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**Country Editor**  
 Serving the Valley for 53 Years

**NOVEMBER 12, 2021**  
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 Volume 11 Number 22

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 1 Corinthians 13:13

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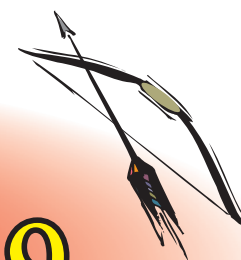
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## Utica Zoo releases cause of death for red panda

### *Passing attributed to acute aspiration pneumonia*

Utica Zoo Deputy Director of Life Sciences and Facilities Jay Pratte released a statement outlining the cause of death of the zoo's red panda, Ming Yue, who passed on Monday, Oct. 11.

"We wanted to follow up with everyone who expressed concern over our female red panda Ming Yue's unexpected death a couple of weeks ago. It is an industry standard for accredited and reputable zoos to perform a 'necropsy' when an animal under human care dies. An animal necropsy is the equivalent of a human autopsy, including an overall investigation to determine cause of death; this includes both a full physical examination and sampling/testing of tissues by an experienced veterinarian and/or pathologist. We worked with the laboratory at Cornell University and recently received the final necropsy report.

"It was reported that Ming Yue experienced acute aspiration pneumonia: this is a lung infection caused by inhalation of saliva, stomach contents or other foreign particles. Acute conditions are severe and sudden in onset. It is unknown how this occurred with Ming Yue; it can result from being startled while eating or drinking, breathing in dust or particles or even having food or water 'go down the wrong tube' (something that each of us has experienced at some point). All of our animals receive direct care and attention from zoo staff every day. Changes in behavior or health are closely monitored, recorded and reported. We have veterinary technicians on grounds daily and work with an experienced local veterinarian. Ming was exhibiting typical behaviors, eating properly and even interacting with staff normally the two days prior to her sudden death. Reviewing our observations and daily records, no atypical

signs of illness or distress were evident. This is not uncommon in 'acute' health events. The report also mentioned a potential underlying cardiac issue which could have complicated the acute health problems; cardiac issues are a recognized congenital issue in red pandas as a species.

"Animals are experts at concealing illness or weakness. For predators, they run the risk of losing their territory or being injured by competitors. For prey species, exhibiting behaviors that indicate you might be easier to catch for dinner will lead to an early demise. This makes monitoring health particularly challenging, but our dedicated staff are always working their hardest to improve our animals' well-being. For those that have asked, we are working with the Species Survival Plan coordinators on how we will proceed with our red panda management program moving forward. We will update you in the future with news.

"Ming Yue's loss was sudden and traumatic for everyone. Thank you all for your support through this difficult time."

Ming Yue was one of two red pandas on exhibit at the zoo. She was born in 2013 at Prospect Park Zoo, Brooklyn, and came to the Utica Zoo in 2014 on loan through Assiniboine Park Zoo, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She and her mate, Muse, have had two groups of cubs including Xiaobo and Mei Lin in 2019. Muse was born in 2011 and came to the Utica Zoo from Red River Valley Zoo in 2012. Muse remains on exhibit.

Red pandas are currently classified as an endangered species, and the Utica Zoo works closely with the Red Panda Species Survival Plan to reverse this perilous trend.



Utica Zoo's red panda Ming Yue passed on Oct. 11. Photo courtesy of Utica Zoo

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## The 2021 Little Falls Cheese Festival turned out to be big

After its cancellation in 2020, the sixth Little Falls Cheese Festival, held on Oct. 2, exceeded all expectations including its attendance record set in 2019.

Between the lingering COVID pandemic and a date change from steamy and hot mid-July to cooler early October, the Little Falls Cheese Festival Committee had been keeping expectations in check. "We just didn't know," stated Teri Chace, one of the organizers. "Would people come out? Would our vendors do well enough to make it worth their while? Would the things we'd tried to improve work out?"

Not only did people show up, attendance was way up. Based on data from the two entry booths on each end of East Main Street and analysis of drone footage, this year's Cheese Festival hosted approximately 8,000 people over the course of the day – shattering the festival's previous record of approximately 6,000 in 2019. One of the improvements was instituting shuttle parking from Veterans Baseball Park on the east side of the city and from the Industrial Park on the west side – both quick trips into the city. Even with the unexpectedly large crowds, there was space for everyone's vehicle and the buses, running continuously all day, conveyed cheese-lovers back and forth without a hitch.

Another improvement was a Food Truck Food Court, moved off Main Street down to the M&T Bank parking lot. There, attendees could order freshly prepared food and drinks then sit under open-sided tents to savor their snack and listen to live music before returning to the main festival to continue strolling, sampling and shopping.

The vendors had an incredible day, a welcome and needed boost for many of them after a rough past year. Many vendors began to sell out by mid-afternoon – not just the artisanal and farmstead New York State cheesemakers but also the gourmet food and wines and spirits purveyors. "It was my best show ever," said Juli Webster of the Mustard Seed. "You knocked it out of the park and made it a fabulous day for us," declared Laurie Schild of Farm Girl

Cider Vinegars. Cheesemakers Cindy and Tim Powers of Poplar Hedge Farm commented "It was amazing talking with so many people and even after selling out, they were stopping and asking questions."

Live music performed all day the length of the festival added to the festive atmosphere. Some people came in cheese hats; others purchased Cheese Festival-themed souvenirs such as keychains, stickers and T-shirts from the Souvenirs Booth. Local brick-and-mortar shops and city restaurants had a banner day. Melanie Pagan of the Loft 32 West boutique reported that she "made more in one day than what I made in the whole year before," and Mangia Macrina's Pizza down in Canal Place reported "a huge day, a sellout Saturday!"

"We plan to keep our festival in autumn going forward," Chace confirmed. "It was a wonderful day. The DPW and the police department were so supportive. But big credit goes to our amazing volunteers, who helped the vendors set up and tear down, kept the day running smoothly and gave visitors to Little Falls a warm welcome. We could not have done it without them!" And as Mayor Mark Blask commented in a widely shared Facebook post that evening, everyone "loved it! The goodwill and publicity Little Falls gets after such a successful event is immeasurable."

The Little Falls Cheese Festival is NYS's premier gathering of cheesemakers, running the length of Main Street from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Keep up to date with future plans by following the Little Falls Cheese Festival on Facebook, Instagram or visiting [littlefallscheesefestival.com](http://littlefallscheesefestival.com).



Based on data from the two entry booths on each end of East Main Street and analysis of drone footage, this year's Cheese Festival hosted approximately 8,000 people over the course of the day – shattering the festival's previous record of approximately 6,000 in 2019. Photos courtesy of Little Falls Cheese Festival and MyLittleFalls.com



Cockran Farm 1790 at 2021 Little Falls Cheese Festival.

### HERKIMER Country Editor

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**DOLGEVILLE  
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Sunday School 9:30 AM  
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Tuesday Bible Study 7 PM

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12 Van Buren St.  
Morning Worship 11-12:30 PM  
Lunch 12:30-2 PM  
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Rev. Anthony Bradseth  
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Worship 11 AM

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Nursery & Sunday School 9:45 AM  
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Sunday Worship 9:30 AM  
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Email [ffirstpres@gmail.com](mailto:ffirstpres@gmail.com)  
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Sunday School 10 AM

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Pastor's Phone (315) 717-9936

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**DENNISON CORNERS  
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Sunday:  
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September - June

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Morning Worship 11 AM  
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Afternoon Bible Study 1:30 PM  
Wednesday Prayer & Bible Study 6 PM

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Sunday Worship 11 AM

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STRATFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
1511 State Route 29A  
Pastor Mark Hediger, 315-429-9085  
[pastormarkh@aol.com](mailto:pastormarkh@aol.com)  
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## SQSPCA honors donors, volunteers

In celebration of the people who make saving homeless, abandoned and abused animals possible, the Susquehanna Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SQSPCA) has designated November as "SQSPCA Supporter Appreciation Month."

People passing the shelter this month will see a special message in grateful recognition of the role supporters have played in the SQSPCA's successes – both past, present and future.

"We owe a debt of gratitude to the many donors and volunteers whose support enables us to do our jobs," said SQSPCA Executive Director Stacie Haynes. "This is especially significant in light of the successful SHELTER US Campaign, during which donors at all

levels helped to make our new, state-of-the-art animal shelter a reality."

