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BRINGING WINTER SURVIVAL BACK TO NDAKINNA

see pg. 20

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Five Towers Media Welcomes Emma Dean and Jeremy Underwood!

Interviewed by **Taylor Stone** | Photos provided

Five Towers Media is excited to introduce two talented professionals joining the team: Emma Dean as Brand Manager and Jeremy Underwood as Technical Specialist. With their combined expertise in creative design and technical problem-solving, they bring fresh perspectives and skills that align perfectly with the company's growing client base and evolving projects.

Emma Dean – Brand Manager

Emma Dean comes to Five Towers Media with a strong background in graphic design and marketing, holding degrees in both fields from SUNY Oswego. "Design and marketing go hand-in-hand," Emma explains. "Understanding branding and advertising has shaped the way I approach visual communication."

Emma's experience spans freelance work and her role with the Adirondack Thunder hockey team, where she created content for multiple social media platforms. At Five Towers, she has already contributed to website editing, social media content curation, and marketing strategy development. Emma shares, "The part I've enjoyed most so far is website editing because of the creative aspect. I'm looking forward to gaining hands-on experience in marketing and project management while contributing to as many creative projects as possible."

Beyond her professional skills, Emma values creativity and continuous learning in all aspects of life. She enjoys exploring new languages, experimenting with guitar, and seeking out fresh inspiration from art, music, and design trends.

Her curiosity and enthusiasm make her a natural collaborator, always ready to bring innovative ideas to the table.

Emma is especially drawn to projects that challenge her to think strategically while remaining creatively expressive. She finds fulfillment in blending data-driven insights with design, creating visuals that not only look great but also communicate effectively to target audiences.



Jeremy Underwood – Technical Specialist

Jeremy Underwood brings a wealth of technical expertise and hands-on experience in software development, IT, and systems analysis. A U.S. Army veteran, Jeremy's interest in technology started at a young age and was solidified during his time at Naval Cryptology School. His educational journey includes a Bachelor's in Software Development and Security from the University of Maryland Global Campus, along with graduating General Assembly's Full-stack Software Engineering Immersive Program.

Jeremy has an extensive portfolio of side projects—over 100 total with 80 being on his GitHub—ranging from functional web applications to custom platforms for mapping drone imagery. He has also held IT roles at the National Security Agency and Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, gaining valuable experience in system troubleshooting and working directly with source code.

Outside of work, Jeremy enjoys spending time with his wife and kids, exploring the Adirondacks, cycling, motocross, and staying active with fitness and outdoor hobbies. His curiosity for technology extends into his personal life as well, where he enjoys experimenting with new tools and learning about innovations in software and IT.

Jeremy thrives on problem-solving and learning from complex technical challenges. Whether debugging code, optimizing website functionality, or exploring new platforms, he finds satisfaction in understanding how systems work and improving them for better performance and user experience.



Building a Stronger Team

Michael Nelson, owner of Five Towers Media, shares his excitement about the new hires: "Hiring Emma and Jeremy was greatly needed. With our client base growing rapidly and scalability always on our minds, we needed people that fit our culture and brought unique skill sets. We are really excited for what Emma and Jeremy bring to the team."

As Five Towers Media continues to grow, Emma and Jeremy's creative and technical talents will play a crucial role in supporting clients and expanding the company's capabilities. Both team members are already making an impact and are enthusiastic about the opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute to the company's success. ■

4-H Party for a CAUSE

Winter's Edge
Fundraiser Set for
January 17, 2026

Saratoga County 4-H is thrilled to announce the return of its Winter's Edge Party for a Cause, a lively community fundraiser scheduled for January 17, 2026, from 6–10 PM at The Hideaway at Saratoga Lake Golf Course. This annual celebration brings together supporters, families, and friends to uplift local youth programs. A special thank-you goes to Harmony Veterinary Center, proudly joining as this year's signature sponsor.

Attendees can look forward to a delightful evening where \$20 admission includes live music by Electric Rodeo, five raffle tickets, and light refreshments (veggies, cheese, crackers, and pepperoni). Beyond that, the event will feature a silent auction, themed raffle baskets, and plenty of festive fun. Guests can also enjoy an open cash bar, a limited food menu available for purchase, and the option to buy additional raffle tickets throughout the night.

All proceeds directly support the Saratoga County 4-H Program, helping fund educational opportunities, leadership development, and hands-on learning experiences for local youth.



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ARCC FINISHES YEAR STRONG

Adds On New Board Members
& Ambassadors in 2026



by **Amanda Blanton,**
ARCC Vice President,
Marketing & Communications

Photos provided

It's a new year full of new possibilities. The Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce experienced a busy year of making connections and supporting businesses in our region. Throughout 2025, we noticed a boom in small businesses, entrepreneurs, and consultants looking to grow their businesses. Welcoming almost 140 new members to the Chamber exceeded the growth from the prior year and invited new opportunities for collaboration and connections. In addition, during the summer, the ARCC and the Greater Greenwich Chamber of Commerce entered into a Partnership Agreement, which will build a strong, collaborative relationship that supports local businesses and drives economic growth across both communities. This alliance marked an exciting new chapter for our regional business community, opening opportunities for members of both Chambers.

The ARCC also celebrated an 87% retention rate, further demonstrating the value that Chamber membership continuously shows year after year. It's with this support that the ARCC can continue its mission of advocating for business, sharing education opportunities, and facilitating connections & collaboration.

ARCC Welcomes New Board Members

The ARCC is pleased to announce the addition of four new members to their Board of Directors in 2026. The ARCC would also like to express our gratitude for the service of the following Board Members whose terms were completed in December 2025: Juan Gonzales (Hunt Companies, Inc.), Eric Ryan (TD Bank), Tim Seeley Jr. (Seeley Office Systems), Jen Whalen (Rozell Industries), Rebecca Wood, and Past Board Chair Marc Yrsha (Arrow Bank).

The new ARCC Board Members are as follows:



Arleen Girard

ARLEEN GIRARD, Senior Vice President, Director of Business Services, joined Arrow Bank in 2014 and oversees the Municipal Banking and Cash Management teams. She is responsible for developing and managing opportunities for revenue growth, including deposits, cash management services, merchant and payroll services, and credit cards. Ms. Girard is also a member of the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition Board of Directors. Girard is a graduate of Glens Falls Senior High School and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Le Moyne College.



Josh Koons

JOSH KOONS is an Information Technology Engagement Manager who specializes in guiding organizations through smart, sustainable technology decisions. With a knack for translating business needs into practical IT solutions, he partners closely with clients to strengthen operations, improve security, and unlock long-term value. Known for his clear communication and forward-thinking approach, Josh helps teams cut through technical noise and focus on what truly drives impact.



Chuck Barton

CHUCK BARTON serves as the CEO of the Warren-Washington Industrial Development Agency, overseeing investment incentive programs supporting 38 active projects valued at more than \$690 million and generating over 670 local jobs. His prior career experience includes Chief Operating Officer of Barton Mines Corporation and Director of Finance for Honeywell's former Engineered Materials division. Chuck also brings a small-business perspective as the former co-owner of a family recreation club.



Kate Wilkins

KATE WILKINS is the Chief Advancement Officer and Deputy Director of The Hyde Collection, where she leads fundraising, external relations, and strategic initiatives that strengthen the museum's role in the community. Since joining The Hyde in 2021, she has helped deepen the museum's regional partnerships and supported its long-term vision for growth, access, and community connection. With more than a decade of experience in development, engagement, and communications for arts organizations across Upstate New York, Kate has built a career dedicated to expanding access to the arts in both urban and rural communities.

ARCC Grows Ambassador Committee

A strong extension of the ARCC, the Ambassador Committee is comprised of volunteers from a variety of businesses & organizations whose mission is to welcome new members, assist at events, and foster connections through the Chamber's networks. We are fortunate to welcome aboard the following:



Zach Walker

ZACH WALKER, Director of Business Development for the Adirondack Thunder | Harding Mazzotti Arena – Zach grew up in Boise, Idaho, where he discovered his love for hockey early on. His playing career led him to the U.S. National Team Development Program in Ann Arbor and Plymouth, and later to Boston College, where he earned a B.S. in Psychology. During four seasons of professional hockey, he also completed an MBA in Marketing from Bellevue University. Today, Zach serves as Director of Business Development, partnering with corporate and local businesses to drive the team's growth and community impact.



