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CORNELL'S ANNUAL CAR SHOW

see pg. 12



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PUBLISHING & ADVERTISING

Michael Nelson michael@fivetowers.us

EDITORS

Michael Nelson Kelsey Sherman

DESIGN

Kelsey Sherman kelsey@fivetowers.us Publication, Ad & Web Design

Kacie Cotter-Harrigan Publication Design

Rebecca Shoemaker Ad Design

Taylor Stone Ad Design

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Amanda Blanton Michael Nelson Derek Foster Performance Industrial Herzog Law Firm Stephen Zabala Matthew Knoth

NEWSLETTER

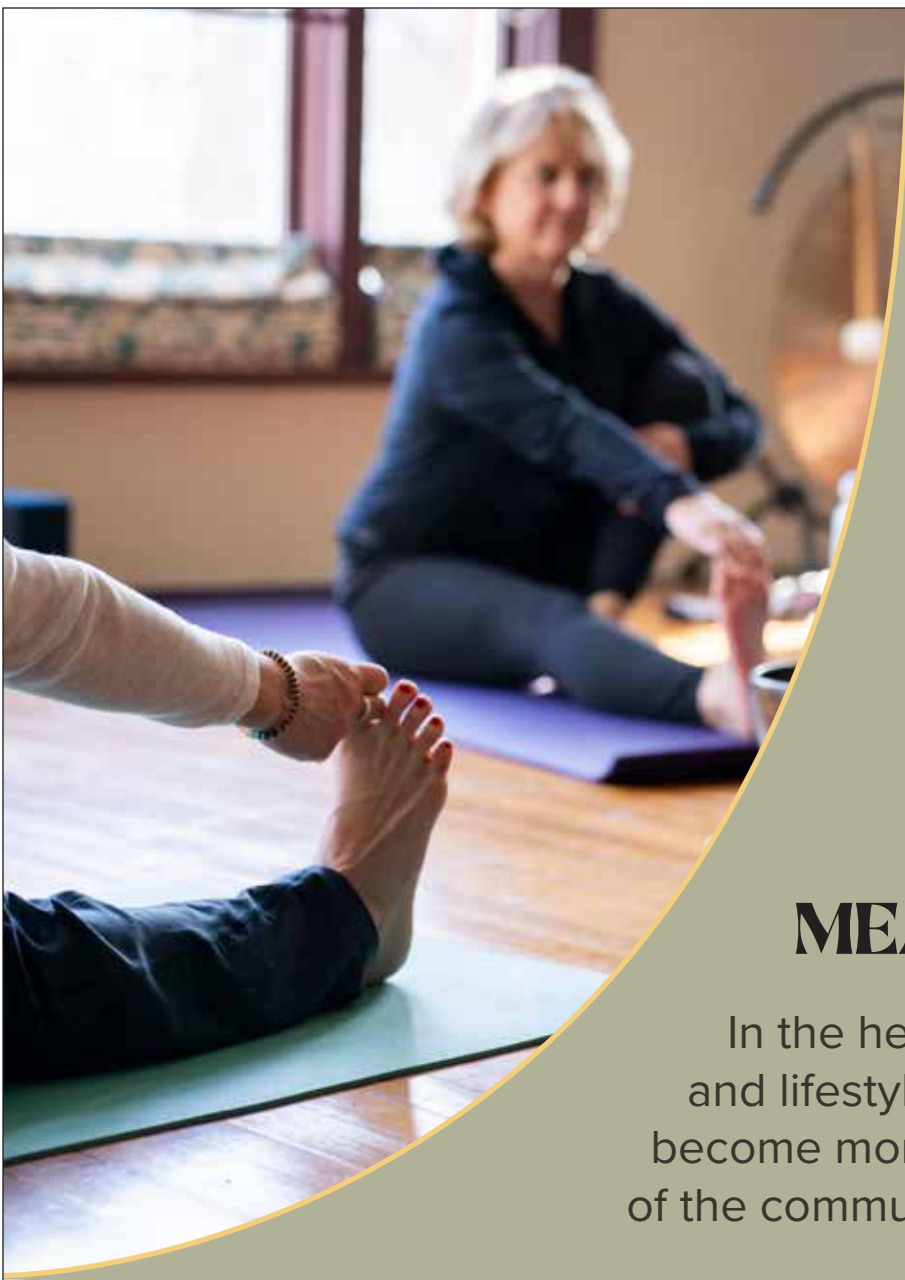
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TONY AWARD® WINNERS

Lillias White & Joaquina Kalukango

to Star in **Douglas Lyons'** *Mother. Daughter. Father. Son.* at Adirondack Theatre Festival

ADIRONDACK
THEATRE
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Douglas
Lyons

Adirondack Theatre Festival (ATF) is thrilled to announce that Tony Award® winners Lillias White and Joaquina Kalukango will star in the world-class cast of Douglas Lyons' new play *Mother. Daughter. Father. Son.*, presented this July at ATF. The production will be directed by acclaimed director Tiffany Nichole Greene.

Douglas Lyons is an Emmy nominated writer, an Auelco award-winning playwright, actor, and composer whose work has been seen across Television, Broadway, Off-Broadway, and beyond. He's one of the creators behind the 2019 ATF hit *Beau*, which just completed two sold out runs Off-Broadway at Out of The Box Theatrics. *Beau* proudly exemplifies ATF's mission to develop new work that lives beyond its initial production. Douglas made his Broadway playwrighting debut with *Chicken and Biscuits* (GLAAD nomination) and has appeared on Broadway as an actor in *Beautiful*, the Tony award winning revival of *Parade* and the *Book of Mormon*.



Lillias White

Tony Award® winner Lillias White received her Tony for Best Actress in a Musical for her tour-de-force performance as Sonja in *The Life*. She has also earned a Tony nomination for *Fela!*, and has had major Broadway roles in *Dreamgirls*, *Once on This Island*, and *Hadestown* among many others. White's extraordinary career spans Broadway, Off-Broadway, film, television, and concert stages worldwide, making her one of the most revered performers in American theatre.

Tony Award® winner Joaquina Kalukango won Best Actress in a Musical for her powerhouse, history-making performance in *Paradise Square*. She earned a Tony nomination for her role in *Slave Play*. Her Broadway credits also include, *The Color Purple*, and *Into the Woods*, *Jelly's Las Jam*. Kalukango is widely recognized for her profound emotional depth and fearless engagement with new work, establishing her as one of the most compelling artists of her generation.



Tiffany
Nichole
Greene

Directing *Mother. Daughter. Father. Son.* is Tiffany Nichole Greene, an Obie Award-winning Director whose work spans New York and nearly every major regional theater. She has also served as the resident director on the *Hamilton* tour and is currently the associate director of *Proof* on Broadway. She is known for her rigorous storytelling, emotional clarity, and commitment to elevating contemporary voices.

"ATF is committed to nurturing new plays and long-term artistic relationships," said Martha Banta, Artistic Director of Adirondack Theatre Festival. "We are incredibly proud to be working with Douglas Lyons again and honored to welcome Lillias White, Joaquina Kalukango, and Tiffany Nicole Greene to Glens Falls. This collaboration reflects exactly who we are and what we stand for."



Joaquina
Kalukango

"Color me thrilled to debut this new play at ATF with these insanely talented Tony award winning Black actresses. It's a dream come true room," said playwright Douglas Lyons when asked about working with Ms. White and Ms. Kalukango.

Mother. Daughter. Father. Son. will be presented in July at the Charles R. Wood Theater in Glens Falls, New York, as part of ATF's summer season. Additional casting and creative team announcements will be made soon.

About Adirondack Theatre Festival Adirondack Theatre Festival is a professional, nonprofit theatre dedicated to producing bold, contemporary work and developing new plays and musicals. Located in Glens Falls, NY, ATF has earned a national reputation for launching new voices and supporting artists throughout the creative process.

For tickets and more information, visit atfestival.org. ■

Sponsor the 25th Annual 4-H Scholarship Golf Classic

The Saratoga County 4-H Leaders' Association invites community partners and sponsors to support the 25th Annual 4-H Scholarship Golf Classic, a special event that combines outstanding golf with a meaningful investment in local youth.



**Event: May 30, 2026
at the Fairways of Halfmoon**

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CART OR TABLE

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Name in the Program, Logo on Table or Cart

The tournament will take place May 30, 2026, at the Fairways of Halfmoon and continues a long-standing tradition of community support and educational opportunity.

Since 2001, the Saratoga County 4-H Leaders' Association has awarded 59 college scholarships valued at \$1,000 each. Through the generosity of sponsors and supporters, local youth have also participated in career and leadership conferences, competitions, and hands-on educational programs that help shape the leaders of tomorrow.

Community members and businesses are invited to partner with 4-H again in 2026 through the following sponsorship opportunities:

- Signature Sponsor — \$1,200
- Patron Sponsor — \$800
- Tee & Green Sign Sponsor — \$400
- Tee Sign Sponsor — \$130
- Cart or Table Sponsor — \$50
- In-Kind Contributions for raffle baskets

Participants are also encouraged to gather a foursome and enjoy a memorable day on the beautiful Fairways of Halfmoon Golf Course.

The event is known for its camaraderie, fun, and strong sense of community spirit.

Each year, 4-H in Saratoga County serves more than 20,000 youth. Proceeds from the Scholarship Golf Classic directly support scholarships, educational trips, leader training, and innovative hands-on learning opportunities.

Sponsors play a vital role in continuing this impact. The Saratoga County 4-H Leaders' Association welcomes your partnership in strengthening opportunities for young people throughout the region.

Thank you for your consideration and for helping 4-H grow the leaders of tomorrow. ■



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Interviewed &
Photographed by
Michael Nelson

BOOSTS FOLDS OF HONOR SCHOLARSHIPS

In the heart of Greenfield Center, New York, Cornell's Used Auto Parts is gearing up for its fourth annual charity car show. This event, set for May 2 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 62 South Greenfield Road, promises a day of classic cars, community spirit, and giving back. With a rain date of May 3, the show benefits Folds of Honor New York, an organization dedicated to providing educational scholarships to families of fallen or disabled military members and first responders. Hosted by owner Casey Cornell, the event has grown from a small employee gathering into a major fundraiser, drawing sponsors from as far as northern New Hampshire.

