



AUGUST 6, 2026

Tradition, tractors, and new attractions: A first look at the 179th Chenango County Fair

REBECCA LAIBOWITZ
GAZETTE STAFF WRITER

NORWICH – One of the region’s longest-running traditions, the Chenango County Fair, returns Aug. 12-16 for its 179th year. It will showcase the county’s agricultural heritage while bringing a blend of family-friendly entertainment and new attractions. The Chenango County Agricultural Society has been preparing for it all year.

For the Chenango County Agricultural Society, founded in 1847, the fair’s longevity is a point of pride and a reflection of its mission: to promote public awareness of the agriculture industry, coordinate with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) to provide youths with experience in agriculture, and present the annual

county fair, providing a place to showcase local livestock, products and entertainment.

“The mission of the Ag Society is to present an annual event where we showcase the agriculture and horticulture of Chenango County for local competition,” said Mary Weidman, president of the Agricultural Society. “And over the years, it’s expanded,” she added.

A nearly two-century tradition going strong

The fair has evolved since its early days, when it moved around the county before settling permanently at the fairgrounds in Norwich. Weidman said harness racing was one of the first major attractions, where local people brought their own animals to race. Now, harness racing draws a large



Coleman Brothers Shows provides the carnival midway annually for the Chenango County Fair. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

crowd and has become a separate event the day before the fair’s official start date. Eventually, the grandstand was built in the early 1900s, and carnival rides were introduced in the 1920s. Today, the fairgrounds

span 35 acres and feature a full midway, livestock barn, exhibition hall, motorsports events and a packed entertainment schedule.

At one of the oldest county fairs in the state, agriculture remains

the backbone. 4-H and open exhibitors continue to fill the hall/barn with animals, produce, household arts and floral displays, hoping to win a coveted ribbon. “That’s the aspect that continues annually, and

that’s really why the fair exists,” Weidman said.

The fair also receives support from New York State Ag & Markets, like almost all county and local fairs do, accord-

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Sherburne Music-Theater Society presents ‘The Comedy of Errors’ this weekend

EARLVILLE – Coming this weekend, Sherburne Music-Theater Society (SMTS) present their production of William Shakespeare’s fast-paced, physical farce, ‘The Comedy of Errors’ at the Earlville Opera House on Friday, August 7th at 7 p.m. and Saturday, August 8th and Sunday, 9th at 2 p.m.

Shipwrecked by a storm at sea, two sets of identical twins are separated soon after their birth. Years later, when they happen to be in the same city, what follows is a series of mistaken identities, wordplay, confusion and baffle-ment.

Will Doonan directs



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the slapstick, farci- cal comedy with a

Vaudevillian bent. The cast includes Maxwell Jacob



Collins, Derrick Furness, Cameron Carpenter, Hamilton, Lisette Marlowe, Aryana

Schneeman, Bruce Ward, Keven Simmons, Karen Kawa-Doonan, Liam Noble, Sybil Anne, Lori Crumb, Ryker Jones, Karen Singh and Colleen Law-Tefft.

Tickets can be purchased online at <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/the-comedy-of-errors-2> Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors/students. Tickets will also be available at the door, based on availability, on the days of the shows.

Don’t miss this hilarious comedy. Since its official incorporation in 1972, Sherburne Music-Theater Society has become an award-win-

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IDA takes first step toward countywide brownfield plan

BY SHAWN MAGRATH
GAZETTE STAFF WRITER

NORWICH – The Chenango County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) is embarking on what’s likely to be a years-long endeavor to identify viable uses for brownfield areas located throughout Chenango County.

The IDA, working in conjunction with Chenango County Department of Planning and Development, is moving on a pre-planning application for a New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) grant.

The state’s BOA program provides funding that would allow Chenango County and the IDA to develop a more thorough plan to redevelop brownfield areas, industrial areas where suspected contamination complicates redevelopment.

Several brownfield



An excavator demolishes one of the industrial buildings once located at Woods Corners in Norwich in this photo from December, 2025. The site is now one of several brownfield areas in Chenango County that may benefit from new study being pursued by the Chenango County Industrial Development Agency. (Photo by Shawn Magrath).

sites have already been identified in the City of Norwich and Town of Norwich.

The IDA voted this month on a resolution committing \$5,000 for a pre-planning application to the NYS Department of State that will pinpoint brownfield areas across all 900 square miles of Chenango County.

The agency is contracting with LaBella Associates, a private consultation firm, to help identify brownfields to include in the application.

If the state approves the IDA’s proposal, the IDA and Chenango County could be awarded up to \$200,000 to complete a detailed

study that outlines viable uses for the county’s brownfield areas, setting in motion potential projects that would bolster economic development in the region.

The grant would require a 10 percent match (\$20,000) to be paid either by Chenango County or the IDA.

It’s a process that may

take years from pre-planning to award, said Commerce Chenango Economic Development Director Tyler Oliver.

There are a lot of areas in the county that could be designated as a brownfield area,” Oliver told the IDA board, citing Woods Corners in the Town of Norwich as an example.

The site once housed administrative offices for Chobani, but the buildings were demolished earlier this year and the IDA has continually sought private interest in developing the site.