Shawn Weinberger

SHAWN WEINBERGER, Sales & Marketing Manager for KEENA PEO Services – Shawn helps employers cut through the clutter of HR, payroll, benefits, and compliance with clear guidance and real-world solutions. As part of KEENA's leadership team, he leads business development and marketing with a relationship-first approach, showing organizations how a PEO can simplify operations, reduce risk, and elevate the support they offer their teams. With experience across HR, compliance, and growth strategy, Shawn is driven by strengthening the regional business community and making it easier for local employers to move forward with confidence and momentum.



Andrew No

ANDREW NO, Financial Services Professional Agent for New York Life Insurance Company – Andrew is a Registered Representative and Insurance Agent with New York Life Insurance Company and NYLIFE Securities, LLC. With a master's degree (MS) and

licensure to assist with business solutions, life insurance, long-term care, investments, and annuities, Andrew helps businesses, individuals, and families plan for today and prepare for tomorrow. Andrew is eager to contribute to the Chamber's mission by fostering genuine connections and supporting the success of local businesses. He aims to support ARCC events by fostering a positive environment where all members feel recognized and engaged.

The ARCC Team, Board of Directors, and Ambassador Committee are looking forward to an incredible 2026 of serving our business community. ■



New Space, New Services, and a Renewed Focus on Feline Care

JUST CATS

VETERINARY CLINIC

Celebrates 31 Years



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

For more than three decades, Dr. Susan Sikule has dedicated her life to providing cats with a peaceful, specialized veterinary experience. This past fall, Just Cats Veterinary Clinic officially marked its 31st anniversary—an accomplishment few small businesses ever reach. And rather than slowing down, Dr. Sikule and her team are entering this milestone year with major updates, including a brand-new Mechanicville location, refreshed branding, and innovative treatment offerings like cold-laser therapy.

A New Chapter Begins With a New Location

After years of operating out of smaller facilities, Just Cats made the exciting move into a spacious new campus in Mechanicville. The building—originally designed for urgent care—offers a level of environmental comfort that is especially ideal for feline patients.

The rooms were constructed with additional insulation, resulting in quieter spaces—exactly what cats need to stay calm during appointments. Dr. Sikule explained that reducing sound and stress has already made an enormous difference for both patients and their owners.

The new location features:

- Six outpatient exam rooms
- One dedicated inpatient room
- A spacious waiting area
- Room-by-room privacy that eliminates noise and feline interaction stress

While the move places the clinic slightly farther from some Saratoga-area clients, Dr. Sikule assures them the experience is well worth the extra minutes of travel.

Advancements in Feline Medicine: Cold Laser Therapy Arrives

One of the most exciting new offerings at Just Cats is cold-laser therapy—an innovative, non-invasive treatment gaining attention across both human and animal medicine.

Unlike heat-based lasers, cold-laser technology stimulates energy, blood flow, and tissue repair beneath the skin's surface. Early success stories include improvements in:

- Arthritis and joint pain
- Chronic urinary inflammation
- Sinus conditions
- Post-injury recovery

Cats tolerate the therapy extremely well, and the treatment is administered right in the exam room with owners present.

For pet owners seeking relief options beyond medications or injections, this new service is a remarkable step forward.



Expanding Capabilities in Diabetes Treatment

Feline diabetes has long been one of the more challenging conditions for both veterinarians and cat owners. Historically, treatment required twice-daily insulin injections—something that could drastically affect quality of life.

Today, Dr. Sikule is helping lead patients into a new era of diabetes management:

- Effective once-daily oral medications now exist
- Many cats can regulate glucose levels without injections
- Monitoring has become easier through at-home glucose testing and wearable sensors

These changes have lifted an emotional and logistical burden for cat owners, opening doors to better long-term outcomes.

**31 Years in Business—
Lessons Learned, Culture Strengthened**

Despite advancements in animal health, Dr. Sikule says the biggest evolution over 31 years has been recognizing the importance of the team around her. Early on, she viewed staffing as transactional—employees came and went and that was simply part of business ownership.

Today, her mindset is vastly different.

She describes her staff as central to patient care, client relationships, and business success. Many of her team members have been with her more than 10 years—including her practice manager, Missy, who helped lead operational transitions during the recent move.

From celebrating long-term hires to refining leadership through business coaching, Dr. Sikule credits her growth as both a veterinarian and owner to staying intentional about workplace culture.



A New Brand Identity for a New Era

With a new building came something Dr. Sikule had been considering for years—a redesigned logo and stronger visual identity.

Her reason was simple:

For decades, she softened the message of being exclusively feline-focused. Now, she embraces it.

Just Cats is not a general animal practice—they are experts in feline needs, from physical health to behavior-based care environments. The new logo reinforces this specialty, and updated signage and digital branding unify both locations under a refreshed aesthetic.

**Looking Ahead:
Continued Growth and Client Appreciation**

Although plans are still in the works, Just Cats is preparing to host an open house and ribbon-cutting at the new location in the spring. The event will allow pet owners to tour exam rooms, meet the team, and experience firsthand what makes the new facility so unique.

With expanded capabilities, new technology, and unmatched dedication to cat-only care, Just Cats Veterinary Clinic continues its mission with the same passion that first inspired its opening 31 years ago.



Learn More

Pet owners can stay updated or schedule an appointment at: justcatsvet.com

New patients are currently being accepted, particularly at the Mechanicville location, with shorter waiting times available for new appointments.

After 31 years, Just Cats remains proof that innovative care, a clear mission, and genuine compassion are the ingredients for sustaining a thriving veterinary practice—one that continues to grow, evolve, and serve the feline community. ■

Co-Founders Bring JOY & PRACTICAL SUPPORT to Everyday Life Through New Online Community



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

In a world where social feeds often amplify comparison and criticism, two people have set out to create the opposite. Sara Kelly and her business partner, Lacey Tomlinson, have co-founded the Joyful Support Movement—an online community and learning platform designed to help people feel supported, organized, and emotionally grounded in everyday life.



Kelly, who brings a background in home management and household systems, was already helping families streamline daily life long before the movement existed. Tomlinson, whose professional experience centers on communications, learning design, and storytelling, had previously launched a podcast exploring what it means to navigate difficult seasons. When the two connected, their shared philosophy evolved into something larger: a structured yet compassionate space where people can show up, be honest about what they're dealing with, and take steps toward their desired goal.

Joyful Support movement

The Joyful Support Movement is centered on a three-step framework that both founders teach.

1 THE FIRST STEP is acknowledging what is happening in your life—the good, stressful, overwhelming, or uncertain pieces.

2 THE SECOND is identifying a “joy moment,” which they emphasize is not grand, expensive, or rare. Rather, it could be a moment of laughter, a warm drink, a quiet car ride, or simply noticing something that feels good, even on difficult days.

3 THE THIRD STEP is identifying one small step to move forward, whether logistical or emotional. Those three actions form the basis of their courses, their conversations, and their community programs.

At the center of the movement is “The Village,” a private online space designed to give people a place to ask questions, share challenges, and receive support without trolling, shaming, or judgment. Kelly explained during her interview that traditional social platforms often make people feel worse after sharing openly, not better. The Village is meant to replicate the kind of supportive environment people wish existed in their physical communities—especially for those balancing work, caregiving, relationships, and personal well-being.

Members can post their three steps, receive encouragement, and even participate in guided sessions around certain life areas. The Village also houses the movement's growing catalog of online courses, ranging from teaching household systems to incorporating children into home responsibilities. Kelly notes that many people reach adulthood without being taught how to manage a household in a way that reduces stress rather than adds to it. Their courses offer practical solutions, not perfection standards, and are designed to be adaptable to individual homes and capacities. Some courses, such as their meal-planning system, are even free.