Donations totaling more than \$5 million during the SHELTER US capital campaign enabled the SQSPCA to relocate its shelter and thrift store facilities in July of this year to a specially-designed campus just north of the previous site on State Route 28.

"Now that we are settled in, each passing day drives home the magnitude of assistance our shelter receives that we simply could not function without. What better time to give credit where credit is due than November – a month when we traditionally stop to give thanks for the bounty and blessings of the year," Haynes added.

As part of SQSPCA Supporter Appreciation Month,

volunteers active in the new location will be invited to a private reception. Supporters who stop in for a visit will receive a special gift while supplies last.

"Our new shelter is possible because people care about animals, because they support our mission and because they are confident we can get the job done. We don't take this public mandate lightly and we hold our donors and volunteers in high esteem," Haynes said.

The SQSPCA is open from noon - 5 p.m. Tuesday - Saturday. Appointments to meet animals are advised, to avoid wait times, but walk-ins are also welcome. To view available animals or to donate, visit [sqspca.org](http://sqspca.org). The shelter is located at 5082-5088 State Highway 28, Cooperstown.



Donations totaling more than \$5 million during the SHELTER US capital campaign enabled the SQSPCA to relocate its shelter and thrift store facilities in July of this year to this specially-designed campus just north of the previous site on State Route 28 in Cooperstown.

Photo courtesy of SQSPCA

### Increased services come at a cost at SQSPCA

Since 2015 – following restructuring, intensive work with Shelter Management Consultant Barbara Carr and organizational rebranding – the Susquehanna Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SQSPCA) has increased its footprint substantially throughout Otsego County and the surrounding region. In the last year and a half alone, despite the global pandemic, the SQSPCA has:

- Started and maintained a pet pantry and eliminated surrender fees to help individuals and families facing financial difficulties
- Expanded its emergency boarding program for animals belonging to those in crisis
- Provides emergency medical care for animals outside the shelter walls
- Partnering with Otsego County Department of Health to organize and execute free rabies vaccination clinics
- Formed the "PAWS (Puppy Mill Awareness with Shelters) Before You Pay" initiative in collaboration with the Humane Society of the United States, the NYS Animal Protection Federation, the ASPCA and local shelters
- Absorbed and is continuing the Greater One-onta Fund for Animal Responsibility (GOFAR) feline low cost spay/neuter clinic
- Formed the Here to Help Hotline and Farm Friends Network to assist with an ever-increasing number of cruelty and hoarding cases and other situations involving farm animals such as pigs, horses, sheep and goats

"Our intake and adoption statistics are also incredibly improved," SQSPCA Executive Director Stacie Haynes said. "Animal intake has increased by 143% over the past five years. Total animals cared for is up 129% and adoptions have increased by a whopping 226%."

The length of stay for shelter animals has decreased by 55% at the SQSPCA, dropping from an average of 67.6 days in 2015 to 30.4 days in 2020.

For more information or to donate, visit [sqspca.org](http://sqspca.org).

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The "Soldier's Joy - Songs & Stories from the Civil War" event will take place on Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m. at the Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley, 623 Columbia St., Utica. Tickets are free. Event registration is requested at [eventbrite.com/e/soldiers-joy-songs-stories-from-the-civil-war-tickets-198288705857](https://eventbrite.com/e/soldiers-joy-songs-stories-from-the-civil-war-tickets-198288705857) or by emailing [irishccmv@gmail.com](mailto:irishccmv@gmail.com).

"Soldier's Joy" is a collaboration by two of the area's well-known traditional musicians who have joined to celebrate "the first real American music" - the music of the Civil War. Join Bill Fahy and Amanda Straney of Soldier's Joy as they present the music of the Civil War and share the stories behind the songs, with letters and stories from the soldiers from Oneida County and New York State. You'll hear the song that was banned by the Union Army, Stephen Foster's last song and the Army's most popular marching song.

Civil War music has its roots in the Celtic, European and Southern traditions as well as the early American songwriters like Foster. You may find yourself singing and dancing along.

Fahy and Straney are both accomplished traditional musicians. Fahy sings and plays guitar and banjo and has been performing for over 20 years in Central NY - with Craobh Dugan and the Mighty Craic, and as a duet with Straney. Straney plays sings and plays the fiddle and has been performing in the area for over 15 years. In addition to performing with Fahy she also plays with Mighty Craic, Craobh Dugan and the Blarney Rebel Band.

## Soldier's Joy - Songs & Stories from the Civil War



Join Bill Fahy and Amanda Straney of Soldier's Joy as they present the music of the Civil War and share the stories behind the songs, with letters and stories from the soldiers from Oneida County and New York State.

## Herkimer College to host on-campus Financial Aid Workshop

Herkimer County Community College will be hosting an on-campus financial aid workshop on Nov. 20 from 2 - 4 p.m.

Financial aid representatives will present a

workshop to provide information and answer questions about tuition, aid, scholarships and more. On-site assistance will be available to complete the FAFSA on the

web. Students and families are welcome, regardless of what college they plan to attend. Advance registration for the financial aid workshop is required at [tinyurl.com/hzy2n9b7](https://tinyurl.com/hzy2n9b7).

hzy2n9b7.

The financial aid session follows an information session presented by the Admissions Office. The information session will provide an opportunity for prospective students and their families to learn about academic programs, services and campus life, as well as enrollment procedures. Campus tours will also

be given. Registration is available at [herkimer.edu/visit](https://herkimer.edu/visit) or by calling 315.574.4028. Participants may attend either or both sessions.

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## The Mohawk Homestead receives donation



(L - R) Shayna Keller, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield Community Investments and Partnerships manager; Eve Van de Wal, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield Utica Regional president; Sharon Palmer, Mohawk Homestead Board of Directors; and Lisa Gollegly, Mohawk Homestead market coordinator.  
Photo courtesy of the Mohawk Homestead

## Bible Trivia

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Bethany in the Old Testament or New Testament or neither?
  2. Which woman was chosen to be queen through a beauty pageant, destined to reign for the rest of her life? Bathsheba, Tahpenes, Jezebel, Esther
  3. From Romans 16, Paul described what devout woman as "our sister"? Rachel, Deborah, Martha, Phoebe
  4. Where was the longest epistle of Paul sent? Rome, Joppa, Gibeon, Nazareth
  5. In Genesis 3:4, who/what told the first lie? Adam, Eve, Serpent, Cain
  6. From Acts 8, Candace was Queen of the ...? Israelites, Ethiopians, Gadites, Ephesians
- Answers: 1) Neither; 2) Esther (2:2-18); 3) Phoebe; 4) Rome; 5) Serpent; 6) Ethiopians
- Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.

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# FUNDRAISER



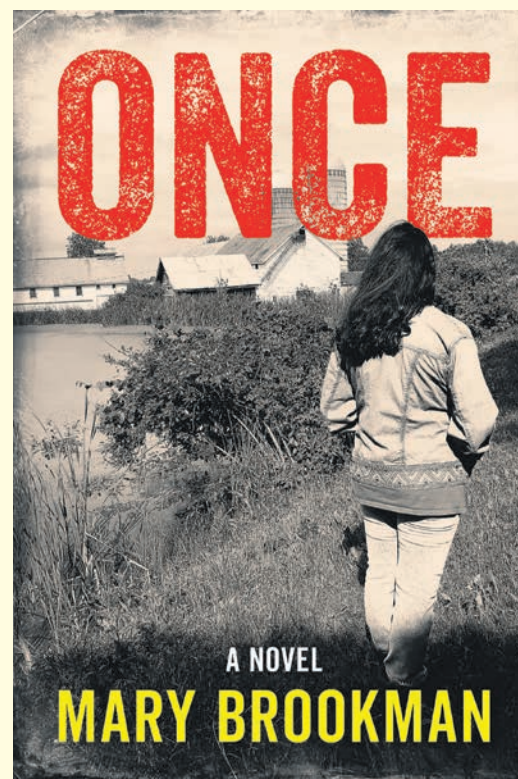
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## Author in-person signing Saturday, November 27 at Highwheeler Coffee



Journalist Valerie Jacobs investigates a perceived conspiracy to take over farmlands, water supplies, and energy sources in the U.S. As the probe intensifies, her search for the truth takes her across the country and beyond while her family and friends are put at increasing risk of harm. The theme throughout is the loss of family farms and the possible resulting decline of its culture of hard work, ingenuity, taking care of family, and working with others.