“If we put the application out this month, we wouldn’t find out about it until late fall. By the time we get a consultant out to do the actual BOA plan, we’re looking at a year-long endeavor at least,” Oliver said. “It’s a long process. If we start to do the process now, that would be beneficial.”

The Chenango County Industrial Development Agency holds its regular meetings at 8 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month.

Meetings are usually held at Commerce Chenango, 19 East Main St., Norwich, across from the post office on the second floor.

The Chenango County Industrial Development Agency board members are R.C. Woodford of Chenango County, Louis Callea of Callea Legal Services, Brian Burton of NBT Bank, Frank Crawford of Kerry Bio, Michael Khoury of the Town of Smyrna, Stanley Foulds of the Town of Norwich and Taylor Zieno of Golden Artist Colors.

All regular CCIDA meetings are open to the public and shared on YouTube. Agendas and meeting materials are posted in advance when available.

A first look at the 179th Chenango County Fair -

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ing to Weidman. “This year’s Chenango Fair is a participant in the Ag Awareness Program, which New York State Ag & Markets sponsors,” Weidman said. “They give us some additional funds to promote agriculture.”

She explained that Ag & Markets helps the fair pay for premiums and participation in the exhibit areas. Thanks to that support, this year’s fair includes several free agricultural exhibits, including the Tired Iron Ag and Tractor Display, Ryans’ Yak Farm Ag Awareness Exhibit, Robin’s Heavenly Birds and the Garden Club’s Flower Show, among other free activities. The premiums also help cover the awards won by exhibitors.

As Chenango County remains connected to its agricultural heritage, the county fair continues to provide an outlet for recognition of history and hard work.

“People are proud of what they’re growing and producing. The fact that they actually bring it here and spend a week displaying it, and the time that it takes to nurture that; you’ve got to respect all of the time and effort, and love that goes into that,” Weidman said.

Family program-

ming and free admission days

Wednesday, Aug. 12, and Saturday, Aug. 15, are Children’s Days at the fair. These days offer free admission for kids 12 and under, along with discounted ride wristbands from Coleman Brothers Shows.

“This year we’re also doing a passport program,” Weidman explained. “When the kids come on the grounds, they’re going to get a pass card. It has six different sites listed on the grounds.”

The passport program is designed to encourage children to explore agricultural and educational exhibits across the grounds. Completing all six stops on the card earns a free ride ticket.

“In addition to coming and having fun, there are things to see, and do, and learn,” Weidman said.

Wednesday, opening day of the fair, is also a free day for all visitors, sponsored by NBT Bank.

Thursday, Aug. 13, is Senior Day. “We want to offer an opportunity for the seniors 60 and over to have their day at the fair,” Weidman said.

“This year we added free admission for veterans and active military when they provide ID,” Weidman relayed. The new initiative offering free admission to military personnel and vet-



4-H and open exhibitors show off their livestock at the Chenango County Fair. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

erans was inspired by community feedback and a desire to celebrate the nation’s history of independence.

New attractions join beloved favorites

Fairgoers can expect a mix of returning staples and fresh programming. “Tractor pulls are a stand-by and the demo derby is a given. We always have those because they’re crowd pleasers,” Weidman said.

Opening day sees the annual firefighters parade. The parade begins at 7 p.m., taking off near the high school on Midland Drive and heading to the fairgrounds. Spectators can watch from the streets, then take advantage of the free admission on opening day. Coleman Brothers Shows, the

fair’s longtime carnival provider, returns again this year despite a recent death in the family.

One of the new additions this year is the Dinosaur Takeover Show, which was described as a multipart attraction featuring educational shows, a fossil tent and a themed miniature golf course. “So it’s going to be fun for the kids and also an educational piece,” Weidman said. A show will be held each day of the fair at varying times, sponsored by Steel Sales Inc.

The entertainment tent will host a full lineup of musical artists, including October Rose, The Revival, the Jessie Kay Band, Krystal Lee, an Elvis tribute, Nashville recording artist Joseph Hosey, The

Burned Over Revival and more throughout the week. Also in the entertainment tent at 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 14, East Coast Wrestling is coming to the Chenango County Fair. “That’s going to be interesting. It’s a free show in the entertainment tent,” said Weidman, who mentioned that the fair had not had a wrestling show in quite a while and fair organizers hope it draws a crowd.

“We try to offer something different every year that not every fair is going to have in rotation,” Weidman said.

As mentioned, tractor pulls and the demo derby remain cornerstones of fair week. Tractor pulls can be seen Thursday and Saturday. The New York Tractor Pullers Association

(NYTPA) is scheduled to be there at 7 p.m. Thursday and Saturday, giving fairgoers a chance to see high-powered tractor and truck pulls, a personal favorite of Weidman, who once competed herself.

Fireworks, sponsored by Rentals to Go, will go off Friday at dusk. What follows is what fair organizers call Midnight Madness, when the carnival stays running until midnight.

In addition, Saturday and Sunday will feature a Western and an English horse show that are still being planned.

The Demolition Derby, produced by Rifanburg Racing Promotions, closes out the fair Sunday.

