing real-world challenges, from eroding civil liberties to rising authoritarianism."

In this opening discussion, the panelists will focus on the challenges democratic institutions face worldwide. Panelists will examine the causes of democratic backsliding, the consequences for citizens and societies and civic education and activism's role in resisting these setbacks.

As Dr. McGowan-Kirsch explains, "Civic education and activism are critical to strengthening democratic institutions. Our students have the potential to shape the future, and this panel will explore how they can lead that charge."

The panel will feature a diverse range of voices, including:

- Professor Ivani Vassoler,

an educator focusing on international politics, will share insights on the causes and impacts of democratic decline in various countries.

- Professor Robert Dahlgren, an educator and scholar focusing on the importance of education in fostering resilience, will discuss how civic education can empower individuals to protect democratic values.

- Nikolay Fontanez, a student panelist, will highlight the significance of student involvement in advocacy and activism, offering a fresh perspective on how young people can contribute to social change.

Dr. Dahlgren has dedicated his career to exploring the intersections of civic engagement and education. With years of experience working in diverse educational settings, Dahlgren advocates for the power of informed, active citizenship to strengthen democratic societies.

Dr. Vassoler has worked extensively on issues related to democratic decline. Having studied political systems across multiple continents, Vassoler brings a unique global perspective, emphasizing the importance of press freedom and cross-cultural tolerance in preserving democratic values.

Mr. Fontanez, a senior with majors in Adolescence Education: Social Studies and History, with a Museum Studies minor, from Ithaca, N.Y., is president of the History Club. He focuses on helping students make informed political and social decisions and is particularly interested in the relationship between democratic accessibility and socio-economic class.

The event, co-sponsored by the American Democracy Project and the Leadership Studies minor, is free and is open to students, staff, faculty and community members. The event comes with support from the Carnahan Jackson Fund for the Humanities of the Fredonia College Foundation.

*"Those who have long enjoyed  
such privileges as we enjoy  
forget in time that men have  
died to win them."*

– Franklin D. Roosevelt





CHAMBER CORNER

Article Contributed by

Daniel J. Heitzenrater

Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce  
President and CEO

Boost Foot Traffic  
for Your Business

There are steps local businesses can take to increase foot traffic, including many inexpensive options. Our guest panelists covered a variety of ideas during our recent Business Builder Workshop in Dunkirk

Bob Lingle, the newest addition to our CHQ Chamber staff as Director of Membership Development, also knows a few things about building a customer base for his own small business. Celebrating seven years of ownership of Good Neighbor Bookstore in Lakewood, Bob has become the true face of the business – a role he is now sharing with his wife as she has taken on the day-to-day operations at the store. Bob reviewed his use of three basic social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok. Stressing that you don’t need to use all platforms, with a focus on those that are comfortable for your use and what you can manage on a regular basis, Bob noted it’s important to create content (images or video) that showcases your products and will engage your audience, keep your messages frequent and consistent, and include a call to action. He also reminded participants to check their online engagement measurements against sales data, to see what may be working and when.

Dawn Murphy, the owner of Whizz-n-Smash, has been producing specialty small batch nut butters from her licensed home kitchen and sells them throughout Chautauqua County at dozens of small locally owned businesses. She also does pop-up and vendor shows to build collaborations with other vendors and build momentum, and provides exclusive flavors as partners with brick-and-mortar merchants to create exclusive sales opportunities. Dawn’s keys for social media content are piquing interest, developing calls to action, and sharing even simple actions like restocking to create FOMO (fear of missing out) that engages her buyers. She also noted that you don’t need

an expensive website to take orders and demonstrated how she uses Facebook and Instagram as a sales platform by embedding links through the use of LinkTree to highlight product listings, locations, and more.

Sheila Webster reviewed one of the main ways the CHQ Chamber drives foot traffic through sales and promotion of the ShopLocalCHQ Gift Card. With over \$63,000 in gift card sales last year alone, the card is accepted at over 165 participating merchants countywide including grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, specialty retail outlets, wineries, hardware stores, and entertainment venues. The CHQ Chamber advertises the gift card to drive sales to local businesses, nonprofits, and individuals, and also provides opportunities to help showcase the merchants that accept the card including a useful window cling and social media graphics that can be customized by local businesses. Participation in the ShopLocalCHQ Gift Card program is open only to Chamber members since there are costs incurred by the Chamber to manage the program. There is no additional cost to merchants above the cost of their membership.

Brandy Hastings from Bandwango reviewed the CHQ Chamber’s use of the subscription platform for building gamified passes that help to drive traffic to local businesses and provide data around those initiatives. The Chamber is currently working on some longer-form or ‘evergreen’ pass ideas that could focus around some locally owned business groups such as coffee shops or pizzerias and is also considering how the platform can be used to augment existing programs and encourage additional foot traffic. We are open to ideas from our members on these fronts.