Local author, **Mary Brookman**, uses her experiences living on a family farm to weave mystery and suspense novels with unexpected twists.

*Once* is her debut novel.

**Available at amazon.com and Highwheeler Coffee**  
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## SQSPCA Helping Paws Society enrollment continues

In order to meet the growing need for SQSPCA services and still cover ever-increasing recurring costs, Susquehanna Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SQSPCA) officials announced the launch of a new Annual Fund donation tier in September, the Helping Paws Society, aimed at securing donors at the \$1,000+ level.

An anonymous matching challenge is still in effect through Dec. 31.

"To help us build the Helping Paws Society, which will in turn increase op-

erational support, an anonymous donor is matching new donations of \$1,000 or more dollar for dollar, up to \$100,000," said SQSPCA Executive Director Stacie Haynes.

At last count, Helping Paws Society Charter Members, including individuals, businesses and foundations, number more than 100.

Donors who had made gifts of \$1,000 or more in 2021 prior to formation of the Helping Paws Society, or who have SHELTER US pledge payments scheduled, are

included among the list of founding members.

### New Campus Presents New Fundraising Hurdles

Coming off an extremely successful capital campaign that raised more than \$5 million in just under three years, the SQSPCA is currently adjusting to life in both new shelter and thrift store facilities just 1.2 miles north of the former location on State Route 28 south of Cooperstown.

"Our new shelter is comparable to a state-of-the-art healthcare facility, with sophisticated and complex plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems designed specifically for our needs," Haynes explained.

These upgrades are not without continued associated costs though, Haynes said.

"The reality is that the new building requires additional expense and investment to maintain," she continued, "and the shelter revenue streams don't come close to covering recurring operational costs, even prior to the move.

"The combined total of adoption fees, thrift store sales and municipal contract income is far lower than our expenses, especially now, in light of the fact that the maintenance requirements of the new building are more complicated and more expensive," Haynes explained.

The SQSPCA is dependent upon philanthropy to bridge that gap.

"We are converting from capital campaign to Annual Fund mode not only to meet these new expenses but also to cover recurring costs that continue to escalate, such as insurance and wages," Haynes said.

### Helping Paws Society Welcomes Charter Members

The new facilities will further improve the daily lives of sheltered dogs and cats by better conforming to guidelines established by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians. Upgraded features include two entrances separating incoming animals from visitors and animals leaving for their new homes, a sterile surgery suite with safe recovery area, a fresh air ventilation system to benefit visitors as well as animals under shelter care, and convenient parking.

"A vibrant Helping Paws Society will allow us to continue these positive trends in the organization's efficacy as well as in the public services we are able to provide and will ensure that we can maximize all the possibilities of the new campus," Haynes said.

To become a charter member of the Helping Paws Society, visit [sqspca.org/support/make-a-donation](http://sqspca.org/support/make-a-donation) or call 607.547.8111 ext. 101.

Donor recognition of Helping Paws Society members will include a plaque in the shelter building and a reception in December. The new shelter is located at 5082-5088 State Route 28, Cooperstown.



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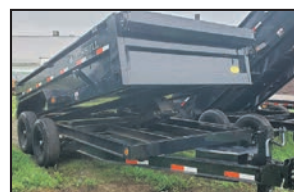
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## New coaches leading Poland cross country program

The Poland Central School District cross country program is running under the direction of new coaching this year.

After Poland physical education teacher and cross country coach Sandy Hitt retired at the end of the 2020-21 school year, Poland fifth grade teacher Todd Manley became the head coach for girls and boys modified cross country and girls and boys varsity cross country. New Poland social studies teacher Joel Allen is a volunteer, part-time assistant coach for the cross country program.

"It's been a ton of fun," Manley said of coaching the cross country students. "They've worked very hard this year."

There are 13 total students in the cross country program. The four girls modified runners are seventh grader Lia Dutcher, eighth graders Ariel Pope and Grace McOwen and freshman Hailey Carnright; the four boys modified runners are seventh graders Jordan Niemetz and Anthony Militello and eighth graders Austin Root-Lanier and James Guarascio; the two girls varsity runners are junior Stefania Grimaldi and senior Madison Altamura; and the three boys varsity runners are freshman Troy Haver, sophomore Kyle Grimaldi and eleventh Nick Robinson.

Manley, who has previously coached soccer, thought that becoming cross country coach would fill a need

for the school, so he reached out about it and became the coach.

With 13 students this year, Manley would like to increase the size of the team going forward but also enjoys working with a smaller group.

"The small number is nice because you get to focus on the individual kids," Manley said.

The cross country season started on Aug. 25 and wrapped up Oct. 13.

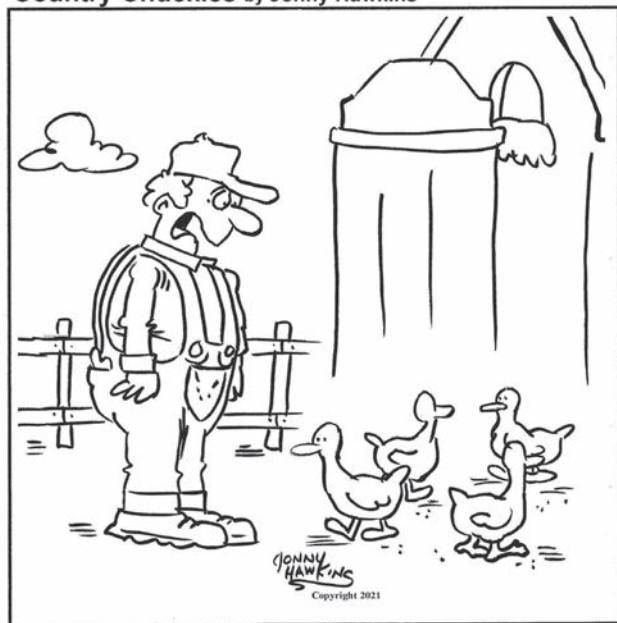
Cross country team members frequently run during practice on Poland's cross country trail, on the district's "beautiful new track" from Capital Project 2020 or go

**New 11**



Students begin a race at a cross country meet hosted at Poland Central School District on Sept. 22. Photos courtesy of Herkimer BOCES

### Country Chuckles by Jonny Hawkins



"You heard me. Get in a row."

## Calendar of events

**NOTE: Calendar items must be submitted by Tuesday prior to the publication date to be included in the Calendar of Events. Entries may be emailed to [cfeditor@leepub.com](mailto:cfeditor@leepub.com)**

### November 13

Project. For more information, call 315.717.5823.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church, The Parish Hall. Taking orders now. Apple pie, apple cranberry pie, pumpkin pie and pumpkin rolls. Call 315.741.4672 to reserve your homemade pies.

**Central Valley Central School District Foundation Turkey Trot** Road race at German Flatts Town Park, 555 State Route 5S in Mohawk. Register [tinyurl.com/ypc726ft](http://tinyurl.com/ypc726ft).

**Drive Through Chicken and Biscuit Dinner** at Newport United Methodist Church 4-6:30 p.m. or until gone at 7488 Main Street (Rt. 28), Newport. Adults \$13. Children (12 and under) \$5. Local Delivery available. Call 315.845.8730. Veterans Appreciation Dinner.

### November 15

**Rabies Clinic at Susquehanna SPCA** 2 - 5 p.m. Register at 607.547.8111 ext 111.

**Red Cross Blood Drive** 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at James A Green High School, 38 Slawson St. Ext., Dolgeville. Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or call 1.800.733.2767. Sponsor Code: [dolgevilles](http://dolgevilles)

### November 18

**Soldier's Joy Program** at The Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley, 623 Columbia St., Utica. Tickets are free. Register on [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com).

### November 19 and 20

**"Indoor Garage Sale"** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. both days at 20 N. Main Street, Dolgeville. Sale in the George Ward Memorial Library building. Proceeds benefit Dolgeville C.A.T.

### November 20

**The Mohawk Homestead's Annual Holiday Basket Raffle and Bake Sale** 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at 1 Fulton Street, Mohawk. Proceeds benefit Mohawk Homestead. Masks must be worn.

