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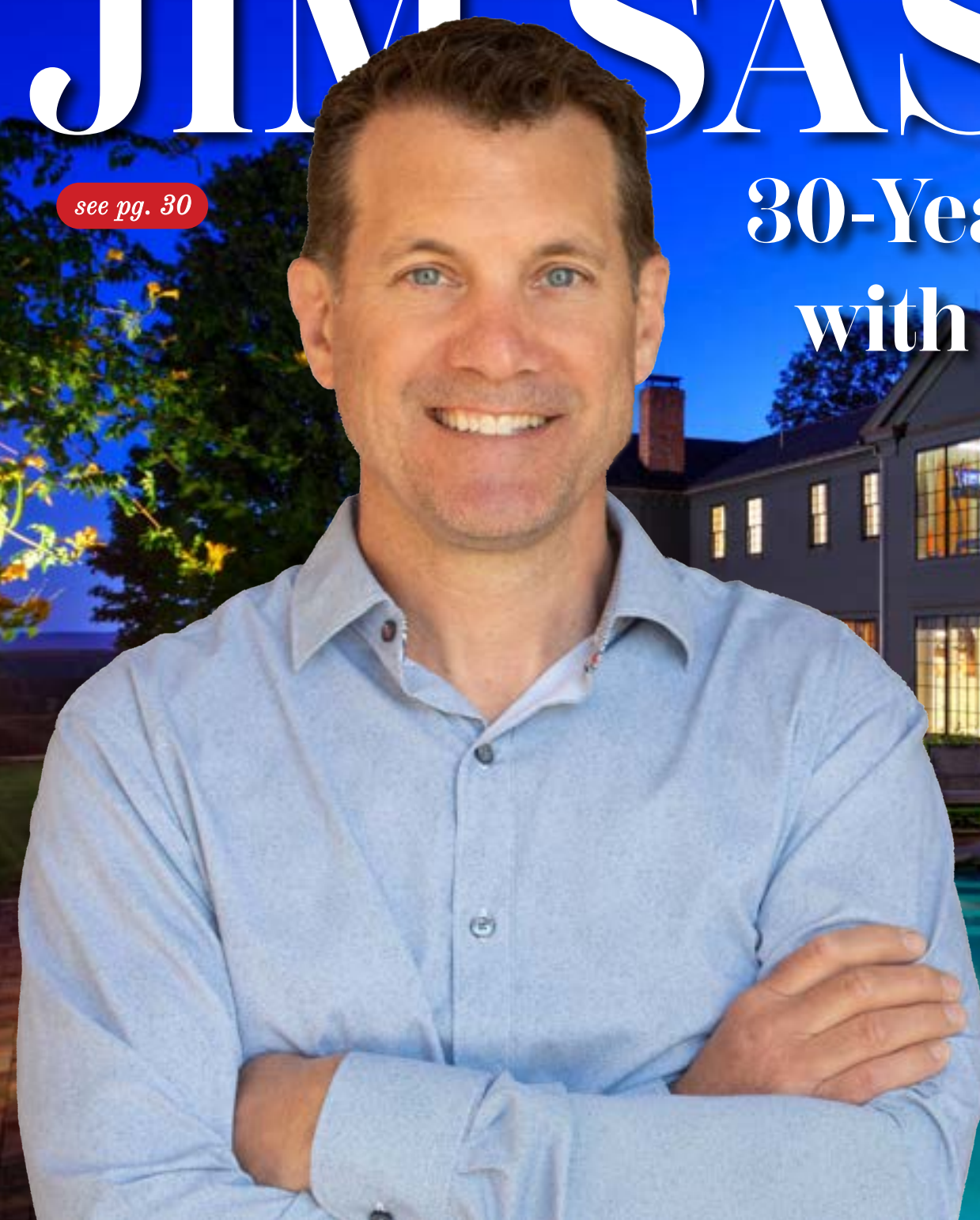
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JIM SASKO

see pg. 30

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Operation Give Back is set to celebrate its fifth anniversary on May 16 with a full day of live music, food, and community camaraderie at Slickfin Brewing Company in Fort Edward. Founder Jacque Ecuyer of the 4s4Life Foundation created the free public event so that 100 percent of every dollar raised goes directly to local veteran organizations serving the Glens Falls area.

OPERATION GIVE BACK

Marks Fifth Year Supporting Glens Falls Veterans



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

The Spark That Started It All

The idea for Operation Give Back came during a casual conversation at Slickfin Brewing Company's bar. Ecuyer, whose brother-in-law is a Marine and whose family has deep military ties, looked around the taproom one day and noticed something missing. There were no events in the region dedicated solely to veterans where all proceeds stayed local. He turned to co-owner Heather March and floated the thought of hosting a military appreciation day.

Her eyes lit up. She called her husband Kris over, and the three of them planned the first event in just

three days. That inaugural year, they raised thirty-five hundred dollars. Ecuyer remembers thinking one thousand dollars an hour was incredible for a brand-new effort. What began as a simple gathering has grown each year exponentially through word of mouth and steady community support.

Now in its fifth year, the event draws an estimated fifteen hundred people in and out throughout the day. Ecuyer and his founding partners, including the March family at Slickfin Brewing and Allen LaPelle of Vested Veteran Grill, have built something that feels like an extended military family reunion.



A Day Built for Veterans and Families

The 2026 anniversary runs from noon until around ten p.m. at Slickfin Brewing Company, located at 147 Broadway in Fort Edward. Attendees will enjoy continuous live music that starts with solo and duo acts and moves into full bands later in the day. Multiple food trucks will offer barbecue, pizza, and kid-friendly options so families can stay longer. Raffles and a silent auction will feature items donated from across the country, including woodworking pieces, event tickets, hotel stays, and baskets from Black Rifle Coffee Company. Sponsor shirts, including those from Five Towers Media, will be on sale for one hundred dollars each, giving local businesses affordable advertising while showing their support for veterans.

Everything happens rain or shine under large tents, with cornhole, fire pits, and plenty of seating on the brewery's expansive outdoor patio. There is no entry fee. Veterans and their families receive special vouchers for the first thousand dollars in food purchases thanks to partner Adirondack Peer to Peer. The atmosphere is intentionally relaxed so veterans can share stories, laugh, cry, and simply feel appreciated in their own community.

Every Dollar Stays Right Here

What sets Operation Give Back apart is its zero-overhead model. The venue is donated. Bands and musicians give their time for free. Food trucks return a portion of sales without being asked. A professional sound engineer donates the entire production, and a dedicated team of volunteers handles setup and raffles.

Because there are no costs to cover, one hundred percent of proceeds flow straight to local veteran groups. Each founding partner selects a beneficiary to keep decisions fair. Past recipients have included the Adirondack Veterans House, Therapeutic Horses of Saratoga, VFW and American Legion posts, and other organizations that serve Washington, Warren, and Saratoga counties.

Ecuyer deliberately avoids large national nonprofits. He wants donors and attendees to know exactly where their money goes. When someone attends with family, they can trust that every raffle ticket or shirt purchase helps neighbors who served, whether through housing support, wellness programs, or community events like Toys for Tots.

This year, the Marine Corps League is expected to be among the beneficiaries. Ecuyer recently joined the group as a civilian member and witnessed firsthand the work they do for veterans and the broader community.