From Humble Beginnings to Community Staple

What started as a casual get-together has evolved significantly. Cornell recalled the first year, when they expected just 20 to 30 cars from employees. Instead, it exploded in popularity, running out of food and attracting far more attendees. By the second year, the event tripled in size, and last year it raised \$10,500 for Folds of Honor. This year, organizers aim to double that amount, fueled by sunny weather hopes and strong early sponsorships.

Fundraising comes from multiple streams, including car registration fees, food sales, T-shirt proceeds, and a 50/50 raffle where winners have generously donated their shares back. Sponsors play a key role, with commitments already from Clear Stream Campground, Performance

Industrial, Denny's, Saratoga Camelot, Novus Clothing, Mariah Jones with the Chain Goods and Team Realtor, and Party After Truck. Cornell encourages potential sponsors to commit by March 31 to ensure their logos appear on banners and materials. For more details, visit Cornell's website at cornellsusedautoparts.com.

Sean Wilcoxon, operations director at Performance Industrial, owner of Tinney's Tavern, and a Folds of Honor board member, emphasized the event's broader impact. He noted that local efforts like this can fund multiple scholarships, potentially sending two or more students to college. The car show not only raises money but also fosters connections, with speakers like Ron Pastino sharing personal stories to inspire attendees.



Honoring Sacrifice Through Education

Folds of Honor was founded by Lieutenant Colonel Dan Rooney after a poignant experience witnessing the return of a fallen soldier's remains. The organization ensures the legacies of those who served live on by supporting their families' educational dreams. In New York, the chapter focuses on fulfilling every scholarship application, especially given the ongoing toll of events like 9/11. Wilcoxon highlighted that the state sometimes falls short of funds due to high demand from military and first responder families.

The mission resonates deeply in the region, where awareness has grown through local events. Until recent years, many, including Cornell's general manager Mike Colvett, were unfamiliar with Folds of Honor. Now, thanks to initiatives like Cornell's car show and Performance Industrial's involvement, it's becoming a household name. The group stresses that freedom is not free, and these scholarships honor the heavy price paid by service members.



A Survivor's Journey and Call to Action

Ron Pastino, a retired New York State Police special operations veteran and 9/11 first responder, brought a personal touch to the discussion. After six years in the U.S. Army and 24 in state police, Pastino spent seven and a half months at Ground Zero on recovery and security efforts. Exposure to toxic chemicals led to severe health issues, including lung disease and multiple surgeries. Forced to retire at 45, he battled PTSD and financial strains while supporting his twins through college.

Folds of Honor eased that burden, funding his children's undergraduate degrees and his daughter's master's program. Pastino now advocates for holistic treatments like stem cell therapy, which reversed much of his lung damage. He views 9/11 as the longest active terrorist event, still claiming lives 25 years later, with deaths from related illnesses surpassing those on the day itself.

For those eligible, applying is straightforward via foldsofhonor.org. Wilcoxon urges applicants to contact New York board members for advocacy, as national funds help bridge gaps. The unpaid board, composed of local volunteers, works tirelessly to meet needs.

As the car show approaches, it stands as a testament to community resilience and gratitude. Attendees can enjoy vehicles, food, and stories while contributing to a vital cause. In Wilcoxon's words, it's about laughter, connection, and remembering the sacrifices that make such freedoms possible. Events like this ensure no family is left behind. ■



ARCC HONORS

JACKY TOUBA

with 37th Annual J. Walter Juckett Award at annual dinner event



ARCC President Tricia Rogers & Jacky Touba



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

Photos provided

The Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce (ARCC) welcomed 260 guests at The Sagamore Resort in Bolton Landing, NY, for their annual dinner celebration on Friday, March 6, 2026. This annual gathering serves as an opportunity to reflect on the past year and show gratitude for the support of the business community.

“This event is a great showing of support for the business community,” said ARCC President & CEO Tricia Rogers. “Community doesn’t happen by accident. It is built intentionally through partnership, collaboration, and showing up for one another. And in the last year, we have seen what support really means.”

The J. Walter Juckett Award is given out at this annual event, tying the philanthropic work and community-minded commitment of Mr. Juckett to a deserving community member. This year, the chamber honored Dr. Jacqueline “Jacky” Touba with their 37th Annual J. Walter Juckett Award, an award bestowed upon a honoree who demonstrates a fierce commitment and hands-on dedication to the betterment of our community.

Guests were treated to a champagne welcome, followed by a cocktail hour, program, and three-course dinner. The program featured a Resolution presentation by Senator Dan Stec & Assemblyman Matt Simpson, and a Proclamation presentation by Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner.



*Kate Austin (Founder of Advocate),
ARCC President Tricia Rogers &
Jacky Touba*



*ARCC President Tricia Rogers
speaking to audience*



*Standing ovation
for Jacky Touba*

The Boards of Supervisors of Warren & Washington counties also prepared proclamations for Dr. Touba. In addition, a very moving video tribute, produced by Sean Junda of Junda Video Enterprises, was unveiled, highlighting Dr. Touba’s accomplishments, including the creation of the World Awareness Children’s Museum in Glens Falls, NY.

Dr. Touba thanked many people during her remarks, including some family & friends in the room. Her emphasis on working together as a community resonated with guests as the ARCC spoke at length about collaboration during the program. During Dr. Touba’s remarks, she shared the story of how J. Walter Juckett himself was one of the first donors toward fundraising for the creation of the children’s museum. At the time, Mr. Juckett was the chairman of the Sandy Hill Foundation, and after realizing the urgency of Dr. Touba’s request, he reached into his wallet and handed her a \$100 bill. This first donation went toward the first International Festival of the Adirondacks in Glens Falls, NY. What was to follow were many celebrations of arts & culture from around the world, the International Youth Art Exchange, the annual International Cuisine fundraiser, and finally the creation of the World Awareness Children’s Museum in 1995. The museum celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2025 and honored Jacky at their International Cuisine event. Today, the museum offers interactive play, cultural exhibits, programs, and events for families.

With more than 50 years as an artist, Jacky drew on her work as a college professor, and her extensive world travels to ensure that the children (and adults) of the Glens Falls region could explore our diverse world through interactive play and learning.

Through the Touba Family Foundation, Jacky has supported multiple arts & culture-focused organizations in the greater region. This initiative is especially important in a time when funding for these organizations often gets cut.

Visit the World Awareness Children’s Museum at 89 Warren Street, Glens Falls, NY ■

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Written by Performance Industrial • performanceindustrial.com

Performance Industrial takes on one of the most complex — and overlooked — cleaning challenges in commercial facilities.

When was the last time you looked up? In most commercial and industrial facilities, the answer is: not recently. The overhead infrastructure of a warehouse — the roof panels, joists, conduit, and structural beams that hold everything together — quietly collects decades of grease, grime, and dust, largely invisible and almost entirely forgotten. For one undisclosed client with a nearly 50-year-old building, that cycle of neglect was about to end.

Performance Industrial, the South Glens Falls-based commercial and industrial cleaning company whose tagline — *Dirty. Difficult. Done.* — has become something of a mission statement, was called in to do what most cleaning companies won't touch: high-pressure power washing of a 26-foot warehouse ceiling, soup to nuts, with full safety protocols and direct accountability to the client.

A Building That Hadn't Seen a Scrub Brush in Half a Century

The project began with a client who had a vision: a fresh coat of paint on the ceiling and joists of their large open warehouse, paired with updated lighting and a top-to-bottom interior refresh. But before any paint could go on, the surfaces had to be clean — truly clean. And a building approaching 50 years old, with rafters and structural steel that had likely never been washed, presented a significant challenge.

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The before-and-after photos tell the story more vividly than words can. Decades of accumulated grease and particulate matter, gone — the structural steel returned to a state that some observers mistook for freshly painted rather than simply clean. The transformation was that dramatic.



Safety First. No Exceptions.

Power washing at 26 feet in the air, surrounded by live electrical conduit, data lines, and a fire suppression system, is not a job that leaves room for shortcuts. Performance Industrial treated this project with the same rigor it brings to every job — and then some.

Before a single drop of water was sprayed, the company conducted an extensive pre-project safety review and even completed a test sample as early as May to validate its approach. On site, every team member operating a lift holds a lift certification. Every ground crew member holds an OSHA 10 certification at minimum. Full PPE is mandatory across the board — eye protection, hearing protection, hard hats, and steel-toed footwear.

Because heavy machinery was running inside the facility, the team also wore personal carbon dioxide detectors — individual units on each worker, not just at the perimeter — to protect against the invisible threat of CO buildup in the large enclosed space.

The electrical hazards required a coordinated approach. Performance Industrial partnered with an electrical company to de-energize all power in the areas being cleaned. Exposed power sources, outlets, conduit runs, and data connections were fully protected before any water was introduced. The fire suppression system received similar attention: sprinkler heads were individually covered before cleaning began — and uncovered every single night before the crew left the building. Sprinkler heads are never left covered when Performance Industrial is off-site. Period.

Rounding out the safety framework: the company engaged a third-party safety firm to conduct unannounced monthly assessments. “We’re asking somebody from the outside to come show up and not tell us, so that we can make sure that we’re doing the right thing,” Willcoxon said. “If it’s not taken seriously, people could get hurt.”

Building a Better System on the Fly

One of the hallmarks of Performance Industrial’s work is a relentless pursuit of efficiency without sacrificing quality. On this project, that instinct proved invaluable. The crew started with two lifts on site. They added a third. Then a fourth. As the project progressed, the team developed a choreographed workflow: the lead lift moves out ahead, protecting electrical connections and

sprinkler heads; two power washers follow close behind; ground crew handles floor safety and slip hazard control; a large floor machine simultaneously recovers water and cleans the floor surface below. The last lift cycles back to remove all sprinkler head protections at the end of every shift.