Lacey Tomlinson



Sara Kelly

The platform also produces three active podcasts, each aligning with one of the movement's core pillars. “Sharing the Middle”—originally created and hosted by Tomlinson—explores real experiences of being in uncertain or transitional phases of life. “No Shame in Our Game,” hosted jointly, offers answers to everyday questions, expert interviews, and discussions on home organization, emotional challenges, and realistic decision-making. Their third podcast, “Joy Moments,” highlights short stories submitted by listeners featuring small but meaningful moments, serving as a collective reminder that joy is often found in daily life rather than milestone occasions.



Listen on joyfulsupportmovement.com

While the movement is open to everyone, the co-founders note that many members tend to be women carrying the weight of multiple roles—work demands, household duties, child needs, aging parents, and personal goals. Their intention is not to fix problems for people, but to offer a place to talk through them, gain perspective, and take manageable next steps. They often refer to the work as “self-help with community support,” acknowledging that while individuals are capable of solving their own problems, no one should feel like they must do so alone.

Kelly and Tomlinson are also beginning to bring their community model into in-person gatherings, where participants can sit, listen, share if they choose, and move through the three-step process in a facilitated setting. The goal mirrors the online space: support without judgment, presence without pressure, and connection without performance.

For more information

on The Village, upcoming events, courses, and podcasts, readers can visit joyfulsupportmovement.com. And for anyone who has ever wished there was a place to talk openly about everyday struggles—from meal planning to parenting challenges to emotional overwhelm—the Joyful Support Movement is working to be that place, one small joy at a time. ■

BRINGING SNOWBOARDING CULTURE BACK HOME



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

Walk into Hometown Board Shop—now operating inside Inside Edge in Queensbury—and you’ll immediately feel a difference. Owners Felicia and Matt Lynn have created a space that is warm, friendly, and rooted in community, not just commerce. They opened the business in early November with a clear purpose: restore the kind of snowboard scene many people in the region once knew. Their goal is not simply to sell equipment, but to give riders a home base again.

That idea began before a business plan existed. After returning to the area, Felicia realized that despite many stores offering gear, there was no longer a true board-shop environment. Years ago, young riders could stop in, talk about equipment and conditions, meet others, and become part of an active network. Over time, that faded as those riders aged, moved away, or stopped participating regularly. When Felicia walked into her former workplace and found that snowboards had disappeared from the inventory, she recognized that something meaningful had gone missing.

She and Matt—both longtime riders and former coaches—decided to fill the gap. With Inside Edge offering space in-house, Hometown Board Shop launched with the ability to sell boards, boots, bindings, apparel, wax, and more, while leaning on Inside Edge for tuning, service, alpine, Nordic, and race-focused offerings. It is an arrangement that benefits both businesses and, more importantly, benefits local riders.

From day one, the shop built its identity around education over salesmanship. Felicia does not describe herself as a salesperson at all, but rather someone who helps riders make informed decisions. Instead of pushing top-priced gear, she takes the time to learn about ability level, frequency of riding, terrain preference, and goals. Customers often find that she steers them toward more affordable equipment when it fits their actual needs. Matt shares that approach; their priority is getting people into the right setup rather than the most expensive one. As he explained, the question is not “What costs more?” but “What matches your style and progression?”



The shop launched with two brand lines that reflect both tradition and emerging trends in snowboarding. Nitro, an established brand with decades of influence in the sport, represents the long-standing culture that shaped many riders. Public, newer and based in Minnesota, is tied closely to street and park riding—two styles gaining renewed interest locally. Together, these brands signal that the shop embraces both experienced riders and young newcomers looking for accessible progression.

What truly sets Hometown Board Shop apart is what Felicia and Matt plan to build beyond the retail counter. This winter, they will begin inviting riders to informal Thursday evening gatherings, where people can talk about conditions, swap knowledge, and organize weekend trips. With Indy Pass access, the owners plan to coordinate visits to different mountains, turning individual outings into group experiences. They also hope to bring back local competitions and introduce clinics, including tuning workshops that help riders take care of their own equipment.

Those events mirror what once existed here. Years ago, the region hosted rail jams and community-style gatherings, including the well-known Hometown Hero event at West Mountain. Felicia and Matt see value in reviving that culture—not only because it was fun, but because it helped young riders learn, improve, and find belonging. For many, that was how lasting friendships were made.

Perhaps the strongest message coming from the shop is that every form of riding belongs in the same community. Felicia has been involved in nearly every discipline—skiing, snowboarding, tele, Nordic, and coaching—and believes the divisions people often talk about are artificial. In her words, “It’s all just sliding on snow.” Whether someone prefers rails in the park, fresh groomers, glades, cross-country trails, or big-mountain conditions, the experience remains shared.

Hometown Board Shop does not simply offer a place to purchase gear; it offers a place to reconnect. For parents now returning to winter sports with their children, for riders who drifted away from the sport, and for new participants discovering it for the first time, the shop is already becoming what it set out to be—home base.

Those interested can visit hometownboardshop.com or stop into Inside Edge to learn more, browse merchandise, or simply talk riding. And for those who ask ahead of time, the shop will even let you know if Sheldon, the unofficial shop ambassador, is on duty that day.

In a moment when small businesses matter more than ever, Hometown Board Shop represents something more than local buying. It represents local belonging. And for the snowboard and free-ski community in the Adirondack foothills, belonging has finally found its place again. ■



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BRINGING WINTER SURVIVAL BACK TO NDAKINNA



JAMES BRUCHAC



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

The idea of “survival” often conjures visions of wilderness disasters, roaring bears, or being stranded in the backcountry. But as James Bruchac reminds us, survival is as relevant on a winter road in upstate New York as it is in deep woods or on a mountainside. “Your car breaks down, you’re out in the middle of nowhere... what are you gonna do?” he says, emphasizing how fire, shelter, and situational awareness can be the difference between comfort and catastrophe.

This winter, Bruchac—author, storyteller, animal tracker, world-traveled cultural educator, and lifelong outdoorsman—is reinstating adult survival training at the Nda Kinna Education Center in Greenfield Center. It’s a return many have been waiting for.

Raised in Story, Raised in Wilderness

James’s foundation in survival began with stories—real stories, Indigenous stories, and stories connected to the land.

His father, Joseph Bruchac - an award winning Native American author, storyteller, and naturalist - was raised during a time when Native ancestry was often hidden rather than celebrated. Because of that history, starting in his college years, his father sought out elders from his own Abenaki ancestry and among the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohican, Lenape and other surrounding communities—absorbing culture, wildlife knowledge, and oral tradition, then passing it down to James and his brother.

Before they learned to build fires, they learned what those fires meant.

Before tracking animals, they tracked characters and lessons embedded in stories.

Those lessons quickly moved outdoors. James recalls early days learning plants, trees, tracks, and ecological understanding directly in the woods with his father.

By his teen years, things escalated:

He traveled to the Six Nations Indian Museum to work with John Stokes—a teacher who had lived with Aboriginal communities in Australia. That encounter lit the spark.

“He made stories seem cool again,” James explains.

Soon he was spending summers in New Mexico teaching youth survival skills, then traveling to West Africa with his father to research the Dogon people. Later came Yellowstone, where tracking wolves and grizzlies became more than textbook ideas. He now has thousands of plaster casts of tracks collected through decades of field work.

There’s one plaster cast now hanging in Ndakinna—a grizzly track “about the size of a small pizza,” as James describes it.

Stories became survival, and survival turned into something he could teach.

Survival Isn't Just for the Backwoods

During the interview, James made a point many people overlook:

Survival skills are everyday skills.

Once you’ve studied tracking, you walk through the backyard differently. You don’t just see footprints—you understand whether a predator or a scavenger is nearby, how fresh it is, and where it went.

Once you’ve learned fire-making, even cattails and birch bark look different.

“You’re never going to look at them the same way again,” he tells listeners.