**Bake Sale and Mini Bazaar** 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Grace Church Rectory, 7 E. Main St., Mohawk.

**Financial Aid Day: Herkimer County Community College** 2-4 p.m. at Herkimer County Community College, Robert McLaughlin College Center (RMCC), 100 Reservoir Rd., Herkimer. Admissions Information Session set 12-2 p.m. Advance registration for the financial aid workshop is required at [tinyurl.com/hzy2n9b7](http://tinyurl.com/hzy2n9b7) or visit [Herkimer.edu/visit](http://Herkimer.edu/visit) or call 315.574.4028.

### November 20 - 21

**Holiday Craft Show** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. German Flatts Town Park, 555 Route 5S, Mohawk. Looking for vendors, \$10/day. Vendors can contact any of the following to reserve a table: Brenda 518.231.2493 or [Bjonker0713@gmail.com](mailto:Bjonker0713@gmail.com); Judy 315.866.2861 or [billybebad56@gmail.com](mailto:billybebad56@gmail.com); or Carol 315.866.6791 or [pvercz@twcnv.rr.com](mailto:pvercz@twcnv.rr.com)

### November 24

**Annual Thanksgiving Pie Sale** at

### November 25

**Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner** 12 - 2 p.m. at Herkimer First United Methodist Church, 127 N. Prospect St., Herkimer. Walk-in Dine-In service begins at noon in Fellowship Hall. Due to COVID-19, no more than 60 can be served at one time. Delivery for homebound and take-out service (no age limit) will be available by reservation. Call the Herkimer County OFA at 315.867.1124 to reserve your meals by Nov. 12.

### December 5

**St. Nicholas Day** Noon - 3 p.m. Fort Klock, 7214 State Route 5, St. Johnsville. Call 518.568.7779.

### December 12

**Brooks BBQ** 1 p.m. - sold out. Herkimer Elks Lodge No. 1439, 124 Mary St., Herkimer. Half-chicken, salt potatoes, coleslaw, roll, \$13. Eat-in or takeout.

### December 13

**Rabies Clinic at Susquehanna SPCA** 2 - 5 p.m. Register at 607.547.8111 ext 111.

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## New from 10

from the firehouse to the Li'l Red Caboose and back. The team even played some ultimate Frisbee in the pouring rain before the first meet, so it has been an enjoyable experience, Manley said.

Allen, who volunteers for cross country a couple of days per week, said it's nice to be around the program and help out, and he enjoys working with a small team.

"We have a good group of kids," Allen said. "Our team has a really good attitude this year. The kids work hard. Mr. Manley makes it a lot of fun, so I enjoy working with him."

Allen said he likes cross country because it's easy to measure yourself, and you get to compete as an individual and as a team. There also is a lot of camaraderie – not just within the team but among other teams as well, he said.

Allen now teaches seventh and eighth grade social studies at Poland. The 2021-22 school year will also be his fifth year involved with the Poland track program. For in-

door track, he has been a volunteer coach helping his brother, John Allen, who is a Poland fifth grade teacher and indoor and outdoor track head coach. For outdoor track, the brothers are co-coaches.

"It's really nice to be coaching where you're teaching," Joel Allen said.

Before starting to teach at Poland this school year, Joel Allen spent the previous seven years as a social studies teacher at New York Mills, where he also coached cross country for a couple of years.

Joel Allen has had ties to Poland for a long time. He went to high school not far away in Remsen, completed a semester of student teaching at Poland in 2006-07 and coached girls modified basketball for the district during the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years.

"I've had connections one way or another," Joel Allen said, "which helps. You feel comfortable and familiar with everyone."

Poland hosted a home cross country meet on Sept. 22, with Adirondack, Canastota, West

Canada Valley and a combined team from Remsen and the Town of Webb.

There was a lot of work that went into the meet, but it was well worth it, Manley said. For many parents, it was the first time they were able to see their students run.

"It was really nice to see," Manley said. "They were excited."

The weather mostly cooperated with a pretty nice day and just a little bit of rain, Joel Allen said. Hosting a home meet is different from a home game in other sports because there are multiple schools that visit at once, he said.

"It's a lot of work to host, but it's fun, and it's nice for others in the school to see," Allen said.

Poland employees were helping out with timing, taking tickets, giving course directions and more, Allen said.

"I enjoyed hosting," Allen said. "We had a lot of support. We had teachers and staff helping with the various jobs."

Sections of Poland's cross country course had to be redone due to all of the rain over the summer, and a community member helped make the repairs, Manley said. A lot of other preparation



Members of the Poland Central School District cross country team pose for a photo before a home meet. (Front row, L - R) Lia Dutcher, Austin Root-Lanier, James Guarascio, Jordan Niemetz and Anthony Militello. (Back row) Head coach Todd Manley, Troy Haver, Nick Robinson, Ariel Pope, Grace McOwen, Hailey Carnright and volunteer assistant coach Joel Allen. (Not pictured: team members Kyle Grimaldi, Stefania Grimaldi and Madison Altamura.)

and volunteer work was also needed for the home meet, he said.

"It was kind of cool to see everybody step up and help out," Manley said.

There were 77 runners at the meet – 23 in girls modified, 14 in boys modified, 20 in girls varsity and 20 in boys varsity.

When the nearly 40 girls and boys in modified lined up to start their race, it was quite a sight to see, Manley said.

"It was pretty cool," Manley said.

Manley said he's excited for the future of the cross country program and hopes to increase the number of team members. The popularity of soccer in Poland makes that somewhat of a challenge, and even this year, four of the cross country students also play soccer and have soccer as their primary sport, but there are still other students who could join cross country.

"One goal is definitely to try to get the numbers up," Manley said. "Having the track and a good track program is hopefully going to help with that."

Allen agreed that the cross country, indoor track and outdoor track

programs could all help each other grow.

"I think ideally that would be the goal," Allen said.

Students who run in all three can certainly see significant improvement, Allen said. The new track from Capital Project 2020 is also utilized at times for cross country practice, so that is helpful, he said.

"It's been good," Allen said. "I think it's nice for the running programs in general. We have indoor track, we have outdoor track and now we actually have a track."

Allen said he agrees with Manley that it would

New 12

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## Herkimer BOCES fall open houses vital to building school-home connection

Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES was able to host in-person open houses for multiple programs this autumn to provide students' parents and guardians a chance to experience the school setting, get to know teachers and strengthen the partnership between home and school.

"We know how important it is to a student's education to have an alliance with the parents," Herkimer BOCES Principal of Alternative Education Patrick Corrigan said. "Open houses are really one of the most crucial tools we have to get that going in the right direction."

Herkimer BOCES Special Programs, Valley Pathways in Technology Early College High School and Pathways Academy at Remington open houses all took place this autumn.

The Pathways Academy open house in 2020 was held before school started to give families a feel for what school would be like under the then-new COVID-19 regulations, Corrigan said. This year, the schedule and plan for the open house returned to very close to what it was in 2019 – except with asking everyone to wear masks, he said.

"We're doing the best we can to get back to a normal open house," Corrigan said. "One of the keys to school success is parent engagement. This is one of many things we do for parent engagement."

Parent-teacher conferences are another practice at Pathways Academy, and they were conducted virtually last year. The virtual conferences led to increased

parent participation, so that might continue for parent-teacher conferences this year, but it's important for open houses to be held in-person if possible, Corrigan said.

Open houses are a chance for parents and guardians to talk with teachers and administrators in a relaxed atmosphere and at a pace they desire, Corrigan said.

Jeff and Cassie Sweeney, whose grandson Logan Haman goes to Pathways Academy, attended the open house. "To just find out how he's doing really," Jeff Sweeney said. "To tell people to get in touch with me if there are any concerns."

Logan is a seventh grader of Central Valley Academy but goes to school full-time at Pathways Academy.

"They've been really fantastic here," Cassie Sweeney said.

Students at VP-TECH also are at Herkimer BOCES full-time. At a school district, parents might run into teachers at sporting events, concerts and other school activities, so open houses are even more important for VP-TECH to make sure parents get the opportunity to talk to teachers when they might not otherwise be able to, Herkimer BOCES Principal of Technical Education Zane Mahar said.

"They probably won't see them out and about," Mahar said. "So this is to try to get them to come out for a meet and greet."