For anyone who wasn’t able to attend the workshop, the complete video is available on our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/@CHQChamber](http://www.youtube.com/@CHQChamber).

We also invite you to save the date or register now for our next Business Builder Workshop, which will highlight Corporate Citizenship and Engagement featuring ways to get your business noticed through things like donations, volunteerism,

sponsorship, and more. This event will be held from 1-3pm on Monday, March 24 at the Southern Chautauqua Federal Credit Union Community Training Center, Mall Boulevard in Lakewood. All Business Builder Workshops are free to all local businesspeople. Advanced registration is required through our web calendar at [www.chqchamber.org](http://www.chqchamber.org).

Women in Networking: Child Care Impact on Workforce

The Small Business Development Center, Community Bank, and the CHQ Chamber are proudly partnering on the next Women in Networking Event with the focus on Child Care Impact on the Workforce. This event will be held Thursday, March 13 and is open to everyone.

You are encouraged to attend to learn more about childcare trends and strategies currently affecting the workforce. Many Chautauqua County employers have Many Chautauqua County employers have indicated childcare is a main barrier for potential hires impacting their employee recruitment, retention, and productivity. Now there are some new strategies and initiatives to help.

The presenters will be Beth Starks and Susan Marker. Beth is the founding consultant with Flourish Leadership Consulting and Executive Director of the Chautauqua Lake Child Care Center. As a consultant and leader in the non-profit and early childhood education sector she has provided inspiration and educational

opportunities for thousands. She has also operated her childcare business for almost 20 years. Susan is the Child Care Council Director for Chautauqua County. She has a wealth of experience in both nonprofit and for-profit management. She began her career at Chautauqua Opportunities.

This event will be held at the Small Business Development Center at JCC, 241 James Avenue (Carnahan Center). The luncheon will begin at 11:30 at a cost of \$19. The presentation is from noon-1pm. Please bring business cards for networking. Preregistration is required. For detail email [sbdc@mail.sunyjcc.edu](mailto:sbdc@mail.sunyjcc.edu).

Hanover Committee to Hold Sip & Celebrate

The CHQ Chamber’s Hanover Committee invites local businesspeople to a special evening of networking and camaraderie at Merritt Estate Winery in Forestville, Thursday, March 13. Sip & Celebrate is a fun way to close the winter season and mingle with other regional businesspeople. There will be complimentary snacks from Merritt Estate Winery along with pizza from Villaggio Italiano, and a cash bar from the winery. There will be a 50/50 drawing and some prize raffles. There is no charge for Chamber members. For non-members the cost is \$10. Advance registration is appreciated for planning purposes. You can register online through the Chamber’s web calendar at [www.chqchamber.org](http://www.chqchamber.org).



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# Business of the Week

**Celebrating Local Businesses  
& Giving them the Spotlight!**

## Local Arby's Owner Highlights Community Commitment, Support for Veterans



*Contributing Editor*  
**Katrina Fuller**

For more than two decades, Chris and Dana Hutchinson have been at the helm of Hutchinson Food and Arby's, serving up more than just sandwiches—they've been serving the community. From school fundraisers to private charitable events, the Hutchinsons have made giving back a core part of their business philosophy, working to ensure their restaurant is more than just a place to grab a meal.

"Arby's is always ready to lend a hand to anyone that reaches out to us for donations from school functions to private fundraisers," said Chris Hutchinson. "Being able to participate has been very rewarding for our company, and we look forward to the next generation being able to continue with this."

While their philanthropic reach has been broad, one group that remains a priority is local veterans. Arby's offers a 10 percent discount to any veteran who dines at their restaurants—a simple but meaningful way to show appreciation for those who have served. The Hutchinsons said they greatly value the service to the country local veterans have provided and are thrilled to help out in this way.

"Although we haven't done anything specifically for veteran support in the community, we are proud to participate in communications such as this and other print/radio programs," Hutchinson shared. "We do offer a 10% discount for any veteran that joins our restaurant for meals—simply ask!"

While discounts are just one

way to give back, they reflect a deeper commitment to honoring and appreciating veterans. These gestures help create a welcoming space where service members and their families feel valued and recognized.

Beyond supporting veterans, the Hutchinsons have built a strong local business that emphasizes both quality offerings and customer engagement. Whether it's the return of fan-favorite menu items like Crispy Fish sandwiches, creamy Mint Shakes, and Potato Cakes, Arby's continues to cater to customer cravings.

"Arby's is always striving to provide top-notch offerings on our menu!" Hutchinson said. "In the near future, Arby's will be returning the Ham option to our menu that will have the return of a guest favorite, Arby's Chicken Cordon Bleu and our new Ham 'n Cheese menu offering!"