The results of that iterative approach speak for themselves. “The amount we can accomplish in a day has probably doubled, with the exact same result — purely because of our wonderful team that’s constantly looking at new ways and efficiencies,” Willcoxon said.

Each morning begins with a daily safety huddle: what was accomplished yesterday, what’s on the agenda today, where all PPE is located, what emergency procedures look like, and where the muster points are. It’s the kind of structured discipline that defines a professional operation — and it’s the same structure Performance Industrial brings to every commercial and industrial job it undertakes.

About Performance Industrial

Founded in 1986 and headquartered in South Glens Falls, New York, with a second location in Albany, Performance Industrial has built its reputation as the region’s go-to source for commercial and industrial cleaning, painting, and flooring. The company serves a broad roster of clients across New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont — including manufacturers, hospitals, research facilities, universities, casinos, grocery chains, and banks.

Services span industrial cleaning, kitchen exhaust systems, sandblasting and pressure washing, commercial window cleaning, and painting and epoxy floor coatings. The company’s Safety Programs & Certification division reflects the same commitment to doing things right that defines every job they take on.

For the client in this project, Performance Industrial hopes to continue expanding the scope of the work as the building’s refresh continues — and potentially take on the painting phase that follows. But the cleaning alone has already delivered something remarkable: a facility that, for the first time in nearly half a century, shines.

Dirty. Difficult. Done.

Learn more at performanceindustrial.com or call 518-793-9274. ■

Karen Carey

Healing & Rebuilding with Intention



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson



Photos provided

IN A CULTURE THAT often prioritizes productivity over reflection, intuitive life coach, speaker, and author Karen Carey is encouraging people to slow down and look inward. In a recent conversation on the *Buying Local* podcast, Karen shared insights from her personal journey and her book *Unbroken*, focusing on self-awareness, emotional healing, and the lifelong process of personal growth.

At the heart of Karen's work is a simple but challenging idea. Most people are repeating patterns they do not fully understand. These patterns show up in relationships, work habits, communication styles, and even the way people speak to themselves. Until they are acknowledged, they continue to shape outcomes in quiet but powerful ways.

Recognizing the Patterns Beneath the Surface

Karen describes self-awareness as the foundation for change. Without recognizing the source of a behavior, it is nearly impossible to shift it. She explains that many coping mechanisms are formed early in life as protective responses. At the time, they serve a purpose. They help someone feel safe, accepted, or in control. The problem arises when those same mechanisms persist long after the original circumstances have changed.

According to Karen, growth requires revisiting those learned responses with curiosity rather than judgment. Instead of asking, "What is wrong with me?" she encourages people to ask, "What happened to me?" That subtle shift opens the door to compassion. It reframes personal struggles as understandable reactions rather than fixed flaws.

Karen draws inspiration from the Japanese art of Kintsugi, which involves repairing broken pottery with gold. The cracks are not hidden. They are highlighted. For her, this philosophy mirrors the human experience. The difficult seasons of life are not meant to be erased or denied. They can become sources of wisdom and strength when acknowledged honestly.

Growth Requires Discomfort

Breaking patterns, she notes, is uncomfortable work. It often requires sitting with emotions that have been avoided for years. Many people prefer distraction, staying busy rather than confronting what feels heavy or unresolved. Karen believes this avoidance keeps individuals stuck. The work they resist is often the work that holds the key to meaningful change.

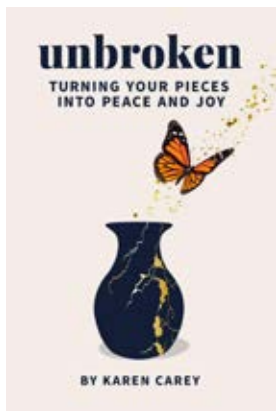
A recurring theme in the conversation was the idea of safety. Karen explains that the nervous system plays a significant role in behavior. When someone feels threatened, even emotionally, their body reacts before their rational mind has a chance to intervene. Learning to regulate stress and create a sense of internal safety can help disrupt automatic responses. This awareness gives individuals the space to choose a different reaction.

Communication, Compassion, and Agency

Communication is another area where patterns surface. Karen emphasizes reflective listening and intentional dialogue as tools for growth. Many conflicts stem from assumptions or defensive habits formed years earlier. When people learn to pause, listen, and clarify rather than react, they begin to reshape long-standing relational dynamics.

Karen also addresses the pressure people place on themselves to constantly improve. She cautions against turning personal development into another performance metric. Self-awareness is not about perfection. It is about understanding. She encourages people to stop making themselves wrong for having coping strategies that once helped them survive.

Writing *Unbroken* was, in many ways, an extension of this philosophy. Karen describes the vulnerability required to share personal experiences publicly. Yet she believes transparency can create connection. When individuals see their own struggles reflected in someone else's story, they feel less alone.



For Karen, personal growth is not a quick fix. It is a continuous process that evolves with age and experience. She rejects the idea that there is a final destination where someone is fully healed or finished growing. Instead, she sees development as cyclical. Patterns may resurface, but with awareness, they can be recognized sooner and handled differently.

Ultimately, Karen's message centers on agency. People may not control what happened to them, but they can influence how they interpret and respond to those experiences moving forward. Through reflection, honest conversation, and a willingness to face discomfort, change becomes possible.

In a world that often encourages speed and surface-level solutions, Karen's approach offers something quieter and deeper. Self-awareness, she suggests, is not indulgent. It is transformative. When individuals understand their patterns, they gain the power to break them, rebuild with intention, and move through life with greater clarity and purpose. ■



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Finding Strength on the Mat

FOR KAT STACK, yoga began as something simple: a way to move her body after the structure of competitive athletics had disappeared from her life. But over time, the practice evolved into something deeper. What started as a workout became a path toward personal growth, emotional balance, and spiritual clarity.

Today, Stack is the owner of Saratoga Sweat, a boutique hot yoga studio offering Bikram yoga and other heated fitness classes. The studio was created with a clear mission: to help people strengthen and reconnect with themselves through the transformative power of yoga.

Stack often emphasizes that yoga's greatest benefits are not always visible from the outside. While many people first come to class for the physical workout, the real impact tends to happen beneath the surface.

"Yoga is so much more than the postures," she explained during a recent episode of the *Food for Thought* podcast. "The physical practice is just the doorway."

At studios like Saratoga Sweat, traditional hot yoga classes follow a structured sequence designed to work every system of the body, from muscles and joints to circulation and respiration. But practitioners quickly learn that the physical challenge is only part of the experience.



The Mind, Body, and Spirit of Yoga



Interviewed by
Stephen Zabala
Photos provided

Learning to Be Comfortable With Discomfort

Hot yoga places students in a heated room, often pushing the body to its limits. For Stack, that intensity is precisely what makes the practice powerful.

The heat, the stillness, and the repetition create an environment where distractions disappear. In that space, students are left with themselves.

"You can't really run from anything in that room," Stack said. "It forces you to confront what's going on internally."

This confrontation can be uncomfortable. The room is hot, muscles fatigue, and the mind starts to question whether continuing is worth it. But those moments are also where growth happens.

Stack describes yoga as a training ground for resilience. Showing up to class, breathing through difficult postures, and staying present despite discomfort can translate directly into everyday life. When people learn to remain calm in a challenging environment, they begin to realize they are capable of more than they thought.

That mindset shift is something Stack has seen again and again in her students. Many arrive seeking a workout. Over time, they discover something more meaningful: confidence, discipline, and a renewed connection to themselves.



The Mental and Spiritual Impact

For Stack personally, yoga became especially important during difficult periods in her life. She credits the practice with helping her navigate emotional struggles and regain a sense of direction. Consistency became the key. Even on hard days, she returned to the mat.

Over time, the discipline of practice built mental clarity and emotional steadiness. Meditation, breath control, and focused movement helped quiet the noise of everyday stress.

Yoga philosophy often teaches that transformation happens gradually through repetition. Each class is not meant to be perfect. Instead, progress comes from showing up again and again. That principle is central to the culture Stack hopes to cultivate at Saratoga Sweat. The studio emphasizes accessibility and personal growth rather than performance.

Anybody can start where they are and grow stronger through practice.



Building a Community Through Practice

Beyond individual transformation, Stack sees yoga as a powerful tool for community building.

When people gather regularly in a challenging environment, a shared sense of accomplishment begins to develop. Students encourage each other, celebrate progress, and recognize that everyone is working through their own struggles.

Stack says that the community aspect was one of the main reasons she decided to open a studio of her own.

After years of practicing and teaching, she wanted to create a space where people could experience the same sense of connection that yoga had given her.

Today, that vision continues to shape the studio. Classes blend physical exertion with mindfulness, encouraging students to push their limits while also learning to listen to their bodies.

For many participants, the most important lesson yoga teaches is surprisingly simple. The goal is not perfection. The goal is presence.

For more about Stack's studio and classes, visit Saratoga Sweat online at saratogasweat.com. ■



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SUNDAY SURVIVAL SERIES



WILDERNESS NAVIGATION ESSENTIALS

with Ndakinna Director James Bruchac

Photos provided

A hands-on wilderness navigation course is coming to the region this spring, offering participants the chance to build essential outdoor survival skills. The “Sunday Survival Series: Wilderness Navigation Essentials” will take place on April 26 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Led by Ndakinna Director and wilderness survival specialist James Bruchac, this immersive class will teach participants how to confidently navigate through wooded environments using both modern and traditional techniques. Attendees will learn map and compass fundamentals alongside time-tested methods that rely on natural elements such as the sun, stars, and moon.

Designed for ages 13 through adult, the course emphasizes practical, real-world application in an outdoor setting. The session will be held primarily outside and will run rain or shine, with a scheduled 30-minute break for lunch. Participants are encouraged to dress appropriately for weather conditions and bring their own food.