**Herkimer 13**



Pathways Academy at Remington music teacher Laura Maynard (L) speaks to student Logan Haman and his grandparents, Jeff and Cassie Sweeney, during the Pathways Academy Open House at the Remington Educational Complex in Ilion.

### New from 11

be good to increase numbers for the program.

"A goal that I would have would be to make more people in the school and community aware of the program and appeal to students who might not be doing anything in the fall to join cross country because I think a lot of them would enjoy it if they gave it a try," Allen said.

The modified numbers for cross country are already pretty good – with eight of the 13 students in cross country on modified, Allen said. "So that's encouraging," Allen said.

All student-athletes in the cross country program have already improved their times this year, including some cutting as much as five minutes off their time, Manley said. He also aims to keep students interested in cross country and ensure they're up to the challenge of going from a 1.3-mile course for modified to a 3.1-mile course for varsity.

"I consider the season a success if all the kids improve their times from the beginning of the year and they all still are willing to run again next year," Manley said.

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## Herkimer from 12

The VP-TECH open house also includes showcasing drones that students use, highlighting the VP-TECH partnership with the Griffiss Institute Air Force Research Laboratory and more, Mahar said.

This year's open house was particularly important with new teachers joining VP-TECH this school year, Mahar said.

"We're also doing it because we have a number of new staff coming aboard," he said.

Herkimer BOCES Director of Special Education and Alternative Education

Roberta Matthews spoke about the Special Programs open house. "The purpose of the fall open house is to provide families with an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher early on and to learn about what they can expect as the year goes on," Matthews said.

Teachers typically plan a short presentation that tells a bit about themselves and how they structure their classroom, Matthews said.

"Parents learn about how to best support their child at home," Matthews said. "The goal is to establish that home-school connection early in the school year in order to optimize success for the child."



Guests attend the Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES Special Programs Open House at the William E. Busacker Complex in Herkimer. View more photos from open houses at [facebook.com/herkimerboces](https://facebook.com/herkimerboces). Photos courtesy of Herkimer BOCES

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## Students hope to use action plans from Herkimer County Youth Summit to 'make a difference' at schools

Students hope to use action plans from Herkimer County Youth Summit to 'make a difference' at schools

Close to 100 students attended the 2021 Herkimer County Youth Summit at Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES and developed action plans to bring back to their schools.

Students from 11 school districts and programs picked a variety of issues to focus their action plans on – including stress, bullying, respect, social interaction, expressing feelings, mindfulness, discrimination, coping strategies, mental health resources and positive affirmations.

Central Valley students, for example, came up with an action plan including creating positive affirmation posters, painting murals in bathrooms, putting up a list of coping skills in bathroom stalls and hosting a guest speaker. They hope to get approval and enact the plan by the end of the 2021-22 school year.

"Hopefully, we'll be able to do that in that timeline and make a difference for our schools," Central Valley senior Gabriella Lawrence said, while presenting

the plan at the Youth Summit.

Each of the districts and programs developed action plans during the Youth Summit on Wednesday, Oct. 27, at the Herkimer BOCES William E. Busacker Complex and will take the plans back to their schools to benefit students across the region. Youth Summit organizers will follow up with each school around March 2022 to see how the plans are going.

There were six students who served as master facilitators for the event: West Canada Valley Central School District seniors Madilyn Connor and Gianna Rutherford, Herkimer Central School District seniors Kalista Maiorano and Bailey Harrer, Mount Markham Central School District senior Kelly Cooley and Central Valley Central School District senior Gabriella Lawrence.

Catholic Charities of Herkimer County facilitated the Youth Summit along with Herkimer BOCES. Catholic Charities of Herkimer County Executive Director Maureen Petrie served as the

Students 15



Herkimer Central School District fourth-grade teacher Jennifer Olds gives a speech about mindfulness to students during the 2021 Herkimer County Youth Summit on Oct. 27 at Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES. Photos courtesy of Herkimer BOCES

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 Nadine Lyndsay, Secretary



## Students from 14

Youth Summit coordinator. The event focused on mental health awareness, mindfulness and wellness.

The student attendees were from eight of the 10 Herkimer BOCES component districts – Central Valley, Dol-

geville, Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Little Falls, Mount Markham, Owen D. Young and West Canada Valley – along with the Town of Webb Union Free School District, Herkimer BOCES Pathways Academy at Remington and Herkimer BOCES Valley Pathways in Technology Early College High School.



The student facilitators for the 2021 Herkimer County Youth Summit introduce themselves in front of the Youth Summit on Oct. 27 at Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES. From left: Herkimer Central School District seniors Bailey Harrer and Kalista Maiorano, West Canada Valley Central School District seniors Gianna Rutherford and Madilyn Connor, Mount Markham Central School District senior Kelly Cooley and Central Valley Central School District senior Gabriella Lawrence.

## Action plans

The student facilitators and Petrie welcomed students at the beginning of the Youth Summit.

"We couldn't have the Youth Summit last year, so I'm very excited to see all of these schools participating this year," Petrie said.

The student facilitators organized a great day, Petrie said.

"Their hope is that what you learn today will help you be able to help other students when you bring ideas back to your schools through your action plans you develop later today," Petrie said.

Near the end of the Youth Summit, students from the school districts and programs met in groups with their schoolmates to develop the action plans, which they then presented to the rest of the Youth Summit participants.

Action plans included many ideas such as involving school clubs, organizing interactive activities, bringing in guest speakers, having small group meetings, creating anonymous drop boxes for students to express their feelings, putting up posters in hallways and bathrooms, adding positive affirmations to morning announcements, hosting a mindfulness school event, setting up safe places to de-stress, using resources already available to students such as school counselors, providing more re-

sources to students, hosting a self-care day for students and integrating positive messages into classrooms.

## 'Your thoughts matter'

The guest speaker for the 2021 Youth Summit was Herkimer Central School District fourth-grade teacher Jennifer Olds, who talked to students about mindfulness and how she learned to use mindfulness techniques to manage anxiety.

"It's just been a real tool for me to get through life in a more positive way," Olds said.

Mindfulness is science-based and used by professional athletes, the military, police and others – including students in her fourth-grade class each year, Olds said.

"It's the ability to pay attention to this moment – right here, right now – without any judgment," she said, adding that the idea is to not attach a story or anything positive or negative as thoughts float through your head.

Research says that 10 minutes a day of mindfulness is very helpful, Olds said.

"It actively changes the pathways and neurons in your brain," she said.

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**Students 18**

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## Announcements

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## Help Wanted

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## Good Housekeeping

### Sausage and Pumpkin Pasta

There's no getting around pumpkins this fall. Paired with spicy sausage, convenient canned pumpkin livens up the usual dinner pasta.

1 pound rigatoni

8 ounces spicy Italian sausage, casings removed

5 fresh sage leaves, finely chopped

1 can (15-ounce) pure pumpkin

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Cook rigatoni as label directs, reserving 1 cup cooking water.

2. In 12-inch nonstick skillet, cook sausage on medium 6 minutes, breaking up sausage. Add fresh sage leaves; cook 1 minute, stirring. Add pumpkin and reserved pasta water; mix well.

3. Drain pasta; return to pot. Add sausage mixture; heat through. Stir in Parmesan. Serves 4.

For thousands of triple-tested recipes, visit: [goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/](http://goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/).

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### Students from 15

body, Olds said.

"Your body will react, and you will feel like you're back in that place," she said. "Your thoughts matter."

Olds told students about various mindfulness tools including using breathing techniques, exercising, watching meditation videos, thinking of things that make you grateful, listening to music, eating healthy snacks, using grounding methods, taking a nap and writing in a journal.

Olds mentioned how students received journals at the Youth Summit, and she gave each student a small, symbolic rose. The flower of a rose is beautiful, but a rose also has thorns, Olds said. A rosebud, however, provides hope for the future, Olds said. She encouraged students to write in their journals based on the symbolism of the rose by writing about the good, the bad and the things that make them hopeful for the future.

That journaling technique can help students learn what makes them feel stressed, what mindfulness techniques work for them and more, Olds said.

"My biggest piece of advice to you as kids is to get to know yourself," Olds said.

### Youth Summit activities

Some light-hearted aspects of the Youth Summit included a Halloween-themed Kahoot! game, lunch for students and free giveaways provided by a System of Care grant through Herkimer County – including backpacks, shirts, coloring books, colored pencils, pop fidget toys, journals and slime.

