

# CHAUTAUQUA GAZETTE



CHQgazette.com | L. Cornell and Company, LLC

Spring Cleaning Edition

Volume 3 • Issue 15 | April 13, 2026



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## HOME IS WHERE PEACE LIVES

*Featured Writer*  
**Megan (Muzacz) Keir**

As a young woman, I ventured out of my hometown of Dunkirk, New York to see the world and serve in the U.S. Army. Because of this, I have lived in 17 different homes across five states and two countries in the last 25 years, with two children tagging along. The biggest and most valuable lesson I have learned through all of it is simple: Making any space a home is not just about the things you put into it, it is also about matching the needs and comforts of your lifestyle and creating a calm and recharging space for your family. And after years of starting over in unfamiliar places, I learned that adopting a few simple habits can turn any space into the kind of place where your family can breathe, be together, and feel at peace.

With spring upon us in Chautauqua County, it's the perfect time to put these lessons to work. Here are a few tips from a life spent making home wherever the orders sent me.

**Start with "Command Central"**

I learned the hard way that without a dedicated spot for important documents, calendars, and incoming mail, the chaos of a move multiplies fast. One of the first things I set up in every new home was what I called "Command Central." This can be a small corner or a big office, whatever space you can spare will do, with a filing system, a family calendar, and a place to sort the mail the moment it

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 11**

## SPRING ORGANIZATION: WHY HIRING A PROFESSIONAL PAYS OFF

*Featured Writer*  
**Deborah Ferrer**

As the days grow longer and the seasons shift, many homeowners feel the familiar urge to refresh and reorganize their spaces. Spring cleaning often begins with good intentions—but without a clear plan, it can quickly become overwhelming. For those unsure where to start, hiring a professional designer can be a worthwhile investment that ultimately saves both time and money.

A professional designer does far more than suggest where to place furniture or storage bins. They take the time to understand how a homeowner truly lives in their space—how rooms are used, what routines look like, and where frustrations arise. Through detailed consultations, designers assess both practical needs and personal preferences, creating customized solutions that reflect each client's lifestyle. This collaborative process builds trust and ensures that the end result is not only visually appealing, but also highly functional.

One of the key advantages of working with a designer is their ability to create efficient layouts that maximize every inch of space. Clutter often stems from poor organization rather than a lack of storage, and professionals are trained to address both. By focusing on form and function, they craft environments where everything has a purpose and a place. Their knowledge of spatial planning, clearances, and product integration helps prevent costly mistakes and ensures that projects are executed correctly the first time.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 5**

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## THIS WEEK AROUND TOWN

### MONDAY, APRIL 13

#### **Flamenco Vivo in Tablao: An Intimate Flamenco Experience | 6 PM-8 PM**

Reg Lenna Media Arts Studio | Jamestown  
For Info: [reglenna.com](http://reglenna.com)

### TUESDAY, APRIL 14

#### **Living Voices: Within the Silence (Japanese Internment in America)**

9 AM-10 AM & 1 PM-2 PM  
Robert H. Jackson Center | Jamestown  
For Info: [roberthjackson.org](http://roberthjackson.org)

#### **The Cinema Series: EPiC: Elvis Presley in Concert 7:30 PM**

1891 Fredonia Opera House Performing Arts Center | Fredonia  
For Info: [fredopera.org](http://fredopera.org)

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15

#### **Living Voices: Within the Silence (Japanese Internment in America) | 9 AM-10 AM, 11 AM-12 PM, & 1 PM-2 PM**

Robert H. Jackson Center | Jamestown  
For Info: [roberthjackson.org](http://roberthjackson.org)

#### **Movies at The Reg: Mr. Nobody Against Putin | 7 PM**

Reg Lenna Center for The Arts | Jamestown  
For Info: [reglenna.com](http://reglenna.com)

#### **Lecture: Listening for Bumps in the Night: Gravitational Waves | 7:30 PM**

Martz-Kohl Observatory | Frewsburg  
For Info: [martzobservatory.org](http://martzobservatory.org)

### THURSDAY, APRIL 16

#### **Book Talk with Paul Leon: One Hundred and Fifty-Four Sonnets | 6 PM**

Ripley Public Library | Ripley

#### **Craft & Sip Group 7 PM-10 PM**

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

### FRIDAY, APRIL 17

#### **CBA Vision Rehabilitation Services' Dining in the Dark 5 PM**

Chautauqua Harbor Hotel | Celeron  
For Info: [cbavision.org/dining-in-the-dark](http://cbavision.org/dining-in-the-dark)

#### **25 Years of Asking Questions: "A Republic, If You Can Keep It"? | 6 PM**

Robert H. Jackson Center | Jamestown  
For Info: [roberthjackson.org](http://roberthjackson.org)

#### **The Music of Simon & Garfunkel With AJ Swearingen & Jayne Kelli | 7:30 PM**

1891 Fredonia Opera House Performing Arts Center | Fredonia  
For Info: [fredopera.org](http://fredopera.org)

### FRIDAY, APRIL 17-SUNDAY, APRIL 19

#### **Lake Erie Wine Country: Cheers to 250 All American Weekend**

Lake Erie Wine Country  
For Info: [lakeeriewinecountry.org](http://lakeeriewinecountry.org)

### SATURDAY, APRIL 18 & SUNDAY, APRIL 19

Westfield Makerspace Spring Market | 10 AM-4 PM  
93 E Main St. | Westfield  
For Info: [marketinfo@westfieldmakerspace.com](mailto:marketinfo@westfieldmakerspace.com)

### SATURDAY, APRIL 18

#### **Square Foot Gardening Class 1 PM-3 PM**

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown  
For Info: [uujamestown.org](http://uujamestown.org)

#### **Frewsburg Lions Club BBQ Chicken Dinner Benefit | 4:30 PM-6:30 PM**

Zion Lutheran Church | Frewsburg  
For Info: 716-499-4886

#### **Folsom Prison Experience: Johnny Cash Theatrical Tribute Concert | 7 PM**

Reg Lenna Center for The Arts | Jamestown  
For Info: [reglenna.com](http://reglenna.com)

#### **Live Music: Volpe Brothers Band | 8 PM-12 AM**

Sherman Hotel | Sherman  
For Info: Sherman Hotel Facebook Page

### SUNDAY, APRIL 19

#### **Alex Holt: Woke and Awakening: Being Aware of Injustice | 10:30 AM**

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown  
For Info: [uujamestown.org](http://uujamestown.org)



## Spring Cleaning Checklist: A Mildly Chaotic Guide to Becoming a Better Person (or at Least Finding Your Floor Again)

### Marketing Director

#### Shannon Nixon

Spring is here. The birds are chirping, the flowers are blooming, and your closet just tried to avalanche on you when you opened it. This can mean only one thing: it's time for spring cleaning. The annual tradition of pretending we're in control of our lives.

Before you panic, take a peak at our official spring checklist.



#### Step 1: Air It All Out

Let fresh spring air into your

home as we escape the clenches of a long winter...and immediately sneeze from the dust that has compiled since last summer (or, for some of us, since the summer of 2020).



#### Step 2: The "Be Honest" Closet Test

Those clothes in the back of your closet you've had since 1999? The ones you swear you'll wear again? It's time to ask yourself three important questions:

1. "Does this fit?"
2. "Do I like this?"
3. "Am I keeping this solely out of guilt and/or nostalgia for a different version of myself?"

If the answer is "I might need this for a very specific, imaginary event," it's time to part ways with it.



#### Step 3: The Sock Reckoning

Gather all solitary socks. Hold a brief memorial service for the ones that have lost their "twin." Now you must decide: keep as cleaning rags or accept that somewhere, there is a parallel universe thriving entirely on your missing socks.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Editorial with Lori Cornell

# IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CLEAN

*Publisher*  
**Lori Cornell**

I resisted the temptation to change the title of Megan Keir's exceptional cover story from "Home is Where Peace Lives" to "A CLEAN Home is Where Peace Lives" as I debated the truth in my latter assumption.

As someone who works from home, I have a routine. And I'd venture to guess, I'm not alone. I start nearly every work-day - which entails responsibilities like designing, financing, editing and marketing the Chautauqua Gazette - by cleaning my kitchen. I'm sure you're saying, but what do the Cornell family dishes have to do with a publishing business? I'll explain...