With a strong focus on personalized instruction, class size is limited to just 10 participants. The cost is \$40 per person. Register today at www.ndakinnacenter.org/event/sunday-survival-series-april-2026/.

This event is ideal for outdoor enthusiasts, hikers, and anyone in the Greenfield Center area looking to improve their wilderness survival and navigation skills. ■



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Saratoga Winter Farmers' Market

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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



PRACTICAL TOOLS TO

Reduce *Stress*
and BUILD
RESILIENCE

Interviewed by
Stephen Zabala
Photos provided

When Rachael Charbonneau began her career, she did not set out to become a mental health and well-being coach. A Saratoga native and National Board Certified Health and Wellness Coach, Charbonneau initially pursued graphic design, later working with health care innovators in San Francisco. But her early struggles with chronic stomach issues, acne, and stress led her to a deeper realization: physical symptoms often have emotional roots.

“Stress had a lot to do with it,” she reflects. That insight became the foundation for her work today, helping clients navigate stress, build resilience, and make meaningful progress toward personal growth.

At the core of Charbonneau’s approach is Acceptance and Commitment Coaching (ACC), an adaptation of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. In simple terms, she says, it helps people “show up for the things in their life that are really important to them, more often, even if it’s uncomfortable to do so.”

The Power, and Problem, of Thoughts

Many people seeking growth feel stuck in loops of negative thinking: replaying conversations, questioning past decisions, or asking “why” long after an event has passed. According to Charbonneau, this isn’t a personal failure. It’s how the brain is wired.

“Our brains were built on problem solving,” she explains. Drawing from Relational Frame Theory, a framework underlying ACT, she notes that humans learn language and meaning through comparison and connection. Over time, the brain becomes highly skilled at identifying threats and predicting outcomes — a useful survival tool that can backfire in modern life.

When there’s no clear resolution to a situation, the brain keeps trying to solve it. This is why unfinished relationships

or ambiguous endings can replay endlessly in someone’s mind. The brain seeks closure.

The result? Thoughts feel powerful. Overwhelming. Convincing.

But Charbonneau is quick to clarify: powerful does not mean true.

One of the key skills in Acceptance and Commitment Coaching is cognitive diffusion — creating space between yourself and your thoughts. Instead of chasing every mental narrative, you learn to observe them. She likens it to sitting beside a highway and watching cars pass. You do not have to run into traffic to inspect each one.

This shift from being inside a thought to observing it can reduce stress dramatically. It does not eliminate discomfort. It changes your relationship to it.

Acceptance Is Not Resignation

A common misconception is that acceptance means giving up. Charbonneau disagrees.

Acceptance, in this context, means acknowledging that thoughts and emotions exist without automatically obeying them. “It’s not accepting them as truth,” she says. “It’s accepting that they’re there.”

When people fight their internal experience, stress expands. The more we attempt to control or suppress thoughts, the more mental space they consume. By contrast, allowing feelings to exist — even painful ones — often reduces their intensity over time.

Meditation practices such as loving-kindness or simple awareness exercises can strengthen this skill. But Charbonneau emphasizes that these practices work best when developed outside of crisis moments. Just as athletes train before competition, resilience is built before it is urgently needed.

Values: The Compass for Growth

If acceptance creates space, values provide direction.

One of the most powerful tools Charbonneau uses with clients is clarifying values. Not surface-level aspirations, but deeply held principles that define what matters most.

“What do you really care about?” she asks.

Values can evolve over time. They are not static personality traits but living priorities shaped by experience. When individuals identify what truly matters — connection, vitality, creativity, integrity — those values become a compass.

Motivation often fades when tied to outcomes alone. But values endure. For example, exercising because you “should” is fragile motivation. Exercising because you value long-term health and want to be present for loved ones is far more resilient.

Once values are clear, the next step is committed action: taking small, consistent steps aligned with them, even when discomfort arises.

Growth, Charbonneau reminds clients, does not require eliminating fear or doubt. It requires moving forward with them.



Why Awareness Is Hard — and Worth It

Many people ask why staying aware of thoughts and emotions is so difficult. The answer, Charbonneau says simply, is that we are human.

Modern life is busy. The brain is constantly scanning for problems. Without practice, we slip into autopilot. That is normal.

The goal is not 24-hour perfect awareness. It is gradually strengthening the ability to pause, notice, and choose.

Resilience, then, is not about controlling every thought. It is about building the flexibility to respond differently. To let uncomfortable emotions coexist with meaningful action. To accept uncertainty without freezing in it.

Over time, what once consumed mental space begins to shrink. Not because it was forced away, but because it was no longer fed by resistance.

In Charbonneau’s work, stress is not the enemy. It is often a signal — pointing toward what matters, what hurts, and what deserves attention. With acceptance, clarity of values, and committed action, individuals can transform that stress into growth.

The mind may always generate noise. But resilience comes from learning you do not have to obey every thought it produces.

For more on Rachael Charbonneau’s work, visit rachaelcharbonneau.com, where she shares her coaching philosophy, services, and practical tools for building resilience.

You can also subscribe to her writing at rachaelcharbonneau.substack.com for deeper reflections and actionable insights on stress, growth, and intentional living, and follow her on Instagram @rachaelcharbonneau. ■

Avoid Costly HOMEBUYING MISTAKES



Interviewed by
Matthew Knoth

Buying or selling a home is one of the biggest financial decisions most people will ever make. Yet many buyers and sellers enter the process without fully understanding the legal steps involved or the costly mistakes that can derail a deal.

Dan Wade, a real estate attorney with Ianniello Anderson, P.C., works with clients across the Capital Region and North Country to guide them from contract to closing. His advice is simple: get informed, stay proactive, and do not cut corners where it matters most.



IANNIELLO
ANDERSON, P.C.

DANIEL B.
WADE, ESQ.



Do Not Skip the Inspection

In recent years, competitive housing markets have pushed buyers to take risks to make their offers stand out. One of the most common is waiving the home inspection.

While that may strengthen an offer, Wade cautions that it can also open the door to expensive surprises. A licensed home inspector provides critical information about a property's condition, from structural issues to aging systems that may soon need repair. Without that knowledge, buyers are purchasing a home with limited insight into potential repair costs.

An inspection gives buyers a clearer picture of what they are buying and can influence negotiations, pricing, or even whether they should proceed at all. For sellers, inspections can also help avoid last-minute disputes. Addressing known issues early reduces the likelihood of renegotiations that can delay or jeopardize closing.

Keep Utilities On, Especially in Winter

On the seller side, Wade sees a surprisingly common and costly mistake: turning off utilities before closing.

In Upstate New York winters, shutting off heat or water can lead to frozen and burst pipes. The resulting water damage can devastate a property before the deal is finalized. Instead of canceling service, utilities should remain active until the buyer transfers them into their own name at or near closing.

Water damage is one of the most destructive and expensive problems a home can face. A simple oversight can turn into thousands of dollars in repairs and potentially stall a transaction.

Advice from a
**REAL ESTATE
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Protect Your Financing

Buyers using mortgage financing must be especially careful not to make major life changes during the transaction process.

Changing jobs, making large purchases, opening new credit lines, or even changing marital status can affect underwriting and slow or derail loan approval. Lenders verify employment and financial stability right up to closing. A sudden shift in income or debt can require additional documentation or trigger a denial.

Planning major events, such as weddings or career moves, outside of the home purchase window can help keep financing smooth and predictable.

Watch for Fraud and Inflated Fees

Beyond inspections and financing, one of the most serious risks today is fraud.

After closing, a recorded deed becomes public record. Wade warns that some companies monitor these filings and send new homeowners official-looking letters offering certified copies of deeds for inflated prices. These mailers can charge up to \$200 for a service that typically costs only a few dollars through the county clerk.

Even more concerning is wire fraud. Cybercriminals may intercept emails and alter wiring instructions, redirecting closing funds to fraudulent accounts. Buyers should never rely



solely on emailed instructions. Always verify wiring details by calling your attorney or title company directly using a trusted phone number.

That extra step can prevent a devastating financial loss.

Take Advantage of Legitimate Programs

Homeowners should also be aware of legitimate programs that can save money. In New York, primary residence owners may qualify for the STAR program, which provides a school tax rebate if income requirements are met. Registration is free and can return hundreds of dollars annually.

Understanding available benefits is another way to protect your long-term investment.

Camps and Seasonal Properties Require Extra Diligence

In regions like the Adirondacks, seasonal camps and waterfront properties often come with unique considerations. Buyers should ensure wells and septic systems are properly inspected and understand any applicable regulatory oversight, including environmental or park agency rules.

Insurance requirements may also differ for part-time residences, making early conversations with providers important.

Knowledge Is Your Best Protection

At its core, Wade says, real estate law is about setting expectations and helping clients understand each step of the process. When buyers and sellers know what is coming and what to avoid, transactions move more smoothly and with fewer costly surprises.

Working with experienced professionals, asking questions, and taking the time to understand the process can make the difference between a stressful transaction and a successful one.

For more information, visit ialawny.com or contact Ianniello Anderson, P.C. directly. ■

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How Construction Contracts Help Avoid Lawsuits



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson
Photos provided

An Interview with Construction Attorney Greg Spaun

In the high-stakes world of construction and contracting, a handshake and good intentions are no longer enough to keep a business safe. The legal landscape in New York and beyond has become increasingly complex, with courts strictly enforcing contract provisions and expanding liability for seemingly minor oversights. That means without carefully drafted agreements and professional legal counsel, business owners could find themselves facing costly litigation.

That's where Welby, Brady & Greenblatt, LLP comes in. As Greg Spaun explains, their firm focuses heavily on construction law and helps contractors and business owners protect themselves before problems escalate into lawsuits.

A Law Firm Built Around Construction and Contractor Risk

Welby, Brady & Greenblatt is not a general practice firm that “dabbles” in construction issues. Their work centers on the construction industry, supporting contractors, subcontractors, developers, and owners through contract review, dispute prevention, litigation, and regulatory compliance.

