City of Norwich: A place to live, or a place to leave?

BY GRADY THOMPSON
Sun Staff Writer

After one year in office, City of Norwich Mayor Christine Carnrike says that she believes the city is in the transition of once again becoming a place to live, and not a place for people to leave. While that may seem a tough order to accomplish in just a year or even two, Carnrike says the city is moving in the right direction in terms of improving its quality of life and reputation.

“My goal was to restore Norwich to its former glory, if you will,” said Carnrike. “It wasn’t built in a day. And I inherited—well, I chose to inherit it—and I don’t think anybody really realized how bad financially it was.”

Since taking office in January of 2016, Carnrike says that her main goals in restoring Norwich were to adopt a more conservative budget for 2017 and maintain a firm handle on the operation of the city.

To do so, the mayor says that it was crucial that the city controlled their spending in 2016 to provide for funding in the future.

“Right now, we’re doing a lot better than we had been. In September 2015, the City of Norwich was labelled as ‘Susceptible to Fiscal Stress’ based on criteria in place at the New York State Comptroller’s Office,” said Carnrike. “We’ve since moved up in that rating, and we are hoping to come off that list entirely in 2017 and 2018.”

As for how they plan to do so, Carnrike says that the key is to remember to save money for a rainy day—something that she says previous administrations seldom did.

“In the past we were spending our ‘fun’ money,” said Carnrike. “It’s easy to say, ‘In Your Own Words’

A. Wesley Jones: Chief Dispatcher, Director of Emergency Management, Photographer

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courts and being able to carry a camera every day. So after some soul searching, I decided to return home to my hometown and in 1995 I joined the Chenango County Sheriff’s Office as a part-time Public Safety Dispatcher. Following the same theme of being part of the action, I also took another part-time job as an assistant with the City of Norwich Emergency Management Department.”

There are still times I miss being a journalist, especially covering

Norwich’s Kurt Beyer Pool is expected to open in 2017 upon the city’s hiring of a Pool Operator.
Two new City of Norwich businesses have set their sites on breathing new life into the downtown area by bringing their modern services to city goers at convenient, accessible locations. Wild Owl Café—a flourish- ing new restaurant located at 28 South Broad Street—is run by partners Mike La Croce and Stoyana Petkova, whose mission to their guests is “to provide a welcoming, clean, warm, and hip ambiance that uses the freshest ingredients available to create unique entrees with sincere and memorable service by our dedicated team.” La Croce and Petkova met in 2012 when Petkova was an exchange student working in a restaurant for La Croce in Old Forge. When Petkova first came to the United States from Bulgaria, she didn’t speak a word of English but she had a dream of one day running a restaurant where their customers were seen and treated as family. “I don’t treat the people as a customer. I see you as my family,” said Petkova through a thick Bulgarian accent. “I’m trying to remember everybody’s name. I want them to be welcome. It’s not just a place to eat, it’s a place to have an experience and be part of my family. I think that the people like it, that’s why they keep coming back.” Petkova went on to explain that La Croce handles the menu and the behind-the-scenes business aspects at Wild Owl Café. As for her? “I’m just having fun!” Wild Owl Café opened on November 5, 2016, and both partners agreed that they were not expecting their restaurant to take-off quite the way that it has. “Most of our success is due to word of mouth,” said La Croce. “People are talking about us, and people keep coming back.”

Submitted Photo

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41 North Salon hair stylists and business partners (L-R) Sarah Hunter and Kaila Lucero.

Submitted Photo

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Success Story

Wilson Funeral Home

2016 was a busy year at the Wilson Funeral Home. The front porch was completely replaced and updated in a way that maintains the historic look of our home while keeping our families and friends safe when paying their respects. We felt it was important to keep the porch looking as original as possible to maintain Norwich’s charm. The front landscaping was also replaced. With the aid of local landscapers, gardens will now bloom from early spring to late fall, keeping Norwich beautiful for all who visit and live here.