And yes—dryer lint becomes valuable.

Real survival often has nothing to do with dramatic wilderness rescues. It’s being prepared when the car stalls in subzero weather. It’s knowing what to safely gather. It’s knowing when to stay put versus when to move—like the real-life Saratoga story of someone who stayed in the woods because they “heard trains” and thought that meant rescue was coming.

Situational thinking matters just as much as technique.



Teaching Skills That Make Wilderness Less Dangerous

James is not romantic about survival.

He is enthusiastic—but realistic.

He’s taught kids who later entered Army Ranger, Green Beret, and special forces pipelines. He’s taught engineers, photographers, and teachers. He’s taught parents who want to feel safer hiking with children.

Whether you’re facing cold, animals, getting lost, or basic resource scarcity—skills reduce panic.

As he says plainly:

“Technology fails. Then what are you gonna do?”

Survival isn’t adrenaline.

It’s preparedness. ■

Sunday Survival Series Returns!

After several years focusing on Ndakinna’s booming martial arts programs, James is bringing back hands-on, beginner-friendly skill development.

Two early courses are confirmed:

WINTER FIRE-MAKING ESSENTIALS

January 25 | 11:00 AM – 2:30 PM

At Ndakinna Education Center, Greenfield Center

This session is built on the most fundamental winter survival priority—heat.

Participants will learn:

- how to properly use fire steels and strike rods
- what to carry versus what to find
- why winter tinder sources differ
- how to legally (and when to ethically break rules) when gathering material
- how to safely build and maintain heat

A bow-drill demonstration ends the session, giving participants hands-on experience with primitive fire.



WINTER TRACKS & TRAILS

February 22 | 11:00 AM – 2:30 PM



Students will learn to identify animals that pass through their backyards and will explore:

- predator vs. scavenger gait
- safety indicators in tracks
- scat interpretation
- animal behavior patterns
- reading track shape, stride, depth, and direction

James brings thousands of casts, including wolves and black bears—but also the track size distinction that can determine whether you’re following a safe-to-observe animal or a dangerous one.

Then the class heads into the woods to find real trails, with the snow acting as a natural tracking sheet.

Sign-Up

Details and registration are available at: NdakinnaCenter.org

Courses are capped for quality and safety, so early registration is recommended.

The return of longer, full day survival treks, and possible overnights are planned for the future. Stay Tuned!

Redefining Physical Therapy Through Integrative Care



Interviewed by
Stephen Zabala

Photo provided

Dr. Sarah Avery, physical therapist, entrepreneur, movement specialist, and advocate for women's wellness, has built an approach to physical therapy that feels much more personal—and far more effective—than the traditional medical model. As the founder of In Motion Integrative Physical Therapy, she is reshaping how patients experience healing by blending evidence-based science with hands-on therapy, functional movement, yoga-based principles, and lifestyle awareness. Her method is grounded not only in anatomy and rehabilitation, but also in connection, education, and the belief that prevention is as important as treatment.

Movement as Medicine

Long before she earned her doctorate in physical therapy, Avery was a lifelong mover—soccer player, dancer, fitness enthusiast. It was the physicality of her youth paired with a strong interest in anatomy that steered her toward physical therapy. While completing her graduate studies, she discovered that learning movement from textbooks could only go so far. Yoga soon became the bridge between scientific study and embodied experience.

What started as quiet evening routines to manage stress developed into something deeper: the understanding that movement heals emotionally and psychologically—not just physically. As she entered the PT field, she realized how much value existed in merging these philosophies.

Yet Avery also saw limitations in conventional outpatient settings. Productivity quotas, double-booking patients, and shortened sessions made it difficult to treat people holistically. The deeper conversations—the ones about stress, lifestyle, menstrual cycles, fear of injury, identity as an athlete—were often left behind. Eventually, she stepped away from insurance-based practice to create the space needed for real healing.

Hands-On Therapy Meets Movement Education

Avery considers herself strongly rooted in manual therapy. Her approach frequently begins with direct physical intervention—trigger-point release, soft-tissue mobilization, and joint work that act as the “bridge” to movement.

Her philosophy:

If the body is restricted, people cannot move correctly—regardless of how well-meaning an exercise program is.

Once mobility is restored, she teaches strength, alignment, and movement patterns that sustain the improvement. Her clinical style is not prescriptive or routine. Instead, she looks at a patient's life:

- What stresses are present?
- What movement patterns dominate their day?
- What past injuries are influencing compensation?
- What fears or beliefs are affecting compliance?

This becomes the foundation of individualized treatment.

Women's Health, Hormones, and Preventative Strength

Dr. Avery has emerged as a quiet yet powerful force in women's physical health. **She specializes in:**

- postpartum return to movement
- pelvic-informed training
- menstrual-cycle-based lifestyle modification
- osteoporosis prevention and reversal

Dr. Sarah Avery

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The Osteo Vitality Program

One of her most significant contributions is Osteo Vitality, a progressive strength-training program for women with thinning bone density.

Unlike traditional programs that rely on light weights and chair-based exercises, Avery designed something demanding but safe:

Weekly programming includes:

- deadlifts
- squats
- overhead pressing
- posture-specific loading
- balance training
- yoga-informed position work that loads bone through tension

Her outcomes are compelling: roughly 86% of returning participants have improved or maintained bone density without medication.

Perhaps more unexpected was the community that formed—women staying not for 12 weeks, but for years, gaining strength, confidence, and belonging.

**The Hormonal Connection:
Moon Cycle Seeds**

Parallel to clinical practice, Avery operates Moon Cycle Seed Co., a women’s wellness product that supports hormonal balance through nutrition. Seed cycling—using ground pumpkin, flax,

sesame, and sunflower seeds strategically throughout the menstrual cycle—became something she learned personally, tested herself, then shared with siblings, then offered publicly.

It is not part of her PT practice but complements her overall mission: helping women understand their bodies instead of suppressing symptoms.

Her philosophy regarding hormonal health:

- Awareness first—know the rhythm of your cycle
- Nourish the body rather than override it
- Reduce internal stress and external toxins
- Encourage cyclical living when possible

Many women report reduced PMS symptoms, regulated cycles, and emotional changes using the method—much like Avery did.

**Healing Through Connection,
Not Volume**

What truly distinguishes Avery is not simply what she practices—but how.

She listens.

She slows down time.

She builds relationships with other clinicians—trainers, chiropractors, massage therapists—and happily refers patients outward, believing no professional should try to be everything.

She treats movement as an art form and each patient as a story rather than a diagnosis.

She encourages evidence-based work without abandoning ancient wisdom.

And she models what she teaches—balancing business ownership, motherhood, physical training, self-study, and rest.

A Modern Model of Physical Therapy

Dr. Sarah Avery represents what the next generation of physical therapy will likely become:

- Preventative, not reactive
- Rooted in science, enriched with human connection
- Integrative, not compartmentalized
- Strength-based instead of fear-based
- Collaborative rather than isolated

Her work not only rehabilitates injuries—it strengthens identity, capability, and confidence.

For those seeking therapy that views them as a complete human—not just a body part—Dr. Avery’s practice stands out.

learn more at:

In Motion Integrative Physical Therapy
inmotionintegrativept.com

Moon Cycle Seed Co.
mooncycleseedco.com

Her approach reminds us that movement is not simply healing—it is empowering. ■

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EMOTIONAL CLEAN UP AFTER THE HOLIDAYS



by Sara Kelly

Sara Kelly is a co-founder of the Joyful Support Movement, where she helps individuals navigate life with more ease, compassion, and joy. Learn more at JoyfulSupportMovement.com.

Now that we have savored the holidays, there is some clean-up to do. Not just putting away the decorations and finding homes for new items, but also some emotional clean-up.

Think of when you cook a delicious meal—there's so much to enjoy, but there's always some work to be done. The pans often have bits stuck to them, and if you leave them, they dry and harden, making the job tougher later. That's why soaking helps: a little water and soap let things loosen in their own time without you having to scrub right away.