According to Spaun, many contractors don't seek legal help until “the train is off the rails.” But the firm's goal is to step in earlier — reviewing agreements, identifying red flags, and helping clients negotiate stronger terms before signing.

As he puts it, it's far easier and cheaper to stay out of trouble than to fight your way out of it after the fact.



The Hidden Contract Clauses That Can Destroy Profit

One of the most important takeaways from Spaun's conversation is that contract language is not just "paperwork." It determines whether a contractor gets paid, whether claims are valid, and whether the business can protect itself when disputes arise.

Spaun shared a story about a contractor who signed what appeared to be a standard AIA contract, but it had been heavily modified. Buried inside was a "turnkey provision" that shifted risk onto the subcontractor and required them to account for anything implied by "design intent," even if it wasn't clearly stated in the plans. The result was massive unpaid change orders and an expensive legal fight.

The lesson is clear: even experienced contractors can get trapped by clauses they didn't fully understand.

Payment Issues and "Pay If Paid" Clauses

Delayed payment is one of the most common legal issues contractors face, and Spaun explained that some general contractors or owners essentially use delayed payment as a form of financing. Even worse, contracts may include "pay if paid" language, which attempts to make subcontractor payment dependent on whether the GC gets paid first.

Spaun notes that in New York State, "pay if paid" clauses are illegal — but that doesn't stop them from showing up in contracts. Without legal review, a contractor might assume the clause is enforceable and fail to negotiate better terms.

Welby, Brady & Greenblatt helps clients identify these provisions, understand what is legally enforceable, and negotiate from a position of strength.

Why Great Work Isn't Enough to Protect Your Business

Perhaps the most striking warning Spaun shared is that doing a great job does not guarantee payment. He referenced a real scenario where a contractor performed work perfectly and the owner had no complaints. However, because required documentation — like certified payroll submissions — was not properly completed, payment was denied anyway. The contractor's quality didn't matter. The paperwork did.

This is exactly why contract compliance is so critical. A contractor can be in the right, deliver an excellent product, and still lose in court if contract terms weren't followed.

Regulatory Compliance Is Becoming a Bigger Threat

Beyond contracts, Spaun emphasized that contractors are increasingly exposed to regulatory risks — especially around labor laws. New York's wage theft laws have expanded and can create liability not only for employers, but also for contractors higher up the chain if their subcontractors fail to properly pay workers.

That means contractors must think beyond price when hiring subs. Choosing the cheapest subcontractor may lead to serious exposure if that subcontractor cuts corners on wages, payroll, or compliance.

Welby, Brady & Greenblatt can help business owners understand these risks and structure agreements to reduce liability.

Prevention First, Litigation When Necessary

While the firm is highly experienced in litigation, Spaun makes it clear that prevention is always the better strategy. Their approach is to help contractors avoid disputes through contract negotiation, documentation systems, and legal awareness — while also being prepared to aggressively defend clients when litigation becomes unavoidable.

For business owners, that kind of support can mean the difference between a manageable dispute and a lawsuit that drags on for years.

Protecting Contractors Starts Before the Job Begins

The biggest takeaway from Spaun's interview is simple: the best time to protect your business is before the contract is signed. Once a dispute begins, options become limited, costs rise quickly, and leverage disappears.

By working with a construction-focused law firm like Welby, Brady & Greenblatt, contractors can spot dangerous contract clauses, improve payment protections, stay compliant, and keep small problems from turning into expensive legal battles.

In construction, the strongest foundation isn't always concrete — sometimes it's the contract. ■

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Saratoga Springs

- ✓ Family-owned since 1969, based in Saratoga Springs.
- ✓ Voted Best Real Estate Company 18 years running.
- ✓ Offers free moving truck for clients.
- ✓ Expertise in residential, commercial, and rentals.

#3

★★★★★

4.8 Excellent

The Scott Varley Team
KWPLATFORM

scottvarley.com
518-281-6808
Saratoga Springs

- ✓ Over 30 years' experience, 5,000+ properties sold
- ✓ Specializes in residential, commercial, and investment properties
- ✓ Keller Williams affiliation for global market access
- ✓ Highly responsive with dedicated operations support

#4

★★★★★

5.0 Excellent

Saratoga Spa REALTY LLC

saratogasparealty.com
518-584-6699
Ballston Spa

- ✓ Veteran-owned with nearly 30 years' experience
- ✓ Ranked in the top 10% of agents in the Capital District for five years
- ✓ Provides custom home evaluation reports
- ✓ Offers stunning listings and personalized support

TOP-TIER



Builders & Remodelers

Saratoga Springs • Malta • Ballston Spa • Clifton Park

#1 5.0 Excellent

★★★★★

Get a FREE Consultation to Discuss Your Project

- ✓ **Building in Saratoga Springs, Malta and Ballston Spa since 1980**
- ✓ **Custom homes, kitchen remodels, baths and additions**
- ✓ **Skilled crews known for craftsmanship and lasting quality**
- ✓ **Trusted for clear communication, timelines and pricing**

Why Galarneau Builders Is Our Top Local Pick

Looking for a trusted building & remodeling contractor in the greater Saratoga Springs, Malta, or Clifton Park, New York area? For over 45 years, Galarneau Builders has helped homeowners across the Capital Region build and transform their dream homes. Known for high-quality craftsmanship and personal service, this locally-owned company is a go-to for everything from full-scale custom home construction to detailed interior remodels like kitchen renovations and bathroom upgrades.

If you're in need of a custom home, kitchen remodeling, bathroom renovations, or full home renovations, trust the team at Galarneau Builders.

galarneaubuilders.com
518-587-8191
Saratoga Springs

Scan Today to Get Started!

Searching for home builders near me, kitchen remodelers in Saratoga Springs, or bathroom renovations in Clifton Park? These top-ranked builders and remodelers are known across Saratoga County for their attention to detail, design/build expertise, and outstanding customer service. Backed by years of proven success and satisfied clients, they're your go-to partners for residential construction and remodeling throughout the Capital Region.

#2 ★★★★★

4.5 Great

michaelsgroup.com
518-899-6311
Mechanicville

- ✓ Expertise in custom home building throughout the region
- ✓ Full design/build services for new construction & remodels
- ✓ Licensed, insured, and client-focused professionals
- ✓ Delivered on time and within budget

#3 ★★★★★

4.7 Great

kodiakofsaratoga.com
518-587-4847
Gansevoort

- ✓ Top-of-the-line leadership with engineering and business expertise
- ✓ Building high-quality homes and spaces with expert craftsmanship
- ✓ Renowned for providing personal attention and care to detail
- ✓ Providing residential and commercial construction services since 2004

#4 ★★★★★

5.0 Excellent

whitbeckconstruction.com
518-226-0017
Gansevoort

- ✓ Building custom homes & completing renovations across Saratoga County
- ✓ Specialists in energy-efficient design & green building practices
- ✓ Known for detail-oriented work & client-first project management
- ✓ Trusted for professionalism, punctuality & transparent pricing

#5 ★★★★★

5.0 Excellent

teakwoodbuilders.com
518-587-2880
Saratoga Springs

- ✓ Custom homes, historic restorations & high-end remodels since 1996
- ✓ In-house Concierge service for home maintenance & repairs
- ✓ Award-winning craftsmanship & detailed custom woodworking
- ✓ Design-build experts blending classic style with modern efficiency

TOP 5 HVAC Companies

Saratoga Springs • Malta • Ballston Spa • Clifton Park

#1

4.9 Excellent

★★★★★

Get 10% Off Labor on Your First Service Call as a New Customer



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& AIR CONDITIONING
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- ✓ Licensed, insured, and family-owned for over 30 years
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Why Cerrone Plumbing & HVAC Is Our Top Local Pick

With over 30 years of experience, Cerrone Plumbing & HVAC stands out among the top HVAC companies in Saratoga Springs, Queensbury, Clifton Park, Ballston Spa, Malta, and across the greater Capital Region. Whether you're upgrading to an energy-efficient system, need urgent repairs, or scheduling a seasonal tune-up, their certified technicians deliver dependable service with clear communication and attention to detail. Regular monthly specials and seasonal discounts make it easy to save, while services range from furnace and AC installations to smart thermostats and indoor air quality improvements for both homes and businesses.

cerroneplumbinghvac.com
518-798-6560
Queensbury



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Searching for HVAC contractors near me, furnace installation in Saratoga Springs, or AC repair in Malta or Clifton Park? These trusted HVAC professionals are known across Saratoga County for 24/7 emergency repairs, seasonal tune-ups, and energy-efficient system upgrades. With decades of combined experience and a strong commitment to customer satisfaction, they're the go-to choice for heating and cooling services in the Capital Region.

#2

★★★★★

4.9 Excellent



Highland Home Heating & Cooling
Quality Is Hard To Define But Easy To Recognize

highlandhomeheatingcooling.com
518-583-4187
Saratoga Springs

- ✓ Based in Saratoga County for 25+ yrs.
- ✓ White glove service
- ✓ Quality that is easy to recognize
- ✓ Trusted by the community

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#3

★★★★★

4.6 Great



B&B
PLUMBING HEATING

bbphsaratoga.com
518-584-4440
Saratoga Springs

- ✓ One-stop shop for comprehensive plumbing & HVAC services
- ✓ Locally owned and community-recognized with continuity
- ✓ Expert installs using top-tier brands and certifications
- ✓ Competitive pricing and customer satisfaction focus

#4

★★★★★

4.9 Excellent



GRASSHOPPER
HEATING & COOLING
PLUMBING ELECTRIC

gograsshopper.com
518-541-7979
Clifton Park

- ✓ Trusted, locally owned HVAC pros serving Clifton Park & the Capital Region
- ✓ 24/7 emergency service with free estimates and financing available
- ✓ Licensed, insured, and woman-owned since 2016
- ✓ NATE- & EPA-certified technicians for expert repairs and installations

#5

★★★★★

4.8 Excellent



Crisafulli Bros.
PLUMBING / HEATING / COOLING / ELECTRICAL

crisbro.com
518-414-5577
Glens Falls • Albany

- ✓ Family-owned and operated with over 85 years of trusted service.
- ✓ Voted best HVAC & plumbing company 18 years in a row
- ✓ Red Carpet Care with lasting, satisfaction-guaranteed solutions
- ✓ Full plumbing, HVAC & electrical — 24/7 emergency support



Certified Public Accountants (CPA)

Warren and Washington County

#1

5.0 Excellent

★★★★★

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If you're searching for a modern, high-trust CPA firm serving Washington and Warren County, Stidd CPA stands out as our top choice for small business owners, entrepreneurs, and individuals with advanced tax needs. Their future-focused approach, transparent pricing, and commitment to collaboration make them one of the most innovative accounting firms in the region.