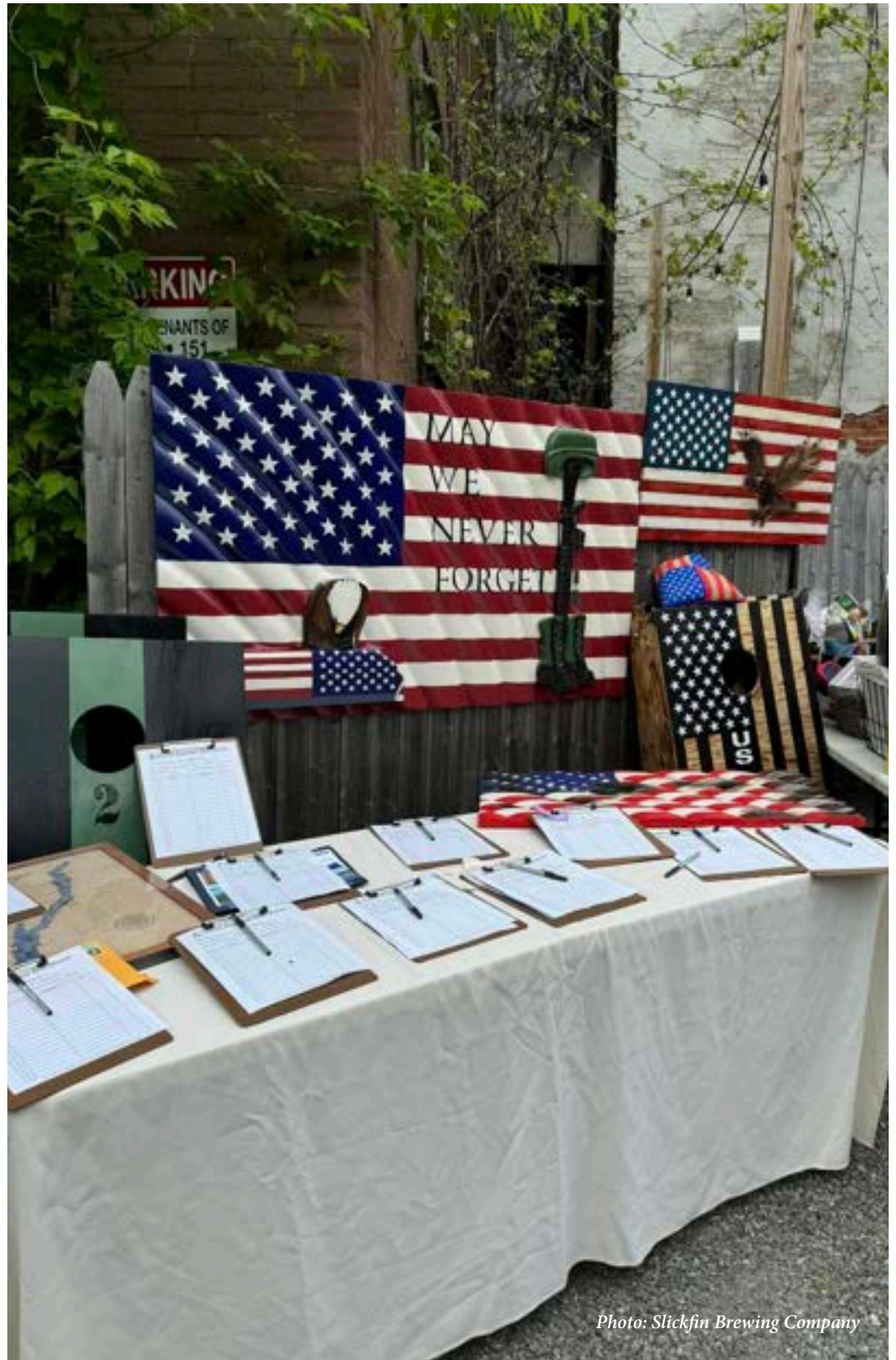


Photo: Slickfin Brewing Company

Building Purpose and Connection

Ecuyer often speaks about the deeper reason behind the event. He believes purpose keeps people sharp and young. He watched older men retire and lose direction once that sense of mission disappeared. Operation Give Back gives veterans a day to reconnect with one another and reminds the community of the sacrifices they made.

A moment of silence and a live guitar rendition of the Star Spangled Banner, midway through the day, honors those who gave everything. Last year, a Tim McGraw song about a fallen soldier movingly affected many veterans in attendance, allowing them to drop their tough exterior and simply feel supported.

The fifth anniversary continues that tradition while expanding reach. An April bowling fundraiser called No Pins Left Behind will serve as a kickoff event. Sponsorships remain available, and raffle donations are welcome. Anyone interested can visit operationgiveback.us for the latest details or find Ecuyer via his Facebook page.

By keeping everything local and every dollar accountable, Operation Give Back proves that one conversation over craft beer can grow into lasting support for the veterans who call the Glens Falls region home. The fifth year promises to be the biggest yet, all while staying true to its roots of gratitude, purpose, and community. ■

Adirondack Theatre Festival Launches



“ATF for ALL” Initiative to Expand Access to Live Theatre

The Adirondack Theatre Festival (ATF) is proud to announce the launch of ATF for ALL, a new community-driven initiative designed to expand access to live, professional theatre across the Glens Falls region.

Built on a simple but powerful idea—neighbors helping neighbors—ATF for ALL invites community members and business owners to “pass the show forward” by funding tickets that will be shared with individuals who may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend.

“At ATF, we believe a seat in the theatre is more than just a night out,” said Martha Banta, Artistic Director of Adirondack Theatre Festival. “It’s a chance to feel connected, to see yourself in a story, and to be part of something shared and alive. ATF for ALL is about opening those doors a little wider.”

For more than three decades, ATF has produced professional theatre in Glens Falls. Through this new initiative, the organization aims to welcome even more members of the community into the theatre—creating opportunities for low income individuals and families, seniors, young people, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers to experience live performance.

The program operates on a “pay-it-forward” model. Supporters can fund as many tickets as they choose, which ATF then distributes at no cost through its website and box office. Individuals interested in attending can submit a brief, confidential request indicating their preferred performance, dates, number of seats, and any accessibility needs. Approved tickets are held at Will Call for easy pickup on the day of the show.

“Think of it like picking up lunch for the person behind you in the drive-thru,” said Tracey Sullivan, Managing Director of ATF. “It’s a simple gesture, but it can mean a lot. That’s what sharing a ticket does—it creates a moment of connection and makes someone feel welcome.”

ATF for ALL reflects the Festival’s ongoing commitment to building community through the arts and ensuring that more people can share in the collective experience of live theatre.

“We hope people will join us, and help someone find their seat at ATF and pass the show forward” Banta added.

For more information, request seats, or to make a gift to the ATF for ALL Fund or other ATF initiatives, visit atfestival.org or contact atf@atfestival.org. ■



About Adirondack Theatre Festival

The Adirondack Theatre Festival is a professional summer theatre company based in Glens Falls, New York, dedicated to developing and producing new and contemporary plays and musicals. Now in its 32nd season, ATF brings together artists and audiences to experience bold, engaging stories.

How the ATF for ALL Fund Works

Community-Supported Giving

Every gift to the ATF for ALL Fund directly supports performance access for eligible patrons. All contributions are tax-deductible and include donor recognition.

\$60 Opens one seat, \$120 Welcomes a pair, \$240 Invites a family of four

Simple, Dignified Access

Individuals seeking tickets through the program complete a short, confidential request form indicating the show they would like to attend, preferred performance dates, number of tickets requested (within limits), and any accessibility needs.

Approved requests are processed by the ATF Box Office, and tickets are held at Will Call under the guest’s name for easy pick up on the day of the performance.



WMHT Public Media Commemorates Troy Savings Bank Music Hall with Original Documentary

WMHT Public Media is set to premiere the original, locally-produced documentary *The Music Hall: Troy NY's Monument to Sound* at a premiere screening event on May 19th at 7:00 pm at the historic venue. A broadcast premiere on WMHT follows the next day on May 20th at 7:30pm on-air, online, and on the free PBS App.

Established in 1875, the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall reshaped the downtown landscape of Troy, NY, drawing global musical talent to this small but mighty city. *The Music Hall: Troy NY's Monument to Sound* celebrates the history, architecture, acoustics, storied performances, and future of the music hall and features the Albany Symphony, Albany Pro Musica, RPI, and the Hart Cluett Museum.

"For 150 years, the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall has been a cornerstone of the region's artistic heritage," said Jon Elbaum, Executive Director of the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall. "This film celebrates our history while inspiring the next chapter of performances, partnerships, and community engagement, and we thank WMHT Public Media for bringing this story to life."

Experience why this celebrated hall is considered to be one of the best acoustical venues in the world during a live screening event on May 19th at 7 p.m. in the hall itself.

President & CEO Anthony V Hayes shared, "WMHT Public Media is proud to highlight the rich contributions of the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall to the artistic culture of our region through this original documentary. These stories will help usher in the next 150 years with the newly renovated hall."

Support for *The Music Hall: Troy NY's Monument to Sound* has been generously provided by Fagan Associates, Architecture+, Troy Savings Bank Music Hall Charitable Foundation, AIA NYS, and WM Fagan + Sons.

Tickets for the premiere screening are on sale now via phone, (518) 273-0038, in person, or online at TroyMusicHall.org.

About Troy Savings Bank Music Hall

The Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, a National Historic Landmark, has been in use since opening in 1875. World renowned for its incredible acoustics, it has hosted performances by legions of world-renowned artists, from legends like Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Isaac Stern, Yo-Yo Ma, and Vladimir Horowitz, to the best on today's music scene, including Boz Scaggs, India Arie, Lake Street Dive, Trey Anastasio, and many more. For information, visit www.troymusichall.org.