The restaurant has also embraced technology, making dining more convenient for customers through the Arby's app.

"Arby's has joined the digital bandwagon with their app, offering amazing promotional offers to those that join the program," Hutchinson explained. "This app also offers the ability to Order Ahead (OA) without having to come inside!"

As a family-owned and locally run business, the Hutchinsons take pride in their long-standing commitment to both employees and the broader community.

"Dana and I have been proud to be a part of Arby's team since joining in Geneva, NY in 1988 and working our way up to owning our own business in 2000," Hutchinson said. "We are proud to be a family-owned, locally run company with an awesome management/staff team, and we look forward to serving our guests for many years to come—stop in and say hello anytime."

For veterans and community members alike, Hutchinson's

Arby's locations continue to offer not just a meal, but a place where service and appreciation go hand in hand. Whether stopping in for a quick bite, redeeming a veteran's discount, or simply enjoying the warm atmosphere, customers can be sure they're supporting a business that values its role in the community.

As they look ahead to the future, Chris and Dana Hutchinson remain dedicated to keeping Arby's at the heart of local life, offering great food, community support, and a welcoming space for everyone—especially those who have served.

## 8 Ways to Honor Veterans

*Article by*

**Metro Creative Connection**

Millions of people make considerable sacrifices to protect the freedoms of their fellow citizens. According to the Pew Research Center and data from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Census Bureau, there are currently more than 18 million living veterans in the United States. The 2021 Census counted 461,240 veterans in Canada, according to Veterans Affairs Canada.

The term "veteran" refers to a person who served in the active military, naval, air service, or space service and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. In the U.S., there are actually five types of protected veterans, according to the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. Under VEVRAA, a veteran may be classified as a disabled veteran, recently separated veteran, active duty wartime or campaign badge veteran, or Armed Forces service medal veteran.

Veterans deserve respect and admiration all year long, but also get their own holiday each November. Veterans Day celebrates veterans' patriotism and willingness to sacrifice and serve. This Veterans Day, people can consider these eight unique ways to honor the veterans in their community.

**1. Attend events.** Organize or participate in local Veterans Day celebrations, such as parades and ceremonial events.

**2. Get involved with veterans' affairs.** Support veterans by volunteering with organizations that assist them, such as the VA, local veteran's groups, VA hospitals, or charities dedicated to veteran services.

**3. Petition for veteran speakers.** Reach out to schools, scout troops

or other groups and arrange opportunities for veterans to share their stories and contributions. Learning about the sacrifices these men and women made can heighten individuals' appreciation for veterans.

**4. Support the families of veterans.** Reach out to veterans' families, who also must make sacrifices and concessions. Anything from shopping, babysitting, doing chores, or making a meal can help the families of veterans.

**5. Make a donation.** If finances allow, make contributions to reputable charities that provide services for veterans like those that offer mental health counseling or job placement services. If there isn't a charity that fits with your vision, begin one.

**6. Hire veterans to work.** If you are a business owner or hiring manager, consider hiring veterans for open positions at your company. It can be challenging to re-enter the workforce after service, so make it known that your firm welcomes veterans.

**7. Offer personal acknowledgements.** Take the time to speak to veterans and thank them for their service. If possible, when dining out, ask the server if you can pay for the meal of a veteran who also is dining that day.

**8. Don't forget the fallen veterans.** Although Memorial Day is designed to honor those who lost their lives through military service, people still can honor the fallen veterans on Veterans Day by sharing stories or placing flags at veteran cemeteries.

Veterans Day is celebrated on November 11, marking an opportunity to express one's gratitude and support for the scores of veterans who have served honorably.

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# CCIDA Announces Appointment of John Healy to Board of Directors

*Bemus Point Resident also Serves as Executive Director of BEST*

*Article Contributed by*  
**County of Chautauqua  
Industrial Development  
Agency**

The County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA) is pleased to announce the addition of John Healy to the CCIDA Board of Directors, following his approved appointment by the Chautauqua County Legislature at its January 2025 voting session.

By virtue of being appointed to the CCIDA Board of Directors, Healy will also assume a seat on the boards of the Chautauqua Regional Economic Development Corporation (CREDC) and the Chautauqua County Capital Resource Corporation (CRC).

Healy has more than 20 years of experience in the construction industry, including architecture/engineering; construction administration; estimating; and project management with educational, health care, commercial, utility, and infrastructure projects. He has worked for the Builders Exchange of the Southern Tier (BEST) since 2021 and was recently named the Executive Director, replacing Brad Walters, who retired from that position at the end of 2024. Walters resigned from the CCIDA board on December 23, 2024 due to his recent retirement from BEST, after serving for ten years, creating the open board seat that Healy is now filling.