This edition - intending to highlight local opportunities and professional advice for readers to spring clean their homes - quickly took shape as more of a mental health hug than a home health celebration. Very often - and quite normally - our urge for tidy is more about creating space for the peace in our lives that Megan so beautifully describes, than about removing dust mites and shower mold for our families to truly thrive. According to much research, a clean and organized home truly is a more peaceful home. Cleaning restores order; control over our inanimate surroundings giving us the confidence and mental space to tackle the more difficult and variable spaces in our lives: relationships, finances, job responsibilities and on and on.

According to "Emboldened Therapy," an online mental health advisory source, "Cleaning



is an easy way to restore some sense of order...when your brain feels overwhelmed, scrubbing the floors gives you something you can control..." So, when we need \$5,000 worth of small business supporting ads in order to publish our next edition of the Gazette in two days, it helps me to get the dishes done first (and/or to just escape the mess to my favorite "peaceful home away from home" - the Bemus Point Library!).

When the world seems topsy turvy, and there's seemingly too much on our plates to handle, perhaps take a few minutes to tidy. One step at a time, we can make our lives just a bit cleaner and more organized.

We hope our tips and tricks in this edition will help you do just that. Spring is often thought of as a fresh start - why not start fresh at home first?

And check one more thing off your list!

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**KATRINA**

from all of us here  
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## In Loving Memory

### Randy R. Rowland

July 9, 1957 - March 29, 2026



It is with heavy hearts and profound gratitude for a life well-lived that we announce the passing of Randy R. Rowland, who left us on March 29, 2026, at the age of 68. Randy peacefully departed this world in Jamestown, NY, surrounded by his beloved family, after bravely battling pneumonia.

Randy was born on July 9, 1957, in Dansville, NY, to James (Barbara) Logue and Sue Rowland. He was a man who carried the warmth of a small-town heart and the strength of a big city soul. Randy was predeceased by his parents, James (Barbara) Logue and Sue Love, and his two sons, Michael and Mark (April) Colburn, whose memories he cherished deeply.

Randy's story is beautifully interwoven with that of his devoted wife, Mary. Together, they navigated the journey of life for over 51 years, celebrating the joys and enduring the challenges with unwavering love and partnership. Their union was blessed with four wonderful children: Debbie (David) Rowland, Matthew (Jamie) Rowland, and the cherished memories of their sons, Michael and Mark (April) Colburn. Randy was the proud grandfather of 13 grandchildren, each of whom brought immense joy and light to his life.

Randy's career path was a testament to his determination and skill. After a brief stint with the United States Navy, where he served with honor, he found his true calling in truck driving, hauling heavy equipment with precision and dedication. An exceptional driver, he retired after many years, leaving behind a legacy of hard work and reliability.

Randy was a man of many talents and interests. His love for tinkering knew no bounds—whether crafting wood projects, fixing cars, or tackling any challenge presented to him, Randy was a master of all trades. His passion for hunting, fishing, and car shows was matched only by the joy he found in the company of his grandchildren. His eyes would light up with happiness whenever they were near, and his hugs, famously warm and comforting, were a testament to the gentle giant he was.

With a personality larger than life, Randy was known for the playful grunt or growl that often accompanied his responses, always understood without the need for words. He was a dependable friend, a loving husband, a devoted father, and a doting grandfather. Those fortunate enough to know him could always count on his support and kindness, no matter the circumstance.

Randy is survived by his soulmate Mary, his daughter Debbie, his son Matthew, and his many sisters: Mimi Rowland, Ruth Sipp, Sally Haskins, Carole Tomayo, Gale Tucker, Dawn (Tim) Snyder, Kim Grey, Dorean Monchilovich, Valerie Logue, and Jenn Logue, and many cousins, nephews and nieces. His family, both immediate and extended, will continue to honor his memory by living their lives with the same integrity and love that Randy exemplified every day.

As we say goodbye to Randy, we remember a life filled with love, laughter, and an indomitable spirit. His legacy will endure in the hearts of his family and friends, and his memory will be cherished by all who knew him.

# Faith Matters

## SPRING CLEANING



### Featured Writer

**Pastor Sherry Mahar**  
Christ First UMC, Jamestown

There are so many signs of Spring—robins in the trees that are starting to bloom, grass that is turning greener, bulbs that have blossomed, occasional warm breezes, and beautiful sunshine. As I was looking out of my window recently, enjoying the sunshine that I've missed for months, I noticed something else about Spring that sprang up within me... a desire to do some spring cleaning! Because filtering the sunshine were little fingerprints - and even nose prints - from my grandchildren who had just visited... as well as a layer of grime on the outside after the winter months of keeping the windows shut tight against the cold. The sunshine didn't just make me smile or bring warmth to my home, it revealed some cleaning that needed to be done.

God's light works in much the same way. God's love makes us smile. God's care warms us. And God's presence gently reveals areas within us that need attention - perhaps with a deep "spring cleaning." Not in a condemning way, but in a way that draws attention and even inspires within us a desire for God to spruce up the home of our lives. God's light shines into the house of our soul, and sometimes what it reveals is a little uncomfortable. We may have smudges on the windows of our perspective that are preventing us from seeing clearly. We may have some sin, like dirty baseboards that need to be wiped down, but we haven't done it because we keep telling ourselves that no one will notice. We may be holding onto baggage from the past, like a stuffed closet loaded with items we haven't worn in years, leaving no room for what God would want to do now. Or we may have collected a pile of excuses for why we can't change, like that one drawer that seems to gather everything and never gets cleaned out - the "junk drawer" (and

we all have one).

Spring cleaning isn't just about seeing what's dirty, messy, broken, or needing to be changed. It's about making space for something fresh. We open everything up to let the fresh air come through, and we begin to freshen up our spaces. In the life of faith, we aren't left alone with a lengthy "to-do list." Right now, Christians are in a season of Eastertide - a time when we remember that God not only reveals what needs to change, but also brings new life as God inspires, equips, and empowers us to journey into the fresh, new life God wants for us.

In the days after Jesus' resurrection, people encountered him and found that everything was being made new. In the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb, overwhelmed with grief - until Jesus called her by name, and she was suddenly able to see clearly. In the Gospel of Luke, two disciples walked along the road, carrying confusion and disappointment - until their eyes were opened and their hearts burned with new understanding. Resurrection didn't just change what they believed; it changed how they saw, what they carried, and it made space for new life.

Spring cleaning of our lives isn't about scrubbing harder or trying to make ourselves perfect, but allowing God to gently clear what no longer belongs, so that something new can take its place. It's about releasing what we've been holding onto, healing what's been hidden away, and opening up space for grace, peace, and purpose. Because resurrection power through Jesus Christ isn't just about an empty tomb. It's about our lives being made new - again and again. And thankfully, God's renewal is much more thorough and much more loving than anything we would try to do on our own. God is with us in the process - in the noticing, in the letting go, and in creating something new within. And God also designed for believers to experience renewal in community, as we gather, reflect, pray, and encourage one another along the way. If you find yourself longing for that kind of fresh start this season, know that there is a place for you at church.

Grace and peace,  
**Pastor Sherry**

## Please join us!

**First Covenant Church**  
520 Spring Street, Jamestown

*Rev. Jerry Lange*  
**"What Jesus Can Do  
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Sunday Service 10:00 am  
To know Christ and make Him known

## Spring Organization: Why Hiring a Professional Pays Off

*Continued from Front Page*

Designers also stay ahead of industry trends in ways that are not always visible to the general public. By attending trade shows, networking with suppliers, and participating in continuing education, they gain early access to new products, materials, and innovations. Many of these items are introduced to trade professionals before becoming widely available, giving clients the opportunity to incorporate fresh, modern elements into their homes. Spring is an especially ideal time for updates, as new product lines often arrive following major industry events.

Beyond design expertise, professionals bring organization and efficiency to the entire project process. From the outset, they develop comprehensive plans and detailed material lists, ensuring that nothing is overlooked. This level of preparation eliminates the need for multiple trips to the store and reduces the likelihood of purchasing incorrect or unnecessary items. In the long run, this careful planning can significantly reduce stress, prevent delays, and keep projects within budget.