About WMHT Public Media

WMHT Public Media is an essential service for education, entertainment, and inspiration, producing award-winning local programming and documentaries. WMHT-FM is your classical companion, with nationally-recognized hosts presenting curated music selections, composer interviews, and exclusive concert events.

Additional information can be found at wmht.org. Follow WMHT on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. ■



TODD BAILEY



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photo:
tbphotopix.com

The Power of Great Content and Creative Storytelling

For Todd Bailey, the title of a creative is the umbrella that covers everything he does. Based in Upstate New York, Bailey has built a robust career spanning premium photography, videography, and digital marketing. Working as a fractional Chief Marketing Officer for small to medium businesses, he brings big brand energy to local enterprises. His journey, however, did not begin behind a camera. It began on a stage.

Finding Focus Behind the Lens

Bailey started as a college music performance major, singing operas on weekdays and performing in rock bands. As he looked toward the future, he realized that playing gigs to support a growing family was not sustainable. In 2011, he picked up a camera as a hobby. He already possessed some background in marketing, but he quickly fell deeply in love with the visual arts. His newfound passion grew organically, taking on a life of its own until it no longer made sense for him to hold a traditional job.

He launched his own business, eventually combining photo, video, and marketing under one unified brand. While he admits to initially adding video services reluctantly due to the immense gear requirements, he dove headfirst into mastering the craft. Today, his client roster boasts major national names like Bank of America Merrill Lynch, the American Cancer Society, and Northwestern Mutual, alongside numerous local business owners.

Building Systems for Corporate Storytelling

His premium photography skills recently earned him a spot in Forbes magazine. Bailey photographed a highly ranked financial team for Merrill Lynch based in Clifton Park, and seeing his work published on a massive national platform was a major milestone. In addition to standard portraiture, Bailey has developed a highly efficient composite photography system for corporate teams.

Instead of coordinating fifteen busy schedules for a single group shot, he photographs each team member individually. He then seamlessly arranges them together using Photoshop. When a company hires a new employee years later, Bailey simply photographs the new addition and drops them into the existing digital composite, saving his clients valuable time and resources. This accidental evolution from photographer to system builder highlights his commitment to solving problems for his clients.

Adapting to the Digital Frontier

As artificial intelligence reshapes the media landscape, Bailey views the technological shift through a remarkably practical lens. For him, AI is not a terrifying replacement for human artistry. It is simply another powerful tool in his toolkit, and he uses it every single day.

Recently, he conducted a photo shoot at a center supporting severely disabled individuals. The subjects were engaged in wonderful activities, but the building itself was undergoing heavy construction with unfinished walls and floors. Using new digital tools, Bailey was able to digitally replace the unsightly construction elements, preserving the subjects' powerful, authentic moments without being hindered by an imperfect physical location.

Bailey notes that these advancements have effectively removed the cap on creativity, putting every imaginable visual option on the table. However, he acknowledges that this freedom brings unique challenges. He believes the greatest gift we have today is that we can create anything, but the hardest obstacle is refining that endless scope into a clear, authentic vision.

Despite his tech-forward approach, Bailey draws a hard line at cutting corners with personal branding. He frequently issues a public service announcement against using cheap AI headshot generator apps on smartphones. He notes that these tools often completely alter a person's biological age or facial structure, resulting in artificial images that lack genuine professional authenticity. If someone needs a quality headshot, a skilled human photographer remains essential.

Whether he is performing live music at a local venue, coordinating a corporate video shoot, or seamlessly blending new digital tools into a commercial photography project, Bailey remains committed to his core identity. He is a creator who constantly adapts his tools to tell the best possible story. ■



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Photo provided

CANINE TRAINING CLASSES OFFERED IN SARATOGA COUNTY



Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County invites community members to participate in an engaging 8-week 4-H Dog Training Program beginning Sunday, May 4 at 6:30 p.m. Classes will be held at the 4-H Training Center at 556 Middleline Road, Ballston Spa, NY 12020.

This inclusive program is open to participants of all ages, welcoming youth ages 8–18 as well as adults. Designed to strengthen the bond between handlers and their dogs, the program offers a supportive, hands-on learning environment led by experienced volunteer instructors.

Class offerings include Beginner Obedience, Grooming and Handling (youth only), Beginner Agility (youth only), and Advanced Agility (youth only). Sessions are structured to help participants build skills, confidence, and connection with their canine companions.

Enrollment is limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to youth participants. All dogs must be at least four months old and fully vaccinated. Both mixed breeds and purebred dogs are welcome.

Program fees range from \$20–\$25 for youth classes and \$80 for adult participation, covering all eight sessions. Registration is required by April 25.

For more information or to register, call 518-885-8995 or email Kim Wilbur kmw82@cornell.edu. ■



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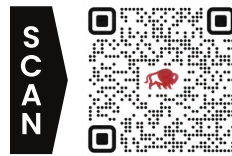
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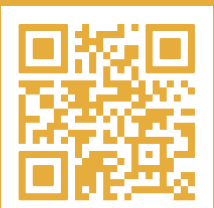
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ARCC FOCUSES ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

with Leadership Adirondack Program and Introduction of Young Professionals Network



2025 Leadership Adirondack participants & Program Facilitator Brian Rollo



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

Photos provided

Over 30 years ago, the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce created the Leadership Adirondack program, designed to take participants on a journey of self-reflection, leadership development, and continuing education. From overnight retreats and ice-breaker exercises to fundraising projects and industry tours, this program has evolved over the years to meet the needs of a changing workforce and emerging leaders.

“Leadership Adirondack holds a special place in our organization. It’s incredibly rewarding to see participants gain new perspectives, build lasting relationships, and leave the program energized to lead and give back to our community in meaningful ways,” said ARCC President Tricia Rogers.

Many of the program graduates have developed into C-suite leadership roles, started businesses, or can now mentor and develop other future leaders. The ARCC Leadership Adirondack program has served, and continues to serve, as a critical role in the pathway to leadership in our region.

The last Leadership Adirondack program wrapped up in February of 2025 with a graduation ceremony in Heritage Hall of the Harding Mazzotti Arena in Glens Falls. All 14 graduates were given the opportunity to speak about their experience and share what they learned with their friends, families, and colleagues.



Graduates from the 2025 Leadership Adirondack program

“Leadership Adirondack strengthened my understanding of regional challenges and opportunities while connecting me with passionate leaders committed to improving our communities, resulting in new professional collaborations that will have a long-term positive impact on our neighbors,” said Susan Wynkoop, Director of Continuing Education and Workforce Innovation at SUNY Adirondack. “The intentional learning activities combined with field visits to area industries deepened my confidence and reinforced the importance of thoughtful, community-centered leadership.”

Over a 5-month period, program participants gain valuable knowledge through a combination of classroom sessions with program facilitator Brian Rollo and tours of businesses and organizations across multiple sectors. Brian Rollo is a graduate of the Leadership Adirondack program (2000), where he held a position as Training Senior Manager for Arrow Financial. Since his time at the bank, Rollo has embarked on his own journey of running a leadership consultancy for growth-minded leaders and high performers.

“Leadership Adirondack has played an important role in developing leaders across our community for decades,” said Brian Rollo. “The growth of the 2024–2025 cohort was a powerful reminder of what’s possible when smart, committed people come together with a shared purpose. As we look ahead, our focus is on building on that legacy. We aim to continue elevating the experience and the impact of the program. The goal is simple: to ensure this remains one of the most meaningful and effective leadership development experiences in New York State.”

The ARCC Leadership Adirondack program is open to ARCC members in good standing, and the application period runs from May 3rd through May 29th. More information can be found on the Chamber’s website at www.adirondackchamber.org.

ARCC launches Young Professionals Network

As part of a plan to continue supporting workforce development, the ARCC has launched a Young Professionals Network (YPN) featuring a small leadership team that is dedicated to planning events and programs for professionals under the age of 40. Their mission is to empower emerging leaders through education, connection, collaboration, and advocacy, strengthening the future of our local business community. They are planning to meet monthly (with a break in July and August) to identify opportunities to connect with other young professionals, grow their networks, and share resources.

The group kicked off their initiatives with a “speed networking” event at The Bullpen Tavern in downtown Glens Falls in mid-March. This fast-paced and exhilarating networking event allowed attendees to pair up with each other for five-minute rounds to exchange information and practice their 90-second introductions. The room was buzzing with conversation and laughter as they honed in on their networking skills. After the exercise, attendees were encouraged to stick around to further their conversations.