Healy is a member of numerous local organizations including the Workforce Investment Board; Jamestown YMCA; and the Jamestown Noon Rotary Club, where he served as past president. His educational background includes an MBA from the Franciscan University of Steubenville; a BA from the University of Mount Union; and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). While playing football at Mount Union, Healy helped the Raiders to a 55-1 record and three NCAA Division III



John Healy

national championships. He is a native of Steubenville, Ohio, and currently lives in Bemus Point with his wife Betsy (Myott) and their four sons.

“We are pleased to have John join the board of the CCIDA,” said Mark Geise, Deputy County Executive for Economic Development and CCIDA CEO. “John brings a wealth of experience to the board and has a firm understanding of its role related to growing and strengthening the local economy, thanks to involvement with BEST and his relationship with Brad Walters.”

“Brad provided a lot of great insights pertaining to what was going on in the business community, so it was very beneficial having him on the board these past ten years,” said Gary Henry, CCIDA Chair. “We are confident that John will continue to provide valuable insights in the years to come and look forward to having him on our team.”

“I’m excited to join the CCIDA Board of Directors and look forward to contributing to the great work the organization does in Chautauqua County,” Healy said.

Prior to his resignation from the board, Walters served as vice chair. That position will now be held by board member Dan Heitzenrater, who had previously served as board secretary. The office of board secretary will now be held by board member Amy Harding.

# Chautauqua County Health Department Announces Upcoming Animal Rabies Immunization Clinics

## Hosted at the Chautauqua County Humane Society

*Article Contributed by*  
**Justin Gould**  
Chautauqua County  
Media Information Officer

The Chautauqua County Health Department (CCHD) is announcing a free rabies vaccination clinic sponsored by the Chautauqua County Humane Society and the CCHD. Animals must be pre-registered to receive vaccinations. Vaccinations will be provided free of charge to all dogs, cats, and domesticated ferrets three months of age and older.

While supplies last, microchipping and distemper shots will also be available through the Chautauqua County Humane Society at no cost.

There are a limited number of spots available, so pet owners should pre-register online as soon as possible. If you register but decide not to attend the event, please cancel your appointment so the spot is available for another pet. You can cancel appointments via the confirmation email you receive when you register.

Pet owners must bring previous rabies vaccination records for each animal receiving a shot to ensure proper and effective vaccination; clinic staff will confirm previous rabies vaccination records. All dogs must be on a leash. All cats and ferrets must be in individual carriers. Animal handlers will transport animals to the veterinarian for vaccination.

New York State Public Health Law requires each dog, cat, and domesticated ferret over the age of four months be vaccinated against rabies. County residents are encouraged to be responsible

**When:**  
Saturday, March 8th  
10:00am-12:00pm

**Where:**  
Chautauqua County Humane Society  
2825 Strunk Rd.  
Jamestown, NY 14701

Pre-registration is required and should be submitted online by visiting [HealthyCHQ.com/Rabies](https://HealthyCHQ.com/Rabies) and view the calendar for upcoming clinics or scan the code below.

pet owners by having their pets vaccinated.

Rabies is a very serious disease of warm-blooded animals caused by a virus. Raccoons, bats, skunks, and foxes are common disease carriers. The virus is transmitted to humans and animals through saliva and can enter the body through a bite, scratch, or open cut. The rabies virus infects the central nervous system and can cause brain swelling and ultimately death within days of the onset of symptoms.

For more information about the clinic contact the Chautauqua County Humane Society 716-665-2209. For general rabies information, visit [HealthyCHQ.com/Rabies](https://HealthyCHQ.com/Rabies) or contact Chautauqua County Health Department at (716) 753-4481.



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# County Partnership for Economic Growth Announces New ‘PAINT CHQ’ Mural Program

## Request for Qualifications from Prospective Artists due March 16

Article Contributed by

**Jason Sample**

Marketing &  
Communications Coordinator  
County of Chautauqua Industrial Development  
Agency | Chautauqua Region Economic  
Development Corporation | Chautauqua County  
Partnership for Economic Growth

The Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG), in collaboration with the Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Development (CCDPD), is pleased to announce a new public art initiative intended to highlight and bring new interest to local communities.

The PAINT CHQ mural program will focus on holding a County-wide festival later this year that involves the creation of large public murals in various Chautauqua County communities. For 2025, the communities of Dunkirk, Falconer, Sherman, and Westfield will participate, with a PAINT CHQ Festival planned for the second week of September. As part of the initiative, Professional artists are being sought to create the artwork and are being asked to submit a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) by March 16. Full details, including a link to the RFQ form, can be found at [ChooseCHQ.com/PaintCHQ](http://ChooseCHQ.com/PaintCHQ).

