

Tompkins Weekly

Jan 8 - Jan 14, 2025

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FREE

Town of Dryden to hold another hearing about fire contracts

The Dryden Town Board is going through the motions after it decided to not renew its contract with the Etna Fire Department.



By Kevin L. Smith

The town renewed contracts for the Dryden, Varna and Freeville fire departments for 2025 — except for Etna. A proposal was on the table to fund Etna’s department, but the proposal

failed to gain traction.

The decision not to renew the Etna Fire Department contract comes after town officials stopped funding to the Brooktondale Fire Department near the beginning of November last year.

The town board approved the tax levy for the fire protection district at its Nov. 14 meeting, but it did not approve contract amounts.

A handful of volunteers and supporters of the Etna Fire Department attended the Dec. 12 public hearing on the contracts. But a proper legal notice on the hearing had not been provided, an omission that needed to be rectified.

Now, members of the community surrounding the Etna Fire Department have a second chance to voice their opinions at a public hearing on Thursday, Jan. 9. The legal notice, which ran on Dec. 28, noted that the hearing will also include the reaffirmation of the contract amounts for each fire department.

Kristy Lynn spoke on behalf of the Etna Fire Department on Facebook:

“Dryden community, we at the Etna [Fire Department] would like to say thanks for all the support given over the years that we have served the community. The elected town board members have decided that it is in the best interest of the community to lose a fire department by not contracting with the department. However, they have no regard to the homeowners whose property insurance will go up, not only from having the fire department farther away but the loss of 6,000 gallons of water will affect the town’s ISO rates that in turn affects every homeowner in the town. With the volunteers at an all-time low, I am not sure why a town would want to lose a department and its volunteers. If you have anything to say or would like the Etna Fire Department to remain in your community, go to the public hearing on

See FIRE on pg 7

Local activities and attractions sure to brighten even the grayest winter day



Photo by Simon Wheeler

Visitors to the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art view 19th century American and European art in a “salon” setting. The museum is free to the public and is open now through Jan. 19 from Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Beginning on Jan. 21, the museum will be open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

By Jaime Cone Hughes
Managing Editor

Though the cold winter months of the new year can feel endlessly long, they are also an ideal time to discover some cozy escapes. Fight the post-holiday slump with these educational and uniquely Tompkins County pastimes that will fill your days with thrills, spills, beauty and delight.

Atlas Bowl

This Trumansburg bowling alley has 10-pin bowling in a lounge setting with seven vintage lanes, as well as a recently installed candle-pin lane. It has been completely restored to 1960s-era lanes and offers a nostalgic experience with old-fashioned hand scoring. Bumpers and ramps are available free of charge for little rollers.

“Atlas is a great family activity that’s family-friendly,” Trumansburg Village Mayor Rordan Hart said.

Atlas offers elevated comfort food with a menu that includes eclectic shareable plates, griddle-cooked burgers, entrees and a kids’ menu. The full-service bar serves classic and modern cocktails alongside wines, hard ciders and craft and domestic beers. The signature cocktail menu changes seasonally.

Atlas hosts QuizBowl Trivia Night

Wednesdays at 7:30 with a first-place team prize of a \$25 gift card. Every Thursday from 7 to 10 p.m. is Vinyl Night, when local DJs and vinyl collectors spin a variety of tunes.

“The [Dalai Lama] learning center is a great place to visit. There are artifacts on display, and it’s a really peaceful place for people to go. They really want people to come in and do some reflection on their own.”

ROB MONTANA

Communications Manager, Visit Ithaca

Bowling hours start at 4 p.m., with the kitchen open from 4 to 9 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. The bar is open 4 to 10 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, and 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Atlas Bowl is located at 61 W. Main St., Trumansburg. Bowling and dining reservations can be made on Atlas’ website, atlasbowl.com.

Art Seek Pass

Visit Ithaca’s Art Seek Pass offers a tour experience that takes users to 20 sites across the county, guided by a free mobile website where participants can check in and earn prizes, including an Ithaca Murals coloring book and travel sketchbook.

“It’s a way for people to explore

public art, and a lot of it is in Ithaca,” said Rob Montana, communications manager at Visit Ithaca. “There are murals, sculptures and different things like that. It’s just a way for people to be guided to some of the more notable public art in Tompkins County.”

Many of the stops on the Art Seek Pass highlight the work of Ithaca Murals, a nonprofit network of people transforming gray walls into beautiful, meaningful works of art that tell the stories of the diverse people who live here. Some of the most notable murals include a tribute to the local connections to the Underground Railroad, acknowledgment of the native land that Ithaca was built upon and countless utility boxes that have been decorated with unique creations.

Though many of the Art Seek destinations are in Ithaca, the tour takes visitors all around Tompkins County.

“It’s really cool,” Montana said. “Something people have been asking about is, ‘How can we see public art?’ That’s something we’re hearing from visitors that is of interest, and it highlights some of the stuff that is off the beaten path.”

For more information and to download the pass, visit visitithaca.com/things-to-do/arts-culture/outdoor-art.

See ACTIVITIES on pg 8

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Tompkins Weekly

GROTON GIRLS WRESTLING

Top row (left to right): Team manager Madison DeGraw, Remi Marshall, Leontine Evans, Zavanna Evans, Lacy Batzer, head coach Jayme Evans
Bottom row (left to right): Brooke Sovocool, Phoebe Bishop, Carmen Bishop

STATS:

- First-ever girls wrestling varsity team in school history
- Placed in the top 8 at all 4 invitationals they competed in
- Phoebe Bishop: 12-0 record, won all 4 invitationals at the 94 weight class
- Carmen Bishop: 19-1 record, won 3 invitationals at the 126 weight class
- Leontine Evans: 14-2 record, won 2 invitationals at the 235 weight class
- Remi Marshall: 9-4 record, won 1 invitational at the 114 weight class

Photo Credit: Adrian Mitchell, Old Stage Photo

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TOMPKINS TEAMS OF THE MONTH DECEMBER 2024

LANSING BOYS BASKETBALL

Top row (left to right): William Stallone, Seneca Scott, head coach Joey Volpicelli, Jordan Sidle, Jackson Tarbert. Middle row (left to right): Korbin Pape, Aiden Vooris, Ryan Pettograsso-Houk, Jaxson Mayo Bottom row (left to right): Kaleb Geiger, Ryan Thompson, Logan Mayo Not pictured: Asher Benson

STATS:

- 7-0 record in December
- Only undefeated team in the IAC
- 1 of 3 undefeated teams in Section IV
- Outsourcing opponents by an average of 62.0-46.6
- Lansing Tip Off Tournament champions
- Ranked #6 in the state in Class B

Photo Credit: Adrian Mitchell, Old Stage Photo

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Our question, your answers

Street Beat

By Jaime Cone Hughes

What are you looking forward to most about 2025?



Being a better man.
Knowing God better and following Him better.
Bill, Waverly



Going to Florida in February.
Annie, Ithaca



More time with friends and family.
Mark, Ithaca



Peace on Earth
Don (with Nikki and Cody), Lansing



Taking cruises in the Caribbean.
Marie, Lansing

Advantage Sport & Fitness acquired by Amenity Collective

Advantage Sport & Fitness Inc. (ASF) founder, president and co-owner John Murray conceived of the idea for the company “in 1987 in my basement,” as Murray put it with a chuckle. At the time, he was working at Tompkins Community Medical Center, now called Cayuga Medical Center, while coaching wrestling at Ithaca College, where he led his team to multiple national championships.

The locally owned company has since grown to be a leader in the commercial fitness industry, with a showroom in Triphammer Marketplace and a sales territory that includes nine states. ASF recently announced that it has been acquired by The Amenity Collective, a wholly owned subsidiary of FirstService Corporation.

The Amenity Collective is North America’s leading provider of full-service facilities management across the fitness, aquatics and recreation industries. This partnership marks a new chapter for ASF, enabling enhanced capabilities and expanded market reach while reinforcing the company’s commitment to providing concept-to-completion commercial fitness equipment solutions and after-the-sale customer service that creates “best-in-class” fitness facilities.

The company’s journey began when, through his work at the medical center, Murray’s clients started approaching him for recommendations on where to purchase a treadmill. There were no treadmill retailers in the area at the time, so Murray called a treadmill manufacturer directly.

“The guy on the phone said, ‘Sounds like you know what you’re talking about. Why don’t you sell our treadmills?’” Murray said.

This sparked a new passion for Murray, and as his success at Ithaca College grew to include back-to-back national championship titles in 1989 and 1990, Murray started his small business. But he needed someone with computer skills to help get it off the ground. His college roommate, John Pfuntner, turned out to be an ideal business partner.

Murray and Pfuntner split equal ownership of the company. With the showroom located at Triphammer Marketplace and also their administrative offices and a warehouse, ASF is the largest tenant of that mall, though most of its presence is out of sight.

In 2010 the duo hired John Marcotte, who helped expand the company into the South and across the northeast, with a sales territory that currently includes Florida, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, New England, Washington, D.C., Long Island and New York City. Marcotte eventually became a



Photo by Jaime Cone Hughes

Advantage Sport & Fitness Inc. (ASF) recently announced that it has been acquired by The Amenity Collective. From left to right: John Pfuntner, ASF vice president, director of business operations and co-owner, John Marcotte, vice president of sales and marketing, and John Murray, ASF president, founder and co-owner.

10% owner in the company.

ASF has become the premier distributor of Precor commercial fitness equipment on the U.S. east coast and a trusted partner for fitness facility design, equipment installation and service.

In addition to its exclusive Precor partnership, ASF represents fitness brands such as Peloton, Escape Fitness and Power Lift, serving a diverse client base that includes multifamily properties, schools, universities, country clubs and corporate fitness centers.

“We really have put together a great team, which is why Amenity looked at us and said, ‘This is the company we want to buy.’”

**John Murray, President
ADVANTAGE SPORT & FITNESS**

The company also recently established a 51,000-square-foot warehouse in Greenville, South Carolina.

“So, basically, I’ve grown the company,” Murray said. “My role is visionary architect. I say, ‘Well, we ought to do this.’” Murray’s ambition is balanced by Pfuntner’s practicality.

“I’m risk tolerant, and he’s risk averse,” Murray said of his longtime business partner. “He’s always assessing all the risks and has done an amazing job, and that’s the beauty in our partnership — the tension. That’s been the secret sauce of our success, along with the talented John Marcotte, who is a great sales leader.”

Murray, who is 68, said he plans to be involved in the company for at least five more years in order to fully accomplish his vision of “a great, enduring company.”

“Eventually, my vision is that we would be doing something from Maine to Miami, and I think we can execute that because we have a com-

pany behind us that will allow us to financially execute our vision in a way that would have taken a lot more time for us to do it, and would also be riskier for us to do,” he said.

“With the acquisition, we as a company will immediately grow to have 40 sales reps and 40 service technicians on the East Coast,” Murray added.

“We’re dedicated to building lasting relationships with successful brands, and our partnership with Advantage Sport & Fitness aligns seamlessly with our organization’s growth vision,” said Brian Sheehan, CEO of The Amenity Collective. “We’re thrilled to partner with such a talented, high-performance team of great people and business professionals. Now, as North America’s largest fitness distributor, we’re eager to combine our resources and decades of experience to create added value for stakeholders, additional opportunities for our team members, and continue delivering the exceptional service our clients rely on.”

Over the years, Murray assembled a team that included many wrestlers, including Ohio State Hall of Fame inductee Mitch Clark, whom Murray said he has known since Clark was five years old.

“[Clark] has been with us for 18 years, and over that period of time he would be our number-one salesperson,” Murray said, adding that former Cornell University wrestler Matt Bogumil is also one of his top-performing salespeople and has been with the company for 17 years.

The company has become a family business, employing both of Murray’s twin daughters and Pfuntner’s daughter, as well.