Additionally, students received 2021 Herkimer County Youth Summit shirts, featuring a design by

Herkimer BOCES Visual Communications Media Arts student Delaney Kerr, a senior from Frankfort-Schuyler Central School District.

Students also participated in three different stations hosted by Catholic Charities of Herkimer County focusing on the themes of the day.

"The more you repeat these positive phrases, the more your brain believes them," Raux said.

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## Slocum-Dickson Foundation grant funds upgrades to Herkimer BOCES adult nursing labs

A generous grant from the Slocum-Dickson Foundation has allowed the Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES Adult Practical Nursing Program to upgrade its nursing labs to more accurately simulate an acute care setting at a time when skilled nurses are in demand.

The lab improvements are essential because licensed practical nurses are now being reintroduced to the acute care hospital setting – including at local healthcare facilities such as Rome Hospital, Little Falls Hospital and the Bassett Healthcare Network, Herkimer BOCES Adult Practical Nursing Program Coordinator Sara Nicolette said.

“We simulate acute care in our labs to practice the nursing process

and push students to really test out their critical thinking skills,” Nicolette said. “We are thankful to the Slocum-Dickson Foundation for this very important improvement to our lab equipment.”

The Slocum-Dickson Foundation grant allowed the program to purchase five new beds, a sit-to-stand lift, two feeding tube pumps and one IV pump. The two adult nursing labs at the Herkimer BOCES Remington Educational Complex in Ilion are used for the licensed practical nursing programs and certified nursing assistant courses.

Nicolette said Herkimer BOCES applied for the grant in March 2020, but due to COVID-19 and other factors, the application was put on hold. That



Dawn Williams and Jennie Wick practice using a mannequin in one of the five new beds purchased for the nursing labs through a grant from the Slocum-Dickson Foundation. Photos courtesy of Herkimer BOCES



Adult Practical Nursing Program full-time students (from left) Jennifer Juliano and Dawn Williams practice using a sit-to-stand lift with Jennie Wick. The sit-to-stand lift was one of several upgrades to the Herkimer BOCES nursing labs purchased through a grant from the Slocum-Dickson Foundation. Juliano is going through the program for retraining, and Williams is pursuing a dream. Wick is going through the program with her husband, Forrest Wick, and is pregnant with their daughter, due in November. Jennie and Forrest Wick are both certified nursing assistants sponsored by Valley Health Services to become LPNs through Herkimer BOCES.

made it a surprise when the grant was received in June 2021, leading to Herkimer BOCES recently purchasing the equipment.

“It was totally unexpected but much appreciated,” Nicolette said.

Herkimer BOCES also appreciates support from Upstate HomeCare, which provided Herkimer BOCES with generous prices on equipment and donated additional equipment. The nursing program purchased one IV

pump, but as Nicolette opened the boxes from Upstate HomeCare, she discovered that Upstate HomeCare gave Herkimer BOCES a dozen IV pumps along with the tubing.

“We can really simulate an acute care setting

now,” Nicolette said.

In addition to acute care settings, LPNs also continue to work in clinic settings, home care dialysis and geriatric home care settings to name a few, Nicolette said.

“In this day of growing nursing shortages, practical nursing programs remain the quickest way to begin the nursing ladder,” Nicolette said. “Herkimer BOCES offers a 12-month full-time program or 20-month part-time day or evening programs.”

For information about the Herkimer BOCES Adult Practical Nursing Program, visit [herkimer-boces.org](http://herkimer-boces.org) and click on the “LPN Program” button on the homepage or visit [facebook.com/HerkimerBocesLPN](https://facebook.com/HerkimerBocesLPN).

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**Sat. Nov. 13th** – 11:30 AM – All-Breed Production Sale – Registered Dairy Cattle we will take a few QUALITY Grade Milk cows for this sale. This sale is FULL once again so look forward to the great consignments from Juniper Farms, Gloryland, L&B Hill, Kuperus Meadows, Holl-Lynn, Mer-Acres, Breezy-Acres, Chestnut-Hyll, Ovaltop, Stanver, Rach- Len, Twin Mill Brook Farms- plus more! Lots of young fresh cows and heifers with deep pedigrees you will find at this sale.

**Mon. Nov. 15th** – Normal Monday Sale & Monthly Sheep, Lamb, Goat & Pig Sale

**Fri. Nov. 19th** – Sale held at our facility- 11 AM. Oakfield Corners 100% Fullblood Wagyu Production Sale – 80 head of cattle with embryo & semen lots. Oakfield Corners has invested in the very best Genetics Worldwide to develop this tremendous group of cattle. Cattle or embryo's were purchased from the best herds available from Triangle B Ranch, Crescent Harbor Ranch, Synergy Wagyu plus more. Sires represented: Michifuku, Shigeshigetani, Itoshigefuku, Haru plus more. Four females sell with SCD AA Tend 10, Four potential herd sires sell with SCD AA Tend 10. 35 head of youngstock still pending SCD & Tenderness scores should be done by sale time. We will take a few consignments for this sale. Don't miss this great offering of Wagyu breeding stock! Watch for further info.

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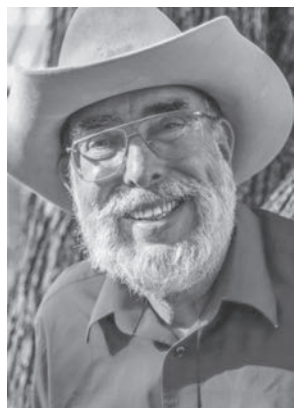
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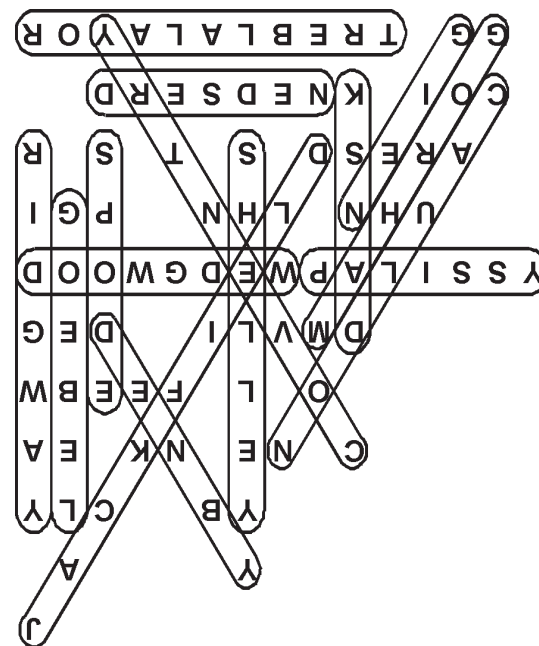


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# Country

CULTURE

THE LAND • THE FOOD • THE PEOPLE

## MAGIC MAZE • MAKERS OF FINE CHINA

C C A X V S Q O L J H E C A J  
X V T R P N L J Y H F D B A Y  
X V T R P O M K Y B I G C L Y  
E D B Z X C W N E U N K T E A  
R Q O S N L O J L I F E E B W  
G F D C M D M V L I A Y D E G  
Y S S I L A P **W E D G W O O D**  
X W V U H N D L H N T S P G I  
R P A R E S D A S O T N S L R  
K C O I J K N E D S E R D I G  
F G G E T R E B L A L A Y O R

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: SAME NAME AS 2ND PRESIDENT

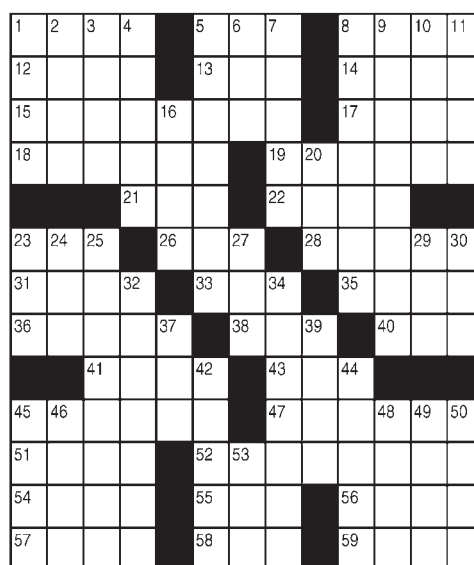
Cauldon	Dresden	Jackfield	Shelley
Coventry	Gien	Palissy	Spode
Dansk	Goebel	Ridgway	Wedgwood
Denby	Gorham	Royal Albert	