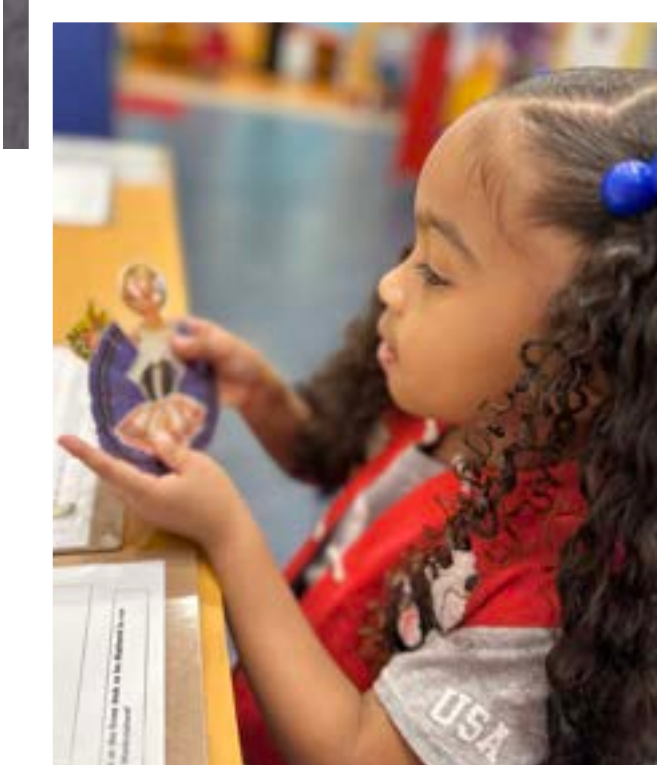
The ARCC Young Professionals Network will create space for connection, growth, and opportunity—empowering individuals to build not only their careers but their confidence, community, and future. ■



YPN Leadership Members: Co-Chair Morgan Flatley (Hometown Golf & Social), ARCC Director of Membership Ava Kanninen, ARCC President Tricia Rogers, and Co-Chair Brett Wagner (NBT Bank). Not pictured Sean Relyea (Thoroughbred Advisors), Aiden Khoury (NY Life) and Joe Endieveri (nePROMO)

How a Glens Falls Museum Brings

Museum Brings



the World to Local Kids



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

In a small space on Warren Street, children in Glens Falls can travel the globe without ever leaving their hometown. At the World Awareness Children's Museum, imagination is the vehicle, and culture is the destination.

Led by Executive Director Bethanie Lawrence, the museum is redefining what a children's museum can be. It is not just a place to play, but a place where young visitors are introduced to the diversity of the world through art, music, and hands-on experiences.

The mission is simple but ambitious: to bring the diverse world to children.

A Global Experience in a Local Space

The museum's approach centers on immersive learning. Instead of reading about other cultures, children interact with them. They can explore a Japanese tea house, play instruments from around the world, or step into a marketplace inspired by another country.

This hands-on model allows kids to experience culture in a way that feels natural. Through play, they begin to understand traditions, customs, and perspectives that may be very different from their own.

Lawrence emphasized that everything ties back to a singular purpose. The goal is not just education, but understanding. Programs and exhibits are designed to help children see both the differences and similarities that connect people across the globe.

The museum's reach extends beyond its walls. Through outreach programs, staff bring cultural education directly into schools, aligning lessons with New York State curriculum standards and giving students access to experiences they might not otherwise have.



Art as a Universal Language

At the heart of the museum is a remarkable collection that underscores its mission. The organization houses thousands of artifacts and pieces of art created by children from around the world, representing dozens of countries and cultures.

This collection is more than a display. It serves as a foundation for programming and inspiration for young visitors. By seeing artwork created by peers from different countries, children begin to recognize shared creativity and expression across cultures.

The idea is simple but powerful. Art becomes a universal language that bridges geographic and cultural divides.

For local families, this means exposure to a global perspective without leaving the region. For children, it offers a chance to see their own creativity reflected in a much larger world.

A Community-Driven Mission

While the museum's focus is global, its foundation is deeply local. As a nonprofit organization, it relies heavily on community support to sustain its operations. Admission fees, donations, and local partnerships all play a role in keeping the doors open and the programs running.

Lawrence has spoken about the reality of running a nonprofit, noting that despite its mission-driven work, it operates much like any other business. There are staff to support, programs to fund, and constant efforts to ensure long-term sustainability.

That balance between mission and operation is what allows the museum to continue growing. It has expanded programming, developed new partnerships, and adapted through challenges, including the disruptions of recent years.

The result is an organization that continues to evolve while staying grounded in its purpose.

Inspiring the Next Generation

For many children, a visit to the museum is more than just a day of entertainment. It is an introduction to the broader world and a chance to develop curiosity about people and places beyond their immediate surroundings.

The museum creates an environment where questions are encouraged, creativity is celebrated, and cultural awareness begins at an early age.

In a time when global connection is more important than ever, the work being done in this small Glens Falls museum carries a lasting impact. By combining play with education and creativity with culture, the organization is helping shape how the next generation understands the world around them.

And it all starts with a simple idea: bringing the world to children, one experience at a time. ■

OVER 30 YEARS OF



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

CAMPS, CULTURE, & SURVIVAL SKILLS AT NDAKINNA

For more than three decades, the Ndakinna Education Center has been quietly shaping how young people connect with the natural world. What began as a small experiment in youth programming has grown into a multifaceted hub for outdoor education, cultural preservation, and hands-on survival training.

James Bruchac, director of the center, recently reflected on that journey, tracing it back to a simple idea that quickly proved its value.

“We kind of did it on a whim,” Bruchac said of the first youth camp. “We only advertised for a short time, and it filled right up. That’s when we realized we had something.”

From a Single Camp to a Lasting Legacy

That early success laid the foundation for what would become a robust lineup of programs. Initially limited to a few weeks of summer day camps, Ndakinna’s offerings expanded organically as interest grew. Overnight camps were added, along with more intensive programs for older students, including the center’s Pathfinder experiences.

Today, those programs span a wide range of age groups and skill levels. Younger children are introduced to foundational concepts like shelter building and nature awareness, while older participants engage in more advanced survival training. These include fire making, navigation, and extended wilderness experiences that culminate in building and sleeping in their own shelters.



Many of the center's current staff members are former campers themselves. Some are now in their 20s and first attended as young as five years old.

Bruchac emphasized that the goal has always been to meet students where they are. Each program is tailored to developmental stages, ensuring that learning remains both accessible and challenging. "It's about building skills over time," he said. "As kids grow, they can move into more advanced programs and deepen their understanding."



Learning Beyond the Classroom

At the heart of NdaKinna's approach is experiential learning. Campers are not just taught about nature. They are immersed in it. Activities often involve engaging all the senses, from listening exercises to tracking wildlife and identifying plants.

This kind of learning stands in stark contrast to the increasingly digital environments many children inhabit.

"We want kids to look up, to listen, to be aware of what's around them," Bruchac explained. "Nature is a full sensory experience, and that's something you can't replicate on a screen."

The center's curriculum also emphasizes practical skills that are rarely taught elsewhere. Fire making, for example, is introduced carefully and responsibly, but remains a cornerstone of the program.

While some may view such skills as outdated, Bruchac sees them as essential.

"Understanding the principles behind these skills gives people confidence," he said. "Even if they never need to use them in an emergency, the knowledge itself is empowering."

Preserving Culture Through Storytelling

Beyond survival skills, NdaKinna is deeply rooted in Indigenous cultural education. Bruchac, who is of mixed ancestry including Abenaki heritage, incorporates traditional storytelling into many of the center's programs.

These stories are more than entertainment. They serve as a bridge between generations, carrying knowledge about the natural world, history, and cultural values.



Growing up, Bruchac and his family were immersed in these traditions. His father made a deliberate effort to seek out and preserve stories and teachings that had been at risk of fading away.

"Back then, people weren't always proud of their Native ancestry," Bruchac said. "A lot of that knowledge could have been lost. We've made it a priority to keep it alive and share it."

Today, that commitment is evident in everything from campfire storytelling sessions to language courses and cultural events hosted at the center.

Adapting to a Changing World

Like many organizations, NdaKinna experienced shifts during the COVID-19 pandemic. As indoor activities were limited, interest in outdoor programs surged. The center saw an influx of new participants, many of whom have continued with the program as they've grown older.

"We had a lot of younger kids come in during that time," Bruchac said. "Now they're teenagers, and they've stayed with us. It's been incredible to watch."