“We really have put together a great team,” Murray said, “which is why Amenity looked at us and said, ‘This is the company we want to buy.’ Our journey has a new chapter, and I’m committed to be in it for at least five years.”

Plans begin for Route 34 culvert project in Lansing

The town of Lansing Highway Department provided some updates on the potential culvert replacement project for the structure on New York state Route 34 at the bottom of the hill, near the Merrill Family Sailing Center on East Shore Drive. The culvert runs under the highway.



By Eddie Velazquez

The project could take up to two years, according to Mike Moseley, the town of Lansing’s highway superintendent. Moseley spoke about the project during his monthly report at the Lansing Town Board meeting on Dec. 18.

“It’s going to be a process,” he said. “It’s a process of land easement and land acquisition. I think you’re probably talking two years plus before they can get everything put together.” The meeting’s minutes indicate that the town is looking at a 2027-2028 timeline for this project.

“The good thing on this project is that the state is talking about lining this, so we wouldn’t have to open-cut the road necessarily,” Moseley said. “We’d be making sure that the concrete structure

is able to accept a liner, versus it being all pitted, and maybe having some rebar signature where that would work. So, we have to fix it enough so the liner can go through and we’d be good to go.”

The project would also likely involve new traffic control measures in the area while the work is being done.

“There’s a lot of problems out there,” Moseley said.

“Traffic control will change to one lane at a time with automated signals.”

MIKE MOSELEY
Highway Superintendent, Town of Lansing

Moseley said that state officials have told him that traffic control changes would occur in similar ways to those seen for other roadway projects in the region.

“Traffic control will change to one lane at a time with automated signals,” he said. It is unclear when these new traffic control arrangements will impact the area.

At the meeting, the board also award-



Photo by Jaime Cone Hughes

Replacing this culvert, located next to Merrill Family Sailing Center at 1,000 East Shore Drive, was a topic of discussion at a recent Lansing Town Board meeting.

ed retiring Lansing Planning Board member Larry Sharpsteen a resolution thanking him for 40 years spent on the board. Sharpsteen and town board member Joseph Wetmore discussed how their differences have made for good government in the town.

“I just want to thank Larry for 40 years of helping out the town,” Wetmore said. “I know you and I don’t always agree, and I think that’s a good thing. I think we need to push back on each other, and I appreciate all the times you pushed

back on me.”

Sharpsteen largely agreed.

“That is healthy,” Sharpsteen said. “Disagreement is often healthy. It keeps us all thinking.”

Town board member Laurie Hemmings also thanked Sharpsteen for mentoring her during their time on the planning board.

“I, too, wanted to thank you, Larry,” Hemmings said. “I learned a lot from

See CULVERT on pg 7

Outlook for the rest of the Newfield school year

The Newfield Central School District (CSD) has entered the second half of its 2024-25 school year.



By Kevin L. Smith

The district will soon go into the first of three sessions for STAR testing. Newfield CSD superintendent Eric Hartz said STAR is an assessment “utilized to test students’ reading levels.”

The districtwide assessment is also a tool that is used for math, Hartz said. The first session is Jan. 6-17, followed by a session in late May and another in early June.

Hartz noted that the elementary school is in its third year of STAR assessment, while middle and high school

students will enter the second year of testing. Hartz added that STAR testing has also been used during the summer for the district’s early learning program.

“The new doors in the elementary school coming soon and the upcoming capital project are primarily safety and security upgrades.”

TIM PAYNE
Board of Education Vice President, Newfield Central School Board

“This is one of the most important assessments we have,” Hartz said. “It gives students and teachers a starting point and end-of-year growth measure,



Photo provided

As part of the Newfield Central School District capital outlay project, there will soon be several new doors at the elementary school.

seeing if they are on grade level or what gains they have made. This also assists teachers with reading groups and which areas are most needed for each student. You have to have a good assessment and measure to ensure solid reading programs for students.”

Christina Ward, Newfield CSD’s board of education (BOE) president, sees STAR testing as “extremely beneficial” for the district.

“Prior to establishing the benchmark testing, I feel the district lacked the ability to measure areas of need and progress in order to improve student literacy, mathematical computation and graduation rates,” Ward said. “The testing maps a series of data points for individual students, as well as whole grade levels, which provides feedback to educators on where more remedial or enrichment attention is needed. Knowledge of the data also helps to align curriculum districtwide from grade to grade and to district goals.”

Aside from testing, the district will be-

gin some project construction. As part of its capital outlay project, there will soon be several new doors at the elementary school. Hartz said the current doors have aged out and “served their purpose.”

The capital outlay project will segue into the district’s larger \$21 million capital improvements project. This project will include upgrades to the elementary school, the bus garage and more.

The capital improvements project construction will begin in late May at the bus garage, Hartz said, followed by various locations of site work throughout the district grounds.

Hartz added that updates will be provided this month and in February, as Newfield CSD awaits approval from the New York State Education Department for a majority of the work.

“The new doors in the elementary school coming soon and the upcoming

See SCHOOL on pg 7

TompkinsWeekly

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TOMPKINS WEEKLY

January 8 - January 14, 2025

REBOOT Recovery: A course to cope with crisis or trauma offered in Groton

In fall 2023, after more than 25 years under the oversight of Groton Assembly of God Church (GAOG), the Groton Food Pantry in the Joyce Crouch Benevolence Building (JCBB), 101 McKinley Ave., moved to 122 Spring St. and became the Groton Community Cupboard.



By Linda

By Linda
Competillo

Since then, Sam Neno, senior pastor of GAOG, and the church leadership have been gearing up for a use for the JCBB that would address the needs of the community with a different focus. To that end, Sam and his wife, Penny, will co-lead REBOOT Recovery there. REBOOT Recovery is a 12-week course focused on practical help for anyone struggling to cope with crisis or trauma. The course will be open to anyone in the community who is interested in finding solutions to such life issues.

“Bruce Stotts [a member of GAOG] has been working hard heading up renovating the Benevolence building,” Sam said, “and anyone who had ever seen it before will be amazed at the transformation!”

Sam has lived his entire life in the town of Groton, but in the Lansing Central School District (LCSD). He is a 1980 LCSD alumnus and earned his associate's degree in liberal arts from Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). He went on to SUNY Binghamton, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees in English with a creative writing emphasis.

Penny, a 1981 alumna of Skaneateles High School, earned her bachelor's degree in English at SUNY Binghamton, after she garnered her associate's in humanities from Onondaga Community College. Penny earned a master's in teaching at SUNY Cortland, where she was also an adjunct professor for five years.

Sam spent 13 years as an adjunct teacher at TC3 and 16 years at Stewart Howe Alumni Services, but he believes his foundation for counseling began when he attended SUNY Binghamton.

"I was an RA [resident assistant] and progressed up to being a resident director with a staff of six RAs under me," Sam said. "I did a lot of counseling during that time and enjoyed that more

than my studies! I trained for counseling officially later, but that gave me a taste for it, and being bullied in grade school and middle school taught me compassion for others.”

It was SUNY Binghamton where Sam and Penny met in April 1985. They were married January 1, 1986, and have since raised three children and added seven grandchildren to their family.

“Most of us have experienced trauma of some sort. ... We’re wounded, but not broken. Wounds can heal.”

PENNY NENO

Life Group coordinator and pastor's wife, Groton Assembly of God Church

“I was a pastor-in-training at GAOG from 2000 to 2002 under Pastor Bob Richardson,” Sam said. “He was my mentor, and I am so thankful for him. When he was called to another church, I became the pastor in 2002. Penny became the Sunday School coordinator in 2001, and still is today, although the classes are now called Life Groups.”

Since becoming the senior pastor of GAOG, Sam has had numerous opportunities for counseling, but he always refers people to professionals when he knows the issues are beyond his ability. Sadly, he said it has “become increasingly difficult to find professionals to refer people who are struggling with life to,” and there are often long wait lists. He explained the depth of the most recent training that both he and Penny have taken to further their ability to help people in need.

“Two years ago, the General Council of the Assemblies of God partnered with the American Association of Christian Counselors to help train pastors in mental health coaching,” Sam explained. “Penny and I took 45- to 60-minute online classes with tests after each class for two years, and [we] earned a certificate for Mental Health Coach, First Responder Training through Light University.”

While taking those classes, Sam and Penny were introduced to REBOOT Recovery. After taking a short five-week course, they both enrolled in the full



Photo by Linda Competillo

Sam Neno, senior pastor of Groton Assembly of God, sits in his dining room at home as he works on preparing for Reboot Recovery – a course dealing with trauma recovery. He and his wife, Penny, will be co-teaching it weekly, beginning January 22. Open to all interested.

training program. Both said they knew they wanted to bring REBOOT Recovery to the Groton community. They emphasized that it is a course, not a support group, providing practical help for anyone struggling to cope with crisis or trauma. You won't find shortcuts or easy answers, but instead you'll find solutions that last. It is peer-led and outcome-based, where participants can discover that there is hope after trauma.

“Most of us have experienced trauma of some sort,” Penny said, “but what I took away from the training most is that we’re wounded, but not broken. Wounds can heal.”

The course will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays from Jan. 22 through April 9. There will be free child care, and a light meal will be provided before each class. Family members may attend with the person who signs up, but it is required that the main participant register at rebootrecovery.com. Click on “Join a Course,” then “Trauma REBOOT.” From there, search for “NY – Groton” in the location field of the sign-up sheet. There is a \$25 fee due at the time of sign-up for the cost of a workbook, but everything else is free of charge. Call or text Sam Neno at 607-898-5163 with questions.

Groton on the Inside appears every

week in Tompkins Weekly. Submit story ideas to editorial@vizellamedia.com or text or call Linda at 607-227-4922.

In brief:

Ridge Runners spaghetti supper

The Groton Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club will hold a spaghetti supper from 4:30 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11, at its clubhouse, 748 Salt Rd. Meals include spaghetti and meatballs and a side salad. Cost is \$14 for adults, \$12 for senior citizens, and \$10 for children aged 5-12. Children 4 and under may eat for free. Take-out dinners are also available.

New Story Walk

Toni Yuly's "Some Questions About Trees" is the new Story Walk book on the trail behind Groton Memorial Park this winter. This charming picture book celebrates a child's sense of curiosity about the world around her.

American Legion blood drive

The Groton American Legion Post 800 will sponsor a community blood drive through the American Red Cross in the Legion Hall, 307 Main St., from 3 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 29. To schedule an appointment to donate please call 800-733-2767 or visit www.redcross-blood.org.

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New Park in Ulysses ushers in new era with road sign

Sara Abernethy, the owner and operator of New Park Event Venue and Suites in the town of Ulysses, is ready for her business to make the jump from Finger Lakes hidden gem to a staple of the region for tourists and residents planning their next big event.



By Eddie Velazquez

Part of that starts with a new, recognizable, locally commissioned road sign to draw attention to the venue, which is known for hosting picturesque weddings and providing quaint and charming accommodations to visitors. But beyond that, Abernethy said she has plans for the near future that will continue growing New Park into a linchpin of social life in the Finger Lakes.

“We do a lot of weddings, showers, parties, events and a lot of other important gatherings,” Abernethy said, describing one half of her business.

The other half of her venture, a hotel with suites inspired by an Irish cottage look and vibe, contributes to New Park staying in business year-round — even when events season is waning, Abernethy said.

“We have seven rooms, and we rent them one or two nights to anyone if they just go to our website and book them,” she said. “We actually stay really busy year round, even when it’s not event season. But this year, we’re just as booked with events, more booked in the winter than we’ve ever been, so we’re still kind of running at almost full speed right now.”

In order to take the next step, Abernethy said she wants to draw more attention to the venue.

“I’ve been passively looking for a sign for two years,” Abernethy said in a social media post. “As we got busier as a wedding venue and a hotel, we started getting complaints that the entrance was hard to see from the road, and people

would pass it and have to turn around.” To remedy that, Abernethy wrote that New Park has had to resort to balloons and chalkboard signs by the roadside.