In the same way, the holidays can leave behind emotional residue that starts to stick if we don't tend to it. What do you find yourself carrying, emotionally, after the holidays?

- Did your mom make a comment about your house that left you livid, but you never addressed it?
- Any resentment over the thoughtful gift you gave your spouse, and in return, you were handed a generic gift card?
- Or perhaps this overall general burnout of depleting yourself year after year and wanting it to be different.

Wherever you are and whatever you are feeling, I've got something for you. It's the three steps of Joyful Support.

1. STORY. What's going on in your life right now, or what are you thinking about that is consuming a lot of your mental energy? Getting clear on your story can help identify what may feel stuck.

2. JOY. What's something good? It's easier to see the things that aren't going the way we want and to focus on them. The dumpster fire grabs our attention quicker than the bloom on the flower. It takes intention to refocus and zoom in on something that brings you joy. Not talking big, winning-the-lottery here, but small like you saw a dog carrying a big stick type joy.

3. TAKING A STEP. What's the tiniest way to move forward? This could mean physically moving around by going for a walk or dancing. Or, figuring out the next step to take toward a solution in some area of your life.

The three steps are the soap-and-water for our emotions—an easy way in to dealing with what's stuck before it hardens. The steps aren't a magic recipe for solving all your problems. What they are is a tool to break free from feeling paralyzed and overwhelmed, to see a way forward, and feel that you have the fuel to do it.

An example of the steps:

STORY: I feel overwhelmed with all that needs to be done in the next week.

JOY: This morning, I saw the most beautiful colors in the sky, and I took a moment to enjoy them.

STEP: I'm going to write down all the things that need to be done, along with their importance and due dates.

The great news is that there is no wrong way to do these steps! By yourself, with a friend, on paper, out loud, once, twice, two hundred times—it all works!

If you're curious to experience this in person—or know someone who would benefit—there will be a gathering where we'll practice the tool together. On Wednesday, January 28th at 6 p.m., at Petal & Hive in Saratoga Springs, I'll be leading a Joy Circle. It's an hour to slow down, check in with yourself, and feel supported by simply being in community. You'll walk away feeling lighter, more connected, and more grounded. When we do this work together, we create space for both personal reflection and collective care.

And don't worry—you don't have to share anything heavy. We can start small with that snarky comment from your mom, or you're welcome to just sit and observe. Truly, there is no wrong way to care for yourself with Joyful Support.

Joy Circle Details and Registration:

village.joyfulsupportmovement.com/events/2E9A58 ■



Scan Me!

A PLAYABLE MUSEUM WITH A CENTURY OF MACHINES



by **Sean Palladino**

Photos provided

ARCADE ARCHAEOLOGY

Strolling through Aviation Mall in November, I stumbled across a relatively new playable museum, Arcade Archaeology, that imbued a wonderful sense of nostalgia for arcade games, filled with more than fifty pinball machines. Opening last summer in June, Lonnie Linen, founder of Arcade Archaeology, has been interested in preserving arcade games for the past decade. The journey began when he acquired and fixed a pinball machine created in 1972 by D. Gottlieb & Co. called “Drop-A-Card”. His mechanical aptitude led him to discover the long history of pinball games since 1931, eventually creating a pinball showcase at the Wilton Mall called “Saratoga Silverball” in 2021 that has drawn thousands of players across the region. Tanner Stowell, a local collector of Japanese rhythm games and associate director, helps bring arcade games from overseas to the museum.

Gathering and preserving the history of pinball machines can be an expensive endeavor, but Lonnie’s connection with Howard Levine of the nonprofit, Project Pinball, helped orchestrate their mission. Lonnie explained, “despite playing a small, humble part, I cannot overstate how the museum’s creation came about thanks to Howard,” as I learned more about Project Pinball. From their website, “Project Pinball began with the discovery of a broken pinball machine at Golisano Children’s Hospital of Southwest Florida. The pinball community and many local benefactors raised funds and donated time to restore the machine to perfect

condition.” The organization eventually became a nationwide organization that supports the placement of pinball machines in Children’s Hospitals, Ronald McDonald Houses, and Assisted Living Facilities. The Saratoga Silverball has been a key benefactor for the project.

Lonnie and Tanner have cultivated a breath of knowledge in arcade history. From describing the unique, internal designs in a machine to the different technological developments throughout the decades, every visit elicits a learning and playing experience. The intricate machines are a marvel of engineering, mixing movable hardware and computer technologies, to whisk a player into another world while being grounded in reality. The expansive space has some classic pinball games, like William Electronic Game’s Indiana Jones Pinball Adventure from 1993 and Sorcerer from 1985, along with D. Gottlieb and Company’s Buccaneer from 1972, among many others. During the cold, winter months, head inside the Aviation Mall to check out the Arcade Archaeology Museum to learn and play history.

They are open on Friday through Sunday, though they are planning on creating a pinball league that meets on Thursday evenings. At the moment, entry into the museum is \$20 for a day pass, with a half-hour pass available, but they are in the process of acquiring custom tokens for an additional way to experience the museum. ■



Winter FARMERS' MARKETS

SARATOGA, WARREN & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

Saratoga Winter Farmers' Market

Wilton Mall
3065 NY-50, Saratoga Springs

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, November – April
9:30 AM – 1:30 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Halfmoon Farmers' Market

Abele Memorial Park, Halfmoon
OR inside Halfmoon Town Hall,
Harris Road, Halfmoon

SCHEDULE:

Wednesdays, Year-round, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Glens Falls Farmers' Market (Winter)

The Market & Event Center "The Ed"
57 South Street, Glens Falls

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, November 2 – April 25
9 AM – 12 PM

- Manager Contact: 518-792-4918
- FMNP Accepted: Yes

Spa City Farmers' Market

Saratoga Spa State Park
(Lincoln Baths)
Saratoga Springs

SCHEDULE:

Sundays, Year-round, 10 AM – 2 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Cambridge Valley Farmers' Market (Winter)

The Old Firehouse,
11 W. Main Street, Cambridge

SCHEDULE:

2nd & 4th Sundays,
January 12 – May 11
10 AM – 1 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes





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"Where Small Moments Shared Create Ripples of Joy"

Joy Moments is a 10-minute podcast that captures real stories of everyday joy from people around the globe. Quick doses of joy from real people living real lives.



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"Sharing our Stories about the Messy Middles of Life"

Sharing the Middle celebrates the "middle moments" of life—the raw, unfiltered experiences of navigating uncertainty, growth, and transformation. Real people sharing real stories about the space between challenge and resolution.



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NCTWC

NORTHEAST CONSTRUCTION TRADES WORKFORCE COALITION



Interviewed by
**Michael Nelson
& Derek Foster**

Photos provided

Working to Build the Next Generation of Trades Professionals

The Northeast Construction Trades Workforce Coalition (NCTWC) is reshaping how young people—and the adults who influence them—view careers in the skilled trades. Founded from a grassroots workforce effort, the coalition has grown into a regional nonprofit known for its innovation in student engagement and career awareness.

Origins Rooted in Industry Need

Roughly eight years ago, Doug Ford of Curtis Lumber was appointed to a workforce task force through the Saratoga Builders Association. Recognizing the growing labor shortage and lack of understanding among students about trade careers, Ford immediately recruited colleague Pam Stott. Together, they began developing programs designed to introduce youth to construction and trade pathways.

For six years, this work was done on a volunteer basis as part of their corporate roles. As demand rapidly increased, Ford and Stott transitioned the initiative into a formal nonprofit structure. The coalition officially became a 501(c)(6) nearly two years ago, and Stott retired from Curtis Lumber to serve as executive director.

A Mission Focused on Awareness, Not Training

NCTWC focuses on awareness—ensuring students know these opportunities exist and understand what they offer. Their mission emphasizes:

- Accurate information on potential earnings, benefits and job security
- Awareness of non-physical roles such as project management and logistics
- Career advancement and entrepreneurial potential
- Early-stage exposure that can influence career decision-making

This “awareness-first” approach has remained unchanged since the organization was formed.