That growth has also brought new challenges, including balancing age groups and expanding offerings to meet demand. In response, NdaKinna has introduced additional programs such as its Sunday Survival Series, which provides adults with opportunities to learn skills like animal tracking and wilderness navigation.

The center continues to evolve while staying true to its core mission.

A Community Resource for the Future

As NdaKinna looks ahead, its focus remains on fostering connection. Connection to nature, to culture, and to community. In addition to camps, the center hosts school field trips, cultural festivals, and workshops led by both in-house instructors and guest experts.

Bruchac sees this work as more important than ever.

"These are skills and perspectives that people are starting to realize they need again," he said. "We're just trying to make sure they're still here to be learned."

For more information about programs, camps, and upcoming events, visit www.ndakinnacenter.org. ■

FARMERS' MARKETS



SARATOGA COUNTY

Saratoga Farmers' Market

112 High Rock Ave, Saratoga Springs

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, May – October, 9 AM – 1 PM
Wednesdays, May – October, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: 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

Ballston Spa Farmers' Market

Wiswall Park, Ballston Spa

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, June 14 – October 4
9 AM – 1 PM
Thursdays, June 14 – October 4
3 – 6 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

Clifton Park Farmers' Market

Shenendehowa United Methodist Church parking lot, Clifton Park

SCHEDULE:

Mondays, June – October, 2 – 5 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Stillwater Farmers' Market

662 Hudson Ave,
Stillwater Public Library

SCHEDULE:

Tuesdays, May 6 – October 28, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Malta Farmers' Market

Allerdice ACE Hardware parking lot,
2570 Route 9, Malta, NY 12020

SCHEDULE:

Tuesdays, May – October, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Route 50 Green Market (Burnt Hills)

802 Route 50, Burnt Hills

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, June 7 – October 25
9 AM – 1 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

Town of Greenfield Farmers' Market

Middle Grove Park,
428 Middle Grove Road

SCHEDULE:

Thursday evenings
June 19 – September 18
4 – 7 PM

Contact: 518-893-7432, ext. 307

WARREN COUNTY

Bolton Landing Farmers' Market

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church
Parking Lot, 7 Goodman Ave

SCHEDULE:

Fridays, June 27 – September 5
9 AM – 1 PM

Manager Contact: 518-480-9118

Glens Falls Farmers' Market (Summer)

South Street Pavilion, Glens Falls

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, May 4 – October 26
8 AM – 12 PM

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

North Creek Farmers' Market

Riverfront Park on the Hudson,
North Creek

SCHEDULE:

Thursdays, June 19 – September 18
2 – 5:30 PM

Manager Contact: 518-251-5210

Chestertown Farmers' Market

Chestertown Town Hall,
6307 State Route 9, Chestertown

SCHEDULE:

Wednesdays, June 12 – September 18,
10 AM – 2 PM

Manager Contact: 518-494-3336

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

Warrensburgh Riverfront Farmers' Market

Warrensburgh Mills Historic District,
River Street (NYS Route 418),
near Curtis Lumber

SCHEDULE:

Fridays, May 30 – October 10, 3 – 6 PM

Manager Contact: 518-466-5497
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Cambridge Valley Farmers' Market

SUMMER: Owlkill Commons,
17 West Main Street, Cambridge
Sundays, May – October, 10 AM – 1 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

WINTER: The Old Firehouse,
11 W. Main Street, Cambridge
2nd & 4th Sundays, January 12 – May 11
10 AM – 1 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Granville Farmers' Market

Granville Village Parking Lot
11 Main Street

SCHEDULE:

Thursdays, June 19 – October 16
2 – 5 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Salem Farmers' Market

Village Park Gazebo,
Route 22, Main Street, Salem

SCHEDULE:

Saturdays, June 21 – October 18
10 AM – 1 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Canal Street Marketplace Farmers' Market

63 Canal Street, Fort Edward

SCHEDULE:

Thursdays, June 5 – September 25
4 – 7 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Greenwich Farmers' Market

99 Main Street, Greenwich

SCHEDULE:

Wednesdays, June 7 - October
3 – 6 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

Whitehall Farmers' Market

Canal Park Pavilion,
4 Skenesborough Drive, Whitehall

SCHEDULE:

Tuesdays, June 4 – October 8
2 – 5 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

A Smarter Way to Train:



Interviewed by
Stephen Zabala
Photos provided

Start With Structure, Not Guesswork

For many people, the hardest part of fitness is not showing up. It is knowing what to do once you get there. In a recent conversation with Mike Verschelden of On the Move Fitness, the focus was not on who he is, but on the system he uses to help people train with purpose, consistency, and longevity.

At the core of his approach is a simple but often overlooked idea. Workouts should be built around a clear structure that aligns with your goals and adapts to your body. Without that structure, even the most motivated individuals tend to lose momentum within a couple of months due to boredom, confusion, or burnout.

Verschelden emphasizes starting with a foundation rooted in mindfulness. Before choosing exercises or setting a schedule, individuals need to understand why they are training. Whether the goal is longevity, strength, or simply keeping up with family life, that deeper motivation becomes the anchor for everything that follows. From there, goals are broken down into manageable steps, creating a roadmap that is both realistic and sustainable.



Build Strength Without Burning Out

A Weekly Framework That Works

Instead of relying on traditional bodybuilding splits, which isolate muscle groups on different days, Verschelden advocates for a total body approach. This method allows individuals to train multiple movement patterns several times per week, leading to better overall results and reduced risk of overuse injuries.

A typical week might include three days of strength training, two days of low intensity cardio, and optional active recovery. This balance ensures that the body is challenged without being overwhelmed, while also supporting cardiovascular health and recovery.

The strength days themselves are built around key movement patterns rather than specific muscles. One day might focus on single leg strength, another on hip dominant movements like hinging, and a third on knee dominant patterns such as squats. This approach creates a balanced program that develops strength, stability, and mobility all at once.

The “Flow to Finish” System

What sets this system apart is how each workout is structured. Verschelden breaks sessions into four phases, creating a repeatable framework that can be adapted to any fitness level.

The first phase, often referred to as “flow,” focuses on getting the body and mind ready. Light

cardio, mobility work, and simple movements help shift attention away from daily stress and into the workout.

Next comes “fly,” which introduces explosive or athletic movements. These exercises are designed to activate the nervous system, improve coordination, and maintain qualities like balance and power that often decline with age.

The third phase is the heart of the workout. This is where compound movements take center stage. Exercises like lunges, squats, and presses engage multiple muscle groups at once, delivering the most benefit in the least amount of time. By focusing on these lifts, individuals build strength efficiently while also protecting their joints through better movement patterns.

Finally, the workout ends with a “finish” phase. This may include accessory work, conditioning, or lighter hypertrophy focused exercises. It is also where variety is introduced, keeping workouts engaging without sacrificing consistency.

Progress Without Punishment

A key principle behind the system is what Verschelden calls stimulation over annihilation. Instead of pushing to exhaustion every session, the goal is to challenge the body just enough to create progress while leaving room for recovery.

This is where tools like rate of perceived exertion come into play. By gauging how difficult a set

feels, individuals can adjust intensity in real time. Early weeks of a program might feel moderate, gradually increasing in difficulty before tapering back. This progression allows the body to adapt safely, reducing the risk of injury and burnout.

Consistency is another critical factor. While many people are tempted to constantly change their workouts, Verschelden stresses the importance of sticking with core movements for several weeks. This repetition provides a baseline for measuring improvement, whether that means lifting more weight, completing more reps, or simply moving better.

Built for Longevity

At its core, this system is not about quick fixes or extreme transformations. It is about creating a sustainable approach to fitness that evolves with the individual. By combining structure, flexibility, and self awareness, it allows people to build strength, improve endurance, and stay motivated over the long term.

The result is a training method that meets people where they are, challenges them appropriately, and keeps them coming back. Not because they have to, but because it works. ■



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Rest, *Simplicity* & the Power of SLOWING DOWN



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photo by
Deb Neary

For Brandon Dewyea, the path to building her business was never about doing more. It was about doing what matters better and helping others do the same.

Dewyea, the owner of Moxie, has spent more than a decade helping clients feel confident in how they present themselves. What began as a career in personal training eventually evolved into something broader, blending styling, organization, and wellness into a single, cohesive approach. At its core, her work is rooted in a simple idea: when people feel better in their bodies and environments, they live better lives.

“I think there’s a huge component to how we feel in our space and how we show up,” Dewyea said.