“I’ve even had people stand at the road,” she wrote. “I knew we needed a sign ... but it had to be special. It had to reflect the personality of New Park, be an introduction into the whimsical village that you’re about to enter into.”

The sign, which features an idiosyncratic frog, was a perfect match, Abernethy said. She found the concept for the sign while visiting local artist Jay Seaman. Seaman, an internationally recognized artist from the Finger Lakes, said the sign just worked. He said that he is familiar with New Park through both Abernethy and the previous owners of the event space and hotel.

“I used a timber frame structure that holds up a large copper frog,” Seaman said, describing his process. The timber frame is made of white oak from Woodhouse Timber Frame Company, a wood-working shop in Mansfield, Pennsylvania. Woodhouse is owned by Seaman’s brother.

“This year, we’re just as booked with events, more booked in the winter than we’ve ever been, so we’re still kind of running at almost full speed right now.”

SARA ABERNETHY

Owner and Operator, New Park Event Venue and Suites

“I think this is around 12 or 14 feet tall, and so it’s prominent enough for people to notice it, and it does the job,” Seaman noted.

Seaman said that he approached the sign and sculpture in the way he typically does, with a chance to show his versatility and an aim to wow his clients.

“As an artist, you kind of have to be willing to do what people want, so you have to be very versatile with different

mediums and different designs and keep everybody happy,” he said. “That’s the nice thing about what I do, is that everything I turn out, it just kind of puts a smile on people’s faces. It’s very uplifting, very happy. I like to do things that are very eye-catching and get the wow factor going.”

The future for New Park

This upcoming summer, Abernethy said the venue will offer a live music series with themes that pair popular drinks and cocktails with musical acts. Abernethy said a newly obtained liquor license will help the venue offer more events that are open to the public.

“It’s going to be on a weekday, because the weekends are all packed with weddings, and we’re going to call them ‘Fire-side Sessions,’” she added. “We know a lot of musicians who are planning on doing acoustic sets out around the fire. We might focus on something like dessert and bourbon, that sort of thing, but we are still coming up with little spins for these events.”

Ulysses Connection appears every week in Tompkins Weekly. Send story ideas to editorial@vizellamedia.com. Contact Eddie Velazquez at edvel37@gmail.com or on X (formerly Twitter) @ezvelazquez.

In brief: Holiday recycling tips from the New York state Department of Environmental Conservation:

Electronics

Did you receive a new television, computer or other electronic device during the holidays? Looking to get rid of the old one for free? Electronic waste, such as televisions, computers and other covered electronic equipment, does not belong in your recycling bin or garbage. Visit <https://www.call2recycle.org/locator> to find a recycling location near you.

Batteries

Make it a New Year’s resolution to clear out your old batteries. Every used battery deserves a home, but they don’t belong in your garbage or recycling bin. Bring rechargeables back to their first home, the store where you bought them! Retail stores that sell rechargeable batteries or products accept used rechargeable batteries for recycling at no charge. Single-use batteries can be recycled at Staples stores, or check with your local



Photo by Sara Abernethy
A new, locally commissioned road sign at New Park Event Venue and Suites in Ulysses signals that the event space is ready for the new year ahead.

municipality for more options.

Give your Christmas tree a second life

If you have a real Christmas tree, choose from options that keep your tree out of the landfill and benefit wildlife and the planet:

- If you have space in your yard, consider using your tree as a brush pile for the birds. Not only will the pile provide extra shelter for feathered friends during the cold winter months, it’ll also give you some excellent backyard bird-watching opportunities!
- Some farms accept Christmas trees for their goats to munch on the vitamin C-rich needles. Be sure to confirm that the farm near you is currently accepting Christmas trees.
- View tips on making your own brush pile and more on how to give your real Christmas tree a second life here: <https://realchristmastrees.org/all-about-trees/how-to-recycle/>
- Remember, Christmas trees (real or fake) do not belong in your home recycling bin.

Obituaries

Celebrating Lives, Honoring Memories

RECENT DEATH NOTICES

Name:	Age:	Town, State:	Death Date:	Arrangements:
Linda Avery	77	Dryden, NY	Jan-5	Perkins Funeral Home
Ellen Kay Mitterer	85	Trumansburg NY	Jan-5	Ness-Sibley Funeral Home
Thomas Martin Butler	77	Ithaca, NY	Jan-2	Lansing Funeral Home
Joseph Larry Tagliavento	69	Ithaca, NY	Dec-31	Bangs Funeral Home
Barry B. Adams	89	Brooktondale, NY	Dec-31	Lansing Funeral Home
Kenneth DePol	83	Lansing, NY	Dec-30	CNY Cremation Service
Anita Dawn VanGorder	91	Virgil, NY	Dec-30	Perkins Funeral Home
Mary Ellen Avery	77	Lansing, NY	Dec-29	Lansing Funeral Home
Judith MacNeil	81	Freeville, NY	Dec-29	Perkins Funeral Home
Robert T. Lower	96	Ithaca, NY	Dec-29	Bangs Funeral Home
Susan Catherine Dafoe	65	Ithaca, NY	Dec-28	Bangs Funeral Home
Madeline H. LaRocca	82	Ithaca, NY	Dec-28	Bangs Funeral Home

Placing an Obituary with Tompkins Weekly

Contact Us Today:

We are dedicated to publishing meaningful and lasting tributes. Contact us today with questions or send your obituary with a preferred photo and begin the process of honoring their memory.



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FIRE

Continued from pg 1

Jan. 9 and voice your opinions. No, we did not make it to every call. We all work and volunteer, but we only missed 17% of our calls, and all of them, the ambulance, was dispatched to respond. Please help if you want the volunteer department to stay in your community.”

Town Deputy Supervisor Dan Lamb provided a statement on fire contracts the day after the Dec. 12 meeting:

“At our meeting on Thursday [Dec. 12], the Dryden Town Board unanimously voted to set contract levels for the W.B. Strong Fire Company of Freeville, the Neptune Hose Company of Dryden, and Varna Volunteer Fire Company. Contract funding for the Etna Volunteer Fire Department was not approved.

“The town board reached its decision concerning the Etna Volunteer Fire Department after conducting a thorough review of call response data over several years and taking input from professional staff and volunteer firefighters. The board determined that contracting with the Etna department is not in the best interest of town residents, taxpayers and neighboring emergency responders. The town board is committed to maintaining the highest public safety levels possible. As stewards of taxpayer dollars, we must only contract with en-

ties that meet the contractual requirement to ‘respond to all calls for service’ and manage contracted funds effectively. An objective review of fire and EMS calls in zones covered by the Etna Fire Department found too many instances where the department never responded to calls or was too late to offer aid.

“The board determined that contracting with the Etna department is not in the best interest of town residents, taxpayers and neighboring emergency responders.”

DAN LAMB

Deputy Supervisor, Town of Dryden

“The cost of providing fire service in the town has doubled in the past 10 years and is growing exponentially. Next to roads and bridges, it is the second-largest expense in the town budget. The town cannot afford to allocate tax dollars to entities that do not meet contractual obligations. Fortunately, through a system of mutual aid, Varna and Freeville’s departments have fully served residents in the Etna area. The town will continue to contract with departments that meet contractual standards and maintain effective service. The town will take immediate action, in coordination with the other departments and Tompkins Coun-



By Jaime Cone Hughes

The sign for the Etna Fire Department, located at 26 Wood Rd., advertises a breakfast on Feb. 2 from 8 to 11 a.m. and includes the message “Save Etna Fire Department.” The Dryden Town Board recently opted not to renew its contract with the department.

ty, to ensure that residents continue to enjoy the highest levels of protection.”

The Etna Fire Department recently provided its response statistics for 2024. The numbers and percentages are as follows:

- 37.1% of the calls were for rescue and emergency medical service (197 total calls).
- 26.4% of calls were for fires (140 calls).
- 13.9% of calls were for false alarm and false calls (74 calls).
- 9.8% of calls were for a hazardous condition (52 calls).
- 8.3% were for service calls (44 calls).
- 3% were good intent calls (16 calls), while 1.5% was for other calls.

Dryden Dispatch appears every week in Tompkins Weekly. Send story ideas to editorial@vizellamedia.com.

In brief:

‘Coffee with the Superintendent’ is Jan. 13

Dryden Central School District (DCSD) superintendent Josh Bacigalupi will host “Coffee with the Superintendent” on Jan. 13 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Dunkin’ Donuts at 36 North St. in the village of Dryden.

The event is an opportunity to meet and have a conversation with the district superintendent.

For information, contact DCSD at 607-844-8694.

CULVERT

Continued from pg 4

you when I was on the planning board, and I still remember you were on the planning board when you approved my house to be built, which was what actually got me interested in getting onto the planning board later. So, thank you so much for all that you’ve done for the town and your years of service and all your expertise.”

Sharpsteen was also honored at the Dec. 16 Lansing Planning Board meeting for his four decades of service.

“On behalf of the board and the community, I want to express my deepest appreciation for your wisdom, as well as your quips throughout the years,” Planning Board Chair Al Fiorille said at the time.

Sharpsteen thanked Fiorille and the board.

“I have been very happy to use my professional experience and training in some small role to benefit the town,” he noted. “It’s been a hoot for me, and I have enjoyed every minute of it.”

Lansing at Large appears every week in Tompkins Weekly. Send story

ideas to editorial@vizellamedia.com. Contact Eddie Velazquez at edvel37@gmail.com or on X (formerly Twitter): @ezvelazquez.

In brief:

Starting Jan. 16, Finger Lakes residents can attend a fantastic story time experience at the Lansing Community Library. During these story time sessions, children and library staff will read delightful stories and take part in fun activities featuring favorite winter friends: snowmen. Staff and attendees will also explore the captivating worlds of penguins and polar bears with engaging stories and activities, including

“polar” opposites. These sessions will happen Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.

“Prepare for a variety of fun activities, captivating stories, creative crafts, and catchy songs,” reads a post on the library website. “This is a wonderful chance to connect with other caregivers and children in our community. Looking forward to seeing you there!”

The story time events are as follows:

- Jan. 16: Learning to Share Story Time
- Jan. 23: Snowman Story Time
- Jan. 29: Penguins and Polar Bears Story Time

SCHOOL

Continued from pg 4

capital project are primarily safety and security upgrades. Along with these upgrades are some much needed infrastructure improvements,” said Tim Payne, Newfield CSD’s BOE vice president. “Some of the improvements are to the aging bus garage, facility stormwater control, parking lots and driveways. In my opinion, these upgrades/renovations are highly necessary in regard to safety, security and the successful operation of our district.”

The second half of the 2024-25 school year is also a time when the Newfield BOE will get down to the wire in its search for a new superintendent. Last summer, Hartz announced his retirement after the current school year.

Since then, the BOE has been on the hunt for a replacement. The deadline to apply for the position was Jan. 3, and the anticipated appointment of a new superintendent will be in April.

Newfield CSD’s new superintendent is slated to begin on July 1 of this year.

With the school year almost halfway finished and Hartz’s last year as superintendent reaching the final handful of months, Ward spoke about how constructive it’s been working with Hartz

over the years.

“[Hartz] has been an agent of positive change here at NCSD,” Ward said. “Being the superintendent is not an easy job, so I am glad for him that he will retire while he still has life to live and love to give. I think that no matter where he goes in life, he will continue to contribute to a future of more equitable public education.”

Preparation for the 2025-26 school budget is also underway, Hartz said. Newfield CSD will hold budget discussions through its financial committee meetings on Feb. 11, March 11 and April 8.

The district will also schedule open budget forums in March and April. More details on the budget timeline will be provided soon.

Newfield Notes appears every week in Tompkins Weekly. Send story ideas to editorial@vizellamedia.com.