Programs Designed to Reach Students Early and Often

The coalition does not wait until graduation-year planning begins. Their education model starts early and builds sequentially through school age groups.

Elementary Programs

Students as young as second grade build small wooden toolboxes—over 1,200 last year alone. **The toolbox build is a hands on tool to:**

- Carpentry and creativity
- Discuss the people involved in constructing their homes
- Encourages motor skills and problem solving

While basic on the surface, the program plants a seed early.

Middle School Experiences

At this stage, programs are tied heavily to classroom curriculum. One example is a real-world geometry and design activity where students build a multi-sided structure, reinforcing:

- STEM and soft skills
- Teamwork and time management
- Construction planning and design

Students begin to see how subjects commonly asked about—such as “when will I use this?”—directly connect to real-life work.

High School Exposure and On-Site Learning

At the high school level, programming becomes career-oriented. Students participate in:

- Job-site tours of active construction sites
- Exposure to the phases of construction and various trades involved
- Meeting builders and trades professionals face-to-face
- Job shadowing
- Internships
- Visits to local businesses to explore real-life careers

The coalition intentionally brings in younger trades professionals when possible to create strong peer relatability.

One student, previously committed to college, was introduced to multiple trades companies through job shadowing experiences. He ultimately entered the industry full-time and has remained in the field successfully.



A Major Breakthrough: Engaging School Counselors

From the beginning, NCTWC recognized the role of school counselors as a key factor in student decision-making. Many, however, previously had limited exposure to trade professions and emphasized college as the expected pathway for academically strong students.

The coalition changed that narrative through counselor-focused efforts including:

- Workforce workshops designed specifically for counselors
- Job-site construction tours at major projects
- Structured conversations with trades industry professionals
- Resource development for school use

NCTWC is helping equip counselors with knowledge and resources to assist in their conversations with students and parents about career opportunities in the trades. They are reinforcing the trades as a viable career option and not a default alternative to college.

Empowering Young Women in Trades Careers

One of the coalition's most celebrated programs is its girls-only construction summer camp.

During camp sessions, participants:

- Use tools ranging from power drills to pneumatic nailers
- Build functioning projects
- Learn building science
- Work directly with industry mentors

Students often leave camp with large-scale projects, including planter boxes, outdoor chairs, vertical gardens and even fully constructed sheds. Attendance has increased enough that the camp has expanded from one week to two. Parents consistently cite confidence-building outcomes.

Industry-Wide Collaboration

NCTWC now represents collaboration among many construction-related companies, not just its founders. Builders frequently rearrange jobsite schedules so they can present to classrooms, lead field trips or host student job shadows. Curtis Lumber and Saratoga Builders Association continue as founding partners. Over 90 organizations are now members of the coalition providing financial and volunteer engagement.

Scaling Beyond New York

Recently, more than 100 lumber dealers from around the United States visited the region specifically to evaluate the coalition's model. Multiple companies expressed interest in launching similar chapters in their home markets.

Plans are underway to package the model into a scalable format for national rollout allowing new regions to replicate the coalition's programming and branding standards.

What began as a local workforce initiative is now positioned to influence career awareness nationwide.

A New Understanding of What the Trades Offer

The coalition is helping dismantle outdated assumptions surrounding trade professions. **Modern trades careers offer:**

- Competitive earnings
- Healthcare and retirement benefits
- Rapid advancement pathways
- Business ownership potential
- Skilled, meaningful craftsmanship

For many students, the trades represent stability paired with visible, tangible accomplishment. And critically, trade careers are not just for those uninterested in college or less academically inclined—they are often ideal for students with strong academic or technical aptitude.

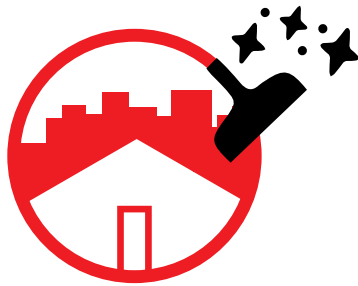


Looking Ahead

What started as two industry professionals trying to solve a workforce problem has become a transformational regional initiative. Through hands-on programs, student engagement, school counselor development and industry collaboration, the Northeast Construction Trades Workforce Coalition is helping young people discover fulfilling career paths while strengthening the trades workforce pipeline.

Their growing impact—soon to reach beyond the Northeast—stands to change how future generations see building, making and craftsmanship in America.

For more information, visit nctwc.org. ■



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How Daigle Cleaning Systems Is Using Robotics to Redefine Commercial Cleaning

For decades, commercial cleaning has relied almost entirely on human labor. But as facilities grow larger, labor shortages increase, and expectations around cleanliness—especially in healthcare—continue to rise, that traditional model is being pushed to its limits. At Daigle Cleaning Systems, co-owner Derek Foster saw that pressure early and made a deliberate decision to integrate robotics into the company's service offerings. Over the last couple of years, robotics have moved from experimentation to a core part of how Daigle delivers value to its clients.

Rather than replacing people, these robots are designed to automate repetitive, labor-intensive tasks, allowing human technicians to focus on detail work, safety-critical cleaning, and higher-value services.



Meet Violet

UVC Disinfection Robot



Meet Scrubby

4-in-1 Floor Care Robot



What the Cleaning Robots Can Actually Do

Daigle Cleaning Systems deploys autonomous cleaning robots that are programmed for specific environments and tasks. These robots are not “plug and play.” Each one is mapped to a facility using onboard cameras, LIDAR technology, and a touchscreen interface. Once mapped, the robot follows exact instructions—no more and no less.

One of the primary machines Daigle uses is a four-in-one floor care robot often referred to internally as “Scrubby.” This robot can:

- Sweep hard floors
- Damp mop surfaces
- Auto-scrub tile and grout
- Vacuum carpeted areas

Because the robot stores facility maps in its internal memory and cloud systems, it can be scheduled to clean specific areas at specific times without

constant supervision. The robot operates using Wi-Fi or a mobile hotspot and documents where it cleans, where it pauses, and where it must return later if an area is temporarily blocked.

The robots are equipped with 360-degree cameras and obstacle-detection sensors. When people or objects appear in their path, operators can choose whether the robot stops, reroutes around the obstacle, or pauses and returns later. In real-world environments—such as hospital waiting rooms—the robots safely navigate around patients and staff without collisions.

Daigle has also deployed ultraviolet disinfection robots designed for healthcare environments. These units use UVC light to disinfect surfaces and reduce the risk of hospital-associated infections. During demonstrations, multiple robots operated simultaneously in confined spaces without interfering with one another, highlighting how advanced the collision-avoidance and navigation systems have become.

Where Robotics Make the Most Sense

Not every building is a good candidate for robotic cleaning, and Derek Foster is clear about that. Robotics work best in facilities with large, open areas where repetitive tasks consume significant labor hours.

The strongest use cases include:

- Hospitals and healthcare facilities, including waiting rooms and corridors
- Medical office buildings and urgent care centers
- Office buildings with wide hallways and open floor plans
- Colleges, universities, and schools
- Banks and institutional facilities

In healthcare settings, robotics help maintain consistent cleanliness in high-traffic areas while supporting infection-control goals. In office and educational buildings, robots can handle daily floor care while human staff focus on detail cleaning, security checks, and specialty services.

Why Clients Are Adopting Robotic Cleaning

The biggest driver behind robotics adoption is not novelty—it's necessity. Many facilities struggle to fully staff janitorial and maintenance roles. Tasks like vacuuming large carpeted areas or auto-scrubbing floors are time-consuming and physically demanding. Robotics allow those tasks to be completed reliably without adding headcount.

From a cost standpoint, Foster explains that most robots pay for themselves within six to seven months. Once deployed, a robot can clean the same area multiple times per day without increasing labor costs. For example, instead of vacuuming once daily due to staffing limits, a facility can vacuum three times a day using the same robotic asset.

Robotics also improve employee safety. In large facilities, staff may walk hundreds of miles per week pushing equipment or transporting materials. Automating those repetitive movements reduces wear and tear on employees and lowers long-term injury risk.