In May 2016, our resident, John Antonowicz, a Norwich native, graduated from Hudson Valley Community College with a degree in Mortuary Science. Since his graduation, he successfully sat for and passed the National Board Exam for Mortuary Science. He is now completing his state required residency here at the Wilson Funeral Home. John is proud to call Norwich his home and we are pleased to have him continue his education by helping those who call on us to serve.

Also in 2016, we began to offer a more expansive line of cremation options and continue to offer green funerals. In fact, we are the only funeral home in Chenango County that offers locally-crafted ceramic urns. We also changed our casket suppliers to keep costs down while maintaining our high standards of quality. These casket products continue to be manufactured only in America. More recently, we began offering veterans’ flag cases made here in Norwich. All of these developments are intended to support our local community. In addition, we relocated and updated our arrangements room to make a more private setting for the families we serve, especially during a most difficult time.

We also continue to offer families the option of pre-funding their funerals in the New York’s ProPlan trust fund. More and more families have learned the value and continue to be aware of the benefits of pre-funding one’s own funeral.

Most importantly, we remain Norwich’s only locally-owned funeral home. Since 1891, we have been family-owned and -operated. We reside in Chenango County, and support all it has to offer. Being locally owned means that every family has the right to choose a service that best fits them and their needs. We are not guided by corporate headquarters in another state, but dedicated to the families we are honored to serve, and we invest our earnings back into our community. Doug Wilson and his family have been assisting Norwich families in their time of need since 1949. More recently, with the management of John Gawronski, since 2009, and John Antonowicz’s assistance, the families we serve will continue to be cared for with compassion and dignity at their time of loss, and with the highest standards of service.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve Norwich families in need, and we wish our friends and neighbors a successful 2017.
The Norwich Fire Department remains an option for the re-location of the Norwich City Hall. According to the mayor, and the city, the officers, and the civilian people, by the given police climate within our nation unfortu-

antly, it doesn’t make the necessary storage available.

“Just makes things easier for everyone,” said Carnrike. “It protects everyone too: the city, the officers, and the taxpayers are entitled to this. Because the taxpayers are the people who pay taxes. Those who do pay taxes are the people that fund this. When we were working with the state and the city to come because of the public works superintendent issue, we had to come to the taxpayers to say if they had to get an additional budget. When we had to go to the taxpayers to ask for one, it was a good thing for the community because it would be a ‘small side street mom and pop operation’ best describes Hi-Skor Lanes, located at 21 Clyde Street, Earlville. The center opened in 1948 with sanctioning men/women and couples leagues; something that continued for the past 69 years into a thriving family business.

A ‘small side street mom and pop operation’ best describes Hi-Skor Lanes, located at 21 Clyde Street, Earlville. The center opened in 1948 with sanctioning men/women and couples leagues; something that continued for the past 69 years into a thriving family business. For the past 47 years, Bruce and Donna Stratton have added a variety of services provided by the Hi-Skor Lanes, including rentals, inflatables and party accessories. Whether large or small, we can serve all of your entertainment needs, including rentals, inflatables and party accessories.

Hi-Skor Lanes is an inviting community gathering place that caters to all ages. A place where everyone is welcome. Stop in to Hi-Skor and visit our friendly staff while you enjoy a fun family bowling experience.

Hi-Skor Lanes is open seven days a week. Glow in the Dark bowling is offered Friday nights from 9 p.m.-12 a.m. for $10. Hi-Skor Lanes is open seven days a week. Glow in the Dark bowling is offered Friday nights from 9 p.m.-12 a.m. for $10.

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North Broad Street makes experience. What sets us apart, says Hunter, is personal interest in the craft strides they’ve made. They’re very happy with the salon turn has also influenced to the availability and experience the new aura they report that more and more people are seeking services as people become more and more open-minded and real that taking care of yourself is not something that varies by gender. “Men are becoming more hygiene conscious, and people are also more open-minded,” said Hunter. “It’s absolutely a positive for them, and also for our industry.”

Social media has also impacted their line of work, as they promote their work on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.