With its mix of heritage and new experiences, the 179th Chenango County Fair aims to offer something for everyone. From families exploring agriculture and motor-sports fans packing the grandstand to gardeners entering floral displays and kids staying up late for Midnight Madness, the fair remains a cherished community event.

“It’s a central opportunity in Norwich for people to get together, have some fun, have some good food and take a look at all the different things that they remember about home and just enjoy themselves,” Weidman said.

Guilford eyes \$8.5K purchase of abandoned Mount Upton High School for demolition

BY SHAWN MAGRATH
GAZETTE STAFF WRITER

GUILFORD – Hoping to rid Mount Upton of what they call a “dangerous eyesore,” Guilford town officials are moving on the purchase of the former Mount Upton High School that has been abandoned and waning for over 30 years.

The property, currently in foreclosure and retained by Chenango County, could enter a countywide delinquent tax sale this fall unless Guilford and county officials can final-

ize a purchase agreement. Guilford Town Supervisor Gilda Ward explained it’s the town’s aim to take ownership, demolish the building, and eventually sell off the property to a private party.

The risk of not following through with the town’s purchase, said Ward, is the possibility of having the building once again acquired by an outside developer who neglects it, a trend Ward said she’s seen over and over again.

“We’re concerned that it’s going to be purchased by somebody who’s just

going to do the same thing that’s happened in the past,” Ward said. “In other words, it’s just going to sit and deteriorate more.”

The former school building has become a headache for town officials who are now getting pressure from neighboring homeowners and businesses, including Stewart’s Shops, to do something about it.

“We’re having a problem with the homeless going in there, people not from this area. We don’t know who they are. Stewart’s is very concerned about it and peo-

ple who live in that area are very concerned,” said Ward. “It’s become a terrible nuisance. The building is really in bad shape, and I’m concerned that someone is going to get in there and get hurt or killed.”

At present, town and county officials have reached an initial understanding where the county would sell Guilford the property for \$8,500, but that deal must still be approved by the Chenango County Board of Supervisors before a purchase can be settled. A resolution drafted by the county’s

Finance Committee will go to the full board later this month.

In the meantime, the Guilford town board has hired a grant writer to help with the astronomical expense of tearing down the Depression-era brick school building laden with asbestos. Ward said she’s confident about being awarded a New York State block grant which will cover the costs of the teardown, but would also require the town to maintain ownership of the property for five years before it can sell it to a private party and

return it to the local tax roll.

“We plan on putting the demolition project out to bid as soon as we’re awarded the block grant,” said Ward, adding her hopes of having work started by the spring of 2027. Meanwhile, the township would take steps to secure the building in order to keep out trespassers.

“This is something we have to deal with,” Ward said. “It can’t just keep sitting there forever.”

Beat the back-to-school rush: why vaccinating early saves time, stress, and keeps kids healthy

C H E N A N G O COUNTY -- As summer flies by, parents are busy preparing for another school year—shopping for supplies, organizing schedules, and making sure their children are ready for the first day of class. One important task that is often left until the last minute is making sure children are up to date on their required school vaccinations. By scheduling vaccinations early, families can avoid unnecessary stress, save valuable time, and help ensure children stay healthy and in the classroom all year long.

Every year, healthcare providers experience a surge of appointments in late summer as families rush to meet school vaccination requirements. Waiting until September can make it difficult to find an available appointment, leading to long wait times and added frustration. By scheduling vaccinations earlier, parents



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have greater flexibility, more appointment options, and one less thing to worry about as school approaches.

Getting vaccinated early also helps prevent delays in starting school. New York State requires students to receive certain immunizations. Children who are missing required vaccines may be excluded from school until they meet these requirements. That can mean missed classroom instruction, missed opportunities to make new friends, and additional stress for both students and parents.

Completing vaccinations well before the first day of school helps ensure children are ready to learn from day one.

Vaccines do more than meet school requirements—they protect children from serious diseases such as measles, whooping cough, and meningitis. These illnesses can spread quickly in schools where students spend many hours together each day.

Healthy children are also more likely to stay in school. When children avoid vaccine-preventable diseases, they miss fewer days of class, stay

on track academically, and can continue participating in sports, extracurricular activities, and time with friends. Parents benefit too, with fewer unexpected absences from work and fewer medical visits caused by preventable illnesses.

Now is the perfect time to check your child’s immunization records and schedule any needed vaccines. Don’t wait until the back-to-school

rush. Contact your healthcare provider or your local health department today to schedule your child’s back-to-school vaccinations. A little planning today can make the start of the school year healthier, easier, and stress-free for the whole family.

Supporting websites:
https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370_2026.pdf
<https://www.healthychildren.org/>

English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Recommended-Immunization-Schedules.aspx
<https://www.chenango-countyny.gov/474/Clinic-Schedule>

Persons with questions or requiring additional information may contact the Chenango County Health Department at (607) 337-1660.

- Information from
Chenango County
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ning community theatre who are dedicated to excellence, while providing an opportunity for talented local thespians and musicians to utilize

their skills. They have provided many audiences with memorable performances and statewide recognition. SMTS is a member of the Theatre Association of New York

State (TANYS). For more information, please find us on Facebook or email us at info@sherburnemusictheater.org.