To help coordinate and oversee PAINT CHQ, CCPEG will be working with A H Public Spaces Consulting, owned and operated by Alexandra Hall. Hall is an award-winning professional studio artist and muralist based in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Hall has worked on public art projects across the country, including Upstate New York. The consulting group will work with CCPEG to select artists, seek public input and feedback, hold community engagement workshops, and also develop and coordinate a PAINT CHQ Mural Apprentice Program.

“The goals of PAINT CHQ follow those of other art mural festivals around the country,” Hall explained. “They include highlighting community assets, embracing the value of public art investment, bringing visitors to participating communities, encouraging economic growth, building a foundation for more public art investment, and improving quality of place. It will also help in the effort to grow regional pride, while garnering significant attention and exposure nationally.”

Each PAINT CHQ mural will be installed simultaneously as part of the



Photo Credit:  
Rachel Von Stroup

The Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG) is launching the PAINT CHQ initiative to help focus on the important role public art plays in placemaking and strengthening local communities. Coordinating the effort is A H Public Spaces Consulting, LLC, who has assisted with other community mural project around the country, including the one pictured here in Fort Wayne, Indiana. (Art by Jeremy Stroup)

inaugural festival in the second week of September 2025, with events taking place throughout County. According to Hall, the festival atmosphere will draw media attention and outside visitors, while inviting local residents to be part of the public art creation. The festival will culminate on the final day of the event, Saturday, September 13, when all the murals are complete and celebrated.

As part of the buildup to the PAINT CHQ Festival in September, steering committees are now being developed in each of this year’s participating communities, with a goal of developing a design brief to help the artists better understand what makes Chautauqua County unique and to ensure certain elements and themes are incorporated into the final mural design. PAINT CHQ Community Workshops are also scheduled at the following dates for each respective community:

- Tuesday, March 11 at 11 a.m. at the Cornerstone Restaurant, Sherman
- Tuesday, March 11 at 5 p.m. at SUNY Fredonia Center for Innovation and Economic Development, Dunkirk
- Wednesday, March 12 at 11 a.m. at the Patterson Library, Westfield
- Wednesday, March 12 at 5 p.m. at the Firemen’s Exempt Hall, Falconer

Anyone who wants to provide input,

but is unable to attend the workshops, is encouraged to provide their thoughts by completing the PAINT CHQ Public Art Feedback Survey. As noted earlier, an RFQ has also been issued for the initiative, with local and regional artists strongly encouraged to apply. Local artists who are interested in learning more about how to install a mural anywhere in the County can also apply to participate in the PAINT CHQ Mural Apprentice Program.

“Artists are strongly encouraged to apply to participate in this project. Local artists who are interested in learning more about how to install a mural may also apply to participate in the apprentice program, which is meant to offer aspiring artists an opportunity to garner valuable experience installing large-scale murals,” Hall said. “This is an excellent resume builder for an aspiring muralist! Volunteer apprentices will be paired with experienced muralists and asked to help assist in the mural installation during the festival. Apprentices may learn how to scale a design to fit a building, learn about different mediums, and expand their artist-network.”

“While we don’t always think about art as an economic development driver, it certainly can be,” said Nate Aldrich, County Economic Development Coordinator and CCPEG Manger. “As our team tackles multiple economic

development priorities, projects like these can also help to improve our communities and create a sense of place by providing unique offerings that are interesting and attractive, while also being interpretive. PAINT CHQ, in conjunction with our many other initiatives, contributes to making our Main Streets more attractive and inviting, while also building community pride.”

Initial funding for PAINT CHQ has been provided by CCPEG. Additional funding may come from grant applications, local foundation support, and corporate sponsorships.

“Our overall goal is to make this a successful event for not only this year’s participating communities, but for all of Chautauqua County,” Aldrich added. “This will help ensure the initiative will return each year with other participating communities, making PAINT CHQ an annually celebrated and anticipated event for all of the County’s residents, businesses, and visitors.”

More information about PAINT CHQ can be found at [ChooseCHQ.com/PaintCHQ](http://ChooseCHQ.com/PaintCHQ).

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life to lose for my country."

- Nathan Hale

  
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# Oscar Nominated Films *The Brutalist* and *Nosferatu* to Show at Reg Lenna Center for The Arts



Submitted Photos

A scene from *The Brutalist*

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

Academy Awards Best Actor nominee Adrien Brody stars in the Best Picture contender *The Brutalist*, (Sat., March 1 at 4 p.m.) Escaping post-war Europe, visionary architect László Toth arrives in America to rebuild his life, his work, and his marriage to his wife Erzsébet after being forced apart during wartime by shifting borders and regimes. On his own in a strange new country, László settles in Pennsylvania, where the wealthy and prominent industrialist Harrison Lee Van Buren recognizes his talent for building. But power and legacy come at a heavy cost... The *Brutalist* is rated R and is 215 minutes long, including an intermission. The film is nominated for 10 Academy Awards.