In brief:

Newfield CSD Board of Education meeting schedule for 2025

Newfield Central School District’s board of education meeting schedule for the second half of the 2024-25 school year is as follows:

- Jan. 16
- Feb. 6 and 27
- March 6 and 20
- April 3 and 23

- May 1, 6 and 22
- June 5 and 19

For more information, go to newfield-schools.org.

Newfield Public Library to host cookbook club

The Newfield Public Library will host its monthly cookbook club on Jan. 13 at 6 p.m.

The theme for this month’s meeting is vegetables. The dish does not have to be a vegetarian meal, but vegetables are the highlight.

The club encourages members to bring an optional dish to pass, a favorite cookbook or recipe.

For more information, go to newfield-publiclibrary.org.

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ACTIVITIES

Continued from pg 1

“It’s a way to get people exploring different parts of the community,” Montana said.

Namgyal Monastery and Dalai Lama Library and Learning Center

One of the destinations on the Art Seek Pass is the large Dalai Lama statue that stands in the courtyard of the Dalai Lama Library and Learning Center.

“The learning center is a great place to visit,” Montana said. “There are artifacts on display, and it’s a really peaceful place for people to go. They really want people to come in and do some reflection on their own.”

Located at 201 Tibet Dr. in Ithaca’s South Hill neighborhood, the monastery and its Library and Learning Center form an educational and cultural institution that aims to preserve the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhist culture.

Namgyal Monastery Institute of Buddhist Studies is the North American Seat of the Personal Monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The founding of Namgyal-Ithaca in 1992 marked an important new phase in the history of Buddhism and Tibetan culture in America.

The Library and Learning Center is a recent addition to the campus. It had its grand opening in 2023.

The 9,250 square-foot building was designed by local firm HOLT Architects, and visitors are free to wander the large, open spaces that are ornately decorated in rich colors from the carpeted floors to the vaulted high ceilings.

The Dalai Lama Library and Learning Center is open to the public Wednesday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Rice Hill and Taughannock State Park

Located on the north side of Taughannock State Park in Trumansburg, Rice Hill sledding area has two ice skating ponds and a warming hut with a wood stove.

“Rice Hill, which is part of the state park property on Rice Road, is a very long, steep hill that runs down to Route 89 and has glorious sledding,” said Trumansburg Vil-

lage Mayor Rordan Hart. He added that there is a large parking area available to the public, making Rice Hill a convenient, family-friendly winter destination.

There are also several multi-use trails that allow for snowshoeing, hiking or cross-country skiing.

“It’s one of those places that I’ve gone to ever since I was a kid,” Hart said.

You can get to Rice Hill either by way of Route 89 or Route 96. Follow the signs for Taughannock Falls State Park.

And for those interested in winter hiking, Hart said that the colder months are ideal for exploring Taughannock Falls without the typical crowds.

“People can take advantage of the trails in the off season,” Hart said.

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art

The Johnson Museum of Art on the Cornell University campus offers three floors devoted to a permanent collection, with Asian art on the fifth floor and two other floors highlighting ancient Greek and Roman art, medieval and Renaissance art, European art from the 17th-19th centuries and modern and contemporary art from around the world.

In addition to the permanent displays, the museum has rotating exhibitions, the next of which will be the works of Suzi Ferrer (1940–2006). Ferrer was a member of Cornell’s Class of 1962 and became a pioneering visual artist during a decade-long stay in Puerto Rico in the 1970s. This solo exhibition opens on Jan. 25 in five of the museum’s galleries and includes rarely seen and recently discovered works.

Now through Jan. 19, the Johnson Museum is open with winter hours on Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed on Monday and Tuesday). Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 21, the museum will be open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Monday).

Admission for everyone is always free.

The museum offers free tours to the general public, led by museum student educators. These experiences can focus on highlights of the permanent collection or special exhibitions. They also can be tailored to a group’s interests.

Tours last 45 to 60 minutes and



Photo provided

Visitors explore the exhibits at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s new visitors’ center.

combine close looking and conversation. The museum requests a minimum of five participants and two weeks’ notice for scheduling. Email Saraphina Masters to learn more or schedule a tour: scm265@cornell.edu.

For more information about the museum, visit museum.cornell.edu.

Press Bay Alley

Located on West Green Street in Downtown Ithaca, Press Bay Alley offers a variety of unique destinations in one compact space. Just a short walk south of The Commons and conveniently located near the Green Street and Cayuga Street parking garages, Press Bay has coffee, ethnic cuisines and multiple retail spaces.

Press Bay Café offers coffee and lattes in a sun-drenched setting that is perfect for starting off a relaxing winter morning.

The savory pastries at Mama Said Hand Pies feature flaky, golden crusts and fillings that celebrate comforting flavors from around the world.

Tacos CDMX serves homemade corn tortilla tacos with a variety of fillings, including asada, pollo, al pastor, chorizo, lengua (beef tongue), ribeye and vegan options.

And new West African restaurant Asempe Kitchen opened last summer, where chef and owner Kuukua Yomekpe gives foodies a taste of authentic African recipes with a vegetarian twist.

At SewGreen, the nonprofit turned self-sustaining business carries out its mission to mainstream and model sustainable practices, provide affordable communication education to all, and empower youth to develop lifelong skills through classes and teen apprentice programs. SewGreen has a resale fabric store and has partnered with Eileen Fisher corporation to be an official outlet for previously purchased and returned Eileen Fisher clothing.

A new addition to Press Bay Alley, Poured Candle Bar offers a wide selection of candles for sale. Those who would like to make their own candle can book a custom fragrance experience on the Poured website, pouredcandlebar.com.

These are just a few of the unique places to dine and shop in Press

Bay; for a full list of the area’s storefronts, visit pressbayalley.com/businesses.

Cornell University Lab of Ornithology

For those who crave being in nature but are less excited about braving below-freezing temperatures, the Lab of Ornithology’s visitor center has new, interactive indoor exhibits where bird lovers can view world-class art and exhibits.

“The Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers year-round bird hikes, and the new visitor center is really amazing,” Montana said. “It’s great for kids to go to, has great accessibility ... with nice, groomed trails. But the visitor center is really cool. There are videos on a loop, places to look out on the pond, and the hands-on activity place is really fantastic. You can listen to bird sounds, touch bird skulls and things like that.”

The observatory allows visitors to watch the Cornell Feeder Cam in person from the comfort of a viewing space, with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Sapsucker Woods Pond.

At the Adelson Family Bird Discovery Lab, discover what it takes to be a bird. Listen to their songs, see through their superpowered eyes, learn how they take flight and more.

The lab’s conservation team collects stories from around the globe from researchers and the public. Visitors can watch the latest videos and learn more about what the lab is doing to protect birds and nature, and what the public can do, too.

The Wall of Birds mural, the work of Jane Kim of Ink Dwell Studio, captures the 350-million-year evolution of birds and highlights one member of each of 243 extant bird families. The Wall of Silhouettes, a mural by James Prosek, nods to the classic silhouettes in the endpapers of the first Peterson guides but expands the range to include habitats and birds from across the world. Maya Lin’s Sound Ring sculpture emanates sounds that represent migration flyways.

Those who are up for a winter hike can venture out to explore five miles of trails in Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary.

For more information, visit birds.cornell.edu.

HISTORY OF TOMPKINS COUNTY



Sledding is one of winter’s great joys for children, and this late 1940s image of three happy kids was taken at Cornell on Lib Slope, after the sledders have made the trek back up the steep hill.



Tompkins Weekly

SPORTS

ESPN 107.1
((ITHACA)) 1160

KEY HIGH SCHOOL MATCHUPS: 1/10 Girls Basketball: Ithaca vs. Corning

• 1/10 Indoor Track & Field: Winter Classic (@ SUNY Cortland) • 1/11 Boys Hockey: Ithaca vs. McQuaid

Lansing boys basketball flying out of the gates again

Over the past few years, the Lansing boys basketball team has made a habit of getting off to a hot start, and this season is no exception.



By Ryan Gineo
ESPN ITHACA

The Bobcats won all seven of their games in December, being the only team in the IAC—and one of just three teams throughout all of Section IV—to have an unblemished record in the opening month of action. Head coach Joey Volpicelli gave credit to their upperclassmen for helping guide them through some difficult matchups.

“There’s been no blowouts,” Volpicelli said. “Everything’s been close. I think it’s some of our senior leadership with Jordan [Sidle] and Ryan [Pettograsso-Houk] out there that has helped us get over the top. We’ve been able to win some of these games early, but the game we played [against Dryden] could have went either way. That was a tough, hard-fought game.”

“If you can share the ball offensively, move it around, and you can play defense and finish with a rebound, good things will happen.”

JOEY VOLPICELLI

Head Coach, Lansing Boys Basketball

That game versus the Lions was their closest game of the season so far, prevailing 57-52. Down by six points at halftime, the Bobcats rallied back to notch a key divisional victory. They did so despite fielding a smaller roster this season. Alex Gir-

ich (6 feet, 7 inches) and Chase Sneddon (6 feet, 4 inches) both graduated in 2024, so going up against a Dryden team with five players at least 6 feet tall was no easy task. That’s led to a change in their style offensively, and it’s safe to say it’s worked out so far.

“We’re more of a 5-out team instead of [having] big in the middle and then kind of playing off of them,” Volpicelli said. “But guys that were on our team last year played with those bigs. They played with guys that were bigger than them every day in practice. So even though Dryden was bigger, I can’t say that we were completely used to it, but these guys are familiar. Those are still some of their best friends that they still play with all the time.”

The Bobcats have certainly made plenty of shots this season, averaging 64 points per game. A big part of that has been the play of Jordan Sidle. The reigning All-State selection has put up multiple performances with at least 25 points. Opponents are well-aware of the scoring threat that he brings to the court. But that’s allowed him to distribute the rock to great effect.

“You see people game planning around him,” Volpicelli said. “He’s got to use his teammates, and he’s doing a very good job of getting others involved. And when he does that, then teams have to adjust. That just frees him up even more. We’re not there yet team-wise, but you can see it growth-wise since we started back in November that if he can trust his teammates and everybody can work off each other, that just makes it that much easier for him.”

Another sharpshooter who has flourished is Ryan Pettograsso-Houk. Last season, he emerged as the Bobcats’ three-point special-



Photo by John Brehm

Lansing’s Jordan Sidle has helped get the boys basketball team off to another flying start. The Bobcats were the only team in the IAC to go unbeaten in December as they aim for back-to-back conference championships.

ist. While he’s still excelling from beyond the arc, he’s become more well-rounded offensively.

“Last year, he was kind of our spot-

See BASKETBALL on pg 10

Dryden girls basketball aims for postseason return

By Ryan Genio
ESPN ITHACA

For the last several years, the Dryden girls basketball team has yearned for postseason play but haven’t been able to punch its ticket to the big dance since 2018. This year’s squad is dead set on putting an end to that drought.

The Lions have gotten off to a solid start with a 4-3 record as of January 6, only one win shy of their total tally from last season. They have a new but recognizable face at the helm in John Pascarella, who is also the head baseball coach. Pascarella has spent the past six years as a volunteer assistant coach for the program, so his

familiarity with the current roster has undoubtedly been beneficial.

“I think the big thing with teenagers in general, it’s learning them and adjusting to who they are with their personalities and what they can do as an athlete,” Pascarella said. “Being able to see that for years has made it a lot easier to be able to talk to them and drive success through their opportunities and drive the success through their positive well-being on the court and the IQ that they bring to the game.”

While the ‘power of positivity’ might be cliché, it truly does apply to the Lions. It’s something that not only Pascarella has helped cultivate, but also extends throughout the en-

tire program, including the junior varsity team with first-year head coach Abby Wilkinson.

“What they bring to the table is their positive attributes and their characteristics, and they just keep pushing each other harder and harder to be great.”

JOHN PASCARELLA

Head Coach, Dryden Girls Basketball

“What they bring to the table is their positive attributes and their characteristics, and they just keep pushing each other harder and harder to be great,” Pascarella said.