— Information from
SMTS

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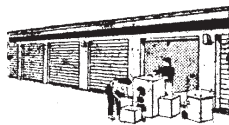


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The Early Files

by Peggy Finnegan

WEEK #32

FIFTY YEARS AGO

August 7, 1976

The Morris fair is over and it rained every day.

Rapp says farming in Chenango county is “here to stay.”

Many join me in hoping for some dry weather to pick beans before they are large enough to use as clubs.

The capture of Ernest Edwards in Oneonta ended a five-day man-hunt after his escape from the Chenango jail.

Dave Gassler is doing very good. Dorothy is feeling better. All hope they come home soon.

Verna McIntyre received a broken ankle when knocked off her motorcycle as she passed a car.

The NBCS band won 2nd place Class B at the Firemen’s Convention in Norwich.

Keith Meyers, 15, is recuperating after a bike accident when he was struck by a car.

FOR SALE: Wedding gown with veil, never worn.

SIXTY YEARS AGO

August 11, 1966

Youth Days is the smell of hot sausage on the grill.

John Richer, Adelbert Button, Richer Mitchell and Jack Wilkinson purchased the feed business of Red Mills Inc., Claverack, NY.

Danny Wenzel was confined to his home by illness. Little Tommy Jones has recovered from his illness.

Mrs. Ina Morgan of So. New Berlin moved onto the second floor in the Floyd Wilber apartment house.

Mrs. Fred Pope and children and Mrs. Charles Reidenback and son spent several days last week at Niagara Falls.

SPECIALS: Well Trimmed Sirloin Steaks \$89c lb.; Fresh Ground Beef 2 lbs. \$1.29. H.J. Schworm-Son

SEVENTY YEARS AGO

August 9, 1956

Miss Alzada Hunt became the bride of Ronald E. Bice June 30. After a wedding trip the couple will reside in Brooklyn.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Clark attended the annual picnic of old Columbus friends at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Reed.

John Saur Jr. and Wesley Aylesworth spent the weekend deep sea fishing off Long Island. They caught an 8 lb. fluke together and several smaller fish.

The lady migrant who was bruised at camp has recovered nicely and can work now.

Thousands are swarming to see the wild ani-

mals that have arrived at the Catskill Game Farm.

EIGHTY YEARS AGO

August 8, 1946

Contrary to the report published in this paper, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Burch did not buy the Hugh Elliott farm.

People are picking huckleberries in the western part of the county.

J.M. Bump purchased the Pittsfield gas station and store from Billy Denaro, who died only hours after the sale.

The D&H car shop in Oneonta will get back to normal when 172 men, laid off in May, return to work.

Two foxes killed by Clifford Hotaling had rabies.

Jack Mullen suffered cuts and bruises when the Ford coupe he was driving left the road near the Williams monument shop and collided with a large maple tree.

LOST: Gold pocket watch at Silver Lake. Guilty party is known. Please return and avoid trouble. Robt. Burdick

NINETY YEARS AGO

August 7, 1936

Raymond Anderson was hurt in a one-car accident near the Benton Bagnall farm.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Brunschmid are parents of a daughter, Jill Marie. Miss Elise Hamm

became the bride of Carl Belden at the West Edmeston church.

Miss Lucy Turner has begun duties as new Home Ec teacher at So. New Berlin.

The 4th annual Great Brook Conservation Field Day will be held on Mortimer Brook’s farm. Hundreds of farmers and others interested in soil and water conservation are expected to attend.

HUNDRED YEARS AGO

August 8, 1926

Percy Card recently purchased a new horse.

Slovenly bundles add to the loss of grain at harvest.

The windstorm of last week did a great deal of damage. We were without lights until Friday and telephone service was cut off the rest of the week. In some woods, over 100 trees were blown down.

George Greenleaf and son are repairing the roof which was torn from Chas. Penner’s barn in the storm.

George Beatty fell and broke his arm. He has been recovering for several months from a broken leg.

Youthful lines are assured by this well-designed Warner corsett for the average figure. It has a comfortable rubber top and long lines

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110 YEARS AGO

August 8, 1916

Six strawberries, picked by John Foster at Fulton, filled a quart basket.

Born July 27th to Mrs. Iva Walling, a daughter, weight two pounds.

Mrs. Julia Spafford spent several days last week with Mrs. Iva Walling.

Mrs. Luron Walling is with her daughter-in-law for some time.

War Department officials ordered from the Savage Arms Company of Utica 250 machine guns at a price slightly under \$1,000 each.

Mrs. Charles Barker and children are picking berries at Mrs. Kuhn’s.

Several from this place are attending Buffalo Bill’s show in Utica today.

Mr. B. Morris, who works in the sugar of milk factory, is spending two or three weeks at his home in Gouverneur.

FOR SALE: Twenty room house in good condition with good barn and hen house for \$1500. Inquire A.W. Morse

LOST: July 25, Ladies navy lue sweater on the state road between Fred Matthew’s residence and Charles Pope’s farm. Mrs. Fred Matthews

120 YEARS AGO

August 11, 1906

Last Sunday the village thermometer registered 112 degrees.