Another important benefit is access to trade-only resources and trusted suppliers. Designers often maintain strong relationships with local vendors and specialized manufacturers, allowing clients to choose from high-quality, durable products that may not be available through standard retail channels. These relationships also provide an added layer of support—if an item arrives damaged or incorrect, designers can work directly with their contacts to resolve issues quickly and efficiently, something that is often more difficult when purchasing through large online retailers.

Working with a professional designer also supports the local economy. Many designers collaborate closely with regional businesses, including suppliers, installers, and craftspeople. This network not only ensures

a higher level of service and accountability, but also keeps investment within the community. Unlike large, impersonal retailers, local professionals are deeply invested in their work and in the satisfaction of their clients.

Ultimately, hiring a professional designer is about more than aesthetics. It is about creating a home that works seamlessly for everyday life—one that is organized, efficient, and tailored to the people who live in it. This spring, instead of tackling organization alone, consider partnering with a professional to transform your space with clarity, confidence, and lasting results.

*With over 25 years of experience in the construction industry, Deborah Ferrer has built a career specializing in kitchen and bathroom design and remodeling since 2009. A graduate of Villa Maria College with High Honors in Interior Design, she blends her technical expertise with design sensibility that prioritizes functionality and creativity. In 2023, she founded Deborah Ferrer Design Studio in downtown Dunkirk, where she focuses on adaptive reuse and space transformation. Deborah's work has earned her Chautauqua County's Best of the Best Interior Designer honors in both 2024 and 2025, and reflects her passion for craftsmanship, innovation, and client-centered design.*



Deb Ferrer featured in her design studio in downtown Dunkirk.

## Spring Cleaning that Supports your Health - Not Just Your Home



*Featured Writer*

**Nancy Rich Johnson**  
Wellness for Life

Spring is a natural time to open the windows, clear out the clutter, and give our homes a fresh start. But as we reach for our usual cleaning products, it's worth asking an important question:

Are the products we're using truly "clean"?

Many conventional household cleaners and laundry products contain chemicals that can do more than remove dirt—they can linger in the air we breathe, on the surfaces we touch, and even on the clothes we wear every day.

Some of these ingredients can affect the body in ways we don't always realize. Over time, certain chemicals may interfere with how our body naturally functions, especially when we're exposed to them day after day.

This isn't about fear—it's about awareness and making small, practical changes.

The good news? You don't have to overhaul everything overnight. A few simple swaps can make a meaningful difference.

**Start with what you use most.**

Laundry detergent is a great place to begin. We wear our clothes all day, and our skin is in constant contact with them. Choosing a simpler, fragrance-free option can help reduce unnecessary exposure.

**Rethink "fragrance."**

That fresh, clean scent many products advertise often comes from synthetic fragrance blends. If you've ever felt sensitive to strong scents,

this may be why. Look for products labeled "fragrance-free" or naturally scented with simple ingredients.

Use fewer products, more effectively.

You may not need a different cleaner for every surface. Many safe, simple solutions can handle multiple jobs. For example, a mixture of vinegar and water works well for glass and countertops, while baking soda can help with scrubbing.

**Pay attention to labels.**

If a product doesn't clearly list its ingredients, that's a red flag. Transparency matters. The more you understand what you're using, the better choices you can make.

**Look beyond the label.**

Some companies use terms like "green," "natural," or "eco-friendly" as marketing—but that doesn't always mean a product is truly safe. This is often called "greenwashing." Look for companies that are committed to transparency, thorough testing, and higher standards, not just appealing packaging.

**Make it a process, not perfection.**

You don't have to throw everything out and start over. As you run out of products, replace them with safer options. Over time, those small changes add up.

Spring cleaning is about creating a space that feels fresh, calm, and healthy. When we choose products that support both our environment and our bodies, we extend that sense of well-being beyond what we can see.

**A clean home should also be a healthy one.**

*Nancy Rich Johnson is the founder of Wellness for Life and has spent over 45 years focused on healthy aging and practical wellness. She partners with **Shaklee**, a company known for environmentally responsible products. Basic H was named the Official Product of Earth Day in 1990 for its 20th anniversary, and the Get Clean line reflects a commitment to products that are safe, effective, and environmentally responsible.*



**Deborah Ferrer**  
DESIGN STUDIO

- Lifelong resident of Dunkirk / Fredonia
- Dunkirk High School Graduate
- Villa Maria Graduate with High Honors - Major: Interior Design
- 24+ years industry experience
- 16+ years specifically designing kitchens and bathrooms
- Advocate for revitalizing Downtown Dunkirk

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Fri, May 8	Trailer Trash
Sat, May 23	HAGG BROTHERS
Sat, May 30	The Zach Gerken Band (Duo)
Sat, June 6	Hide N' Seek
Fri, June 19	BackLog
Sat, June 27	One Boomer

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CHAMBER CORNER

It Takes a Community to Raise a Business

Article Contributed by

**Daniel J. Heitzenrater**

Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce  
President and CEO

At a recent meeting in Falconer, one participant summed it up like this. What does a strong business community look like? "It's this, coming to small business gatherings like these Sit-Downs makes us stronger.

What does a strong business community look like to you? It's a question we've asked during our Small Business Sit-Downs across the county. Some of the answers were specific to the community we were in, but many answers were universal.

**The CHQ Chamber Presents the State of the County**

The CHQ Chamber is working with the County Executive's office this year to provide a more meaningful event to our local business community. This year's breakfast gathering with the County Executive will include the actual State of the County address, followed by a moderated question and answer session so our guests can engage with the topics presented.

Words like Communication, Trust, Participation, and Sacrifice came up in almost every conversation.

As small business owners, you're frequently the CEO and the janitor, the HR department and the lead salesperson. It can be a struggle to step away from the daily grind to go to a meeting. Our Small Business Sit-Downs are an hour away from your business, from your family, from time that you can use for yourself. But consider it an opportunity to work ON your business rather than just working IN your business.

The CHQ Chamber State of the County Breakfast will be held Tuesday, April 21 at 8am at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 150 West Fourth Street, Jamestown. The cost to attend this event is \$30 for Chamber members or \$35 for non-members, which covers breakfast and helps to support the ongoing work of the CHQ Chamber year-round.

The strongest business communities we see are those where business owners recognize their success is directly tied to the community around them. When people take the time to mentor a new entrepreneur, share an idea, or even just commiserate over common struggles. It turns what can be viewed as competition over local dollars into collaborators. Into a community.

Sponsors for the 2026 CHQ Chamber State of the County Event are AHN Westfield Memorial Hospital, Brooks-TLC Hospital System, County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency, LaBella Associates, Media One Radio Group, National Grid, Phillips Lytle LLP, the State University of New York at Fredonia, and UPMC Chautauqua. Registration is open now through the Chamber's web calendar at [www.chqchamber.org](http://www.chqchamber.org).



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



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Square Foot Gardening Class This Saturday, April 18



This Saturday, 1-3 p.m., former Penn State Master Gardener David Winner is offering a class on Square Foot Gardening: How to grow your own fresh vegetables in a limited space. With a \$10 fee, it will include visuals to demonstrate how to set up a square foot garden and refreshments. Location is the Unitarian church, 1255 Prendergast Avenue, Jamestown, where parking is behind the building. Proceeds from the class will benefit the church.

# Chautauqua County Executive PJ Wendel to Deliver 2026 State of the County Address

## 2026 State of the County Address



**PJ Wendel**  
Chautauqua County Executive



### Contributed by Chautauqua County

Chautauqua County Executive Paul M. Wendel Jr. will deliver his 2026 State of the County Address on Tuesday, April 21, offering residents, business leaders, and community partners a forward-looking update on the county's progress and priorities.

Hosted in partnership with the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce, this year's event represents a unique opportunity to expand public engagement by bringing the State of the County directly to the community. The breakfast gathering will take place from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton Jamestown and will include a moderated question-and-answer session led by Chamber President and CEO Daniel Heitzenrater.

"Chautauqua County is on a strong and steady path forward," said Wendel. "We've made real progress by focusing on what matters most—strengthening our economy, investing in our communities, and delivering results for our residents.

Wendel's remarks will highlight key accomplishments from the past year while outlining a strategic vision for continued economic growth, infrastructure investment, and enhanced quality of life across Chautauqua County.