Robert Eggers' *Nosferatu* (Wed., March 5 at 7 p.m.) is a gothic tale of obsession between a haunted young woman and the terrifying vampire infatuated with her, causing untold horror in its wake. *Nosferatu* is rated

R and is 132 minutes long. The film is nominated for 4 Academy Awards.

Upcoming Movies at The Reg include *Buster Keaton's Sherlock Jr. with R.E.M.'s Monster and New Adventures in Hi Fi: A Silents Synced Film* (March 12 at 7 p.m.), SZA and Keke Palmer in the comedy *One of Them Days* (March 14 at 7 p.m.), and Best Actress nominee Fernanda Torres in the Oscar nominee for Best Picture and Best International Feature *I'm Still Here* (March 19 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.



A scene from *Nosferatu*

# At Audubon: Learn About Local Farming on Friday, Kids Study Birds of Prey on Saturday



Submitted Photos

At Audubon Community Nature Center's March 7 First Friday, 11 a.m.–noon, Ginny Carlberg will introduce you to the challenges and joys of operating a local farm. Bring a packed lunch for conversation afterward.



Saturday, come with your 3 to 8-year-old(s) to Little Explorers, 10–11:30 a.m., and learn about "Hawks, Falcons and Eagles." Soren, pictured, is a Red-tailed Hawk who came to Audubon in 2022. For more about both events (and to reserve your space by Thursday for Little Explorers), 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.

# Dwyer Chautauqua



The PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran's Peer to Peer Program's goal is to link Veterans together for socialization and friendship. This program utilizes peer support from those who can relate to the struggles of transitioning into civilian life.



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For a full calendar of events go to:  
**[dwyerchautauqua.com](http://dwyerchautauqua.com)**



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## Why Hire a Tax Professional?

*Article by*

**Metro Creative Connection**

tax credits that the average person may miss.

Tax season, which begins in January and ends in April with the tax-filing deadline (tax day falls on Wednesday, April 15 in 2025), can be a stressful time for people in the United States. Individuals and businesses are required by law to file their income tax returns with the federal government and either await a refund or pay what they owe.

Tax laws are not always easily understood by people outside of the field of accounting and financial planning, and they often change from year to year. Rather than face the daunting task of taxes alone, taxpayers can work with a professional tax preparer or a certified public accountant. These people keep up with the tax code and their expertise can help filers make the process less daunting while ensuring all eligible deductions and credits are noted. The following are a handful of the many benefits of relying on a tax professional.

• **Save money:** The cost of using a tax professional often is offset by the amount of money that professional can save you. A tax prep pro may find deductions or

• **Save time:** The Internal Revenue Service says that it typically takes the average person around 13 hours to correctly and completely fill out a Form 1040 or 1040-SR. Professional tax preparers are more intimately familiar with these forms and can do it in a fraction of the time.

• **Answer questions:** A tax professional can answer questions taxpayers may have, which can help you avoid having to check with the IRS directly. Getting immediate answers to questions can provide you with peace of mind.

• **Avoid mistakes:** Professionals help taxpayers avoid common mistakes that can lead to an IRS inquiry or audit.

• **Look at past returns:** Tax preparers can review previous returns and, in some cases, get you additional money back. They also can speak to the IRS on your behalf if there are any penalties from back taxes or provide support if you get audited.

Working with a professional tax preparer is a wise move for people who find handling their own tax returns very taxing.

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## Nick Langworthy

CONGRESS DISTRICT 23

### Congressman Nick Langworthy Introduces Bill to Cut Red Tape on Broadband Permitting Process

On Wednesday, Congressman Nick Langworthy (NY-23) introduced the Wireless Resiliency and Flexible Investment Act, which would codify a Trump-era 2020 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule as part of broader efforts to streamline the broadband permitting process.

The legislation would make it easier and faster for wireless service providers to improve their existing communications towers and equipment. By streamlining the approval process to enhance network reliability, this bill would support the expansion of wireless services, including 5G, across the United States.

Specifically, the Wireless Resiliency and Flexible Investment Act would require state and local governments to approve applications for these modifications and improvements to existing networks within sixty days, ensuring that necessary upgrades can proceed without unnecessary delays - to the benefit of both service providers and consumers.

“There are still large swaths of areas across Western New York and the Southern Tier that don’t have stable cell service. If we are going to invite economic investment to the region, our people desperately need broadband. It is crucial that

we cut red tape so these areas can get the service they need,” said Congressman Langworthy in a statement on Wednesday. “Once these companies can expand faster, consumers will be able to get better, more reliable cell service. It is my hope that this bill will be supported in a bipartisan matter as it moves through the legislative process.”