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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Landed  
5 Gearwheel tooth  
8 Slightly  
12 Sultry Horne  
13 "— you serious?"  
14 Barn roof spinner  
15 Strict disciplinarian  
17 Noble Italian family  
18 Swift  
19 Sculpted trunks  
21 Old Olds  
22 Doctor Zhivago  
23 Wye follower  
26 Moreover  
28 On edge  
31 Sciences' partner  
33 Observe  
35 Campus VIP  
36 "Hogwash!"  
38 Finale  
40 Water tester  
41 Love god  
43 Inherited  
45 Painter's motion  
47 Reduces  
51 Nashville's st.  
52 Instrument in a Dixieland band



- 54 Couturier Cassini  
55 Stannum  
56 Pinta's companion  
57 Favorites  
58 Norm (Abbr.)  
59 Vortex  
Paul —  
8 Declared  
9 Baby's bed  
10 Division word  
11 Casual tops  
16 Notion  
20 Ump's call  
23 Hit with a ray gun  
24 Triage ctrs.  
25 System for linking computers  
27 Ruby of films  
29 — Paulo, Brazil  
30 Away from  
WSW  
32 Island wraps  
34 Queen's domain  
37 Stir-fry pan  
39 Entryway  
42 Factions  
44 Packing string  
45 Halt  
46 Far (Pref.)  
48 Author Bagnold  
49 Tear  
50 Remain  
53 Torched

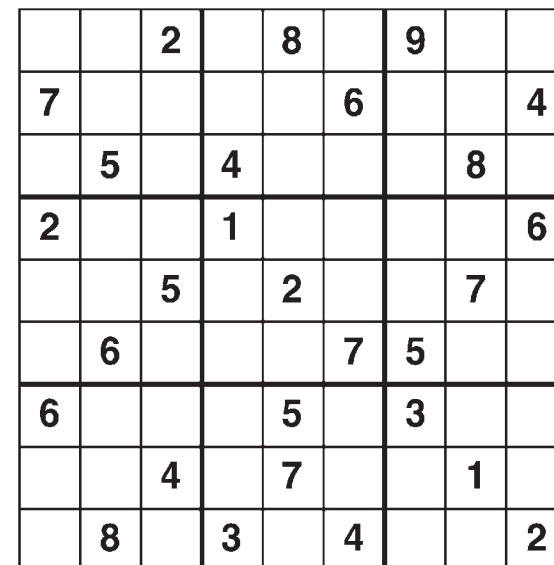
### DOWN

- 1 Charitable gift  
2 Bound  
3 Concerning  
4 Spud  
5 Big gorges  
6 Mine yield  
7 Oil tycoon J.  
8 Declared  
9 Baby's bed  
10 Division word  
11 Casual tops  
16 Notion  
20 Ump's call  
23 Hit with a ray gun  
24 Triage ctrs.  
25 System for linking computers  
27 Ruby of films  
29 — Paulo, Brazil  
30 Away from

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## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle



Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

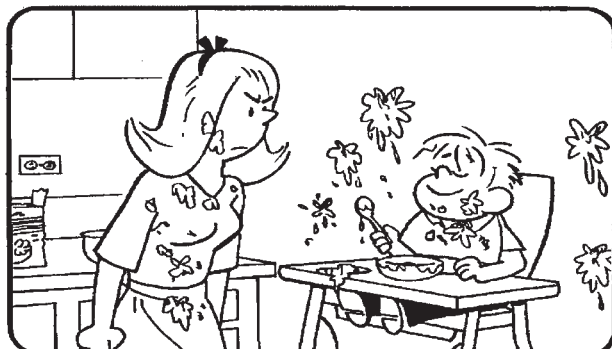
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

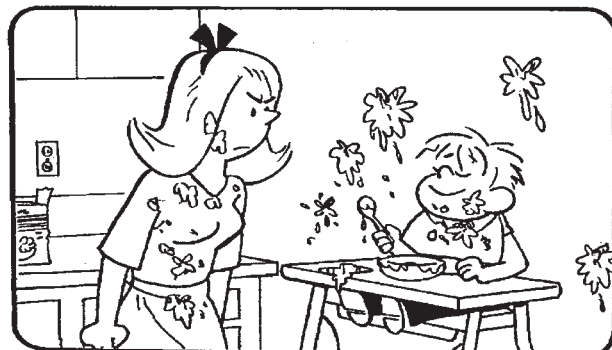
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Food "spat" on wall is moved. 2. Bowl is missing. 3. Bowl is bigger. 4. Bowl is turned. 5. Back of highchair is removed. 6. Sleeve is shorter.

## SCRAMBLERS

MARRIED  
Today's Word

1. Artisan 2. Detour;  
3. Pamper; 4. Diaper;  
solution

## SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Builder	ASTRAIN			
Divert	ROUTED			
Spoil	MAPPER			
Baby	REPAID			

TODAY'S WORD

\_\_\_\_\_



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# Holiday Gift Guide

## Choosing the perfect Christmas tree

Come the holiday season, perhaps no tradition evokes the warm and fuzzy “feels” more than a family outing to pick a Christmas tree. Whether it’s a trek to a live Christmas tree farm or a short drive to the nearest pre-cut tree lot, the process of selecting a tree that will serve as the crown jewel of the season is a great way to make lasting memories.

Selecting a tree is a yearly ritual and every person has their specific criteria for what makes the ideal Christmas tree. These tips can help families find the right tree.

**Choose your species.** Do some homework on the type of tree you want prior to purchasing. Balsam Fir and Fraser Fir are popular Christmas tree varieties, but there are many others, such as Noble Fir and Norway Spruce. Balsams are known for having the most fragrant smell, but frasers tend to keep their needles the longest. For those who prefer a Douglas Fir, keep in mind that they some-

times drop their needles prematurely due to foliar diseases like needle-cast fungus.

**Space for ornaments.** In addition to aroma and needle longevity, look for trees that have a desirable shape and allow for adequate space between branches, as advised by the home and garden resource “The Spruce.” Trees groomed to be lush and full will look beautiful unadorned, but once ornaments are added, full branches may cause those ornaments to hang low or even fall off. Trees with sparse branches allow ornaments to hang straight.

**Measure your space.** Trees in the field or lot may look much smaller than they do when brought into the living room. Don’t make the mistake of selecting a tree that is too large for your home. The agricultural firm Ragan & Massey says to measure the room from floor to ceiling and subtract the height of the tree stand and tree topper. It’s equally important to measure

the width of the area where the tree will stand and allow ample space for foot traffic around the tree.

**Perform a needle check.** Every tree will drop some needles, and most evergreens hold their foliage. Modest needle loss is not an indicator of a poor tree. However, Decker’s Nursery, of Greenlawn, NY, says if 50 percent of the needles are lost when you swipe your hand down three to five different branches around the tree, it is likely not a good choice. In addition, avoid a tree that has glaring defects in the trunk, as it can impede water flow through the tree.

**Heavier is better.** A heavy pre-cut tree means it is full of water and has been cut more recently. A healthy, fresh tree is going to require an effort to lift. Older, dried out trees will not be heavy.

Upon arriving home, make a fresh cut off the tree trunk and get it in water as soon as possible, even if just a bucket until the tree stand can be set up.



Come the holiday season, perhaps no tradition evokes the warm and fuzzy “feels” more than a family outing to pick a Christmas tree.

## Five ways to support small businesses this holiday season

Small businesses long have been the heart and soul of local communities. There is something to be said about being on a first-name basis with a local restaurateur or another small business owner, as such familiarity often translates into exemplary service.

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses account for 99.9 percent of companies in the country, due in large part to the broad definition of a small business being those with fewer than 500 employees.

However, the vast majority of businesses in the U.S. have a staff that’s smaller than 20 workers, according to the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council. These firms employ nearly 60 million workers, says the SBA.

Despite the prevalence of small businesses, fewer than 80 percent of entrepreneurial small business ventures make it beyond their first year. Only around half make it beyond five years.