"As we look to the future, our focus remains clear—building a stronger, more prosperous county for the next

generation," Wendel added. "This is about continuing the momentum we've built together and ensuring Chautauqua County remains a place where people want to live, work, and raise a family."

Traditionally, the State of the County Address is delivered to the Chautauqua County Legislature. That tradition will continue this year, with a recording of the address to be presented during the Legislature's regular meeting on Wednesday, April 22 at 6:30 p.m.

"We're excited to incorporate the State of the County address into the Chamber's annual County Executive Breakfast this year," said Dan Heitzenrater, CHQ Chamber President & CEO. "We hope adding the address will encourage more of the public to engage with the "State of Chautauqua County" and guide a substantive Q&A session based on the most up-to-date information from County Executive Wendel."

A recording of the full presentation will also be made available online at [chqgov.com](http://chqgov.com), ensuring residents have multiple ways to stay informed and engaged.

The April 21 event also offers attendees the opportunity to network with local leaders and stakeholders while gaining insight into the direction of county government.

Registration is \$30 for Chamber members and \$35 for non-members. For more information or to register, visit the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce website at [chqchamber.org](http://chqchamber.org).



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# SPRING CLEANING Trivia

1. What is the main active ingredient in household bleach?
2. Which country is credited with inventing soap around 2800 BCE?
3. What common household item can kill many bacteria due to its acidity?
4. What temperature (in Fahrenheit) is typically needed to kill most bacteria in laundry?
5. Which cleaning tool was patented in 1901 and revolutionized home cleaning?
6. What is the term for cleaning without water using chemicals or solvents?
7. Which gas is commonly used as a disinfectant in water treatment plants?
8. Which cleaning method uses sound waves to remove dirt at a microscopic level?
9. What is the main ingredient in most dish soaps that helps break down grease?
10. What year did Procter & Gamble introduce Tide detergent?

1. Sodium hypochlorite 2. Ancient Babylon 3. White vinegar 4. 140°F (60°C) 5. The vacuum cleaner 6. Dry cleaning 7. Chlorine 8. Ultrasonic cleaning 9. Surfactants 10. 1946

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**Chautauqua County Launches Lead Rental Registry Program 14701 Zip Code Identified as a Community of Concern**

*Lead Rental Registry Program Will Inspect, Certify and Track Pre-1980 Rental Properties*

*Contributed by*  
**Chautauqua County**

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) recently announced the launch of its nation-leading Lead Rental Registry Program, designed to better protect children from dangerous lead exposure in rental housing. Jamestown, New York (ZIP code 14701) is one of 25 communities of concern selected for the initiative. The state regulations were finalized last week and the Chautauqua County Health Department (CCHD), in coordination with community partners, have begun implementing the program locally.

**About the Lead Rental Registry Program**

The Lead Rental Registry Program creates a proactive, statewide system to identify and address lead hazards in rental housing—finding and fixing lead paint risks before children are exposed. The law requires that:

- Residential rental properties built before 1980 with two or more units undergo inspections to verify they are free of lead hazards.
- Property owners must obtain a Lead Safety Certificate for all rented units.
- Identified hazards must be corrected using lead-safe work practices and completed promptly.
- Compliance will be monitored and enforced to ensure safer housing conditions.

**About Lead Poisoning**

While major strides have been made in removing lead from gasoline, plumbing, consumer products, and building materials, older housing remains the primary source of childhood lead exposure. Homes built before 1980 — particularly those with peeling or chipping lead-based paint — continue to put children at risk.

- The 14701 zip code has the sixth highest rate of childhood lead poi-

soning in New York State.

- Lead exposure often comes from deteriorating paint and dust in older homes.
- No level of lead exposure is safe, especially for young children.
- Lead poisoning can cause irreversible brain damage, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and other permanent health impacts.
- Routine maintenance and safe repairs can prevent exposure.

**Local Need and Local Action**

Chautauqua County's older housing stock highlights the need for this initiative. More than 86% of homes in the 14701 ZIP code were built before 1970—well before lead paint was banned in 1978. These figures exceed state averages and underscore the urgency of taking proactive steps to reduce lead hazards.

“Jamestown’s older housing stock can pose challenges to children’s health and create economic burdens for families,” said City of Jamestown Mayor Kimberly Ecklund. “The city is committed to supporting county and state-led initiatives, working to ensure homes are safe and families have the resources they need to protect their children and strengthen our community.”

Over the past three years, an average of 60 children each year in Chautauqua County have tested above the state’s action level of 5 micrograms per deciliter, with another 10–20 children testing just below that threshold — levels still associated with long-term impacts. On average, eight out of ten lead-poisoned children in Chautauqua County live in rental housing.

Lacey Wilson, Chautauqua County Public Health Director emphasized the importance of the upcoming program. “This registry is a major step toward breaking the cycle of childhood lead poisoning in our community. By identifying hazards early and suppor-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Hospital Employee Receives Highmark Bright Blue Futures Award and Donates to Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation



Jacqueline "Jackie" Francisco presents a \$1,000 Highmark Bright Blue Futures Employee Recognition Award to WMH Administrator Dr. Rodney Buchanan who accepts the gift on behalf of the WMH Foundation.

*Contributed by*  
**Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation**

Jacqueline "Jackie" Francisco has been recognized with the Highmark Bright Blue Futures Employee Recognition Award, honoring her commitment to community service and volunteerism. The award includes a \$1,000 grant designated to a nonprofit of the recipient's choice.

Francisco donated the full award to the Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation, restricting the gift to breast cancer awareness initiatives.

"I wear many hats in my work and volunteer efforts, but the one that fills me with the most joy is my volunteer hat," said Francisco. "Volunteerism allows me to give back to the community in meaningful ways. Over the years, I've supported causes ranging from Alzheimer's and breast cancer awareness to child abuse prevention and Meals on Wheels. Most recently, I've been volunteering at Westfield Memorial Hospital to support

both the community and the dedicated staff who work here."

Patricia Gaughan DiPalma, Executive Director of the Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation, praised Francisco's generosity. "We are pleased that Jackie chose to direct this award to the hospital Foundation," said DiPalma. "Her dedication to breast cancer awareness and her commitment to service reflect the values of compassion and community that guide our mission. This gift helps support programs that make a meaningful difference for our patients and families."

The Highmark Bright Blue Futures Employee Program recognizes employees who demonstrate leadership through service and a commitment to improving community health and well-being.

The Westfield Memorial Hospital Foundation (now in its 47th year) supports high-quality patient care working with the hospital in providing financial support with on-going philanthropic partnerships and community engagements.



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## Upcoming at Audubon: Volunteer Day, Breakfast Kick-off for Birdathon



Celebrate Earth Day this Saturday with Audubon Community Nature Center staff and other volunteers working on projects to maintain and improve the building and grounds: Family-friendly, free, and includes lunch! Create your own team of birders and raise some money for a deserving college-bound student and care for Audubon's animals during the April 25-May 3 Birdathon. Make reservations by Monday, April 20, to join the Birdathon kick-off at Breakfast With the Birds Saturday morning, April 25. Audubon is located at 1600 Riverside Road, one-quarter mile east of Route 62 between Jamestown and Warren. For all these, call (716) 569-2345 or visit AudubonCNC.org/events.

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## Chautauqua County Launches Lead Rental Registry Program 14701 Zip Code Identified as a Community of Concern

Continued from Page 8



ting property owners in making lead-safe improvements, we can create safer homes and better health outcomes for children across Chautauqua County.”

The New York State Department of Health has already awarded nearly \$16 million to 20 local health departments to build capacity and assist the communities of concern in their county with implementing the Lead Rental Registry. Chautauqua County receives \$601,300 per year over the course of five years to implement the program.

In the last year, the CCHD has expanded its Lead Poisoning Prevention team by more than 50% and recently opened a satellite office at Jamestown City Hall, increasing accessibility for landlords, tenants, and families. The team recently launched an updated website outlining the program details and notification was sent to landlords and renters in the program area in 2025, informing them about the upcoming Lead Rental Registry Program and offering free lead inspections in advance of the 2026 implementation.

### Training and Certification Opportunities for Contractors and Landlords

As part of local preparation for the Lead Rental Registry Program, **contractors and landlords are required to become EPA-certified** in lead-safe renovation, repair, and painting. Federal law requires lead-safe certification for any work that disturbs painted surfaces in housing built before 1978. Proper training is essential to prevent contractors and property owners in communities of concern —

including Jamestown — from unintentionally creating new lead hazards while attempting to address peeling or chipping paint.