Street Commissioner Elliott is engaged in cleaning and widening the brook and we understand the contract has been let to Z.T. Darrow for \$3,600.

An accident on the O&W resulted in the death of Fred Davis and injury to Charles Howe and Riley Bennett. They were on a hand car following a passenger train when the wheels of the hand car jumped the track.

Fifteen cows were taken from the Perkins farm in Columbus because of tuberculosis. Mrs. Perkins was allowed \$10 per head.

H.T Lottridge has his new coal pockets in operation and it is interesting to watch the procession of big steel buckets carrying coal to the top of the building. A gasoline motor furnishes the power.

Harvey Holdridge has a tomato plant with 114 tomatoes on it.

FOUND: Part of a set of false teeth. Owner can have same by proving property and paying for this notice. T.A. Lowe.

Outdoor Chenango: Getting into the waterfowl hunt with geese and ducks



Eric Davis

Outdoor Chenango

I really gained a lot of my hunting experience from duck and goose hunting in the Finger Lakes as a teenager.

I did not get into archery hunting until I was in college, so I spent my autumn weekends in the duck blind rather than in a treestand in high school. Here are some things to know about waterfowl hunting in general and some equipment I recommend getting if you want to get into goose hunting.

Knowing the regulations and requirements is critical when it comes

to hunting ducks and geese. They are migratory birds, so they fall under federal jurisdiction in the form of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

While NYSDEC Environmental Conservation Officers enforce the laws and regulations within New York for the most part, they can have USFWS Special Agents come in to conduct investigations. With this, know that the fines and penalties that come with breaking the law or regulations are heftier. The first requirement is that everyone who hunts waterfowl in New York must register with the Harvest Information Program (HIP).

It is a simple survey asking about hunting migratory birds last year. Once you answer all the questions, you get a HIP number that you must carry with you while afield waterfowl hunting. The second requirement is that hunters aged 16

and older must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Stamp while hunting waterfowl. This stamp can be purchased at a United States Postal Service Office and the hunter must sign their name across the face of the stamp in ink.

It is worth noting that about 98 cents off each dollar that is spent on Migratory Bird Stamps goes directly to acquiring habitat critical to migratory birds for breeding or for migrating. The third requirement to know is that you must use non-toxic shot, meaning shot other than lead, when hunting migratory birds. The most common choice is steel shot as it is the least expensive option. Tungsten, bismuth, and mixes of those metals are other options that carry a heavier price tag.

The last requirement is that a shotgun that can hold more than 3 rounds total in the firearm must be modified so that it can only hold 3 rounds total (this is not required

in the September goose season or during the snow goose conservation season). This is usually accomplished by placing a rod in the tubular magazine of a pump or semiautomatic shotgun, often referred to as a “duck plug.” If you have questions about this process, visit a gun shop to ask them for assistance.

When it comes to equipment, the first thing to invest in would be decoys, in my opinion. Using decoys allows you to place them where you want the geese to come in, so you get ethical shots at them. Geese will try to land with decoys without any calling more readily than they will try to land where there is calling but no decoys.

If you plan to hunt in fields mostly, get decoys that are in feeding positions. If you plan to hunt over water where the geese come to loaf and nap, get resting and sleeping position decoys. Geese typically land into the wind if it is blowing above 5 mph, so leave

an open area where they can approach and try to land, this is where you plan on getting your shots at them.

If you buy decoys made for use in water, realize you need to buy rope and anchors, so they don’t just float away after you put them out. The second piece of gear to get would be a goose call. Adding sound to a decoy spread helps make it realistic. Most hunters will start out with a goose flute but over time will go to a short reed call because you can make a wider variety of calls on a short reed than on a flute call. The third piece of equipment to purchase would be a blind. Either a layout blind, which looks like a sleeping bag with doors, or an open-top ground blind will work but in different scenarios. Layout blinds allow you to set up in the middle of fields without a tall profile.

This helps get away from hedgerows or wood edges that some birds can shy away

from. Open-top ground blinds, like the Avian-X A-Frame, allow you to set up on fence lines, hedgerows, and other areas with more vertical structure to break up the outline of the blind. They are more comfortable to hunt out of but can lead to birds not finishing where you want for easy shots.

The same gear recommendations apply to getting into duck hunting. The only big difference is that almost all duck hunting ends up happening over water. While full body decoys are made for field hunting, it is less common to find ducks feeding in fields in large numbers.

If you are interested in starting to waterfowl hunt, make sure you understand the regulations before going out. Remember to stay safe and only shoot in safe directions, because it can get hectic when a big flock comes in and you start shooting.

Homelessness rises nearly 35% in Chenango region despite statewide drop

NORWICH – New reports issued by federal and state agencies suggest homelessness is on the rise in the Chenango County region despite a considerable drop in numbers across New York State.

An analysis from the New York State Comptroller’s Office shows homelessness in Chenango, Broome, Otsego, Delaware, Cortland, Tioga counties, and the City of Binghamton is up nearly 35 percent since 2024.