“When you add the heart into what they’re doing on and off the court for each other, that positive well-being is such a big push for the players. Any time they’re down, they’re just uplifting to each other. When you talk about what you look for in a team, you’re talking defense or offense. I think their positiveness to drive each other for results is really one of the big keys to our success, and it will be going forward.”

In terms of the X’s and O’s, the Lions have put together a cohesive defensive unit that is allowing 44 points per game. On a hyperlocal level, in games against fellow Tompkins

See DRYDEN on pg 10

Continued from pg 9

“We get up and down the court pretty well defensively,” Pascarella said. “We play solid defense, and they constantly communicate on defense and adjust to the players that we’re playing against. You try to put the best people in the right positions all the time. Some days, some people just don’t have it that game, and you just got to adjust from there. Through their osmosis, they pick each other up, and defensively we’re pretty sound.”

“She loves the game,” Pascarella said. “She loves her team. She wants to do as much as she can to contribute to her fellow teammates and to the Dryden program. It’s been really cool to see her transition this year to a player that’s looked up to on the team and in the program. She just wants to really be the best for her teammates and go out there and be successful to win games with them.”

Then there's the senior duo of

“They do a fantastic job just staying positive even when the moments are getting hard,” Pascarella said. “You got a 10-0 run against you, and they’re the first two to be like, ‘Hey, listen, it’s fine. We’ll figure it out.’ Hearing that—which is fantastic—and Giuliana and Claire [Fitzgerald] following it right up, it’s such a good feeling. It’s a heartfelt team that just brings positivity, and they want to be successful together.”

“One: play our game,” Pascarella said. “Play our speed of the game, and don’t play the speed of the other team’s game. And the other thing is we need to be disciplined within our sets. If we’re running an offensive set, we need to be disciplined in it. And when all else fails and everything breaks down, you just play basketball. If we just realize that and have fun with it, we’ll be very successful.”



Photo by Jim Organ

Dryden's Giuliana Pascarella (#12) is the top returner for the girls basketball team. The Lions are looking to improve on last season's 5-13 record under first-year head coach John Pascarella. Also pictured: Olivia Sheive (#14).

Continued from pg 9

that you have that.”

The Bobcats are looking to repeat what they achieved last season: an IAC championship and a deep run in

“We’ve just got to come to practice every day and keep working,” Volpicelli said. “We got to keep working hard. We can’t take any days off. We have some new guys and some veterans, but we haven’t played together all that much in the grand scheme of things. The more we play together, hopefully the more in-tune we get with each other. Sharing the basketball is a big push for us and rebounding. If you can share the ball offensively, move it around, and you can play defense and finish with a rebound, good things will happen.”



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WEDNESDAY 1/8

NARCAN Training with REACH
Wednesday, January 08, 2025 , 4:00pm-5:00pm Join the REACH Project to learn how to recognize an overdose, respond to an overdose emergency, and administer NARCAN. This skill could help you to save a life. This program is part of TCPL's Information Saves Lives project, and is funded by the Tompkins County Opioid Task Force grant. Tompkins County Public Library 101 Eat Green Street Ithaca, NY

What's Cookin' Jazz Trio
Wednesday, January 08, 2025, 6:00pm-8:00pm An evening of jazz standards. Brookton's Market 491 Brooktondale Rd. Brooktondale, NY De Wayne Perry dwperry777@gmail.com 7202191952

Business After Hours at Coltivare
Wednesday, January 08, 2025 , 4:30pm We are excited to join Coltivare as our host! Coltivare is a restaurant that provides a unique Farm-to-Table experience in a beautiful setting, right in the heart of Ithaca's vibrant downtown. This event offers our members a special opportunity to share ideas and build connections. Held at various locations in Tompkins County, this gathering is the perfect place to form long-lasting partnerships. There will be a lovely spread of food, a cash bar, and door prizes. Bring your business cards for an opportunity to network - we will have raffle tickets for the door prizes!

THURSDAY 1/9



Story + Craft
Thursday, January 09, 2025 , 4:00pm-4:45pm Story + Craft is our weekly reading + creating event for children! Join us for a read-aloud, followed by art-making or a guided craft. Best for children 5 and up, but younger are welcome with an adult to assist. Tompkins County Public Library 101 East Green Street Ithaca, NY

Family Playgroup
Free 6 weeks series, January 9 - February 13. Thursday, January 09, 2025 , 9:30am-11:30am CCE-Tompkins Education Center 615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, NY



Tapestry
A tapestry is defined as a heavy cloth or canvas with designs or pictures woven into it. The January exhibit will weave together images from thirteen of our artist members. The result promises to be a colorful and diverse sampling of paintings, photos, sculpture, and fiber arts. The show will run from January 2nd through

February 2nd, 2025. Opening reception Friday, January 3rd, 5–8pm. Regular hours Thursday-Sunday 12-5 pm. 120 W State St. Curbside parking and ADA accessibility. 607-277-1626. Made possible in part with funds from the NYS Council on the Arts, administered by the Community Arts Partnership. State of the Art Gallery 120 West State Street Ithaca, NY (607) 277-1626

FRIDAY 1/10

American Red Cross Blood Drive
Friday, January 10, 2025 , 10:00am-3:30pm Tompkins County Public Library 101 East Green Street Ithaca, NY Sheila.Sullivan@redcross.org Additional Date: Monday, March 10, 2025, 10:00am-3:30pm

Trivia Night
Friday, January 10, 2025 , 6:00pm-7:00pm All ages welcome to join for a family-friendly trivia night. Come with friends or form a group when you arrive for the chance to win a large one-topping pizza from Covered Bridge Market and a book of your choice. Newfield Public Library 198 Main Street Newfield, NY 607-564-3594



Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency Neighborhood Investment Committee Mtg. (IN-PERSON)
Friday, January 10, 2025 , 8:30am-10:30am Common Council Chambers 3rd Floor City Hall 108 E Green St Ithaca, NY Additional Date: Friday, February 14, 2025, 8:30am-10:30am

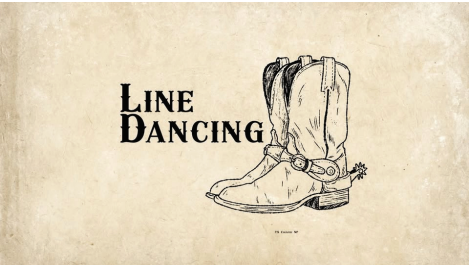
Enhance Your Fitness Trumansburg
Friday, January 10, 2025 , 10:00am-11:00am Trumansburg Fire Hall – \$5 drop in, membership not required but members eligible to pay \$35/month for unlimited H&W activities. Classes focus on stretching, flexibility, balance, low-impact aerobics, strength training, and deep breathing exercises. Instructor: Caryn Sheckler Trumansburg Fire Hall 74 W Main Street Trumansburg, NY Additional Dates: Monday, January 06, 2025, 10:00am-11:00am Wednesday, January 08, 2025, 10:00am-11:00am

SATURDAY 1/11



Creating Art to Save Birds
Saturday, January 11, 2025 , 10:00am-11:30am Each year in the United States, an estimated 624 million birds die from window collisions—but we can help prevent these strikes. Join us for an engaging workshop where you'll learn practical solutions for bird-safe windows with Miyoko Chu, Senior Director of Communications at the Cornell Lab. Then, create replica birds using repurposed fabric with artist and Syracuse University professor Holly Greenberg as part

of a crowdsourced, large-scale art installation. With the public's help, Holly is creating over 10,000 birds to memorialize the number of birds killed in window strikes in 2023 in a single city, Chicago. No supplies needed! Choose from two sessions: 10am or 1pm. No registration required; first come, first served. Recommended for ages 6 and up. Cornell Lab of Ornithology 159 Sapsucke Woods Road Ithaca, NY 3039175408



Line Dancing
Saturday, January 11, 2025 , 6:00pm Looking to learn line dancing or sharpen your skills? Hopshire is the perfect place for dancers of all levels! Join us at various times throughout the year as Karen Benjamin Hayes leads line dancing lessons in our spacious event area. While you're here, quench your thirst with our signature craft beers. Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to dance, socialize, and enjoy great drinks at Hopshire. Come dance with us and be part of the fun. Cost: \$5 Hopshire Farm & Brewery 1771 Dryden Rd. Freeville, NY

Cosmic Smash Booking with Terry Pitzel
Saturday, January 11, 2025 , 11:00am-1:00pm Join Terry Pitzel, our Galactic Guide, in the Whimsy's café to learn about Cosmic Smash Booking. Don't know what Cosmic Smash Booking is? Think of it as a mix between intuitive oracle card reading, junk journaling, art journaling and collage with a sprinkle of sculpture for good measure. Bring a composition book, scissors, a glue stick and any other supplies or items that ignite your creativity. Some spare supplies will be on hand so if you don't have the time or funds to purchase things, we can help. All crafty skill levels are encouraged. You don't have to be an artist to do this! Feel free to come and go as you please so if you can't show up right at 11 am or if you have to leave early, don't worry. This is a very relaxed, informal experience. And yes, the café will be open so grab your favorite beverage and enjoy your “me” time of self-exploration and creativity. What a great way to spend a few hours on a Saturday! The Whimsy Mercantile 2075 East Shore Drive Lansing, NY

Family Storytime
Saturday, January 11, 2025 , 11:00am-11:30am Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to celebrate reading and build their early literacy skills at Family Storytime. We meet each Saturday for stories, songs and hands-on fun. Tompkins County Public Library 101 East Green Street Ithaca, NY

SUNDAY 1/12

Mind Over Body with Mitch Raymond, PT
Sunday, January 12, 2025 , 4:00pm-5:00pm Learn how to achieve improved strength and range of motion through movements and techniques aimed at strengthening the connection between the mind and body. We

will work on stability, strength, balance, injury prevention and exploration of motion. It's recommended that attendees bring a yoga mat, a rolled-up towel or a pillow. Come learn from the best! Mitch is a Physical Therapist with Visiting Nurse Service of Ithaca & Tompkins County and is a Certified Expert in Exercise for the Aging Adult. Class is \$10. The Whimsy Mercantile 2075 East Shore Drive Lansing, NY

Seeing Ithaca: through the eyes of artists
Sunday, January 12, 2025 , 12:00pm-5:00pm This year State of the Art Gallery Ithaca will again be sponsoring Seeing Ithaca Through the Eyes of Artists. It will take place during the month of August 2024. Last year's event included nine galleries, each gallery exhibiting art on the broad theme “Seeing Ithaca”. This year we are expanding the scope to include galleries, artists with studios, and businesses and other venues that show art. For an updated list of venues, Click here to head to our website Artists will have their studios open August 10, 12–5. Galleries and other venues will celebrate Gallery Night on August 2, 5–8. State of the Art Gallery 120 West State Street Ithaca, NY (607) 277-1626

MONDAY 1/13

Cookbook Club
Monday, January 13th 5:30 PM
Cookbook Club continues with the theme of vegetables. Bring a dish to pass, a favorite cookbook, or recipe. Open to all ages!



TUESDAY 1/14

Makerspace One-on-One
Tuesday, January 14, 2025 , 11:00am-12:00pm What do you want to make? Register for a one-on-one session in the makerspace with Library Assistant Josh to use our laser cutter, 3-D printer, or Cricut. Sessions are one hour and a maximum of two people are allowed in the makerspace at a time. If you are learning how to use a machine, raw materials can be provided. Please bring in your own materials for personal projects. If you need assistance with the sewing machine, please contact Cady Fontana at cfontana@tcpl.org. Library staff reserves the right to cancel additional appointment bookings to allow room for other participants to learn. If you are going to be late for your appointment, please call ahead to notify us. If you are more than 15 minutes late, your session will be cancelled. Ages 16+ only. Tompkins County Public Library 101 East Green Street Ithaca, NY

Break Time

HOROSCOPE

Week of
January 5 to 11, 2025



ARIES

If you're on holiday, take the opportunity to explore outdoor activities with family or friends. You may feel an intense urge to get active. Even alone, you'll want to go on outings to feed your adventurous spirit.