To support compliance, **Chautauqua County offers free EPA-approved training opportunities** for contractors, landlords, and DIYers who want to learn general lead-safe work practices. These training opportunities help provide tools and knowledge needed to make homes safer, protect families, and support successful implementation of the Lead Rental Registry Program. For more information about classes and how to sign up, call the CCHD’s Lead Rental Registry Program office at 716-661-8088.

### Resources:

- Lead Rental Registry Program:
- Chautauqua County Health Department’s site: [HealthyCHQ.com](http://HealthyCHQ.com)
  - NYSDOH Lead Rental Registry Program: [health.ny.gov/LeadRentalRegistry](http://health.ny.gov/LeadRentalRegistry)
  - NYSDOH Lead Rental Registry Program factsheet: <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2626.pdf>

*About Chautauqua County Health Department - The Chautauqua County Health Department is the leading Public Health organization in Chautauqua County dedicated to the support of the community’s health. The Health Department takes innovative approaches to provide technical assistance to partner organizations, and offers various programs and services in order to help prevent disease, protect the public’s health and promote our community’s overall health and wellness. For more information visit [www.HealthyCHQ.com](http://www.HealthyCHQ.com).*

## Senior Scene with Dana Corwin

# April is National Volunteer Month Celebrating Volunteers in Chautauqua County



Contributed by

**Dana Corwin**

Director of Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services

**April is National Volunteer Month**, a time to recognize the incredible impact volunteers make in communities across the country. The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services (OFAS) is proud to celebrate the individuals who give their time and compassion to support older adults throughout our county.

During this National Volunteer Month, the Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services would also like to recognize and celebrate our **2026 Volunteers of the Year**. Please join us in congratulating **Ellen Coffaro** and **Shirley Vandenburg**, who have been selected as the **2026 Chautauqua County Volunteers of the Year**. Their dedication demonstrates the tremendous impact volunteers have in strengthening communities throughout Chautauqua County.

Each year, on **Older New Yorkers’ Day**, the **New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA)** honors older adults from across the state for their outstanding volunteerism. The event celebrates healthy aging and highlights the power of community engagement. The program is also one-way NYSOFA works to overcome stereotypes about aging—by showcasing the many older adults who remain active, engaged, and committed to giving back to their communities.

Volunteers play a vital role in helping older residents remain connected, independent, and supported. OFAS is currently **seeking** caring individuals who are willing to share their time and talents in a variety of meaningful roles.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- **Friendly Visiting** – Spend time with an older adult to reduce isolation and build meaningful connections.

- **Friendly Calling** – Provide regular check-in phone calls to brighten someone’s day.
- **Senior Pen Pal Program** – Exchange letters with older adults to create lasting friendships.
- **Home Delivered Meals Delivery** – Help deliver meals to homebound older adults and provide an important daily wellness check.
- **Visiting Pets Program** – Certified, friendly pets and their owners can visit older adults to bring comfort, companionship, and joy.
- **Office Assistance** – Help with administrative tasks and support daily operations.
- **OFAS Event Support** – Assist with community outreach events, health fairs, and special programs.
- **Volunteer Transportation Drivers** – Help older adults get to medical appointments, grocery stores, and other essential services both **within and outside of Chautauqua County**.
- **Peer Leaders for Classes** – Lead or assist with wellness, health education, or evidence-based programs.
- **Health Insurance Counseling Volunteers** – Help older adults understand Medicare and health insurance options through our counseling programs.
- **Computer Help and Technology Training** – Assist older adults with basic computer skills, smartphones, email, internet use, and accessing online services.

Whether you can give a few hours a week or help occasionally, your time can make a meaningful difference in someone’s life. Volunteering is also a wonderful way to stay active, meet new people, and strengthen our community.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with the **Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services**, please call **716-753-4471** to learn more and register.

Join us this April in celebrating National Volunteer Month and all the dedicated volunteers who make Chautauqua County a stronger, more connected community.

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



Shirley Vandenburg



Ellen Coffaro

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## Home Is Where Peace Lives

*Continued from Front Page*

comes through the door. I've carried this habit with me long after military life, and it's still a lifesaver. When you can sit down in one spot with your important paperwork, phone numbers, and upcoming dates right at your fingertips, the rest of the house, and the rest of life, feels so much more manageable.

### If It Doesn't Work for You, Let It Go

Moving constantly forced me to reckon with our belongings. When a move was upcoming, I started taking stock of the things we had collected along the way and began donating or disposing of anything we no longer used, was not sentimental, or did not fit into my lifestyle. You don't need a move to apply this tactic. As you tackle spring cleaning this year, pick up each item and ask yourself: would I pack this in a box and carry it to a new home? If the answer is no, thank it for its service and let it go. Donate it, gift it, or recycle it. Your closets and your mind will feel lighter.

### Make Every Room Do Its Duty

In small military housing, we couldn't afford wasted space. Every room had to have a clear purpose. The dining table was for meals and homework. The living room was for family time, not for backpacks, laundry, or toys that were not actively being played with. Give each space in your home a specific role this spring and let it serve that role with honor.

### Go on a Peacekeeping Mission

We all get overwhelmed by the outside world sometimes, and that's exactly why it's so important to create what I call "pockets of peace" in your home. Find the colors, styles, and activities that bring your family calm. Maybe that means setting Grandma's antique chair in a sunny corner with a plant and a stack of good books. Maybe it's a den decked out in Buffalo Bills gear to maximize the joy you get from watching Josh Allen jump over stuff. Whatever brings you and your family



Megan Keir featured at one of her most "Peaceful Homes".

peace, find a spot and make it your oasis from the chaos of life. You may think of this as a non-necessity, but I have learned that having a peaceful space where you can recharge gives you the rest, relaxation, and mental clarity you need to take care of the loads of things you must do every day.

### Be at Home Wherever You Are

Spring cleaning isn't really about scrubbing baseboards or reorganizing the pantry, though those things are satisfying too. At its heart, it's about creating a space where your family can land softly, where the outside world quiets down and the people you love most can just be together and enjoy time spent at home.

No matter how many times life uproots you, home is something you build with intention, not an address on a piece of paper. Chautauqua County will always be home to me, wherever I am, and I take it with me in my heart like a prized possession.

Happy spring, Chautauqua County.

**Megan Keir** (formerly Muzazc) is a native of Dunkirk, New York. She is a U.S. Army Veteran and graduate of American Military University. Megan has spent her civilian career as a Special Investigator, Intelligence Analyst, and Government Consultant. She has two children, Madelyn and Olivia. She currently resides in the Washington, D.C. area with her fiancé, Lewis, and her two dogs, Stanley and Rose.

## Pat's Pen with Pat Locke

# National Scrabble Day: April 13



Contributing Writer

**Pat Locke**

Every year on April 13, National Scrabble Day is recognized as a tribute to the timeless appeal of Scrabble and the simple pleasure of arranging letters into words. The day also honors the birthday of Alfred Mosher Butts, the inventor who turned language into a beloved tabletop pastime invented in 1931.

Originally called Lexiko and later Criss-Crosswords. The name Scrabble was trademarked in 1948 by James Brunot who bought the production rights which then solidified its place in popular culture with Scrabble having now been produced in 31 different languages and sold in 121 countries. Since its creation, more than 150 million sets have been sold worldwide, making Scrabble one of the most popular board games. Brunot chose the word, Scrabble because it is a real word originating from the Dutch word "schrabbelen". It is deemed the

perfect name to describe the action of trying to create words from limited tiled letters.

There's something quietly satisfying about the placing of letter tiles, the careful calculation of a triple-word score and the friendly debate over whether a word is actually in the dictionary. Scrabble invites us to think creatively and enjoy the beauty of words, one tile at a time. Whether you're a seasoned strategist or someone who simply enjoys placing a word across the board, the spirit of the day is the same in celebrating words and the connections they create.

Perhaps that's the true magic of Scrabble long after the tiles are returned to the box. The memories linger proving that sometimes the simplest game brings the richest reward. With every word formed and every friendly challenge, it reminds us that language connects us and sometimes the best conversations begin with just seven little letters. Whether you're chasing a triple-word score or simply enjoying the company, Scrabble continues to prove that the right words and the right moments never go out of style.