Just as important, robotics open doors with clients who already have in-house cleaning teams. Rather than replacing those teams, Daigle positions robotics as a way to augment existing staff—allowing people to focus on detail-oriented, judgment-based work while robots handle predictable, repetitive tasks. This approach transforms robotics from a threat into a collaborative tool.



Humans Still Matter—And Always Will

Despite rapid advances, robotics do not eliminate the need for skilled technicians. Robots cannot yet clean bathrooms independently, handle complex spills without guidance, or perform judgment-based tasks like spot glass cleaning or high dusting. Human oversight, programming, and decision-making remain essential.

At Daigle Cleaning Systems, robotics have created new internal roles as well. Team members are trained as robotics specialists who understand mapping, programming, troubleshooting, and optimization. As Foster notes, there is a significant learning curve—but also a growing opportunity for people who want to work at the intersection of skilled trades and advanced technology.

A Glimpse of the Future of Cleaning

By integrating robotics into its service model, Daigle Cleaning Systems is solving real-world problems for clients while preparing for an industry facing labor shortages and rising standards. Robotics are not a replacement for people; they are a force multiplier—one that allows facilities to do more, more consistently, with the resources they already have.

As automation becomes more common in commercial buildings, companies that understand how to deploy robotics thoughtfully—not blindly—will be the ones setting the standard for the next generation of facility services. ■



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3.7 Good



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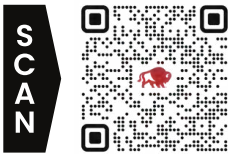
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MONTHLY MARKET OUTLOOK



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Market Volatility Returns:

Why Uncertainty Today May Create Opportunity Tomorrow

After months of relative calm in financial markets, volatility has returned, and in a meaningful way. Equity indexes sold off recently, led primarily by growth and technology names that have powered much of the market's advance over the past two years. While pullbacks can feel uncomfortable, especially following a strong rally, we believe the current environment reflects a normal and healthy resetting of expectations rather than the start of deeper trouble. In fact, many of the forces behind the recent weakness may ultimately create opportunities for long-term investors who remain disciplined.



A Market Searching for Clarity

Markets dislike uncertainty, and today's environment has plenty of it. Although the government has reopened after the shutdown, a significant gap in economic data remains. Agencies are still working through backlogs of unreleased reports, meaning investors, economists, and policymakers are still flying somewhat blind. The Federal Reserve, which has emphasized repeatedly that it is "data dependent," will likely head into its mid-December meeting without the October jobs report or CPI inflation data, which are two major inputs in shaping interest-rate policy.

This lack of information is contributing to a broader sense of hesitation. A month ago, markets were pricing in a near-certain rate cut in December. As new partial data trickled in, such as the surprise upside in the September employment report, the probability of a cut has dropped significantly. The CME FedWatch tool shows December cut expectations falling from roughly 95% a month ago to near even odds, demonstrating how dramatically sentiment can shift when the data picture is cloudy.

In the meantime, surveys and private-sector indicators offer mixed signals. Consumer sentiment shows growing concern about rising unemployment. Small business optimism has slipped, with companies reporting softer sales. Manufacturing remains in contraction, while the services sector continues to show expansion but with persistent inflationary pressures. And while ADP's private payroll report showed modest job gains, it remains only loosely correlated with official government data.

In short, the environment remains difficult to interpret, and that is precisely why markets have begun to wobble.

A Healthy Reset Following a Strong Rally

It's important to remember that the market entered this environment priced for near perfection. High valuations, narrow leadership, and extreme concentration in a handful of mega-cap names have made equities more vulnerable to sudden swings. Even strong earnings results from major companies such as NVIDIA failed to spark sustained enthusiasm. That is a clear sign that investors were already pricing in a lot of good news.

At the same time, concerns around artificial intelligence (AI) spending have added fuel to the recent pullback. While AI remains one of the most important long-term themes in markets today, the near-term cost of building out infrastructure, combined with uncertainty around the timeline for meaningful ROI, has led investors to reassess how much they are willing to pay for AI-related stocks. Crypto's sharp decline has also contributed to the risk-off sentiment, especially within tech, where digital assets are often viewed as an indicator of speculative appetite.

Against this backdrop, a market retreat is not only understandable, it is entirely normal. Historically, when valuations become stretched and expectations too optimistic, the market often resets through a 3–10% pullback. That is what appears to be unfolding today.



Key Levels and What Comes Next

Technically, the market is approaching important support levels. The S&P 500 recently broke below its 50-day moving average, an early signal that momentum has weakened. The next major level is the 200-day moving average near 6,162. A move toward that level would put the market close to textbook correction.

Importantly, every significant pullback since late 2022 has ultimately become a buying opportunity, and we believe this cycle may be no different. Several powerful forces are likely to support markets as we head into 2026:

1. Fiscal and Monetary Stimulus on the Horizon

Even if the Fed delays a December rate cut, policy is still likely to ease in 2026 as employment cools. On the fiscal side, 2026 is shaping up to include meaningful stimulus. Tax refunds are expected to increase due to unchanged withholding tables under the Big Beautiful Bill, putting more cash into consumers' hands. Historically, this combination: easing monetary policy and supportive fiscal policy, boosts economic growth and corporate earnings.

2. Strong Earnings Expectations

S&P 500 earnings are projected to grow roughly 13% in 2026. Markets typically price in earnings 3–6 months ahead, meaning investors are likely to begin focusing increasingly on next year's growth trajectory rather than today's uncertainty. High-quality companies with durable cash flows tend to lead during these periods.

3. Record Cash on the Sidelines

Perhaps the most compelling support is the sheer amount of cash waiting to be deployed. More than \$26 trillion sits in money markets, savings accounts, and cash-like investments. Historically, when markets pull back and valuations become more reasonable, some of that cash finds its way back into equities—fueling strong rebounds.

Volatility Is a Feature, Not a Failure

Volatility can create anxiety for investors, especially when it is tied to uncertainty around the economy, the Fed, or major market themes like AI. But it's essential to separate temporary discomfort from long-term opportunity. Markets often need periods of digestion after strong rallies. Pullback helps reset valuations, broaden participation, and create healthier foundations for future growth.

The economy, while showing pockets of softness, continues to expand. The labor market has moderated but remains resilient. And with 2026 shaping up to bring both policy support and earnings strength, the long-term outlook remains constructive.

Investors should stay diversified, remain aligned with their long-term goals, and avoid making decisions based solely on short-term volatility. Historically, periods of uncertainty have rewarded patience.

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Business Council
January 2026
Meeting13
JAN

9 – 10 AM
Arrow Bank meeting room
20 South Street (Lower Level,
Glens Falls

The ARCC Women's Business Council (WBC) is excited to present a panel discussion on HR for business at our first meeting of the new year!

PANELISTS:

Brooke A. Bardin, AVP, Employee
Relations Manager, Arrow Bank

Jennifer Barry, J.D., HR Consultant
Practice Leader, GTM Payroll & HR

Sara Martin, Senior HR Consultant,
GTM Payroll & HR

ARCC Mixer at
Downtown Social15
JAN

4 – 6 PM
Downtown Social
190 Glen Street, Glens Falls

Mix & mingle with us at the ARCC January mixer! Enjoy drink specials, food samples and live music as you network with your peers at our first mixer of the New Year!

Born from a vision to create the ultimate gathering place in Glens Falls, Downtown Social brings together great food, drinks, and entertainment under one vibrant roof.

SARATOGA COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Start Strong Social at The Bunker

15
JAN

4:30 – 6:30 PM
The Bunker
307 Broadway, Saratoga Springs

Fees/Admission: \$10 for members

Kick off the new year by connecting with fellow professionals at the Start Strong Social. Join us at The Bunker for light refreshments, great conversation, and a relaxed networking experience surrounded by a fun, golf-inspired atmosphere.