TAURUS

You may feel confused and easily distracted this week. Fatigue will catch up with you. Make sure you take advantage of your days off, if you have any left, to recuperate. You may also take on a heavy workload this week.



GEMINI

The party goes on! You still have plenty of opportunities to celebrate, and you'll be invited to many events. At work, you'll have to deal with demanding clients, and you'll find time is a precious commodity.



CANCER

Make every moment count, and don't neglect your responsibilities. Your boss may ask you to come back to work during your vacation. Your family may also put a lot of pressure on you this week.



LEO

You may plan a spontaneous trip or getaway. You'll be thrilled about the prospect of starting a new apprenticeship. If you're going back to school, you'll take it very seriously.



VIRGO

You'll start the year off with a powerful surge of emotions. You'll dive into a whirlwind of thrilling challenges, both in your professional and personal life. Brace yourself for a fresh beginning. You may be congratulated for an achievement.



LIBRA

Stay on your toes this week. A misunderstanding with someone close to you could disrupt your daily routine. You may have to tread carefully around certain individuals, feeling as if you're walking on eggshells.



SCORPIO

It's time to put aside distractions and focus on housework. The holidays are over, and you need to get down to business. At work, an amazing opportunity will open up after a colleague's unexpected departure.



SAGITTARIUS

Now is the perfect time to prioritize self-care and self-respect. You'll discover what you're passionate about and start taking the first steps toward an incredibly rewarding challenge.



CAPRICORN

Whether you're on vacation or not, you'll spend a lot of time with your family or in the home. Take advantage of the next few days to refresh your decor and reorganize your furniture to declutter your home and mind.



AQUARIUS

You feel under pressure and are concerned about your finances. It can be tough to find balance in times like this. You might find yourself surrounded by people when you crave solitude, yet feeling lonely when you're on your own.



PISCES

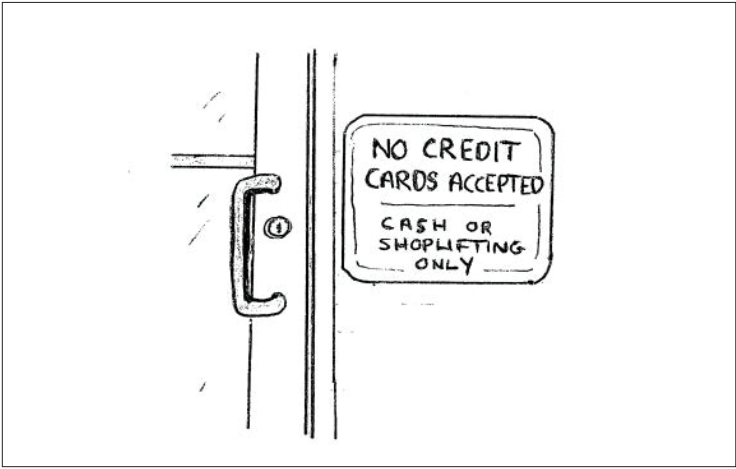
Take advantage of this quieter time to handle your returns and exchanges either online or in store. You'll stumble upon some exciting deals and promotions and won't hesitate to treat yourself to some well-deserved rewards.

The luckiest signs this week:
GEMINI, CANCER AND LEO



COMICS

By Jack Young



Sudoku

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

How to play:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: you must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column or 3x3 box.

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			

RECIPE
of the week



Chicken Enchilada Soup

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6):

- 1 lb cooked, shredded chicken
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup red enchilada sauce
- 1 can (14 oz) diced tomatoes
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans,
- drained and rinsed
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup heavy cream (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Sauté Aromatics: Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Sauté onion and garlic until softened.
2. Combine Ingredients: Stir in chicken broth, enchilada sauce, tomatoes, black beans, corn, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper. Bring to a simmer.
3. Add Chicken: Stir in shredded chicken and simmer for 10 minutes to let the flavors meld.
4. Finish Soup: Stir in cheddar cheese until melted. Add heavy cream for a creamier texture if desired.
5. Serve: Ladle into bowls and garnish with your favorite toppings.

ACROSS

1. Tableland
5. Flows back
9. Handful
12. Arena shape
13. Invalid
14. Historic epoch
15. Monk's quarters
16. Romantic ones
18. Leg joints
20. Evaluate
21. Shaggy ox
23. Brewing vessel
27. Slip
31. Capture
32. Get an "A" on
33. Clear liquor
35. Aggravate
36. Comes together
39. Least messy
42. Allows to enter
44. Gooley liquid
45. Require
47. Stadiums
51. Provoker
55. Orderly
56. Bill and ____
57. Guitar's kin
58. Overhanging roof part
59. Shipping weight
60. Drove over the limit
61. Small portion

DOWN

1. Mimic
2. Fifty-fifty
3. Bargain offering
4. Side streets
5. Come to a close
6. "Perry Mason" star
7. Lamb's comment
8. Blackboards
9. Attorney's charge
10. Botch
11. Had being
17. Nasty
19. Posed for a picture
22. Barrel
24. ____ the way
25. Mineral resources
26. Printed matter
27. ____ Cass
28. Frozen
29. Appear
30. Cherry seed
34. Young bug
37. Dye
38. Robs
40. Small quantity
41. Pressed
43. Raise: 2 wds.
46. ____ on (love excessively)
48. Put on, as clothes
49. Liquid rock
50. Flower support
51. Tread the boards
52. Muck
53. Electrified particle
54. Ruby-hued

Will Russell’s journey to Wilburland

Growing up, Will’s grandparents and parents were college-educated and mostly professorial. By the time he was a high school senior Will was producing concerts at his Westfield, New Jersey high school. Will knew two things about himself: He loved music, and he loved technology. So, he headed to Ithaca College to follow the family tradition of going to college AND also he planned to spend lots of time doing music.

By Marjorie Olds

Arriving in 1976 Will signed up to chair the Technical Committee for IC’s concerts, since the music scene at IC was vibrant: “My freshman year, I joined the Ithaca College Bureau of Concerts as the technical chairperson. My job was to interface between the traveling bands and the college, making sure that the bands’ audio and lighting technical needs were accommodated. I had no idea what I was doing when I started, but between talking with road managers from traveling bands and technical people on the Ithaca College side of things, I got up to speed pretty quickly.” “I was also responsible for assembling a stage crew, which was responsible for unloading and loading the band truck. Once we got good and dependable, we could actually be useful with setting up the bands’ equipment. My stage crew and I did some crazy things as well, like literally lifting and moving a car out of the parking area when the band truck arrived. We were pretty fearless! We did shows for the Jerry Garcia Band, Billy Joel, Little Feat, Bonnie Raitt, Leo Kottke, John McLaughlin, Elvis

Costello, Todd Rundgren, Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, Steve Forbert, and Pure Prairie League. It was an amazing time!” “When Steve Forbert came to play my senior year, his crew was so impressed with me and my crew that they offered me a job, which I was very tempted to take, except that I hadn’t finished college yet, and I knew that if I left, I never would. So, I stuck it out.” “Looking back over my life, it’s hysterically obvious that this is what I’m supposed to be doing, because every opportunity I had to do this, I did it.”

WILL RUSSELL
Founder, Electric Wilburland Studio

“I learned so much in those four years, about technical things, about managing people, and about myself... Turns out I was good at this stuff!” “So fast forward to 1998...I moved Wilburland, my recording studio, into an amazing former church building that was for sale in Newfield, and before long business was booming!... The entire recording industry was flourishing.” “Then around 2002, two critical things changed. Number one, an on-line service called Napster opened up, and people all over the world were accessing and distributing music for free on the Internet. So basically, anyone with a computer could access any album they wanted without paying for it, and suddenly, music essentially became free.” “The second thing was the introduction of affordable recording technology, which leveled the playing



Photo provided

Will Russell in his Newfield recording studio, Electric Wilburland Studio.

field in terms of who could record and market their own music. The entire recording industry was suddenly in a tailspin, and major studios all over the world were closing, because the product that they were producing suddenly had no value.” “My business changed dramatically as well; the studio went months with no income, and I drew no paycheck. That was a challenging time.” “Fortunately, a desperate business consultation turned into a personal inspirational talk, which put my focus back on manifesting what I wanted a successful studio to look like, why I wanted it, and why I deserved it... Somehow, everything worked out because I’m still here!” “Looking back over my life, it’s

hysterically obvious that this is what I’m supposed to be doing, because every opportunity I had to do this, I did it. And like the thing about leading a team, that theme has carried through my life, working with people. That’s what I do every day when I’m working in the recording studio, the intersection of music, tech, and people.” Today, 41 years since Will gambled on creating a recording studio, he still loves his work. “I’m thrilled by the work I do, even though the work has changed.” Will Russell of Electric Wilburland Studio can be reached at 607-227-9932, and his website is wilburland.com. Other social media links can be found here: <https://linktr.ee/wilburland>

Youth orchestra announces winter concert



Photo provided

The Cayuga Chamber Orchestra Youth Orchestra will perform at Ithaca College on Jan. 11 at 4 p.m.

The Cayuga Chamber Orchestra Youth Orchestra (CCOYO) will hold its annual spring concert, on Jan. 11 at 4 p.m. in Ithaca College’s Ford Hall, under the baton of Conductor, Kirsten Marshall. Join the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra Youth Orchestra for an afternoon of musical partnership, featuring CCOYO concerto competition winner Jocelyn Hsu, harp, and the Ithaca High School Choir. This program includes works that were originally ballets, dances, and operas by Still, Debussy, Mozart Verdi, and Smetana.

Admission is free and donations are gratefully accepted. The CCO was founded in 1976 and is officially designated “Ithaca’s Orchestra.” Each season includes an Orchestral Series, Chamber Music Series, a Holiday Concert, free Family Concerts, two free Concerts by the CCO Youth Orchestra, and the long-standing Willard Daetsch Youth Outreach Program, which earned the 2015 Yale Distinguished Music Educator award. For more information on the CCOYO and the CCO: Visit CCOithaca.org or contact the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra at 607-273-8981 or info@CCOithaca.org.



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Danby receives state grant for proposed municipal sewer system

A new state grant could lead to big changes for the town of Danby.

On Dec. 24, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) informed Danby Town Supervisor Joel Gagnon that the town has been awarded a \$4,587,272 Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) grant — 75%

of the funding necessary to install a new municipal sewer system in the hamlet areas of Central and West Danby.

“It was thrilling,” said Greg Hutnik, Danby town planner. “This is an enormous amount of money for a small town, and if you look at the list of recipients for the WQIP award, it’s one of the highest awarded amounts, so it’s incredible. I don’t know if Danby has ever been awarded this kind of money.”

“We just need to temper that excitement with the reality that not everyone is on board with this project,” Hutnik said. “People are wary of change.”

The hamlets were historically the places of commerce, but over the last century there has been a big shift, Hutnik said. “There are not as many services in the hamlets, not as many commercial establishments,” said Hutnik. “They have become more like bedroom communities for Ithaca.”

The grant was awarded based on a report by HUNT Engineers. The engineering report recommends providing sanitary collection and treatment for the hamlets in the form of a gravity collection system and a modular, package membrane bioreactor treatment system, as well as four engineered containers for Central Danby with separate containers sized for flows for the northern and southern sections of Main Street/Danby Road.

The recommended course of action for West Danby includes a grinder collection system and a modular, package membrane bioreactor treatment system served by two larger

container systems.

The main purpose of the project is to provide sanitary sewer collection and treatment to the hamlets to eliminate inadequate on-site septic systems, reduce nutrient loading to the headwaters of Cayuga Lake and to achieve the intent of the Cayuga Lake total maximum daily load, said Hutnik.

Gagnon said a municipal sewer system also aligns with Danby’s comprehensive plan, which calls for focused growth in the hamlets while maintaining the rural character of the town.