A Shift Toward Something Deeper

Before launching Moxie, Dewyea spent 14 years as a personal trainer. The work was rewarding, but when she relocated to the Capital Region, she felt ready for a change. Rather than starting over in a saturated industry, she leaned into a different skill set, one that focused less on physical performance and more on personal expression and environment.

Styling became the foundation of her business, helping clients feel more aligned with how they present themselves. Over time, that expanded into organization and decluttering, addressing not just how people look, but how they live.

“It’s a skill that we’re not taught,” she said, referring to both clothing and environment. “What feels really good on our bodies... and also in our environment, what brings us joy?”

That question became central to her work. Closets, kitchens, and living spaces were no longer just functional areas. They were reflections of mental clarity or, in many cases, mental clutter.

The Case for Less

Dewyea’s philosophy stands in quiet opposition to a culture that often promotes more as the solution. More productivity, more tools, more noise. In her experience, that approach leaves people overwhelmed rather than fulfilled.

“I personally feel we’re in an information overload,” she said.

Her response has been to simplify, both in her business and in the services she offers. That includes everything from maintaining a small, intentional team to streamlining how clients connect with her. Even scheduling is kept simple, often handled directly through email rather than multiple platforms.

This mindset extends to her clients as well. Whether she is helping someone edit their wardrobe or reorganize a home, the goal is not perfection. It is clarity.

“More is not always better,” she said.

Rest as a Missing Piece

In the past year, Dewyea introduced a new offering that ties directly into her broader philosophy: vibroacoustic therapy. The experience is intentionally simple. Clients lie down, fully clothed, on a specialized table that uses sound and vibration to promote relaxation and nervous system regulation.

The appeal, she says, is partly in what it does and partly in what it requires: nothing.

“You don’t have to do a darn thing. You literally just have to show up and lie down,” she said.

In a culture where rest is often treated as an afterthought, the response from clients has been telling. Many report feeling calmer, more focused, and more present after even a short session. For some, it is the first time they have been able to fully quiet their minds.

“It’s a way to really give your brain a rest,” Dewyea said.

That rest, she emphasizes, is not a luxury. It is essential. It is the only time the body can fully relax and begin to heal.

A Holistic Approach to Daily Life

What makes Dewyea’s work unique is not any single service, but how they connect. Styling, organization, and wellness are often treated as separate industries, yet in practice, they overlap constantly.

A cluttered home can create stress. A disconnected sense of style can impact confidence. A lack of rest can affect everything from focus to emotional well-being. Dewyea’s approach acknowledges these connections and meets clients where they are.

Her business has also been shaped by personal experience. A challenging period caring for aging parents forced her to reevaluate her own limits and priorities. It reinforced the importance of protecting her energy and focusing on what truly adds value.

“I’m very protective of my bandwidth,” she said.

That clarity now guides both her work and her message to clients.

Living Better by Doing Less

At its heart, Dewyea’s journey reflects a broader shift. Instead of chasing more, she has built a business around helping people slow down, simplify, and reconnect with what matters.

The transformation is often subtle. A cleaner space. A more intentional wardrobe. A moment of quiet in the middle of a busy day. But those small changes can ripple outward, affecting how people think, feel, and show up in their lives.

“When we feel better, we do better,” she said.

In a world that rarely stops moving, her work offers a reminder that sometimes the most powerful change comes not from adding more, but from finally letting go. ■



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with Teakwood Builders in Saratoga

Interviewed by



Michael Nelson



Derek Foster

Photos provided

Jim Sasko founded Teakwood Builders in Saratoga Springs in 1996 with little more than a truck, basic carpentry skills, and a willingness to learn. Thirty years later, the design-build firm stands as one of the Capital Region's premier luxury home construction and remodeling companies. Sasko has guided the business through organic growth, painful missteps, and deliberate systems that created a company culture where employees stay for decades, and projects earn both regional and national awards.





The Early Years: Hands-On Beginnings in Saratoga Springs

Sasko was 26 when he started Teakwood Builders. Fresh from Hudson Valley Community College and Utica College's construction management program, he began as a one-man operation. He handled carpentry, estimating, sales, and bookkeeping himself while working many hours, evenings, and weekends. "I got into owning a business because you usually don't know any better at that age," he recalled. Early projects were modest bath remodels and small additions around the Capital Region. He learned the hard way what each job actually profited after tracking every dollar.

In the early 1990s, Sasko had tasted higher-end work framing executive homes for KeyBank leaders relocating to the area. Those million-dollar houses in the 1990s sparked his vision for luxury custom building. He moved his business to Saratoga Springs and slowly shifted the firm from general remodeling to architecturally driven luxury projects and lakefront homes. The evolution was never planned. It grew from client requests and a reputation for meticulous craftsmanship that local architects began to trust.





Hard-Earned Lessons: Staying in Lane and Learning to Say No

Growth brought costly lessons. Sasko admitted he once tried to be everything to every client, which stretched his small crew thin. "I can't be all things to all people," he said. The turning point came when his wife, then in graduate school for her MBA, corrected him during a conversation about the business. She told him he did not yet have a company. He still had a business that depended entirely on him.

That distinction reshaped his thinking. For the first 20 years, the operation ran on his direct involvement. Only in the past decade did Teakwood Builders mature into a true company with systems, a leadership team, and an integrator who helped install processes. Sasko joined national peer groups through the National Association of Home Builders and implemented EOS training about five years ago.

These steps created repeatable processes that allowed him to step away for the first time.

Today, Sasko still emphasizes focus. The firm declines work that falls outside its lane of high-end design-build remodeling and bespoke luxury homes. That discipline has protected profit margins and team morale, especially amid post-2020 material and labor cost spikes that have pushed average kitchen remodels to \$175,000 or \$200,000 for his company.





Creating a Culture Where People Stay and Grow

Teakwood Builders' strongest asset is its people. Several team members have been with Sasko for 25 or even 27 years. One started as a laborer three years after the company launched and now manages multimillion-dollar projects. Sasko credits an open-book philosophy and an upside-down organizational chart that places production crews at the top and support staff beneath them. "We're a construction company first," he explains. Everyone else exists to make sure the field teams have the materials, answers, and tools they need.

The firm posts clear job descriptions, offers self-evaluation tools, and runs practical tests, such as building sawhorses under time constraints, to advance apprentices to carpenter levels with pay increases. Quarterly reviews and shared annual goals reinforce ownership. Sasko still conducts one-on-one meetings across all levels so no one feels invisible. The result is a collaborative environment aligned with the company's core values of People, Product, Process, and Pride.

This culture helped Teakwood Builders attract talent during the tight labor market of recent years. Rather than chase bodies, the company held to its pay structure and values. New hires often came through employee referrals because word spread that the team was stable, well-paid, and genuinely invested in long-term careers.

Sasko now leads more strategically while the operation runs smoothly without him. He recently took an off-grid motorcycle trip for five days with no cell service, confident the business would continue uninterrupted. That milestone, he says, marks the difference between owning a job and leading a company.

Thirty years after riding his bike to a framing job as a teenager, Jim Sasko has built more than luxury homes in Saratoga Springs. He has created a design-build firm known across the Capital Region for craftsmanship, client experience, and a team that feels ownership in every project. The journey was never linear, but the lessons in focus, systems, and people-first leadership continue to define Teakwood Builders today. ■



How to Protect Yourself from Deed Theft in NY

Written by Lisa Licata, Assoc. RE Broker,
Office Manager of Sterling Real Estate Group

When we think about protecting our home, we often focus on locks, alarm systems, or insurance. But there's another, lesser-known threat that can jeopardize your ownership without you even realizing it: deed theft.

What is Deed Theft?

Property fraud or house-stealing which is known as deed theft occurs when criminals fake your identity to steal ownership of your home through fraudulent means. This type of crime is particularly insidious because it can occur silently, without any immediate red flags.

Once the deed is forged and recorded with the county clerk, the thief may attempt to:

- Take out loans using your property as collateral
- Sell the home to an unsuspecting buyer
- Rent it out and collect payments fraudulently

And the worst part? You might not find out until it's too late.

Who is at Risk?

Deed theft can happen to anyone, but certain homeowners are more vulnerable:

- Seniors who own their homes outright
- Owners of rental or vacant properties
- Those who've inherited property
- Homeowners in financial distress

How to Protect Yourself

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to proactively monitor and prevent deed theft—starting with a simple, free service offered right here in Saratoga County and surrounding counties.

Sign Up for Property Fraud Alerts

The Saratoga County Clerk's Office provides a link to a Property Fraud Alert system for users. The service provides free email notifications about documents recorded under your name. You should take action immediately whenever you notice something unusual because it could develop into a major issue.