Scrabble isn't just about points or perfectly placed words. It's about the laughter, the quiet thinking between turns and the simple joy of sharing time together.



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# Geise Named to Regional Publication's Power 250 List

**CCIDA CEO recognized for economic development successes in Chautauqua County**

*Contributed by*

**County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency**

Mark Geise, Chautauqua County Deputy County Executive for Economic Development and CEO of the County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA), has again been named to Buffalo Business First's "Power 250" list.

The "Power 250" is an annual list of 250 people the newsroom staff at Buffalo Business First considers the most influential in the eight counties that make up Western New York: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming. In 2026, Geise ranked No. 192.

Geise was appointed Deputy County Executive for Economic Development and CCIDA CEO in March 2018. Since then, he has led efforts to grow and expand business opportunities in Chautauqua County, including overseeing expanded programs to help employers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past four years alone, under Geise's leadership, the CCIDA has assisted with \$1.74 billion in capital investment projects in Chautauqua County. These investments include, but are certainly not limited to, the Cummins Engine internal expansion project (\$452 million); Wells Enterprises Phase I, II, and III expansion efforts (\$512 million combined); development of shovel-ready sites in both the Town of Ripley (\$16 million) and the Town of Ellicott (\$600,000); relocation of Maplevale Farms, a long-time food distribution company (\$41.4 million); redevelopment of the White Inn in Fredonia (\$15+ million), and a multitude of housing projects aimed at providing modern housing options for county residents (\$109 million).

Geise also played a key role in creating and overseeing the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG), an initiative of CCIDA's component organization, the Chautauqua Region Economic Development Corp. (CREDC). In 2025, CCPEG obtained and awarded millions of dollars in economic development resources to support 51 public-private economic development projects across Chautauqua County. The partnership also provided \$400,610 in direct grant funding to 26 projects in 2025.

Under Geise's oversight, the CCIDA and CCPEG have also focused on talent attraction and retention through the Live CHQ marketing initiative, which promotes the benefits of living and working in the region.

Geise founded the Chautauqua County



Mark Geise, CCIDA CEO

Land Bank Corp., where he serves as Chairman of the Board. He also serves on the boards of the Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau; the Chautauqua County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board; the CCPEG Advisory Board; and Invest Buffalo Niagara, where he is a member of the Executive Committee.

"Mark Geise's continued recognition on Buffalo Business First's 'Power 250' list reflects the consistent, results-driven leadership he brings to economic development in Chautauqua County," said Chautauqua County Executive Paul "PJ" Wendel, Jr. "Under his direction, we've seen significant investment, strategic growth, and meaningful progress in strengthening our local economy. Mark's ability to build partnerships and move impactful projects forward continues to position our county for long-term success. On behalf of Chautauqua County, I congratulate Mark on this well-earned and continued recognition."

"While I appreciate being recognized by the team at Buffalo Business First for this prestigious honor, this recognition is only possible because of the hard-working team we have at the CCIDA, CCPEG, the Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Development, the County Executive's office, the Legislature, and many others," Geise said. "This recognition is not a personal achievement, but rather reflects the hard work and dedication our team continuously puts into making Chautauqua County an attractive place to do business — and a great place to live and raise a family."

Geise lives in Fredonia with his wife, Katie Geise, Executive Director of the Chautauqua County Workforce Investment Board (Chautauqua Works). They have three adult children: Mark, Aidan and Keely.

Buffalo Business First said the Power 250 list has been an annual feature since 2013 and highlights people making changes and improvements across Buffalo and Western New York. The list changes each year based on events, news, and promotions.

# Tea with HatTeas at the Marvin House

*Contributed by*

**The Marvin House**

The Elizabeth Warner Marvin House invites the community to a special luncheon event, Tea with HatTeas, on Thursday, April 23, featuring guest speaker Harriet Sessler, owner of HatTeas Tea House & Café.

This unique event is part of the Marvin House's Diamond Jubilee celebration, marking 75 years as a women's organization dedicated to preserving local history and fostering community engagement in Chautauqua County.

Guests will enjoy an elegant afternoon inside the historic Marvin House, often described as a "treasure trove" and "magnificent eye candy," known for its beautiful displays of teacups and teapots. The home will be styled in a traditional tea party setting for the occasion. For a touch of playful glamour, the first fifteen people who sign up will be invited to choose from the Marvin House's charming collection of vintage ladies' hats. It's a chance to step into another era, strike a pose, and let your inner grand dame twirl for an afternoon. Early sign-ups won't just reserve a seat at the table; they'll claim the opportunity to wear a vintage hat.

The luncheon menu will feature classic English scones with currants served with Devonshire cream and raspberry jam, entree is a savory spinach and feta crepe paired with a fresh citrus salad of leafy greens, mandarin oranges, and glazed almonds with citrus vinaigrette. Dessert will include bread pudding with bourbon sauce, along with coffee and tea.

Following the luncheon, Sessler will



Harriet Sessler, owner of HatTeas Tea House & Café

present a program exploring the history of tea, its cultural significance, and the distinctions between afternoon tea and high tea, including traditions rooted in British aristocracy.

"The Marvin House has served the region for 75 years, and this event is a wonderful way to celebrate that legacy while bringing the community together," organizers shared. "We invite guests to experience the charm of the house and enjoy an afternoon of history, hospitality, and connection."

**Event Details:**

Thursday, April 23

**Luncheon Tickets:**

\$21 for members, \$25 for guests

RSVP by April 20

**Email:**

marvinhouse@marvinhouse.com

**Phone:** 716-488-6206

The Marvin House encourages community members to attend this and other anniversary events throughout the year and to consider becoming members to help continue its mission.



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 ~ Mario Buatta



# Business of the Week

Celebrating Local Businesses & Giving them the Spotlight!



Editor-in-Chief

Katrina Fuller

As the green buds and blooms of Spring burst forth in these next few weeks, the chores that were left behind during the winter months also burst onto our to-do lists. Spring cleaning is usually intertwined with the season, but it doesn't have to be! This year, area families could spend their spring break deep-cleaning the garage. Or, Cynthia Messere could help plan the adventure your family has been dreaming about.

Messere is the founder of Tales of Travel: Enchanted Encounters, known by the acronym ToTEE, a local travel planning service specializing in Disney and Universal Studios destinations. Her origin story is exactly the kind you would expect from someone who makes magic her business.

"My biggest inspiration is my mother," Messere says. "She has the biggest heart and has always loved Disney. She goes every year, and one year, she brought us along. That trip changed everything for me."



Photography by Amanda Abers

## TALES OF TRAVEL ENCHANTED ENCOUNTERS: SKIP THE SCRUB BRUSH, GO ON AN ADVENTURE



Submitted Photo

**Cynthia Messere**  
Owner of Tales of Travel  
Enchanted Encounters

Messere said she felt the magic of Disney herself, and wants to help other families experience the feeling themselves. The fun she has had experiencing Disney with her own family is unmatched. She said the looks on her children's faces make it all worth it, and she can't wait to share the magic with her younger children as well.

"The magic there is real, and experiencing it together as a family left such a lasting impression," she said. "I wanted to take that feeling and share it with the world. Helping others experience that same joy is what inspired me to create Tales of Travel: Enchanted Encounters."

The magic of it all carries over into Messere's planning process, which is designed to be simple for clients and thorough behind the scenes. After an initial inquiry, Messere sends a planning form

and collects a \$5 professional planning service fee before work begins.

"It gives me everything I need to build a personalized itinerary," she said. "From there, I review their details: location, budget, dates and any special interests or events happening during their stay."

Messere then gets to work mapping out options, checking promotions and creating a value-centric plan that gets customers the best deals and the greatest experiences.

"I also guide them through the parks so they don't feel overwhelmed," she added. "My goal is for every client to show up knowing everything is handled — all they have to do is have fun."

Every detail is attended to. Messere said she works to account for each family's pace, interests and travel style, whether they are chasing thrills at Universal, celebrating a milestone at Walt Disney World or exploring Disney destinations around the world.

Messere said there is an advantage to working with a local specialized travel company like Tales of Travel: Enchanted Encounters.