Rather than offering simple annual tax filings, Stidd CPA provides a holistic, year-round advisory relationship designed to help clients anticipate change, minimize risk, and make confident financial decisions. Their fully digital workflow—from secure document collection to real-time collaboration and electronic delivery of all work—sets them apart as one of the most progressive, client-centered CPA firms in Upstate NY.

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stiddcpa.com
518-414-3242
Glens Falls

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#2

★★★★★

5.0 Excellent

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CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

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Glens Falls

- ✓ **Years of experience with small-business clients in the region**
- ✓ **Proactive tax planning reduces your long-term liabilities**
- ✓ **Clear communication turns accounting jargon into plain language**
- ✓ **Trusted advisor relationships foster reliable financial decision-making**

#3

★★★★★

4.0 Great

WDR

CPAs & Business Advisors

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Saratoga Springs

- ✓ **Full-service audit, tax, advisory team covers broad needs**
- ✓ **Partner-led engagement ensures senior oversight on every job**
- ✓ **Strong reputation built on integrity and long time service**
- ✓ **Scalable solutions support clients from startup through growth**

#4

★★★★★

3.7 Good

CMJ

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

cmjllp.com
518-798-3330
Queensbury

- ✓ **Forward-looking firm uses technology to streamline processes**
- ✓ **Comprehensive financial reviews help identify growth opportunities**
- ✓ **Collaborative team culture means multiple experts support you**
- ✓ **Holistic view of your business improves decision-making outcomes**

#5

★★★★★

3.7 Good

MB

BUSINESS ADVISORS AND CPAS

mmbaccounting.com
518-798-3330
Rochester • Elmira • Canandaigua
Latham • Queensbury

- ✓ **Over 50 years of distinguished regional accounting**
- ✓ **Delivers high-quality audit and tax services to corporations**
- ✓ **Consulting excellence for businesses and individuals statewide**
- ✓ **Modern-minded firm adopts cloud accounting for real-time visibility**

Five Towers Media Launches FOUNDRY 5

Bringing Enterprise-Level Workflow Automation to Saratoga's Small Businesses

Local agency owner Michael Nelson expands into business automation — helping small teams stop drowning in manual work and start scaling.



Michael Nelson, owner of Five Towers Media — a Saratoga Springs marketing agency serving clients across the Capital Region — has launched Foundry 5, a new business automation company purpose-built for small businesses ready to work smarter.

Foundry 5 identifies the manual, repetitive workflows eating up a small team's day — invoicing, lead follow-up, reporting, client onboarding — and automates them end-to-end. Projects are fixed-scope and fixed-price, typically completed in two to three weeks. Automations run on Foundry 5's managed infrastructure, with ongoing monitoring and support available through monthly care plans.

Until recently, sophisticated workflow automation was largely out of reach for small businesses — the cost and complexity favored enterprise companies with dedicated IT departments. A new generation of automation tools has changed the math, and Foundry 5 is built to take advantage of that shift on behalf of local business owners.

Foundry 5 operates with a focused service model: one engineer, a defined set of automation tools, and a deliberate cap on active clients to ensure quality of delivery.

Ongoing support is available through optional monthly care plans that cover monitoring, maintenance, and SLA-backed response times.

Nelson, who continues to lead Five Towers Media, sees the two businesses as complementary — one helping companies grow their audience, the other helping them build the operational foundation to handle that growth.

About Foundry 5

Foundry 5 is a Saratoga Springs-based business automation company helping small businesses identify, scope, and automate the manual workflows that slow them down. Fixed-scope projects. Fixed prices. Client-owned deliverables. Learn more at foundry5.us.

About Five Towers Media

Five Towers Media is a Saratoga Springs marketing agency serving small and mid-size businesses across the Capital Region. Founded by Michael Nelson, Five Towers Media focuses on helping clients build meaningful audience relationships that drive long-term growth. ■



Our mission has always been to help small businesses grow — and to give them unwavering support as we do. We see local teams carrying massive workloads that automation can lift off their plates. When you stop doing manually what a system can do for you, you free up your people to focus on higher-level work. That's what actually moves the needle."

— Michael Nelson, Founder, Foundry 5



Michael Nelson



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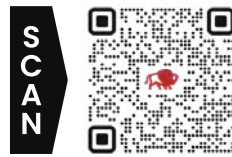
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Own a Business?

YOU NEED A POA.



Written by **Herzog Law Firm**
herzoglaw.com

Most business owners are planners by nature. You build systems, manage risk, and think ahead. But there is one area where even the most prepared entrepreneurs leave themselves — and their businesses — dangerously exposed: legal planning for the unexpected.

Specifically, what happens to your business if you can't run it?

Not when you retire. Not after you pass. Right now — tomorrow — if you were in a car accident, had a medical emergency, or became seriously ill. Who keeps things moving? Who pays your employees? Who signs the contracts? The answer, without a properly executed Power of Attorney, may be: nobody.

A Power of Attorney isn't just a personal planning document. For a business owner, it may be the most important legal instrument you don't have.

Your Business Doesn't Pause Because You Can't

Businesses run on decisions. Payroll has to process. Invoices need approval. Lease agreements come due. Vendors need to be paid and clients need to be managed. None of that waits for you to recover from a health crisis.

Without a Durable Power of Attorney — one that remains effective even if you become incapacitated — no one has the legal authority to act on your behalf. Not your spouse, not your business partner, not your most trusted employee. Unless the authority is specifically granted in a legal document, they are locked out.

In practical terms, this means:

- Business bank accounts may become inaccessible
- Payroll may go unprocessed, putting employees at risk
- Contracts may go unsigned, costing you clients and revenue
- Tax deadlines and filings may be missed
- Vendors may stop service or pursue legal remedies

The business you spent years building can begin to unravel within weeks — not because anything catastrophically went wrong, but simply because no one could legally make decisions.

Courts Get Involved — and That Gets Expensive

When there is no POA in place and a business owner becomes incapacitated, family members or business partners who need to act have limited options. Typically, they must petition the court to appoint a legal guardian or conservator.

This process is public, time-consuming, and costly. Court proceedings can take months. During that time, your business is in limbo. And once a guardian is appointed, they may be someone the court selects — not necessarily the person you would have chosen. The court's priority is legal compliance, not business continuity.

The irony is that the court process designed to protect you can also be one of the most disruptive things that can happen to a small business.

A Healthcare Proxy Protects More Than Your Health

A Healthcare Proxy — sometimes called a Health Care Power of Attorney — designates someone to make medical decisions on your behalf if you cannot. For a business owner, this document matters beyond the obvious personal reasons.

Without one, your medical providers are legally constrained in who they can communicate with and who can authorize treatment decisions. Family disagreements over care can drag on and create emotional paralysis at exactly the moment your business needs clear-headed leadership.

Naming a Healthcare Proxy ensures that medical decisions are made swiftly and according to your wishes — keeping the focus on your recovery rather than a legal tug-of-war at bedside.

What About Your Will?

Business Owners Face Unique Stakes

Many business owners assume that because they have a partnership agreement, an operating agreement, or a buyout clause, their estate planning is covered. Sometimes that's partially true. But a Will does things those documents don't.

A Will specifies where your personal assets go. It names an executor who manages your estate. And critically, it can address what happens to your ownership stake in the business — whether

it passes to a family member, gets bought out by a partner, or triggers a succession plan.

Without a Will, your business interest becomes part of your estate and subject to New York's intestacy laws. That means the state decides who inherits your share of the business — which may be someone with no business experience, no interest in the company, and potentially adverse to your existing partners.

- Business partners may find themselves in business with your heirs — whether they want to be or not
- Disputes over business value during probate can be lengthy and expensive
- Minority ownership interests can be difficult to value and even harder to sell
- Succession transitions without a plan often result in business decline or dissolution

The Documents You Need Work Together

A Durable Power of Attorney, a Healthcare Proxy, and a Will are not three separate concerns. They are three parts of one strategy — keeping you in control of what happens to your business, your assets, and your family, no matter what circumstances arise. Often times this is just the base foundation, and other considerations such as different types of trusts may be advisable.

Together, they answer the questions most business owners never think to ask until it's too late:

- Who runs things if I can't?
- Who makes decisions about my medical care?
- Where does my business go when I'm gone?

The good news is that putting these documents in place is not complicated when you work with the right legal team. It does not take months. It does not require a crisis to trigger. It just requires making the appointment.

Herzog Law Firm Works With Business Owners Across New York

The attorneys at Herzog Law Firm work with business owners throughout the Capital Region, the Hudson Valley, and surrounding communities to build comprehensive legal protection plans that address POA, Healthcare Proxies, Wills, and other estate planning strategies tailored to the complexity of owning a business.

Whether you're a sole proprietor, a partner in a growing firm, or a family business owner thinking about the next generation, Herzog Law's estate planning attorneys bring both legal depth and genuine care to every client relationship.

To schedule a consultation, visit herzoglaw.com or call (518) 465-7581. Offices in Albany, Saratoga Springs, Kingston, and Queensbury. ■

This article is intended for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Consult a licensed attorney for guidance specific to your situation.