Sign up here for Property Fraud Alerts

You'll need a valid email address and the name you want monitored. It's quick, easy, and can give you much-needed peace of mind.

Scan to Sign Up for Property Alerts

Additional Tips:

- You should check your deed periodically through your county clerk's office
- Check your credit report once per year to detect any unusual activities.
- Be cautious when receiving unexpected mail that contains information about your property or your name.
- Placing a credit freeze at your credit reporting agency should be your next step.
- A real estate attorney should be consulted when you believe fraud is involved.



Don't Wait Until It Happens to You

Deed theft exists as a real crime which occurs more frequently than most people realize. A short time investment in setting up alerts will prove beneficial for your future protection.

Sterling Real Estate Group dedicates itself to safeguard both our clients and our community members. You should distribute this information to everyone including those who face higher risks.

Your home represents more than real estate ownership because it serves as your financial asset and personal sanctuary and enduring heritage. Take steps to keep it safe.

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5.0 Excellent

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- ✓ **Values integrity, ethics, and mentorship**
- ✓ **Won Best of Saratoga Region 2023–2025.**

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Looking for a trusted, experienced real estate brokerage in Saratoga County and the broader Capital Region? Sterling Real Estate Group, based in Ballston Spa, has over 25 years of real estate experience, offering exceptional service whether you're buying, selling, or exploring new construction opportunities. Their boutique approach—reflecting quality over quantity—makes them a top pick for clients seeking knowledgeable, personalized guidance.

The team stands out for its integrity, community mindset, and deep commitment to client success. They prioritize ethics, open communication, and continued education for both agents and clients—making the real estate process smoother and more transparent.

sterling518.com

518-688-2211

Ballston Spa




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Looking to buy or sell a home in Saratoga Springs, Malta, Ballston Spa, or Clifton Park? Explore this vetted list of top-rated real estate professionals offering expert guidance, market insights, property listings, and seamless transactions throughout the Capital Region. Whether you're buying your first home, selling a property, or investing in real estate, these top-rated professionals proudly serve clients in Saratoga Springs, Malta, Ballston Spa, and Clifton Park with expert guidance and personalized service. Specializing in residential and commercial real estate, they offer everything from property listings and market analysis to staging advice and contract negotiations—helping you achieve your goals with confidence.

#2

★★★★★

5.0 Excellent



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#3

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4.8 Excellent



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- ✓ **Over 30 years' experience, 5,000+ properties sold**
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#4

★★★★★

5.0 Excellent



Saratoga Spa

REALTY LLC

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518-584-6699
Ballston Spa

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- ✓ **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

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#1

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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.

Scan Today to Get Started!

galarneaubuilders.com
518-587-8191
Saratoga Springs

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


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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.



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cerroneplumbinghvac.com
518-798-6560
Queensbury

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
★★★★★



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- ✓ Licensed, insured, and woman-owned since 2016
- ✓ NATE- & EPA-certified technicians for expert repairs and installations

#5 4.8 Excellent
★★★★★



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TOP-TIER



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#4

★★★★★

3.7 Good

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- ✓ **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

mmbaccounting.com
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Rochester • Elmira • Canandaigua
Latham • Queensbury

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

How PEOs Help Businesses Simplify Payroll, HR, and Workers' Comp

Running a business often means juggling far more than the core service a company provides. Payroll, workers' compensation, regulatory compliance, and employee benefits all require constant attention. For many business owners, especially those in trades or construction, those responsibilities can become overwhelming.

Professional Employer Organizations, commonly known as PEOs, are designed to solve that problem. In a recent conversation on the *Buying Local* podcast, Nick Schkrioba of PeoplEase explained how these organizations help companies streamline back-office responsibilities while focusing on growth.



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

Offloading the Back Office

A PEO acts as a partner that handles administrative functions related to employees. According to Schkrioba, most PEO relationships center on four primary areas. These include workers' compensation, payroll processing, compliance with employment laws, and employee support services such as benefits.

For many business owners, these tasks can become a drain on time and resources. Processing payroll, filing taxes correctly, maintaining compliance with changing labor regulations, and managing claims all require expertise that small companies may not have in-house.

A PEO consolidates those responsibilities into a single support structure. Instead of contacting multiple vendors such as insurance carriers, payroll processors, and compliance consultants, a company can rely on one partner.

"It becomes one call instead of five," Schkrioba explained, describing how the system reduces complexity for business owners.

The arrangement allows entrepreneurs to focus on running their businesses rather than managing paperwork. In industries where margins and schedules are tight, that shift can make a significant difference.

Better Rates Through Collective Buying Power

Another major advantage of PEOs is purchasing power. Organizations like PeoplEase combine thousands of employees from client companies into a single pool when negotiating with insurance carriers and service providers.

With that larger scale, the PEO can often secure better rates for workers' compensation insurance and related services. Schkrioba compared the concept to buying supplies in bulk.

When a single small business negotiates insurance rates on its own, it has limited leverage. But a PEO representing tens of thousands of workers nationwide has far greater influence with carriers and vendors.

That collective power allows clients to access coverage and pricing that might otherwise only be available to much larger corporations.

For businesses operating in multiple states, the benefit extends even further. Because the PEO operates nationally, companies expanding into new markets often avoid the administrative burden of registering policies and adjusting coverage for each new location.

Managing Risk and Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation is a core focus at PeoplEase and a key differentiator from many other PEOs. While most PEOs prioritize benefits and cater to white-collar businesses, PeoplEase is built to support blue- and gray-collar industries like construction and manufacturing, where risk is higher and coverage needs are more complex.

The organization delivers hands-on risk mitigation and claims management services designed to reduce both the frequency and cost of workplace incidents. It also emphasizes return-to-work programs, helping injured employees stay active through light-duty roles or partnerships with nonprofit organizations during recovery.

This approach not only supports employees through rehabilitation but also helps control claim costs for employers. In addition, by operating under PeoplEase's broader workers' compensation structure, businesses may benefit from stronger modification rates—an important factor in qualifying for contracts, especially in construction and government sectors where strict insurance standards apply.



Compliance in a Changing Workplace

Employment regulations are constantly evolving. Laws affecting workplace policies, discrimination protections, and remote work arrangements can change frequently.

During the pandemic, for example, many companies had to introduce telecommuting policies and adjust employee handbooks to reflect new labor standards.

PEOs monitor these changes and help businesses remain compliant. They also provide resources such as required labor posters, training programs, and updated policy documentation.

For small and midsize companies without dedicated HR departments, this type of support can reduce legal risk and administrative stress.

Allowing Business Owners to Focus on Growth

Ultimately, Schkrioba says the goal of a PEO partnership is simple. Business owners should spend their time building their companies rather than navigating complex administrative systems.

By consolidating payroll, insurance, compliance, and employee support under one partner, companies gain both efficiency and expertise.

For many organizations, that shift allows leaders to focus on what they do best. Whether that means managing construction projects, running a logistics company, or growing a local service business, the operational burden becomes lighter.

More information about the services discussed in the conversation can be found at the PeoplEase website, peoplease.com. ■

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ADKtechs



Interviewed by
Michael Nelson

Photos provided

For over two decades, Adirondack Technical Solutions, commonly branded as ADKtechs, has been a trusted technology partner. Celebrating the start of its 21st year in business, the company continues to innovate. Recently relocating to a new office near Exit 17 in the Capital Region, ADKtechs is focused on providing an amazing culture and high-quality service. Under the leadership of President Jared Humiston, the Fort Edward-based managed security service provider helps local companies manage IT efficiently, strengthen cybersecurity, and avoid costly disruptions.

The Shift to Proactive IT Management

In the early days, most businesses treated IT as a reactive necessity. Companies waited for problems to occur before calling for help, creating what Humiston describes as an exhausting "fire truck" model where teams simply rush to put out fires.

To combat this organized chaos, ADKtechs pivoted away from offering piecemeal, a la carte services. Allowing companies to pick and choose protections often leaves dangerous gaps in security. Instead, the firm champions a standardized IT program. This comprehensive approach covers desktop installations, advanced malware monitoring, and employee training to build a robust human firewall. It also involves independent penetration testing to purposefully search for vulnerabilities and verify that security controls are effective. By standardizing practices, businesses can proactively innovate rather than simply react to emergencies.



For businesses navigating a complex digital world, partnering with a forward-thinking provider with a strong local team is essential for long-term growth.