“It’s not going to be an easy sell, because you have to consider that if you own a property in the town of Danby, you already have a septic system.”

JOEL GAGNON

Supervisor, Town of Danby

In 2022, the town revised its zoning laws to reflect those goals, allowing for more dense growth in the hamlets while requiring a 10-acre lot per dwelling unit in two newly created zones, Rural 1 and Rural 2.

But without a municipal sewer system, construction in the hamlet requires a minimum of one acre per private septic system, a requirement set by Tompkins County Whole Health to preserve water quality.

“You don’t get that neighborhood feel with one-acre lots, and it’s not as affordable,” Hutnik said.

With the municipal system proposed in a report by HUNT Engineers, the hamlet could become more densely populated while protecting the cleanliness of the area’s waterways, said Gagnon.

“It’s to HUNT’s credit that they managed to make a case and it was basically funded,” he said. “It gets us where we want to go.”

For the project to be financially feasible, the town must come up with additional grant money to pay for the remaining 25% cost.

“Doing sewers in a small town like



Photo by Joe Scaglione

The Danby hamlet could soon see more potential for growth thanks to a \$4.58 million grant from the State of New York for the installation of a new municipal sewer system. The town of Danby has yet to decide if the town will accept the grant, which is expected to pay for 75% of the total cost of the proposed project.

this doesn’t make any sense if the cost is going to be borne by the taxpayers in the district,” Gagnon said. “It’s prohibitively expensive.”

Gagnon said the construction of the sewer system would be paid for with grant money, and operation and ongoing maintenance of it would be paid for by the taxpayers through the creation of a water district.

The grant funding is environmentally motivated and not structured around smart growth, Gagnon pointed out.

“The state [of New York] has a policy of encouraging new growth to be where infrastructure already exists and is not aimed at enabling new growth in places where there isn’t that infrastructure, so in Danby, to grow smartly, we need the infrastructure,” Gagnon said. “A policy that says, ‘let’s focus growth where it already exists’ condemns small places to sprawl, if they’re going to grow at all, and that is not particularly forward looking.”

“In most of New York State it’s not conspicuous that this policy is inadequate, but it’s more conspicuous in Tompkins County, where we do have that growth, and most of the growth has been sprawling,” he added.

The grant award letter states that the Office of State Comptroller (OSC) must approve DEC’s documentation of the project solicitation and review process before the DEC can begin the steps to execute a contract with the town.

“When we receive OSC’s approval, we will provide additional information to assist you in getting a contract in place,” the contract states, adding that upon receipt of this additional information, DEC and OSC expect that contracts will be executed within 90 to 120 days.

Gagnon and Hutnick said that the next step is to bring the grant award before the Danby Town Board

in order to determine how the town should proceed and that it will likely come up at the board’s second January meeting, Jan. 22.

“It’s not going to be an easy sell, because you have to consider that if you own a property in the town of Danby, you already have a septic system,” Gagnon said. “A small portion of them are failing, but if yours is not, you’re probably not keen on having a water district annual expense of hundreds of dollars. You save when it reaches the end of its life, but in the meantime it’s just an additional expense, so we have to convince people that the tradeoff is worth it.”

That tradeoff is growth in the hamlets and the enhancement of the quality of life in Danby, Gagnon said.

“What we’ll gain,” he said, “is the ability to provide services. Opportunities for shopping, entertainment, recreation and community connection are all assets that we have come to appreciate that we’ve lost through thinning out over time and are things that people genuinely miss. So, the question is: are we willing to take on additional expense to enable the kind of growth that we say we want?”

Hutnik said that credit should be given to Tompkins County for awarding the small amount of funding that kicked off this project.

In 2019 the Town received a \$10,000 Housing Affordability and Supportive Infrastructure Grant from Tompkins County to hire a consultant to assess the approach to achieving compact infill development in Danby’s hamlets, which the town used to hire HUNT Engineers. This led to the town and HUNT then applying for and being awarded additional grant money to complete an engineering study for wastewater treatment and collection systems for each hamlet.

“It’s amazing how far small seed money can go,” Hutnik said.



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ARTHUR WEBB - NYSLFD

2024

Gorges scenery along Ithaca area waterways as captured through the lens of photographer Joe Scaglione

- 1. Buttermilk Falls boasts this final 165-foot cascade
- 2. Former grist mill, Van Natta Dam along Six Mile Creek
- 3. Northern view of Cayuga Lake from Stewart Park
- 4. Ludlowville Falls along Salmon Creek tributary
- 5. Myers Park Lighthouse as the sun sets on another day



Photos provided by Joe Scaglione

Master Composters: A program not to be missed

By Russell Kwong

Composting has changed my understanding of sustainability.

I’ve spent the past four years in Ithaca building my sustainability toolkit – learning about and engaging in practices to make the city and the world a healthier place to live. Some of these include a class in water management and working with the city to increase clean energy through distributed energy resources. However, the most impactful experience has been the Master Composter training program.

Each spring, the Compost Education Program at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County trains a new cohort of Master Composters to actively promote composting in the County. This training includes ten 2-hour weekly evening classes and 20 matching hours of “practical internship.” The internship allows trainees to practice what they’ve learned in class and bring real-world experiences back to the classroom.

Coming from New York City, my only experiences with composting had been collecting kitchen scraps, leaving them on the curb, and watching them get hauled away by white collection trucks. After learning about the Master Composter program, I jumped at the opportunity to participate. My goals for this program were to learn about residential composting, and in turn, share this new knowledge. What I received exceeded my expectations. I am now confident in my role as a Tompkins County Master Composter. Below are a few insights from my participation in the Program.

Composting is a fun and collaborative way to learn about environmental stewardship. Master Composter training is more than just a series of classes; it includes many hands-on activities to build confidence in compost education. All Master Composters in training receive a take-home compost bin (a stealth bin, bokashi, or a worm compost bin) and share updates with the class. We were also invited to Dr. Janice Theis’ lab at Cornell to explore underground ecology and examine compost critters through microscopes.

By the end of the training, the cohort broke into small groups and gave mini-presentations on a shared topic

of interest. Presentations for my class included compostable products, indigenous composting practices, and human waste composting. As new Master Composters, we continue to share volunteer opportunities and help each other reach our sustainability goals.

Composting fosters a network of local sustainability leaders. The Master Composter program introduced me to a variety of community organizations that are actively making a difference. I had the pleasure of meeting and speaking to composters from all corners of the County, including:

- The Soil Factory – a community hub where sustainability meets at the interface of art and science,

- Dish Truck – a team that eliminates disposable dishware at large-scale events, including at the Ithaca Farmers Market,

- Cornell Compost Facility – a large-scale compost facility that turns 4,000 tons of organic waste into nutrient-rich compost to be used on campus and in the community,

- Previously trained Master Composters, who share decades worth of experience and knowledge with a new generation of composters.

Composting creates an informed and environmentally conscious community. Working at the Compost Education booth is easily one of the most rewarding experiences in the Program. I’ve spoken to dozens of residents, families, and students and no two interactions are the same.

Initially, this position was intimidating, but I quickly found a passion for sharing best practices in composting. I am proud to have tabled at the Farmers Market and Cornell Ag Day. I even co-coordinated the Program’s efforts at the Apple Harvest Festival! I appreciated these events as a way to exchange knowledge. Local composters in the community shared their tips and taught me about cold-weather composting, getting rid of pests, and what they add to their compost piles.

Overall, the Compost Education program is a phenomenal way to join a network of environmentally responsible leaders and share sustainable practices with the rest of Tompkins County. I highly recommend the Program to anyone who is curious about the composting process and enthusi-



Photo provided

Russell Kwong participates in the Master Composter training program.

astic to share this knowledge with others. This is a program not to be missed, and I can guarantee it will make you rethink the value of composting and the meaning of sustainability.

The Compost Education Program is currently accepting applications for the 2025 Master Composter training until 11:59pm on Monday, January 27th. To find out more and apply, visit cctompkins.org/mc. Once the deadline passes, qualified applicants will be invited for a short interview. Since

there are limited spots, many applicants will mean a competitive process. All questions can be sent to the Program Manager, Adam Michaelides, via email acm1@cornell.edu or the “Rotline” (compost hotline) 607-272-2292.

Russell Kwong is a Cornell student and 2024 Master Composter from the Compost Education Program at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Signs of Sustainability is organized by Sustainable Finger Lakes.

NYSEG Energy Savings Kits



Tompkins County Office for the Aging has free, do-it-yourself energy savings kits available for individuals over 60. Each kit contains five outlet and switch gaskets, two door sweeps, one roll of weatherstripping and a three-pack window insulation kit. Make your home more energy-efficient with this complimentary kit; call the Office for the Aging at (607) 274-5482 or stop the office, located at 214 W. State St. Limit one kit per household.

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NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

John-Paul Mead, M.D., PLLC (“PLLC”) filed Articles of Organization with the NY Sec. of State (“SSNY”) on 8/28/24. Office location: Tompkins County. SSNY is designated as agent of PLLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to 103 W Seneca St, Suite 302, Ithaca, NY 14850. Purpose: to practice the profession medicine. 11/27, 12/4, 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Bookwork Solutions LLC filed Arts. Of Org. with the Sect’y of State of NY (SSNY) on 11/10/2024. Office: Tompkins County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to: 47 Whig Street, Trumansburg, NY 14886. Purpose: any lawful act. 11/27, 12/4, 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

DVM Detective LLC filed Arts. of Org. with the Sect’y of State of NY (SSNY) on 3/28/2023. Office: Tompkins County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to: 205 Columbia Street, Ithaca, NY 14850. Purpose: any lawful act. 11/27, 12/04, 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08/2024

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

BAYLEA & CO LLC Articles of Organization filed Secretary of State of NY (“SSNY”) 11/22/2024. Office location: Chemung County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to 2219 Doolittle Rd., Lockwood, NY 14859, USA. Purpose: any lawful purpose. 12/04, 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 01/15/2024

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Heron Hale Holdings LLC filed Arts. of Org. with the Sect’y of State of NY (SSNY) on 11/14/2024. Office: Tompkins County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process

against it may be served and shall mail process to: 131 Cambridge Place, Ithaca, NY 14850. Purpose: any lawful act. 12/04, 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/14/2024

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

La Colmena Ink LLC. Articles of Organization filing date with Secretary of State (SSNY) was 04/24/2024. Office location: Tompkins County. SSNY has been designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served and SSNY shall mail process to 117 Winston Dr., Ithaca, NY 14850. Purpose is to engage in any and all business activated permitted under NYS laws. 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Rockabill Properties LLC (the “LLC”) filed Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State of New York (“SSNY”) on 11/12/2024. LLC office location: Tompkins County. The SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The SSNY shall mail a copy of any process served to Rockabill Properties LLC, 80 River St, Suite 3C, Hoboken, NJ 07030. Purpose: any lawful activity. 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Stately Apartments Member LLC (the “LLC”) filed Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State of New York (“SSNY”) on 11/12/2024. LLC office location: Tompkins County. The SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The SSNY shall mail a copy of any process served to LLC, c/o Rockabill Development LLC, 80 River St., Suite 3C, Hoboken, NJ 07030. Purpose: any lawful activity. 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Conifer Healthcare Solutions LLC. Articles of Organization filing date with Secretary of State

(SSNY) was 11/22/2024. Office location: Tompkins County. SSNY has been designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served and SSNY shall mail copy of process to 3105 N. Triphammer Rd. Suite 7, Lansing, NY 14882. Purpose is to engage in any and all business activities permitted under NYS laws. 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22/2025.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

PURSUANT TO SECTION 206 OF THE LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY LAW

Name: GEHRING FARM LLC

Articles of Organization filed with NYS SOS on December 5, 2024.

Office of the company located in Tompkins County.

The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the company upon whom process against it may be served, and the post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process so served is Gehring Farm LLC 1208 Trumbulls Corners Road, Newfield, New York 14867.