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Processes: The Key to Scaling Without Chaos

In the fast-paced world of blue-collar businesses, from construction firms to manufacturing outfits, chaos often feels like the norm. Owners juggle endless fires, high turnover, and stalled growth, wondering why their hard work yields inconsistent results. But according to Bill Tansey Jr., CEO of The OpEx Shop, the secret lies in documented processes and systems.

Interviewed by



Michael Nelson



Derek Foster

Photos provided

With a career rooted in solving difficult problems, driving innovation, and building winning teams, Tansey coaches leaders to transform operations using time-tested Fortune 50 practices scaled for small and mid-sized companies. His approach, drawn from systems like the Danaher Business System and Toyota Production System, emphasizes that without structured processes, businesses remain stuck in reactive mode, while those with them scale smoothly and sustainably.

What "Process" Really Means: Standard Work That Works

At its core, Tansey defines "process" as "standard work" – a written standard to execute to, ensuring everyone knows exactly how to perform tasks. This isn't just jargon; it's a practical framework that demystifies operations. He breaks it down into a simple three-tier hierarchy: policy at the top for vision-setting, procedures in the middle for guiding steps, and work instructions at the bottom for gritty, day-to-day details.

This structure makes processes digestible, manageable, and evergreen, allowing teams to create, approve, publish, edit, and even obsolete documents as needed. Without this, businesses operate on tribal knowledge – "that's just how we do it" – leading to errors, rework, and frustration. Tansey stresses that documented processes create clarity, turning chaos into predictable outcomes where success is defined in writing.





From Blame to Continuous Improvement

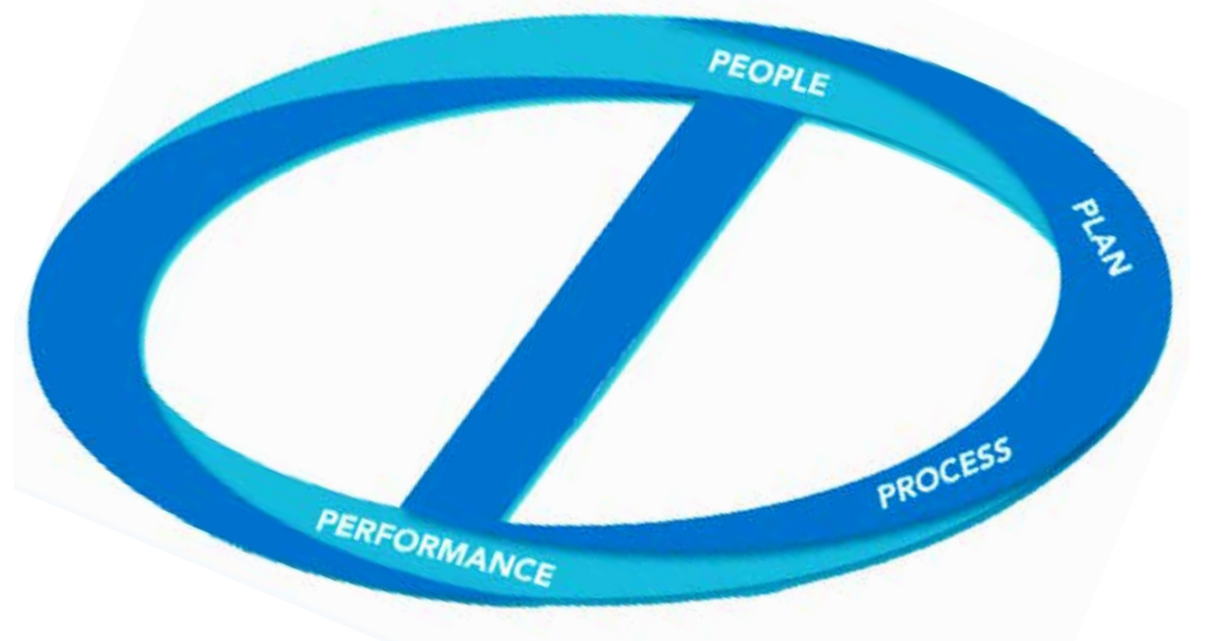
The real power emerges in fostering a continuous improvement culture. In chaotic environments, shortfalls lead to finger-pointing and blame. But with standard work, teams huddle shoulder-to-shoulder to refine processes, not people. Tansey explains that if employees can point to a document outlining their job and know what success looks like, they're empowered to collaborate on fixes when metrics falter.

This shift boosts retention, especially in high-turnover trades like construction and healthcare facilities management. Drawing from Gallup's research, Tansey notes two key questions for employee success: "Do I know what it takes to succeed in my job?" and "Do I have the tools to do it?" Processes answer both, providing structure akin to giving kids routines for security. In Tansey's experience, this reduces stress, enhances job satisfaction, and helps attract talent in tight labor markets.

Smarter Hiring, Stronger Growth, and Overcoming Resistance

Hiring and scaling benefit immensely, too. Tansey advises using processes to create objective scorecards for resumes, video screens, and interviews, often leading to hiring after just one or two in-person meetings instead of dozens. For growth or sale, standard work increases EBITDA multipliers by proving the business runs independently. Yet resistance is common.

Tansey debunks excuses like "processes take too long" (rework costs more), "great teams don't need them" (teams over six people do), or "we're too entrepreneurial" (statistics show entrepreneurial failures often stem from a lack of structure). At The OpEx Shop, he helps leaders overcome this by tying processes to personal motivations, using love languages-inspired incentives to sell benefits over features.



Danaher Business System

Real-World Proof: The Danaher Story

A prime example is Danaher, which Tansey highlights as a model. Starting in the mid-1980s, Danaher rocketed to the Fortune 500 by acquiring mom-and-pop companies and deploying the Danaher Business System – essentially a collection of standard work. This turned underperformers into high-flyers, boosting performance five to tenfold through waste elimination and measurable execution.

Tansey applies similar principles at The OpEx Shop, coaching on strategy deployment, root cause countermeasures, and team alignment to fix profit leaks, operational glitches, and change management hurdles.

How to Get Started Without Slowing Down

To start without overwhelming your business, Tansey recommends treating it as a major project: break it into milestones, build early wins off-site, and document the value stream first – the money-making flow from lead to delivery. If hiring is the bottleneck, prioritize that. Offload daily execution to focus on strategy, and say no to distractions. As Tansey puts it, leaders must clarify success and remove roadblocks, like defining the finish line in a race.

Ultimately, systems and processes aren't bureaucratic hurdles; they're the foundation for freedom. Businesses mired in chaos burn out owners and teams, while those embracing standard work grow resiliently. As Tansey's clients attest, crossing from concept to execution is tough, but with guidance from experts like him at The OpEx Shop, it's transformative. Ready to scale? Document your processes today – your future self will thank you. ■

STRENGTHEN YOUR BUSINESS WITH SMART Marketing



Why PR and earned media are now the most important investment in your marketing strategy—and how *Buying Local* delivers both.

In the coming months, our marketing column will spend a lot of time talking about the power of an integrated marketing approach—one where all facets of your marketing strategy are intertwined and working together to deliver maximum results with minimal effort. When done correctly, integrated marketing doesn't mean doing more marketing. It means making every piece work harder.

In that spirit, we want to show how *Buying Local* is not just a news website, but a powerful tool within a smart, integrated marketing strategy. From digital visibility to brand credibility—and now, increasingly, visibility inside AI-powered search—*Buying Local* brings multiple marketing layers together under one roof.

That last point deserves a closer look. Because the way people find businesses is changing fast.

The New Discovery Layer: AI Search

More and more, your potential customers aren't just typing queries into Google. They're asking ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and other AI assistants for recommendations. "Who's the best HVAC company in Saratoga Springs?" "What's a trusted local CPA?" "Which builder has the best reviews?"

These AI systems don't serve ads. They cite sources. And the businesses that get cited are the ones with editorial credibility—not the ones with the biggest ad budgets.

The data on this is striking. Gartner, one of the world's leading research and advisory firms, recently published their 2026 communications predictions with a clear directive: PR and earned media budgets will double by 2027 as AI-powered search replaces traditional search. They're telling marketing leaders to shift spending away from paid channels toward earned media—because that's what AI answer engines actually cite.

An analysis of over one million links cited by ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity found that roughly 94% of AI citations come from non-paid sources. Earned media—articles, features, press coverage—accounts for approximately 82% of those citations. Paid placements and advertising barely register at all.

That's not a small shift. That's a fundamental change in how discovery works—and it has major implications for local businesses.

Why Recency Matters More Than Ever

Here's what makes this especially relevant for businesses that want to stay visible: AI systems aren't just favoring editorial content—they're prioritizing fresh editorial content.

More than half of all AI citations come from content published within the last 12 months. The highest citation rate occurs within seven days of publication. Press release citations alone grew fivefold between July and December 2025 as AI systems increasingly pulled from recent news sources.

This is not a one-time optimization play. It requires an ongoing editorial presence. A business that gets featured once and goes quiet will fade from AI-driven visibility just as it would fade from a search engine—but faster.

That's why consistent press release publishing, regular feature articles, and steady editorial coverage aren't just nice-to-have. In 2026 and beyond, they're core infrastructure.

PR & Communications That Build Trust—and AI Visibility

Buying Local coverage functions as earned media, not advertising. Articles, press releases, and podcast interviews position local businesses as leaders in their field and contributors to the community. This kind of third-party editorial validation has always built trust with readers. Now, it also signals authority to AI systems.

When your business is featured in an article on *BuyingLocal.us*, that content doesn't just live in front of local readers—it becomes part of the indexed editorial record that AI search engines draw from when recommending businesses. The more consistently you appear in editorial content, the more signal you send.

This is what marketing professionals call GEO: Generative Engine Optimization. And unlike traditional SEO, which rewards technical precision, GEO rewards editorial trust. Third-party coverage. Named mentions in articles. Published press releases. Expert content with your name on it. The exact things *Buying Local* produces for its members.