Findings are outlined in a report from the agency that suggests homelessness in the state declined by 7.9 percent between January 2024 and January 2025, driven primarily by a decrease in homelessness in New York City.

In 17 of 25 state regions known as Continuums of Care (CoC), homelessness is on the rise. Data are collected from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Point-in-Time Count of the homeless. In 11 New York regions, including the CoC encompassing

Chenango, homelessness grew by more than 10 percent, the highest increase being in Columbia and Greene counties, followed by Troy/Rensselaer County and Schenectady.

Chenango County’s CoC ranks fourth highest on the comptroller’s list.

The comptroller’s report augments efforts of a recent conference in Chenango County that was intended to expand discussions of homelessness in the area. The conference, held at Norwich High School on July 17, united multiple county agencies through seminars and a viewing of a highly regarded documentary on homelessness.

Advocates point to a number of issues that lead to homelessness, and the need for a collaborative solution.

New York State has dedicated more resources to housing. However, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has overhauled the way in which states receive federal funding, shifting away from a “housing

first” approach, according to Comptroller DiNapoli.

The comptroller’s report argues that “policies that can mitigate evictions and provide housing assistance, particularly to families with children, should continue to remain a focus of policymakers at federal, state, and local levels.”



The Chenango County Sheriff’s Office removed the remains of a large Norwich homeless encampment in March 2024. An analysis from the New York State Comptroller’s Office shows homelessness in Chenango, Broome, Otsego, Delaware, Cortland, Tioga counties, and the City of Binghamton is up nearly 35 percent since 2024. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

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New Berlin Library Corner



Dino Camp off to strong start

NEW BERLIN — The New Berlin Library’s three-week summer Dino Camp is off to a successful start, welcoming dozens of children during its first week of activities.

The free program, funded through a Community Foundation of South-Central New York grant and a donation from the New Berlin Art Forum, is being held in the New Berlin Library Community Room. Dino Camp runs Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., through Aug. 13.

The first week concluded on Thursday, July 30, with 35 children participating over the course of the week. Daily attendance ranged from 12 to 20 children, who took part in a variety of dinosaur-themed crafts and activities.

During the opening participants created dioramas featuring building block dinosaurs, dinosaur footprint stamps, foam dinosaur feet, dinosaur tails,

dinosaur claws, pterodactyl puppets, paper tube dinosaurs, silhouette dinosaur paintings, dinosaur necklaces and dinosaur magnets. Children also learned how to twist balloon dinosaurs.

The program is designed for children ages 12 and younger but is open to all youth ages 18 and under. Children ages 5 and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

“We try and make it as low stress as possible,” said Library Director Michelle Priola. “You attend the days you are able and skip the ones you can’t make. If you show up late, we get you caught up on whatever project we are working on.”

Two weeks of Dino Camp activities remain, and new participants are welcome to join at any time. Registration is not required.

Each day begins with breakfast served at 9 a.m. through the Unadilla Valley School

District Summer Feeding Program. Activities take place from 9:30 a.m. to noon, followed by lunch from noon to 12:30 p.m.

The Summer Feeding Program provides balanced USDA-approved breakfasts and lunches free of charge to all children ages 18 and younger. Participation in Dino Camp is not required to receive the meals.

A complete schedule of Dino Camp activities and art projects is available at the New Berlin Library, and daily schedules are posted on the library’s Facebook page.

For more information, contact the New Berlin Library at 607-847-8564.

Some great new additions to the library include: *The Cat Who Saved Books* by Sosuke Natsukawa, *The Cat Who Saved the Library* by Sosuke Natsukawa, *River of Spirits (The Under Wild Series)* by Shana Targosz, *Relic of Thieves (The Under Wild Series)* by Shana Targosz, *New*

Beginnings (An Amish Romance) by Linda Byler, *The Ties that Bind (An Amish Romance)* by Linda Byler, and *Captain Underpants and the Big, Bad, Battles of the Bionic Booger Boy Part 2: The Revenge of the Ridiculous Robo-Boogers* by Dav Pilkey.

The New Berlin Library is located at 15 South Main Street, New Berlin. The Library is open Monday and Wednesday 10AM-8PM; Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10AM-5PM; and Saturdays 10AM-noon. The web address is <http://libraries.4cls.org/newberlin/>. Please contact us at 607.847.8564 or like and message our Facebook page New Berlin Library and Museum (<https://www.facebook.com/newberlinlibrary.newberlinny>) with any questions.