### Statement from Congressman Nick Langworthy on Act of Vandalism at Jamestown District Office

“Last week, an act of vandalism was committed at my Jamestown office designed to jam the door and make it impossible for us to enter our office space. At the time of the incident, it was public knowledge that I was off-site holding a press conference and the office would be empty. We immediately notified local law enforcement who are conducting an investigation. This disturbing incident comes on the heels of an envelope with white powder that was recently sent to another one of my district offices. Let me be clear: these actions are crimes and have no place in our political discourse. It is completely unacceptable for my hardworking staff and the citizens who rely on our office for federal assistance to be disrupted by the criminal activity of deranged zealots. It will not be tolerated, and I will urge prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.”

DISTRICT OFFICE: 716-488-8111  
langworthy.house.gov



## George M. Borrello

SENATE DISTRICT 57

### Statement from Senator George Borrello on the Tentative Agreement Reached Between New York State and NYSCOPBA

For years, I have been a vocal advocate for our corrections officers, who have been subjected to increasingly intolerable and inhumane working conditions. The HALT Act has made an already dangerous job even worse, stripping officers of the necessary tools to maintain order and safety in our prisons. I have stood with them as they’ve fought for fair treatment, and I will continue to do so.

The tentative agreement reached by a mediator and NYSCOPBA would allow for the temporary suspension of certain provisions of the HALT Act to provide an opportunity for evaluation. It remains to be seen whether this will lead to real, lasting reforms. Additionally, while this agreement includes a provision to have a third-party mail vendor screen all incoming inmate mail, which is a positive step, it fails to include the mandatory use of body scanners for visitors to detect dangerous drugs like fentanyl and K2 which continue to enter the prisons at an alarming rate and have been responsible for life-threatening emergencies for dozens of corrections officers. Overall, I still have serious reservations about whether the changes offered in this tentative agreement go far enough to truly restore order and safety to

our corrections facilities.

It will ultimately be up to the striking corrections officers to decide whether this tentative agreement addresses their concerns and is acceptable to them. However, continuing to strike comes at a steep cost, with the threat of severe financial penalties, lost wages, and even the loss of health insurance weighing heavily on their decisions. These officers must decide what is best for them and their families, and I will continue to support them wholeheartedly, no matter the choice they make or the challenges they face in this fight for safer working conditions and real reform.

This entire situation is yet another example of the disastrous consequences of the out-of-touch, far-left policies pushed by an activist legislature, while Governor Hochul mindlessly steers New York further into decline, appeasing them at every turn instead of standing up for law and order. Their reckless, pro-criminal agenda has already turned our streets and communities into havens for lawlessness, and now we see its impact endangering those who put their lives on the line to maintain order behind prison walls. The fallout from these policies continues to unfold across our state, and unless we change course, the chaos will only deepen.

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## A Stream Too Small to Name

*Drabble by John Brantingham*

The lake was iced over, but I could hear the stream feeding it still flowing under the snow, and I wondered how it would taste if I dipped my hand and drank the way I did from creeks when I was a child and hadn’t learned the specialized vocabulary of things that played hell on your body. I dreamed of life buried this time of year under the snow: snakes, skunks, and woodchucks down far as they could get. I dreamed of the complex and intricate patterns of fish beneath the ice, safe from the world of birds and people.

This poem was sponsored by a grant from New York State Council on the Arts.  
Johnbrantingham.com





# Andrew Molitor

ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 150

## Assemblyman Molitor Joins the Call for Urgent Prison Reforms to Protect Correction Officers

Standing alongside Assembly Republican Leader Will Barclay (R,C-Pulaski) and members of the Assembly Republican Conference, Assemblyman Andrew Molitor (R,C-Westfield) joined the call for immediate reforms to address the growing crisis in New York’s prison system. With increasing violence, unsafe working conditions, severe understaffing and a lack of critical resources, correction officers are facing daily threats to their safety while struggling to maintain order behind prison walls.

The Assembly Republican Conference recently sent a letter to Gov.KathyHochulurgingimmediate intervention, including repealing the HALT Act—a law that has severely limited the ability of correction officers to maintain discipline and control over violent inmates.

Meanwhile, correction officers from approximately 40 state prisons have staged demonstrations, demanding relief from the deteriorating conditions that have made their jobs increasingly dangerous.

“Our state’s correction officers are being left to fend for themselves in the face of escalating violence and dangerous conditions,” said Molitor. “They are outnumbered, overworked and constantly put at risk due to policies that favor criminals over the men and women keeping our prisons secure. The HALT Act has stripped officers of the ability to enforce discipline, and as a result, assaults on staff have skyrocketed. This is a crisis that cannot be ignored any longer.”

Prison officials and union leaders have reported worsening conditions inside facilities, with officers being forced to work excessive overtime shifts due to widespread staffing shortages. The lack of personnel

and support has made an already challenging job nearly impossible, contributing to an environment where officers fear for their safety every time they report for duty.