"Instead of spending hours researching, guessing or hoping you didn't miss something, you have someone who

already knows the ins and outs," she said. "No two trips I plan are ever the same. You get expert guidance, insider knowledge and support every step of the way."

Messere said another highlight is supporting a local business while still making Disney trip dreams come true.

"I want people to know that I'm dedicated to my community," she said. "I love helping others, and I truly believe ToTEE can bring the magic back into people's lives. Whether it is your first trip or your tenth, I'm here to make it special."

Messere said her clientele is as broad as the parks themselves: families, couples, first-timers, solo travelers and seasoned Disney devotees.

"Anyone and everyone," she said. "If you want to visit Disney or Universal, I want to be part of your journey."

This spring, maybe skip the deep clean and start planning something worth remembering instead. Messere and her incredible Disney and Universal know-how are ready and waiting to bring a little magic to your life. To get in touch with Tales of Travel: Enchanted Encounters, email [MessereToTEE@gmail.com](mailto:MessereToTEE@gmail.com), or call (716) 518-4955. Follow ToTEE on Facebook for updates and travel tips.



**Cynthia Messere**  
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# TAX TIME



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## HOW LONG TO HANG ON TO YOUR TAX RETURNS

*Contributed by Metro Creative*

As individuals attempt to more effectively organize their homes, they may come across a familiar pile of documents that they might hesitate to discard. Conventional wisdom has suggested taxpayers hold on to their tax returns for at least seven years. However, the Internal Revenue Service indicates that the seven-year timeline is not necessarily applicable to everyone. The IRS recommends taxpayers speak with their insurance company or creditors to see if they require account holders to hold on their tax records longer than the IRS. If they don't, individuals can follow these guidelines, courtesy of the IRS.

1. Keep records for 3 years if situations (4), (5), and (6) below do not apply to you.
2. Keep records for 3 years from the date you filed your original return or 2 years from the date you paid the tax, whichever is later, if you file a claim for credit or refund after you file your return.
3. Keep records for 7 years if you file a claim for a loss from worthless securities or bad debt deduction.
4. Keep records for 6 years if you do not report income that you should report, and it is more than 25 percent of the gross income shown on your return.
5. Keep records indefinitely if you do not file a return.
6. Keep records indefinitely if you file a fraudulent return.
7. Keep employment tax records for at least 4 years after the date that the tax becomes due or is paid, whichever is later.

These can serve as guidelines taxpayers can follow if they are attempting to declutter at home but don't want to discard tax returns they might someday need. Taxpayers also can consult with their accountants or tax preparers for advice on how long to keep their returns. In addition, those who want to keep their returns can scan relevant return documents and then store them digitally on an external hard drive. This frees up space in a home and can calm any fears about discarding returns taxpayers may have.

## HOW CAN I FILE FOR AN EXTENSION?

*Contributed by Metro Creative*

There are three ways to request an automatic extension of time to file an income tax return.

1. You can pay all or part of your estimated income tax due and indicate that the payment is for an extension using your bank account; a digital wallet such as Click to Pay, PayPal, and Venmo; cash; or a credit or debit card.
2. You can file Form 4868 electronically by accessing IRS e-file using your tax software or by using a tax professional who uses e-file.
3. You can file a paper Form 4868 and enclose payment of your estimate of tax due (optional).

Tax day arrives on April 15. Taxpayers who have lingering questions about their returns are urged to contact the IRS via [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) or work with a certified tax professional.

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# Chautauqua Vegetarian Society April Meeting

Contributed by  
Chautauqua  
Vegetarian Society

The April meeting of the Chautauqua Vegetarian Society will be at 1:00 PM, Sunday, April 19, in Jamestown at the Seventh Day Adventist Church on McDaniel Street. Our guest speaker will be Vegan cookbook author Terri Groh.

Terri Groh began a plant-based whole food journey back in 2023 after a health scare and lost 73 lbs. within a year by eating a vegan, sugar and oil-free diet. She has written a cookbook, Simple & Nutritious: 52 Plant-based, Whole Food Recipes. Terri is passionate about cooking and baking and has turned her love into making delicious plant-based meals. She has a website, The Frugal Connection, as well as a You-Tube channel of the same name where she shows how a plant-based, whole food diet can be delicious and affordable.

Terri is consecrated and ordained with the Christian & Missionary Alliance, serving alongside her husband at Jamestown C&MA Church. She is also a published author of seven books,



Submitted Photo

Vegan cookbook author Terri Groh

as well as a public speaker speaking at different churches, retreats, and conferences.

Terri's desire is to encourage people to prioritize their health so that they can live full and rewarding lives.

This will be a Vegan potluck. Please bring a Vegan (no meat, dairy or egg ingredients) dish to share. The cost is \$2 if you bring a dish or \$6 without a dish. Please call Gail at 716-753-7761 to let us know that you are attending. RSVPs by the end of the day on Thursday, April 16 are appreciated.

# WOKE AND AWAKENING: BEING AWARE OF INJUSTICE

Alex Holt's topic is "Woke and Awakening: Being Aware of Injustice" when he speaks virtually at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown's 10:30 a.m. hybrid service this Sunday, April 19. The retired UU minister says, "The term 'woke' has been used as an insult, though its meaning is very simple. It also is directly related to the promise of awakening to our true 'self.' Can 'woke' be reclaimed in this urgent time?" All are welcome to the service at 1255 Prendergast Avenue. To participate virtually, use the link at [UUJamestown.org/calendar](http://UUJamestown.org/calendar).



Submitted Photo

# Energizing the Talent Pipeline

MOOG Endorses the Dream It Do It  
Advanced Manufacturing Program Certification

Contributed by  
Dream It Do It  
Western New York

MOOG is partnering with Dream It Do It Western New York to support efforts to build a talent pipeline into manufacturing careers. Representatives of MOOG officially endorsed the Dream It Do It Advanced Manufacturing Program (DIDIAMP) Certification. The certification is a regionally recognized manufacturers credential that has been designed by the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier in collaboration with students, teachers, counselors, principals and funders.

The certification requires students to engage manufacturing technology camps and manufacturing technology tours, acquire work experience in a manufacturing facility, demonstrate a strong work ethic, participate in manufacturing career cluster courses while in school and graduate from high school. Students as young as 13 years old can enroll in the DIDIAMP and start their journey toward the certification.

The DIDIAMP is designed to connect, engage, enrich, challenge and reward students on their way to manufacturing career pathways. Students enrolled in the program earn and accumulate electronic badges that can lead to one of four belt level certifications at graduation.

"MOOG has partnered with Dream It Do It to connect with students by hosting facility tours and taking part in camps and community events," said Jared Threat, Community Outreach Partner at MOOG. "The Dream It Do It Advanced Manufacturing Program Certification plays an important

role by giving students a platform to highlight their skills and career interests, while also allowing our organization to identify, engage, and recruit emerging talent. We view this program as a key component of our long-term approach to developing a strong talent pipeline for careers at MOOG."

"We look forward to building on our partnership with MOOG to foster stronger relationships with schools and create more meaningful connections between students and manufacturing careers," said Todd Trantum, President of Dream It Do It Western New York and Executive Director of the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier.

Dream It Do It Western New York (DIDIWNY) is energizing and building the early talent pipeline.



DIDIWNY is an initiative powered by the Buffalo Niagara Manufacturers Alliance and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier. To learn more about DIDIWNY go to [www.didiwny.com](http://www.didiwny.com).

### About the BNMA & MAST

The Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance (BNMA) and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier (MAST) are united in a strategic partnership to strengthen the regional manufacturing economy and advance shared priorities for growth, innovation, and competitiveness. Together, we leverage our combined networks, resources, and expertise to support manufacturers of all sizes with the talent, tools, and insights needed to succeed in a rapidly evolving global economy. Guided by a shared vision of a thriving, future-ready manufacturing ecosystem, our organizations are committed to driving economic prosperity and creating lasting opportunities across Western and Southern New York.

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*The Benefit this year will be donated to Ben and Mikayla Gauger family who lost everything in a recent house fire.*

## Spring Cleaning Checklist: A Mildly Chaotic Guide to Becoming a Better Person (or at Least Finding Your Floor Again)

Continued from Page 2

**Step 4: Clean Something You Usually Ignore**

Reminder: You are allowed to use the nice stuff now. You're alive! It's spring!