Purpose: any lawful business.

2/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Farber Imports, LLC, Art. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/4/24. Office: Tompkins County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 6 Sunset West Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. 12/11, 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Ellison Property Group, LLC, Art. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/5/24. Office: Chemung County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of

process to the LLC, 219 M. Elston Rd., Van Etten, NY 14889. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

AnyBody & EveryBody LLC, Art. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 4/30/24. Office: County of Tompkins. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 241 Cherry St., Ithaca, NY 14850. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Red Bird Tile LLC. Articles of Organization filing date with Secretary of State (SSNY) was May 19, 2023. Office Location: Tompkins County. SSNY has been designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served and SSNY shall mail copy of process to 2197 Ellis Hollow Rd. Ithaca, NY 14850. Purpose is to engage in any and all business activities permitted under NYS laws. 12/18, 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Downey Farm LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 12/13/2024. Office location: Tompkins County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to: ZenBusiness Inc., 41 State Street, Suite 112, Albany, NY 12207, USA. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29, 2/5/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

To Advertise Classified, Legal, or LLC, Contact: Tina Mallinson (607) 591-0249 TinaM@VizellaMedia.com TompkinsWeekly.com

Warren Refrigeration, LLC -- Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of New York on 12/18/2024. Office location: Cortland County. Secretary of State of New York designated as agent of the limited liability company upon whom process against it may be served. Secretary of State of New York shall mail process to 2045 Maxfield Road, Cortland, New York 13045 which is the principal office of the limited liability company. The limited liability company was formed for any lawful business purpose. 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29, 2/5/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Sprint Alumni Engagement, LLC. Articles of Organization filing date with Secretary of State (SSNY) was 11/29/2024. Office location: Tompkins County. SSNY has been designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served and SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 856 Snyder Hill Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850. Purpose is to engage in any and all business activities permitted under NYS law. 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29, 2/5/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Herman Handyworks LLC was filed with the New York State Department of State on October 15, 2024. The LLC is located in Tompkins County. The Secretary of State is designated as the agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC is 99 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12231. The LLC is formed for any lawful purpose. 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29, 2/5/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY

COMPANY

Mecenas Holdings LLC filed Arts. of Org. with the Sect’y of State of NY (SSNY) on 9/7/2024. Office: Tompkins County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to: The LLC, PO Box 81, Ithaca, NY 14851. Purpose: any lawful act. 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29, 2/5/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

ROWAN’S RENOVATIONS, LLC, Art. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 09/17/24. Office: County of Tompkins. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 46 Drake Road, Lansing, NY 14882. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. 01/01, 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29, 2/5/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Mandeville & Son, LLC, Art. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/19/24. Office: Tompkins County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 894 Ithaca Rd., Spencer, NY, 14883. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29, 2/5, 2/12/2025.

NOTICE of FORMATION of a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Mandeville Property Group, LLC, Art. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/19/24. Office: Tompkins County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 894 Ithaca Rd., Spencer, NY, 14883. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. 01/08, 1/15, 01/22, 1/29, 2/5, 2/12/2025.

Solutions to Puzzles on Page 12

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7	2	1	3	6	5	8	4	9
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Real Estate Transactions

CAROLINE
- Andrew Siefert & Lindsay Goodale bought from Timmy G. Bremer & Tracey L. Bremer at 73 Blackman Hill Rd, Caroline, NY 13736 on 12/12/24 for \$421,250.

DANBY
- Mallaer Drapala Ft & Garrett M. Drapala bought from Jason Fleischer at 104 Peter Rd, Danby, NY 13864 on 12/10/24 for \$215,000.
- Christine Obrien & Paul Maccarone bought from Karl Madeo & Linda Madeo on Yaple Rd, Danby, NY 13053 on 12/10/24 for \$53,000.
- Ryan Management NY LLC bought from Barclays Mortgage T & Sandra M. Loomis at 365 Troy Rd, Danby, NY 14850 on 12/09/24 for \$216,000.
- William Wilcox & Karen

Wilcox bought from Kathleen Weeks at 143 Nelson Rd, Danby, NY 14850 on 12/12/24 for \$40,000.

DRYDEN
- Honk Honk Holdings LLC bought from Valle J. Vasse at 230 Main St W, Dryden, NY 13053 on 12/09/24 for \$275,000.
- Nora Starr bought from Michelle R. Wheaton in Dryden, NY 13053 on 12/11/24 for \$42,500.
- Richard Clark bought from George H. Clark Sr. Estate & Richard J. Clark in Dryden, NY 13053 on 12/03/24 for \$2,000.
- Samuel K. Smith bought from Helen Porter in Dryden, NY 13053 on 12/04/24 for \$179,000.

ENFIELD

- Daniel Hawkes bought from Leo D. Dougherty & Thu T. Thi-Nguyen at 173 Tucker Rd, Enfield, NY 14886 on 12/02/24 for \$231,500.
- Keith Mcmillen & Elyse E. Mcmillen bought from Yaicha Bryan & Harrison Ramey in Enfield, NY 13073 on 12/03/24 for \$500.

GROTON
- Nicholas Priest & Aleesha Priest bought from Brenda L. Mincher in Groton, NY 13073 on 12/02/24 for \$65,000.

ITHACA
- Cindy Bronen & Michael Schneider bought from Joyce A. White at 6 Penny Ln, Ithaca, NY 14850 on 12/10/24 for \$250,000.
- Colwyn Gulliford & Mary Kadzielski bought from Matthew M. Yarrow & Erika D.

Yarrow at 119 Cascadilla St, Ithaca, NY 14850 on 12/12/24 for \$460,000.
- Christina Siau bought from Shawn R. Smith at 202 Elmwood Ave, Ithaca, NY 14850 on 12/09/24 for \$354,000.
- Rachel Testman bought from M.T. Contiguglia Estate & Myriam T. Contiguglia in Ithaca, NY 14851 on 12/09/24 for \$142,000.
- Elizabeth S. Jones bought from Gary A. King & Judith A. King at 105 Highgate Pl, Ithaca, NY 14850 on 12/05/24 for \$510,000.
- Quy S. Lam bought from Susan A. Manning at 10 Highland Park Ln, Ithaca, NY 14850 on 12/03/24 for \$450,000.
- Jacqueline Riccio bought from Patricia M. Thayer at 440 Titus Ave N, Ithaca, NY 14851

on 12/03/24 for \$245,000.
- Vinh Tuanle bought from Kenneth D. Ash at 137 Caddington Rd, Ithaca, NY 14851 on 12/02/24 for \$290,000.

LANSING
- Christopher Bishop & Tricia Bishop bought from Jeanne Bishop Estate & Scott Bishop at 709 Lansing Station Rd, Lansing, NY 14882 on 12/06/24 for \$261,800.
- Sean R. Chilson bought from Nicholas J. Barra on Jerry Smith Rd, Lansing, NY 13068 on 12/11/24 for \$30,000.
- Vicki Fleming bought from Norman L. Davidson at 1187 Ridge Rd, Lansing, NY 14882 on 12/06/24 for \$255,000.
- Luke D. Powers bought from David J. Powers at 450 Holden Rd, Lansing, NY 13068 on 12/10/24 for \$102,000.

- Zhengjing Yang & Jing Zhang bought from Lawrence P. Mancuso at 2250 N Triphammer Rd, Lansing, NY 13068 on 12/11/24 for \$240,000.

NEWFIELD
- Juan Elie bought from Glenn S. Caslick at 34 Millard Hill Rd, Newfield, NY 14867 on 12/03/24 for \$600,000.
- Adele Peters bought from Gregg R. Volles at 27 Pearl St, Newfield, NY 14867 on 12/04/24 for \$224,000.

ULYSSES
- Stephen H. Watkins & Debra A. Watkins bought from Kathrine M. Horey at 2 Falls St, Ulysses, NY 14850 on 12/09/24 for \$275,200.

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Happy New Year, Republicans of Tompkins County!

Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of author Zachary Winn and are not representative of the thoughts or opinions of Tompkins Weekly.



By Zachary Winn

As President-elect Trump's second inauguration approaches, 2025 is already shaping up to be eventful. New Year's Day saw a terror attack on Bourbon Street in New Orleans and a vehicle explosion at the Trump Hotel in Las Vegas. With strange details emerging and authorities claiming these incidents are unrelated, their timing suggests troubling signs for the year ahead. These events follow an alleged "Bird Flu" outbreak suspiciously surfacing just before the inauguration. Post-COVID, I no longer trust health authorities and will never wear a mask again under any circumstances.

While the Democrats continue to deny President Trump's mandate, the fact is the 2024 election was decisive for Republicans. Kamala Harris underperformed Joe Biden's 2020 results in every county nationwide, and voters in virtually all regions moved significantly to the right. Democrats now find themselves in a difficult position, needing to appeal to moderates without angering their leftist base. Much of the Republican Party's growth has come from disillusioned Democrats, alienated by their former party's extremist policies and rhetoric. As the left focuses on retaking Congress in the 2026

midterms, Republicans must prioritize voter registration and outreach. The Democrats' setbacks in 2024 were substantial but not fatal. Their desperation makes them all the more dangerous.

Among the issues facing Trump's second term, enforcing immigration laws must remain a priority. Just before Christmas, a horrific crime underscored the stakes: a woman sleeping on a New York City subway was burned alive, allegedly by Sebastian Zapeta, an illegal immigrant deported during Trump's first term. Zapeta re-entered the country due to a border left wide open by Biden and committed this heinous act—literally fanning the flames as his victim died an agonizing death. Zapeta is just one of millions who have entered the country illegally during the Biden administration, their presence subsidized by taxpayer dollars and facilitated by Democrat policies. Mass deportations are not an act of cruelty, but self preservation.

The sanctuary laws protecting individuals like Zapeta in New York City are mirrored here in Tompkins County. Ithaca remains a Sanctuary City in a Sanctuary County in a Sanctuary State. As the industry of "resistance" to Trump reemerges, travelers in Ithaca should expect the same disruptive protests, roadblocks, and street takeovers that have plagued the streets under various, shifting pretenses for over a decade. Local leaders must condemn these illegal acts of intimidation when they occur.

With the 2024 elections concluded,

the 2025 local election cycle is just around the corner. Petitioning for local races begins soon, and several Tompkins County legislators are expected to step down. Additionally, redistricting has created two new legislative seats, opening the door for a wave of new candidates. Unfortunately, too often, Republicans hesitate to run, leaving races uncontested and decided in Democratic primaries. This must change.

Republicans have an opportunity to expand their influence in the legislature, but this requires bold individuals willing to endure the challenges of public service. If you've ever considered running for local office—whether for the Legislature, Common Council, or School Board—now is the time. Democrats, despite their internal divisions, are never short on candidates. Republicans must meet this challenge with equal resolve.

There is also reason for optimism. The ongoing crisis at the Asteri building is finally receiving the attention it deserves. Recent reports from Tompkins Weekly, The Cornell Daily Sun and outreach worker Richard Rivera have exposed the building's dire conditions, including frequent police calls, rampant

substance abuse, and unsanitary environments. Photos and video of the building sent to the Legislature prompted an inspection by Tompkins County Environmental Health. Trash filled with used syringes and other hazardous materials was found to be overwhelming the building's infrastructure. Asteri's owner, Vecino Group, has been cited by Tompkins County Environmental Health for failing to properly manage the building's waste.

The crisis is now too much to ignore. One legislator has described witnessing the deplorable conditions firsthand, and another is now calling for a review of Vecino Group's tax abatement at the January meeting of the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency. Addressing this crisis, like any other, depends on leaders having the courage and will to act.

The same principle applies to our party. Whether tackling local issues or broader challenges, 2025 is an opportunity for Republicans to offer a real alternative to the status quo. If you want to be part of the change, now is the time to get involved. Visit Facebook.com/TompkinsGOP/ to learn how you can help.

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