Combating Ransomware and Minimizing Downtime

One of the most severe threats facing modern organizations is ransomware. Malicious actors execute code to infiltrate a network, encrypt vital data, and demand a ransom for the decryption key. While some organizations mistakenly believe cyber liability insurance is enough to save them, Humiston warns that insurance should be the absolute last resort for an emergency.

When a cyberattack occurs, prolonged downtime is the true enemy. A robust IT partner ensures companies have tested incident response plans and reliable backups. If a network is compromised, the goal is to seamlessly roll back to a secure state, restoring data in minutes. Participating in tabletop exercises helps leadership teams understand what a disruption would cost and how to achieve a swift return to business operations.



Navigating the Risks and Rewards of AI

Artificial intelligence is dominating business conversations, offering both distinct advantages and hidden dangers. One emerging threat is "shadow AI," which occurs when employees bring unvetted technology into the business. For example, a worker might use a free AI engine to process a financial spreadsheet, unintentionally teaching the AI proprietary company data. To prevent sensitive information from becoming compromised, Humiston advises companies to establish strict AI policies and utilize closed, confidential AI subscriptions.

When used responsibly, AI is a powerful tool to speed up creativity and business outcomes. ADKtechs leverages artificial intelligence to parse through security event logs across networks, cloud platforms, and endpoints. The technology quickly identifies anomalies like "impossible travel," a scenario where a user account logs in from distant locations, such as New York and Florida, within an impossibly short timeframe. However, AI still requires human expertise to filter out false positives. ADKtechs maintains a dedicated, full-time position solely for reviewing these security alerts to ensure accurate threat detection.



Cultivating Culture for Client Success

Beyond servers and software, the foundation of a successful IT firm is its people. The recent move to a vibrant new mixed-use location was driven by a desire to enhance company culture. The space provides employees with convenient access to nearby amenities, honoring the idea that an employee's time is a valuable form of currency.

This investment in employee well-being directly benefits clients. High employee retention means customers interact with familiar faces who possess deep, tribal knowledge of their specific network environments. Currently, nearly the entire staff has been with the company for several years. For businesses navigating a complex digital world, partnering with a forward-thinking provider with a strong local team is essential for long-term growth. ■

MAY

UPCOMING NETWORKING EVENTS

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

SARATOGA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Saratoga County Chamber's Annual Celebration Night 2026 **07 MAY**
 Exclusive Sponsor Reception: 4:30-5:30 PM
 Main Celebration: 5:30-7:30 PM
 The 1863 Club, The Saratoga Race Course, Saratoga Springs
 Registration required: <https://saratogacounty.chambermaster.com/eventregistration/register/42229>

Monthly Networking Mixer at The Canopy **14 MAY**
 4:30 - 6:30 PM
 The Canopy
 697 US-9, Wilton
 Fees & Admission: \$10 for members

CAPITAL REGION CHAMBER

YPN Morning Connect & Keynote **19 MAY**
 8 - 9:30 AM
 5 Computer Drive South, Albany
 Fees/Admission: \$15 per person
 Registration: <https://members.capitalregionchamber.com/ap/Events/Register/BDFNBk9IaCKC0>. Registration closes May 15.

MEETING POINT

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

Saratoga Springs Chapter **21 MAY**
 8:30 AM
 Saratoga National Bank, 171 S Broadway, Saratoga Springs

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

ARCC EVENTS

ARCC May Mixer at Adirondack Winery **21 MAY**
 4 - 6 PM
 Adirondack Winery
 395 Big Bay Road, Queensbury
 Fees & Admission: \$15 for ARCC Members and \$25 for Not-Yet Members

AMA COFFEE AND CONNECTIONS - SARATOGA

28 MAY
 8:30 - 9:30 AM
 Kru Coffee
 46 Marion Avenue, Saratoga Springs

LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB

After-Hours Business Mixer at Jamo's Pub **20 MAY**
 5 - 7 PM
 Jamo's Pub
 192 Canada Street, Lake George
 Registration Required: <https://pci.jotform.com/form/260775685371165>
 Join the Lake George Regional Chamber for a fun evening of networking, community connection, and karaoke! Whether you're ready to grab the mic or just cheer on your fellow attendees, karaoke will be a big part of the fun at this lively mixer. Come enjoy tasty bites, great company, and a relaxed, upbeat atmosphere while making new connections with fellow members and guests. It's the perfect midweek excuse to get out, mingle, and sing along — we hope to see you there!

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02

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03

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EPISODE 122

The Pivot That Revolutionized Shepherd Communication & Security

In this episode, hosts Michael Nelson and Derek Foster sit down with Richard Ruzzo, who shares how he built Shepherd Communication & Security from a small telecom contracting operation into a growing commercial security company by refocusing the business, embracing enterprise thinking, and betting on the right people. He talks about losing a major revenue stream, rebuilding from the ground up, and the lessons every trade business owner should learn.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 123

Perfection, Processes & Growth at Lazzaro's Autobody

In this episode, host Derek Foster welcomes back guest Josh Jewett for an in-depth conversation on his path from a Hudson Valley Community College auto-body student to owning Lazzaro's Autobody and acquiring a second shop in Saratoga—all within six months. Josh shares hard-won lessons on perfectionism, implementing shop processes, mentoring his team, continuing education, and the mindset required to scale a blue-collar business.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 124

Real Leadership Lessons for Trades with Codey Gandy

In this episode, hosts Michael Nelson and Derek Foster chat with Codey Gandy of Echelon Front as he breaks down what real leadership looks like in the trades, and why most people get it wrong. From extreme ownership to building strong relationships, this conversation is packed with practical insights for anyone looking to grow a team or business.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



EPISODE 125

Building the Future of Concrete with Sarah Patrie

In this episode, guest host Stacy Spector sits down with Sarah Patrie to explore her journey from growing up in a construction family to becoming Executive Director of PCI Northeast, highlighting the power of mentorship, industry involvement, and embracing nontraditional career paths. They dive into workforce development, innovation in concrete, and the critical role of relationships and associations in long-term success in the trades.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



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!**

EPISODE 71



**Visual Storytelling:
The Creative Journey of Todd Bailey**

In this episode, Mike Nelson catches up with creative powerhouse Todd Bailey to discuss his fascinating evolution from a performing musician to a Forbes-published photographer and fractional CMO. They dive deep into the impact of AI on content creation, the wild world of muscle cars, and why small businesses benefit immensely from fractional marketing leadership.



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EPISODE 72



Declutter Your Life & Mind with Brandon Dewyea

In this episode, host Mike Nelson sits down with Brandon Dewyea as she shares how her work as a stylist and wellness professional helps people feel more confident, organized, and mentally at ease. From decluttering your environment to experiencing vibroacoustic therapy, this conversation explores how rest and simplicity can transform your daily life.



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EPISODE 73



Inside the World Awareness Children's Museum

In this episode, host Mike Nelson sits down with Bethanie Lawrence to explore how the World Awareness Children's Museum is bringing global culture and creativity to kids in the local community. They dive into nonprofit leadership, navigating challenges like the pandemic, and the importance of arts education in childhood development.



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EPISODE 74

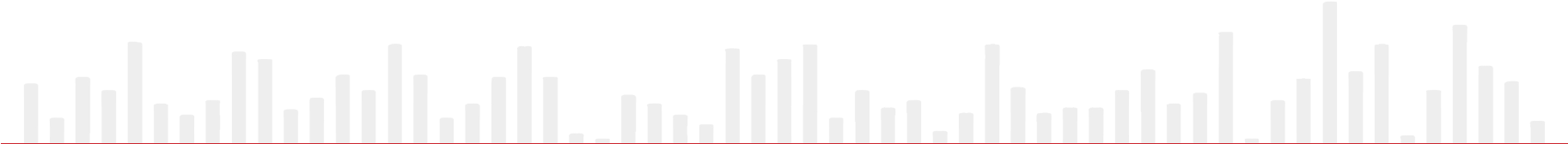


How Jay Ingleston Emotionally Connects With Readers

In this episode, Author Jay Ingleston returns to the show to talk about his latest book, *Just for Today: Small Words for Heavy Days*, his evolving writing process, and the emotional impact of creating work centered around grief, growth, and connection. The conversation dives into everything from self-publishing and AI tools to the challenges of writing fiction and the mindset shifts that have shaped his career.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



LISTEN ON



Running a fractional firm shouldn't take multiple tools.

A time tracker. A CRM. A project manager. Plus a spreadsheet to hold it all together.

For fractional CFOs, bookkeepers, agencies, and nonprofits, the tools don't talk. Clients can't see their own data. Reports are manual. Audit trails are shaky. So you build workarounds — and the workarounds become the job.

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