Information from the New Berlin Library

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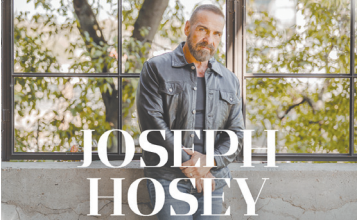
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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



FREE DAILY ENTERTAINMENT AND EXHIBITS (REAR OF GRANDSTAND)

- Wood Carver
- Flower Show, Exhibition Hall
- Tired Iron Ag and Tractor Display, South Road
- Robin's Heavenly Birds & Butterflies, North Road
- Dinosaur Takeover Fossil Tent, South Road
- Dinosaur Takeover Golf Experience, South Road
- Ryans' Yak Farm NYSAAF Ag Awareness Exhibit, North Road
- Party Animals Petting Zoo, North Road
- Blacksmith Shop, South Road

PRE-FAIR TUESDAY AUGUST 11

12:00 PM Harness Racing

WED., AUGUST 12 *Children's Day!*

12:00 PM October Rose (Entertainment Tent)
3:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
1:00 PM Royal Pageants Chenango County Fair Pageant (Entertainment Tent)
5:00 PM October Rose, South Road
5:15 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
7:00 PM Firefighter's Parade (East Main Street/Grandstand)
8:00 PM Concert The Revival Featuring Allyssa Crosby Season 25 of The Voice & Matt Beadle (Entertainment Tent)
8:15 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)



THURSDAY, AUGUST 13 *Senior Day!*

10:00 AM Chenango County Fair Tractor Pull (Grandstand)
10:00 AM- Senior Day - Music & Entertainment, Bingo,
4:00 PM Vendors, Drawings & Displays (Entertainment Tent)
1PM-2PM October Rose (Senior Tent)
3:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
4:00 PM October Rose (Entertainment Tent)
6:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
6:30 PM October Rose (Entertainment Tent)
7:00 PM NYTPA Tractor Pull/Truck Pull (Grandstand)
7:30 PM The Jessie Kay Band (Entertainment Tent)
8:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

12 PM-2 PM Gary Jennings Sr. (Entertainment Tent)
2:00 PM October Rose (Entertainment Tent)
3:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
5:00 PM October Rose (Entertainment Tent)
6:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
7:00 PM East Coast Wrestling Chenango County Fair (Entertainment Tent)
7 PM -12 AM FRIDAY NIGHT MIDNIGHT MADNESS
8:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
Dusk approx. 9:15 FIREWORKS OVER THE FAIRGROUNDS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 *Children's Day!*

9:30 AM Gymkhana Fun Show & Jackpots - Horse Show
10:00 AM NYS Talent Contest, (Sign-ups 10 AM) (Entertainment Tent)
1:00 PM The Burned Over Rival (Entertainment Tent)
1:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
2:30 PM Nashville Recording Artist Joseph Hosey (Entertainment Tent)
3:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
4:00 PM Krystal Lee The Country Sweetheart (Entertainment Tent)
6:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
6:30 PM October Rose (Entertainment Tent)
7:00 PM NYTPA Tractor/Truck Pulls (Grandstand)
8:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
8:00 PM ELVIS An Evening with Tribute Artist Don Brown (Entertainment Tent)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

8:30 AM English Horse Show
11:30 AM October Rose (Entertainment Tent)
11:00 AM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
12:00 PM The Jessie Kay Duo, (Entertainment Tent)
1:00 PM DEMO DERBY (Grandstand)
1:30 PM October Rose South Road
3:15 PM Jac-N-Cat and Carl Too (Entertainment Tent)
4:00 PM Dinosaur Takeover Show, South Road (Sponsored by Steel Sales)
7:00 PM DEMO DERBY (Grandstand)

All times subject to change



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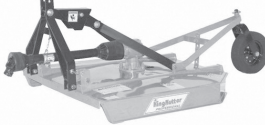
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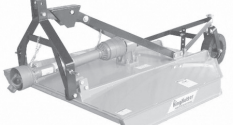
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Hundreds celebrate Wolf Mountain’s 20th anniversary

BY TYLER MURPHY
GAZETTE MANAGING EDITOR

— SMYRNA —

Hundreds of visitors joined the packs of gray wolves, eastern coyotes and the arctic, gray, red and silver foxes at the Wolf Mountain Nature Center on Sunday to celebrate the nature preserve’s 20th anniversary during the annual Wolves and Watermelons event.

“Thank you to the hundreds of visitors who came out yesterday to join us for our 20th anniversary celebration at the center,” organizers said following the Sunday event. “Weather was perfect, music was wonderful, and families had fun.”

The anniversary celebration featured live music by the Four Corners String Band, food from Kandi’s Kitchen food truck, walks along the center’s wooded trails and the feeding of the wolves’ annual watermelon treats.

Visitors also saw the animals in their outdoor habitats and attended a ceremony honoring the center’s “spirit wolves” in its memorial garden.

The event marked two decades since Wolf Mountain opened to the public in spring 2006 with only two wolves. The nonprofit center has since expanded to include several wolf packs, eastern coyotes and four types of foxes.

The center sits on 70 acres of forests, meadows and ponds on Hopkins Crandall Road in Smyrna. Its animal habitats have also expanded, with some covering more than nine acres and providing room for the animals to move, forage and display natural behaviors.

The species offer visitors a close look at the differences among members of the canid family, according to information shared by the center at the event and online at www.thewolfmountainnature-center.org.