“I feel like the location of our salon has been a major blessing considering the high amount of traffic on North Broad Street,” says Lucero. The partners report that events like the Pumpkin Festival have brought a num- ber of walk-ins to their salon to inquire about their services and experience the new aura the salon strives to have. The partners estimate that roughly 90 percent of their customer base has returned for their services.

“Our location, and just word of mouth, has been a big factor in people finding out about us,” said Hunter. “Also, the transformations that we are able to give people make others want to try it for themselves. We have the power to make someone feel good about themselves instantly.”

While the majority of North’s clientele is women, they report that more and more men are seeking services as people become more and more open-minded and real that taking care of your- self is not something that varies by gender. “Men are becoming more hygiene conscious, and people are also more open-minded,” said Hunter. “It’s absolutely a positive for them, and also for our industry.”

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Teaching the importance of growth and success through youth and adult programs

“Maintaining partnerships is the key to success in many organizations.”

KEN SMITH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Michaela Watts
Sun Staff Writer

Since Cornell Cooperative Extension celebrated an impressive 45th anniversary this past July, many improvements and changes have been made to the operations of this county. The CCE has completed a major construction project since moving into the historic building back in 1961. The building houses many other agricultural businesses along with CCE and because of that, Executive Director, Ken Smith noted that modern regulations and energy efficient accommodations needed to be done. “When constructing this huge project many things had to be corrected to fit today’s society. Such as updating the heating and cooling system, making the bathrooms more handicap accessible, revising the lighting fixtures, and steering enough space for offices, with 14 employees alone working for the CCE. The building will still maintain its historical Victorian view but with modernized touch,” said Smith.

Although the CCE has undergone a new project, it still maintains its mission and playing a decisive role in cultivating programs for agriculture, youth development and nutrition. The organization continues to provided the community with after school activity programs with maple production, programs related to agricultural science and life skills through educational opportunities, such as 4-H and reintegrate outdoor recreation programs to the public with the fish and float program, kayaking and shooting sports.

The most important thing when promoting their community involved programs is the collaboration with partnering entities. “Maintaining partnerships is the key to success in many organizations,” said Smith.

In previous years the CCE has partnered with Eat Smart New York to raise awareness, access, nutrition education materials of 4-H to achieve future success.”

In 2016 and 2017 the CCE along with the Chenango Farm Bureau and the Agriculture Development Council participate in numerous events during the fair season to spark a interest among the community and local farmers. A new event was introduced to the public on the first day of the fair called “Farm to Fork.” Farm to Fork allowed local farmers to display and prepare their freshly grown ingredients to the public. “This event was a huge success and the fair board asked if we could continue it in next years fair program with the possibility of expanding it to a two day event. Other successful event that the CCE is proud in continuing is the darry days and the 4-H program hire in Chenango County. “4-H is something that has been around forever and it really reaches our youth the importance to display self confidence and use the tools that they learn while being apart of 4-H to achieve future success,” said Smith.

In previous years the CCE has participated with the Eat Smart New York to raise awareness, access to nutrition education programs to individuals who qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). ESNY provides nutrition education materials and sponsors education events and classes in local communities on a variety of nutrition topics like: healthy eating on a budget, smart shopping for vegetables and fruits, healthy meal planning, basic cooking and food safety skills, weight control and physical activity. The goals of the Eat Smart New York program are to eat more fruits and vegetables, drink less sugar-sweetened beverages and exercise more as part of a healthy lifestyle.

While grants make up a majority of the CCE’s fund, Smith assured that programs are will continue on for another successful year in 2017. Smith also stated, that he would like to continue the success of 4-H, outdoor adventure for youth and adults, and establish new programs.

Previous programs such as farm to fork, darry days, 4-H in the class and after school river based activities ready to be tackled when the warm weather approaches. Smith also mentioned to have a good majority of the offices re-organized and back in full operation since the remodel. In addition Cornell Cooperative Extension, Executive Director Ken Smith was presented with the “Advocate of Agriculture” award in 2016. Every year this award goes to someone who has demonstrated the willingness and fortitude to promote and advance the knowledge of the agricultural industry.

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