Baseboards, light switches, the top of the fridge, that one mysterious sticky spot on the floor you've been stepping over for months. Bonus points if you say, "Wow, this place looks amazing," after cleaning exactly one thing.

**Step 5: The "Junk Drawer of Truth"**

Set a timer for 5 minutes and clean like someone important is about to visit. Stop dramatically when the timer ends and say, "That's enough for today."

Dump it alllll out. Marvel at the 37 pens that don't work, the one key to a lock you no longer own, a charger for a device that existed at the turn of the century. Keep the things you recognize and release everything else.

Step 9: Add Something Fresh  
A plant (real or aspirational), flowers, or a candle that smells like you have your life together. This step is less about cleaning and more about emotional well-being.

**Step 6: The "Why Do I Own This?" Audit**

**Step 8: The Five-Minute Productivity Sweep**

Look around your slightly cleaner space. Ignore the one corner you avoided. Tell yourself you did your best and prepare your cleaning strategy for the next day. For now, enjoy the fruits of your labor: brew yourself a fresh cup of coffee, kick up your feet and relax on your freshly spruced up patio furniture, and breathe (that fresh spring air).

Walk through your home and pick up random objects. If your reaction is, "Huh... when did I get this?" consider donating. If your reaction is, "This sparks joy" congratulations, keep it! If your reaction is, "This might be important someday" it probably will not be.

**Step 7: Bathroom Cabinet Reality Check**

Remember, the spring cleaning ritual, like the New Years resolution, doesn't demand perfection. Instead, embrace the progress you've made, celebrate the fresh starts, and throw away that instruction manual you've been holding onto "just in case."

Throw out expired products. Be honest about products you tried once and hated and the fancy things you're "saving" for no reason.

## PUT SOME SPRING IN YOUR CLEANING STEP

Courtesy of  
**Metro Creative**

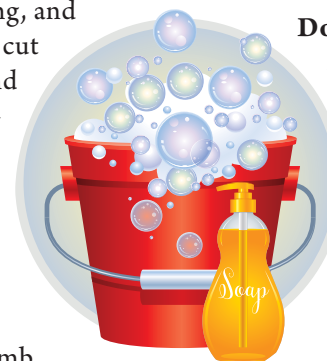
Spring is the season of nature's rebirth. Trees and flowers begin to bloom anew each spring, and young animals can be seen frolicking with their parents. During a time when it seems like the entire planet gets a refresh, many homeowners turn their thoughts to refreshing their homes as well.

at the ceiling and working down towards the floors will help people avoid having to clean the same surface twice.

Using a duster or a microfiber cloth, individuals can clear cobwebs from corners and dust from crown molding. Fingerprints will accumulate near light switches and door handles, so those areas should be wiped down, too.

As the days lengthen and the weather warms, spring cleaning takes center stage. Spring cleaning is more extensive than simply washing away grime, as cleaning a home often offers a psychological reset for the coming months. A clear strategy can make the task of spring cleaning feel less daunting, and these tips can help cut down on clutter and other interior annoyances that have arisen after months spent indoors.

Homeowners can conduct a thorough cleaning of heating and cooling output and intake vents as they likely have gathered dust over the winter. A down of floor moldings can get to any area near the floor or under furniture that doesn't get frequent cleaning.



**Do a kitchen reset**

Focusing attention on the kitchen, which tends to be the busiest room in the house, is a wise idea for spring cleaning plans. This is the time for individuals to pull everything out of the refrigerator and pantry and check for expiration dates. Wiping down the shelves means cleaning away any accumulated food drips or spills. Additional areas to consider include behind the refrigerator, inside the dishwasher filter and inside the microwave.

**Declutter before cleaning**

The rule of thumb when starting on spring cleaning is to combat clutter before cleaning. Trying to clean around clutter is inefficient and may result in throwing in the towel prematurely. It is important to remove as much as possible from each room before you begin cleaning. As homeowners move through each room, they can assess whether they've used items in the last year or whether they serve any functional or aesthetic purposes. If not, they can be trashed or donated.

**Focus on air quality**

It's key to replace the HVAC system filters come springtime, as well as any air purifiers in the home. This will help reduce allergens and ensure that the cooling system will run efficiently when it's time to turn it on.

**Move top to bottom**

It's important to follow the rules of science when spring cleaning. That means that dust and debris will be affected by gravity. Engaging in a top-down approach will help make cleaning more efficient. Beginning

Spring cleaning takes place each year. Prioritizing decluttering and following a systematic path through the home helps people eliminate stress and mess at the same time.

*"A clean house is a happy house."*

~ Louisa May Alcott

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

**PUZZLES ON PAGE 17**

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## WNY Forward Fund Announces New Grant Opportunity for Improving Civic Health and Building Common Ground

*Collaborative funders group seeks Expressions of Interest for two-year grants from organizations working on rapid response in protecting democracy and civic infrastructure building*

Contributed by  
**Western New York Forward Fund**

The Western New York Forward Fund, a collaborative effort of local funders, has announced its second grant opportunity with a call for “Expressions of Interest (EOI)” from nonprofit organizations who are working to protect human rights and democracy, and to expand civic engagement and activation. This focus on civic health is defined as strong connections between residents, robust relationships between people and public institutions, and positive attachments that people have to the places they live.

Established and emerging nonprofit organizations focused on rapid response and building civic infrastructure throughout the eight counties of Western New York (Niagara, Erie, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Allegany, Wyoming, Genesee, and Orleans) are invited to apply.

A total of \$1 million is available to fund organizations over a two-year period with anticipated grants to be between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per organization, per year. Funding can be used for general operating purposes, and simplified reporting will be required. The EOI is a short online questionnaire, and then meetings with finalists will be held for discussions to learn more before final awards are determined. Parameters for the funding were developed based on input from organizations operating in the field. The deadline for applying is April 20 at 4 p.m. and notification of grant awards will be in late May. An informational webinar is planned for April 13 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. for organizations interested in learning more. More information and the application can be found at [www.WNYForwardFund.org](http://www.WNYForwardFund.org).

Current grants are available for activities to protect human rights and increase community voice by expanding access to democracy and decision makers in two priority areas:

- **Rapid Response to Protecting Democracy and Civil Rights:** Flexible funds to support community protection, engagement, and activation activities and stop-gap funding for on-the-ground engagement, organizing, and activation.
- **Civic Infrastructure Building:** Coordination and infrastructure building to plan for and implement strategies and activities to mobilize residents for meaningful, sustained civic participation, and research and campaign planning for local policy and practice changes.

Funders identified civic health and building common ground as priority areas as more communities across the country are working to protect constitutional rights and recognizing that democratic participation requires outreach and training to ensure safety and effectiveness. The grant funding is intended to support groups that are coordinating, engaging, training, and mobilizing citizens in advocacy and rapid response in protecting democracy, and organizations working to increase civic participation to build an engaged and informed citizenry and a future grounded in freedom and justice for all.

The WNY Forward Fund was created in 2025 and includes 14 local funders who have contributed approximately \$2.6 million to the Fund to spark innovation, strengthen capacity, and support nonprofits as they adapt to shifting conditions and reimagine how to best use community resources. The multi-year commitment is designed to help ensure that the WNY community and the nonprofit sector remain strong, resilient, and equipped to adapt in the face of recent changes that have created financial strain, rapid change and deep uncertainty while community need is increasing. Improving civic health and building common ground is one of three priority areas designated by the collaboration. Other priorities include exploring opportunities for the formation of strategic alliances & nonprofit resiliency, and sector support for communications and storytelling. An initial grant opportunity for exploring strategic alliances awarded \$378,690 in grants to 18 organizations in February.

WNY Forward Fund has already provided funding to support the Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project (ECBAVLP) to support participation in the Upstate Immigration Pro Bono Collaborative and supported efforts to strengthen local news in Western New York.

WNY Forward Fund collaborators include The Buffalo Bills Foundation, The Celia Lipton & Victor W. Farris Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, the Health Foundation for Western & Central New York, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Fund, James H. Cummings Foundation, The John R. Oishei Foundation, KeyBank, Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, M&T Bank, The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation, Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, and The Western New York Foundation. The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo manages the Fund.

To learn more about the WNY Forward Fund go to [WNYForwardFund.org](http://WNYForwardFund.org).

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