According to the center, gray wolves are highly social animals that form packs and communicate through body language, scent and vocalizations. Their howls can help pack members locate



Visitors gather for an animal presentation beside one of the fox habitats during the Wolf Mountain Nature Center’s Wolves and Watermelons event this weekend. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)



A wolf enjoys a watermelon treat during the annual Wolves and Watermelons event at the Wolf Mountain Nature Center in Smyrna. (Photo from Wolf Mountain Nature Center)



The Four Corners String Band performs during the Wolf Mountain Nature Center’s 20th anniversary celebration on Sunday in Smyrna. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)



A family wearing wolf ears joins the festivities during the Wolves and Watermelons event at the Wolf Mountain Nature Center. (Photo from Wolf Mountain Nature Center)

one another and communicate with other packs.

Eastern coyotes are common throughout New York and are highly adaptable, living in forests, farmland and areas near farm and rural communities. The center’s coyotes help visitors learn more about an animal neighbor they may hear or encounter at home.

Gray foxes, also known as tree foxes, can climb trees using rotating wrists and semi-retractable claws. They can be distinguished from red foxes by their black-tipped tails and the dark stripe running down their backs. Red foxes, including the silver-colored variety, generally have white-tipped tails.

Also, visitors can witness the beauty of a creature known to arctic locals as the “Ghost spirits of the North.”

Arctic foxes are adapted to severe cold, with small ears, with compact bodies and fur covering the pads of their feet.

Visitors may view the wolves, foxes and coyotes from as close as about four feet, although state regulations prohibit physical contact with the animals. There are also viewing stands and occasional demonstrations or feedings.

Founder and head animal caretaker Will Pryor said Wolf Mountain is a sanctuary nature preserve rather than a traditional zoo.

“Come and see wolves in their natural environment, these are habitats, not cages,” Pryor said.

Education has remained central to the center’s mission since its opening. Volunteers provide guided and self-guid-

ed tours, answer questions and teach visitors about animal behavior, diets, habitats and the role the animals play in natural systems.

Wolf Mountain has been built and operated through volunteers. Volunteers maintain the grounds, care for the animals, guide visitors and help run public events. Only those with extensive training are permitted to enter the habitats for specialized work.

The center has also expanded its wooded trails, created the memorial garden and planted about 1,000 trees and shrubs across the property during its first 20 years.

During the anniversary celebration, Wolf Mountain was raising money for a walk-in cooler to preserve and make long term food storage more efficient. The proposed \$12,000 project would allow the



A fox nibbles a treat during the Wolf Mountain Nature Center’s 20th anniversary celebration Sunday. (Photo from Wolf Mountain Nature Center)

center to store more animal food and accept and keep larger donations without the risk of spoilage.

The center is inspected, regulated and licensed by the state Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Wolf Mountain Nature Center is open to the public from noon to 3 p.m. Fridays and

Saturdays and from noon to 4 p.m. Sundays, with the last admission at 3 p.m. Located at 562 Hopkins-Crandall Road in the rolling hills of Smyrna. It sits atop a hill at an elevation of about 2,000 feet.

Its next major event, the Honoring the Spirit of the Wolf Festival, is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 11.

The 68th annual Canasawacta Country Club member-guest tournament winners



NORWICH— Congratulations to the 2026 Canasawacta Country Club 68th annual member-guest tournament winners. Masters Flight Champions (overall winners): Brett Smith and Bryan Boyer. Oakmont Flight: Nate Sheer and Joe Rull (last year's runners up). Baltusrol Flight: Collin Fern and Carson Maynard. Oakland Hills Flight: Dennis Rifanburg and Dave Husted. Merion Flight: Jared Campbell and Mark Ross. Winged Foot Flight: Carlos Santa-Ines and Chris McLaughlin. Pebble Beach Flight: Aiden Hannan and Doug Coggins. Shinnecock Flight: Kevin Walsh and Jeff Parker. Olympic Flight: Jamie Robinson and Dale Persons. (Photo from the Canasawacta Country Club)

Scientists believe the sugarcane plant was first domesticated in New Guinea more than 8,000 years ago. From there, it spread across the southern Pacific, reaching India by about 2,500 years ago. Today, sugarcane is grown in more than 70 countries worldwide and is used to produce more than 70% of the table sugar consumed around the world.

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Sugarcane can be used to make biofuels and beverages like rum and cachaca.

Sweet Dreams

Can you spot all six differences between these two scenes?

This cartoon leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

Shortcuts
by jeff harris

A Short And Sweet Look At Sugarcane

Word Search

Can you find the hidden words? Search carefully because some words are backward or diagonal.

HARVEST	PAPER	CROP
PROCESS	PLANT	FEED
WATER	SUGAR	STEM
BRAZIL	INDIA	FUEL
GRASS	CANE	BOB
TABLE	SEEDS	RUM
BUTTER	ONTOAST	
GUAMUE	ATTOSN	
CUBMATE	AMEETA	
CALFAAZ	GPNOL	
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A sugarcane plant is about 70% water.

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How do you describe a sugarcane grove?
A sweet spot.

What is the best way to break bad news to sugarcane?
Sugarcoat it.

What is the best way to win over sugarcane?
With sweet talk.

How do you describe a cross between sugarcane and a lemon?
Sweet and sour.

About 1.9 billion tonnes (2.1 billion tons) of sugarcane are harvested worldwide each year. Brazil and India are the two largest producers.

I like to think my acting is pretty sweet.

This edition of Shortcuts is sponsored by Michael Cane.