Consumers who want to help their favorite small businesses survive can use the holiday season and beyond to set the course for success. Consumers can make a concerted effort to fuel this important cog in their local economic engines.

**• Shop local.** The concept is simple, but effective. Opting to shop in local stores over larger conglomerates and franchises can help small businesses take root. Before making holiday shopping lists, visit local stores and base gift ideas on in-stock items. Those gifts will likely be one-of-a-kind.

**• Purchase gift cards/certificates.** All businesses have slow periods, sales often stagnate post-holiday. Gift cards may bring new customers into local businesses who might not otherwise have patronized them, potentially creating new repeat customers.

**• Cater holiday meals and gatherings.** The holiday season is chock-full of entertainment opportunities. Individuals can rely on nearby restaurants and other food and beverage businesses to cater holiday parties. Some businesses may be willing to discount or donate food for nonprofit group activities, such as church bazaars, school concerts or fundraising fairs.

**• Mention small businesses on social media.** The holiday season breeds excitement. Therefore, when shoppers are in local stores, they can snap pictures of products and overflowing shopping bags and post them online while praising local businesses.

**• Think about subscription gifts.** Enrollment in a health club or a massage therapy service are gifts that keep on giving for the recipient, but also help ensure consistent incoming cash for the business providing the service.

When shopping this holiday season, consumers can look to the small, local businesses in their communities that help make towns and cities unique.



Consumers who want to help their favorite small businesses survive can use the holiday season and beyond to set the course for success.

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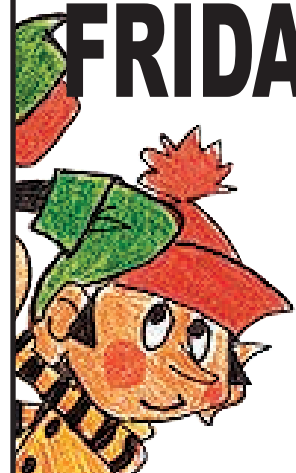
Open Weekly: Thurs 5-10 pm; Fri 5-11 pm; Sat 5-11 pm (Closed 11/25-11/27)

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# ELVES NIGHT OUT & PARADE OF LIGHTS! FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3 Parade starts at 6 pm



## PARADE ROUTE:

Mohawk St- Montgomery St- Moyer St- Maple Ave-  
Montgomery St- Church St- Palatine Plaza- LaFayette St-  
Grand St- Church St- Erie Blvd to Fire Station

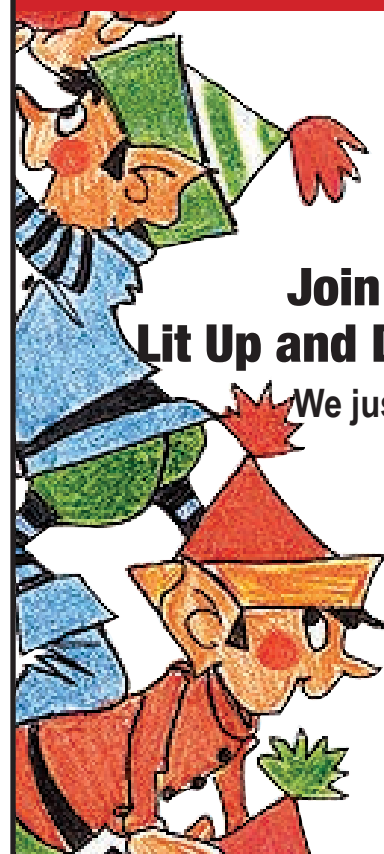
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Canajoharie Volunteer Fire Department

## Tips to keeping holiday spending in check

Increased expenses that typically occur during the winter holiday season can make it hard for some consumers to avoid overspending, with many struggling to stay within normal spending limits, often taking months into the next year to pay off the resulting debt.

While this has become an annual issue for many consumers, the economic stress many faced last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic has many consumers saying this year they plan to spend more to make up for missed celebrations put on hold to prevent virus spread last year.

In fact, some 40% of consumers say that the pandemic won't impact their spending this year, and an additional 30% of consumers say they plan to spend more this year than last year, a time when fear and uncertainty caused by the pandemic resulted in many consumers lowering their holiday budgets.

According to the 2021 Holiday Outlook by PwC, total holiday spending this year will be 20% more than last year, with the average consumer planning to spend \$1,447 compared to last year's total of \$1,186. The international accounting firm's survey of more than 1,000 consumers also found that more people plan to increase their personal spending as well.

"After a 2020 holiday season of self-deprivation, consumers plan to pamper themselves this year: They will spend an average of \$442 on themselves this holiday, up 48% from 2020 and 28% from 2019," PwC said. "Consumers are ready to celebrate this year. They want to shop and travel and make merry after more than a year of various forms of pandemic-related abstinence.

"They're still wary about public-health considerations in the wake of the variants. But for many, the vaccine has offered more freedom to participate in holiday activities."

That's why it's so important – especially this year – that as you plan for the holidays, you make sure that you have a clear picture of where you are financially, said Emily Marrison, an Ohio State University Extension program specialist in healthy finances. OSU Extension is the outreach arm of the Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

Already, seven in 10 consumers say they typically overspend during the winter holidays, according to a consumer spending survey by Affirm, a California-based company that offers consumers the ability to buy now and pay later. And over half of consumers say they typically have anxiety about holiday shopping, with 41% reporting staying on budget a top concern, and 31% concerned about incurring long-term debt, the survey found.

"We all have our own money personalities – our habits and attitudes toward money," Marrison said. "Individuals who especially value giving or being spontaneous may find it more difficult to be disciplined with spending this time of year compared to individuals who value planning and security."

One way to be disciplined is to create a budget, a list of priorities and then stick to it, she said.

"Check on your progress weekly and be as honest as you can with yourself about staying true to the spending limit that you've set," Marrison said. "If a gift or activity is going to exceed your budget, don't charge it on credit. Instead, review your list and budget and perhaps reprioritize your list."

Here are some other tips to help you formulate a holiday spending plan to avoid financial pitfalls:

- **Make savings automatic.** Set aside a portion of your paycheck. Start saving now. Transfer to your savings a set amount of money from each paycheck.

- **Start with a list** of everything you'll be spending money on during the holidays. Include

all gifts, foods, drinks, decorations and charitable giving.

- **Set reasonable expectations.** Take a look at your monthly budget, decide how much you can really spend on those holiday extras and plan your budget accordingly.

- To determine your holiday budget, **review what you spent last year.** Then, use that amount as a guide for this year. Remember to include all money spent on gifts, foods, drinks, decorations and charitable giving.

- Once you've created your budget, stick to it.

- After your budget is made, **prioritize where and how you'll spend.** Be sure to account for everything: gifts, decorations, donations, a new piece of clothing, groceries and baking.

- **Prioritize.** If you come up short, determine where you can do some trimming. Can you forgo new holiday decorations this year? Can you pledge to avoid spending money on yourself when you're out shopping?

So many things about this year are nontraditional, so if your money is tighter this year than usual, think about starting new traditions that don't require you to spend as much money. For example, instead of buying for everyone in your family, you can opt for a family gift exchange that will allow you to buy for one person instead of the whole gang. That way, everyone still gets to be involved in the holiday experience. If you need to, adopt a new tradition that requires no money spent at all, like watching a holiday movie together, baking your favorite holiday treat or taking a festive holiday walk.

- **Keep an eye out for online and in-store deals and sales.** Retailers are offering Black Friday deals over multiple weeks this year. Grocery stores often offer specials on holiday-related food items. And limit the number of shopping trips: The more you are in the stores, the greater the chance you'll make impulse purchases.

- **Don't wait until the last minute.** That's one of the best ways to go into debt during the holiday season. Take advantage of pre-holiday sales and free online shipping.

- **Look ahead.** Now's the time to realistically start planning for next year. Take the holiday budget you've set for this year – or what you wish it could be – and divide it by 12. Then, set up an automated plan to deposit that amount directly from your paycheck into a special savings account for holiday spending next year.

Finally, Marrison stresses the point about overspending and avoiding burdensome credit card debt.

"Be kind to your future self," she said. "Purposefully set yourself up for a financially healthy start to a new year."

More consumer tips and helpful information from CFAES experts can be found at [livesmartto-hio.osu.edu](https://livesmartto-hio.osu.edu).





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