SEO Value Through Quality Backlinks

When a business is featured on *BuyingLocal.us*, it earns a high-quality editorial backlink from a trusted local news source. These links signal credibility, authority, and geographic relevance to search engines. Over time, they help strengthen local search rankings and increase long-term online visibility.

What's changed is that this backlink now serves double duty. It helps your traditional SEO rankings—and it contributes to the editorial footprint that AI systems use to evaluate your business's authority. The two strategies are now deeply connected.

Content That Powers Social Media, Email & Podcasts

Every *Buying Local* feature is designed to create ongoing, reusable content—not a one-and-done placement.

For podcast guests, the exposure goes far beyond a single interview. Each guest appears on the *Buying Local* podcast, distributed across Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, and Rumble. From there, short-form clips are shared through social media and can be reused by guests in their own marketing—on social media, websites, and email campaigns.

Buying Local also sends weekly email campaigns dedicated to podcast episodes, putting each guest's story directly in front of an engaged local audience. The result is increased exposure, extended reach, and professionally created content that businesses can repurpose as part of their own strategy—often saving time and money while maintaining a consistent brand message.



One Message, Many Channels

What makes *Buying Local* especially effective is its multi-channel reach: online news articles, a weekly podcast featuring local business leaders, social media distribution, and email marketing campaigns. Each channel reinforces the others, helping businesses stay visible wherever their customers already are.

And critically, each piece of content produced—whether it's a feature article, a press release, an expert column, or a podcast episode—contributes to the editorial record that AI search engines draw from when answering the questions your future customers are already asking.

Marketing That Keeps Working

Unlike traditional advertising that stops the moment a campaign ends, *Buying Local* features remain live, searchable, and shareable. They continue to generate brand awareness, referral traffic, and SEO value long after publication. And with AI-driven search growing rapidly, that editorial archive becomes more valuable—not less—over time.

Research from Semrush found that visitors arriving from AI search convert at over four times the rate of traditional organic search visitors. The people asking AI assistants for local business recommendations aren't browsing. They're ready to act.

Buying Local is more than a news website. It's a comprehensive marketing platform combining SEO, PR, content marketing, social media, email marketing, and community trust into one cohesive approach—and now, an increasingly powerful presence in the AI-driven search results your customers are turning to every day. That's what we mean by smart marketing.

If you are interested in finding out more about how *Buying Local* can help your business with smart marketing, reach out to Michael Nelson at michael@fivetowers.us. ■

APRIL

UPCOMING NETWORKING EVENTS



SARATOGA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Albany Common Roots Joint Mixer with Capital Region Chamber

09 APR

5 – 7 PM
Common Roots Brewing
19 Quackenbush Square, Albany
Admission: \$15/member

Join the Saratoga County and the Capital Region Chamber of Commerce for a joint mixer at Common Roots Brewing in Albany. Connect with local entrepreneurs and Chamber members in a low-pressure, social environment designed for genuine conversation and relationship building. By attending, you'll leave with new contacts, fresh ideas, and a stronger sense of community within the Capital Region's business network.

Meet and Greet Networking Event Hosted by The VBC and ESU VMRC

16 APR

9 – 10 AM
Empire State University
113 West Avenue, Saratoga Springs

Admission: This event is free and open to anyone who registers in advance.

This FREE networking event is your opportunity to connect and collaborate with area business professionals. Whether you're looking to expand your professional network or reconnect with fellow business leaders, this gathering is designed for meaningful connections. Thank you to the Empire State University Veteran and Military Resource Center for co-hosting this networking event with the VBC.

Spring 2026 Saratoga Job Showcase

16 APR

10 AM – 12 PM
Empire State University
113 West Avenue, Saratoga Springs

This event is free and open to anyone who is interested in jobs and careers.

MEETING POINT

Glens Falls Chapter

13 APR

11 AM
EOS Office -
9 Broad Street
Union Square -
2nd Floor, Glens Falls

Saratoga Springs Chapter

23 APR

8:30 AM
Saratoga National Bank, 171 S Broadway, Saratoga Springs

Albany Chapter

24 APR

8:30 AM
22 Corporate Woods Blvd, Suite 501, Albany

FRI

BNI

Meets every Friday at 7:30 AM
Southern Adirondack Realtors
296 Bay Road, Queensbury

ARCC EVENTS

ARCC April Mixer at the Glens Falls Country Club

16 APR

4 – 6 PM
Glens Falls Country Club
211 Round Pond Road, Queensbury

Fees & Admission:
Reservation required,
\$25 for non-members (verify)

LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB

After-Hours Business Mixer at Bolton Landing Brewing Company

30 APR

5 – 7 PM
Bolton Landing Brewing Company
4933 Lake Shore Dr, Bolton Landing

Register: <https://pci.jotform.com/form/260684209759166>

Join the Lake George Regional Chamber for an After Hours Mixer at Bolton Landing Brewing Company! Spend your evening connecting with fellow Chamber members and local professionals while enjoying a relaxed brewery atmosphere and fresh local brews. We will be adding a little extra fun with "Brew Bingo", a lighthearted networking game designed to get conversations flowing and help you meet someone new. We hope to see you there!

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02

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EPISODE 117

Scaling Your Business at the Speed of Cashflow

In this episode, Mike Nelson and Derek Foster break down the pros and cons of scaling your business using cashflow versus debt, including trade lines, loans, and credit cards. They also discuss how to think through major purchases like equipment, overhead, and hiring so you don't overextend yourself chasing growth.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 118

Processes Your Team Will Actually Follow with Bill Tansey

In this episode, Derek and Mike are joined by Bill Tansey Jr. to break down why systems and documented processes are the difference between a business that grows smoothly and one that constantly feels stuck in chaos. From SOPs and accountability to building repeatable success, we cover how structure actually creates freedom for owners and teams.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 119

Building Hospitals and Building Careers with William Day

In this episode, hosts Michael Nelson and Derek Foster sit down with William Day, project manager at Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown. William returns to the show to break down his transition from field construction to owner's project manager for a regional healthcare network, overseeing capital projects across multiple hospitals. From high-end builds to fast-track commercial projects, he shares how every step in his career sharpened his leadership and commitment to quality.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 120

Discipline, Leadership & Building a 100-Year Company

In this episode, Mike sits down with Rick Engelhardt of Peckham Industries to talk about discipline, leadership, safety culture, and what it takes to help drive a 100-year-old construction company forward. Rick shares how consistency, intentional leadership development, and strategic focus directly impact growth and the bottom line.



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 66



Breaking Patterns & Rebuilding Yourself with Karen Carey

In this episode, Mike Nelson sits down with intuitive life coach, speaker, and author Karen Carey to explore personal growth, emotional patterns, and the real work behind transformation. The conversation dives into her book *Unbroken*, unpacking how past experiences shape behavior, why discomfort often signals growth, and how self-awareness helps people rebuild their lives with intention and purpose.



SCAN TO LISTEN!

SEASON 3, EPISODE 67



Support Cornell's Annual Car Show Benefiting Folds of Honor

In this episode, host Mike Nelson sits down with Casey Cornell, Sean Wilcoxon, Mike Colvett, and Ron Pastino to talk about Cornell's Used Auto Parts' annual charity car show and the mission behind it. The conversation explores how the local event is raising money for Folds of Honor while sharing the powerful story of a 9/11 first responder whose family benefited from the organization's scholarships.



SCAN TO LISTEN!

SEASON 3, EPISODE 68



Jacque Ecuyer Shares How Operation Give Back Honors Local Veterans

In this episode, host Mike Nelson interviews Jacque Ecuyer, founder of the 4s4Life Foundation, about Operation Give Back—a free, all-day military appreciation event at Slickfin Brewing Company featuring live music, food trucks, raffles, and community camaraderie for veterans and their families. Now celebrating its fifth anniversary, the event directs 100% of proceeds to local veteran organizations, fostering appreciation, shared stories, and real support in the Glens Falls/Upper Hudson Valley area.



SCAN TO LISTEN!

SEASON 3, EPISODE 69



Simplifying Payroll: Why Smart Contractors Are Turning to PEOs

In this episode, Mike Nelson sits down with Nick Schkrioba of Peoplease to break down how Professional Employer Organizations (PEOs) help businesses simplify payroll, workers' compensation, compliance, and HR operations. Nick explains how outsourcing back-office tasks allows business owners to focus on growth while gaining access to better insurance rates, risk mitigation, and nationwide support.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT
BY GREENFORK

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 33

Yoga Beyond the Mat: Energy, Mantra, and Eternal Soul

In this episode of Food for Thought by Greenfork, host Stephen Zabala interviews Kristen Nelson, owner of Yoga Mandali in Saratoga Springs, about her journey from college yoga classes to owning a heart-centered studio rooted in bhakti yoga—the path of love and devotion. They explore the full spectrum of yoga beyond physical postures, including breathwork, meditation, mantra, restorative practices, kirtan, gong baths, retreats, and teacher trainings that help release stored emotions, regulate the nervous system, and foster community.



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EPISODE 34

Getting Out of Your Own Way with Rachael Charbonneau

In this episode, host Stephen Zabala sits down with Rachael Charbonneau to talk about mindset, self-awareness, and how to stop letting fear and negative patterns control your life. They break down practical ways to handle stress, build resilience, and make real progress toward personal growth.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 35

Transform Your Life Through Yoga with Kat Stack

In this episode, Stephen sits down with Saratoga Sweat owner Kat Stack as she shares how discovering Bikram yoga transformed her life. Stephen and Kat dive into the mental, physical, and spiritual power of hot yoga, why discomfort is essential for growth, and how the practice improves life far beyond the mat.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 36

The Foundations of Fitness with Mike Verschelden (Part 1)

In this episode, host Stephen Zabala is joined by coach Mike Verschelden of On the Move Fitness for the launch of a 4-part series on building real, sustainable fitness programs. They break down the essential foundations—finding your “why,” setting realistic goals, reverse-engineering from the result, what makes a great coach, and why most social media fitness advice fails—while sharing practical examples and the importance of checking in with your body and recovery.



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