Take a few swings on the simulator, cheer on colleagues, or simply enjoy the laid-back setting; it's the perfect way to unwind, recharge, and build new professional connections in a casual yet engaging environment.

Looking Ahead...

Crafted for Success
Women in Business Mixer05
FEB

4:30 – 6:30 PM
Innovation Center at Saratoga, Inc.
16 Old Stonebreak Road, Malta

Admission: Free for members only

Join us for Crafted for Success, a dynamic Women in Business mixer designed to spark meaningful connections, inspire collaboration, and celebrate the power of women in business — all in the inviting, hands-on setting of the Innovation Center, a collaborative makerspace for all creatives & entrepreneurs.

Whether you're a seasoned entrepreneur, a creative side-hustler, or just starting your journey, this event is crafted (literally!) with you in mind.

Deal Me In: Valentine's
Networking Night!12
FEB

4:30 – 6:30 PM
Saratoga Casino Hotel
342 Jefferson Street, Saratoga Springs

Fees/Admission: \$10 for members

Held at Saratoga Casino Hotel, this event blends the excitement of casino-style fun with the power of professional connections. Whether you're looking to grow your business, strengthen relationships, or simply enjoy an evening out, this mixer offers the perfect mix of opportunity and entertainment.

CAPITAL REGION
CHAMBERNetwork by 9 at
Hilton Garden Inn
Clifton Park08
JAN

Hilton Garden Inn
Clifton Park
30 Clifton Country Rd, Clifton Park

Fees/Admission: \$15
Online pre-registration required.
Event is open to Chamber
members only.

Online registration will close at 12 p.m. on January 7. Due to the nature of this event, we are unable to accommodate walk-ins. Please email Lauren Cognato, Events Manager at lcognato@capitalregionchamber.com with questions regarding this event.

Women's Business
Council: Confidence,
Growth Beyond
Comfort27
JAN

11:30 AM - 1 PM
Crowne Plaza Albany,
The Desmond Hotel
660 Albany Shaker Road, Albany

Fees/Admission:
\$48 Chamber Members
\$58 Non-members

Join Tamani Wooley as she shares her journey and discusses the confidence it takes to step out of your comfort zone.

This program is for you if you want to:

- Cultivate confidence to embrace every day and uncertainty
- Push beyond your comfort zone
- Navigate challenges with resilience



Struggling with HR issues that slow down your business?

Whether it's an absent, distracting, or amateur HR setup, these can jeopardize your business's growth and profitability.

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to learn
more!





Facilitating the growth and development of Blue Collar businesses. We will showcase REAL Blue Collar businesses in interviews, and use these stories to help educate and empower the next generation of trades workers to become Blue Collar business owners.



EPISODE 102

Leading Through Change with Bill Tansey

In this episode, your hosts Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Systems welcome back operational excellence expert Bill Tansey. Bill breaks down key pillars like daily operations, problem-solving, and the eight wastes, offering practical tools to eliminate inefficiency and ensure consistent execution in trades like construction and manufacturing..



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 103

NCTWC Leads Workforce Innovation

In this episode, your hosts Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Systems welcome back Pam Stott and Doug Ford from the Northeast Construction Trades Workforce Coalition. Tune in as they tackle shifting stigmas, counselor workshops, job shadowing, and plans to franchise their model nationwide with help from education firm 1080. Also learn about the November 19th mixer at Rivers Casino—networking, updates, and a high-stakes 200-ticket raffle (\$5K/\$3K/\$2K prizes).



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 105

Starting a Blue-Collar Business While Working Full-Time

In this episode, your hosts Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Systems break down Robert Kiyosaki's Cashflow Quadrant for blue-collar workers and deliver a practical 6-step blueprint to start and grow a profitable trade business while still keeping your day job. From validating your idea and staying lean to knowing exactly when to quit and how to avoid the classic rookie mistakes, this is the no-BS roadmap thousands of tradespeople have been waiting for.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 106

Why Robots Are the New Blue-Collar Superpower

In this episode, your hosts Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Systems sit down with Bob Caldarella of ClearFocus Robotics to talk real-world autonomous robots in the trades, how “mop bots,” delivery bots, and disinfection robots are taking over repetitive, dangerous, or mundane tasks in cleaning, healthcare, landscaping, and facilities, delivering ROI in under a year while creating higher-skilled jobs and happier customers.



SCAN TO LISTEN!

LISTEN ON





Saratoga, Warren, and Washington County have no shortage of fantastic goods & services to offer! In this podcast, our host Mike Nelson will clue you in on the gems hidden **in your very own community!**



SEASON 3, EPISODE 51
31 Years with Just Cats Veterinary Clinic

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media chats with Dr. Susan Sikule from Just Cats Veterinary Clinic about 31 years in business, the clinic’s recent move to Mechanicville, and how feline medicine has evolved over the decades. They discuss advancements in veterinary technology, new treatments like cold laser therapy and oral diabetes medication, and what it takes to run a successful local business for over three decades. Susan also shares lessons learned as a business owner, from building the right team to adapting through change, and gives listeners a glimpse into the future of her cat-only practice.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



SEASON 3, EPISODE 52
Navigating the Golden Years with Kym Hance

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media sits down with Kym Hance from Herzog Law Firm to talk about aging life care management and how proactive planning can make the later years truly golden. They explore family dynamics, estate and elder law planning, long-term care options, and how to approach sensitive aging conversations with compassion and clarity.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



SEASON 3, EPISODE 53
Creating Support Without Shame with Joyful Support Movement

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media sits down with Sara Kelly to explore the Joyful Support Movement, a platform designed to bring community, emotional support, and practical home management tools to people who feel overwhelmed. Sara shares her journey, the three-step framework behind the movement, and how the Village, courses, and podcasts help people feel seen, supported, and capable in their daily lives.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



SEASON 3, EPISODE 54
A New Home Base for Local Snowboarders

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media sit down with Felicia and Matt, the team behind Hometown Board Shop, to explore how they’re rebuilding a true snowboard and freeski community in the Adirondack foothills. From gear education to local ride meetups and the return of grassroots competitions, they share their vision for bringing back the board-shop culture they grew up with.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



Join host Stephen Zabala, lifelong wellness enthusiast and founder of Greenfork, as he unpacks real-life, practical approaches to nutrition, wellness, and success—without the over complication.



EPISODE 24

Overcoming Trauma Through Fitness with Jackie Orr

In this episode of Greenfork Food for Thought, host Stephen Zabala chats with fitness and nutrition coach Jackie Orr about her transformative journey from a stay-at-home mom battling weight gain, grief, and self-medication to becoming a passionate trainer who has changed countless lives. They delve into themes of personal growth, the healing power of fitness and community, overcoming family trauma, prioritizing kindness and family, and her upcoming move to a slower-paced life in Alabama.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 25

A Raw Conversation on Men's Mental Health

In this episode of Greenfork Food for Thought, host Stephen Zabala and guest Whelden Graziano openly discuss men's mental health, sharing personal struggles with depression, overwhelm, relationship failures, and the societal pressures on masculinity. They explore coping strategies such as exercise, yoga, meditation, journaling, building a supportive tribe, and embracing vulnerability for personal growth and resilience.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 26

Why Your Scale and Apple Watch Are Lying to You

In this episode of Greenfork Food for Thought, Registered Dietitian Lindsay Ferrara joins host Stephen Zabala to reveal why the bathroom scale and wearable calorie estimates are often misleading, how metabolic testing and InBody scans give a truer picture of health, and why preserving muscle and fiber intake matter far more than chasing quick weight loss. They dive into diet myths, GLP-1 drugs, DEXA scan inconsistencies, and the simple habits that actually optimize metabolism and body composition.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 27

The Realities of Entrepreneurship with Mike Nelson

In this episode of Greenfork Food for Thought, host Stephen Zabala sits down with Mike Nelson, owner of Five Towers Media, to dive into the realities of entrepreneurship, burnout, discipline, and finding purpose in your work. They explore the ups and downs of running a business, staying committed to personal growth, and building a life rooted in health and community.



SCAN TO LISTEN!

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