“Our correction officers deserve better—they deserve to have the proper staffing, resources and authority to maintain order,” Molitor continued. “State leadership has ignored their pleas for far too long, and unless we act now, this crisis will only deepen. Repealing HALT, addressing the staffing shortage and ensuring officers have the tools they need must be a top priority.”

Republican lawmakers continue to push for immediate action to restore safety and security in state correctional facilities. They remain committed to supporting the men and women who work tirelessly to keep communities safe and are calling on the governor and legislative leaders to take meaningful steps before more lives are put in danger.

## Assemblyman Molitor Joins Bipartisan Effort to Honor Victims and Promote Traffic Safety

In a powerful show of support for safer roads and stronger traffic

safety awareness, Assemblyman Andrew Molitor (R,C-Westfield) stood alongside Assemblyman Robert Smullen (R,C-Mohawk Valley and the Adirondacks) and a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers today to push for the passage of Assembly Bill A.3938, the “Alexander John Smullen Traffic Safety Memorial Law.”

The legislation, named in memory of Alexander John “AJ” Smullen, Assemblyman Smullen’s late son, seeks to establish a traffic safety memorial sign program that will allow families to publicly honor loved ones lost in fatal vehicle collisions. At the same time, the initiative serves as a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of reckless, impaired and distracted driving.

“No family should have to endure the unimaginable loss the Smullen family has faced, but we have the power to turn griefinto action,” said Molitor. “This bill ensures those we’ve lost are not forgotten while also reinforcing the message that every driver has a responsibility to keep our roads safe.”



Submitted Photos

Republican Members of the Assembly holding Press Conference in Parlor



Senate and Assembly Members from Across the Aisle at Press Conference on the “Alexander John Smullen Traffic Safety Memorial Law”

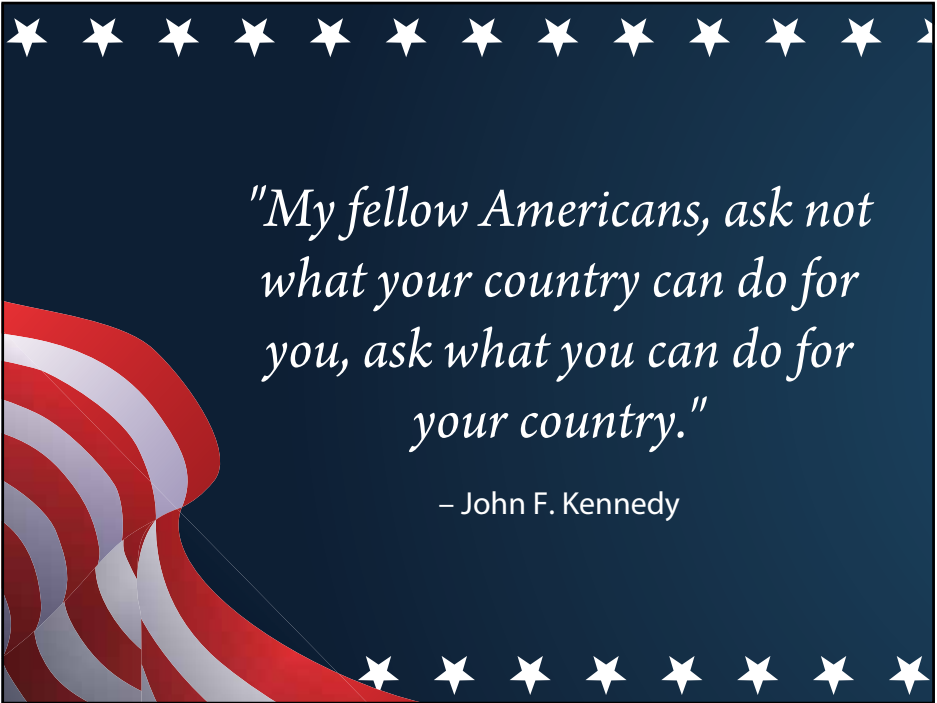
DISTRICT OFFICE: 716-664-7773 | ALBANY OFFICE: 518-455-3563 | molitor@nyassembly.gov

## Lauren Turner Speaks on “Prophecy” at Sunday’s Unitarian Service



At this Sunday’s 10:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown service, retired Methodist minister Lauren Turner will talk about “Prophecy.” Is it supernatural? Is it psychological? What is the Prophetic temperament? Some say we have prophets living with us now, ranging from those driven by a vision of social justice like Martin Luther King, to those driven by literal visions and voices they claim to hear. Turner will examine all these things. Everyone is welcome to the service and coffee hour that follows at 1255 Prendergast Avenue. To participate virtually, use the link at UUJamestown.org/calendar.

Submitted Photo





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