Today 34°/26° · Sunday 39°/23° · Monday 40°/31° · Tuesday 40°/30° · Wednesday 44°/32° · Thursday 40°/25° · Friday 32°/21°

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Domination
B-B/LR boys swimming and diving claims Class C title
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Your hometown guide to news, events, local businesses, and more!

The Le Roy Weekend Gazette

Volume 2, No. 16 · www.thedailynewsonline.com/leroyweekendgazette · Saturday, February 14th, 2026 / FREE

Proudly Celebrating
NATIONAL JELL-O WEEK!
The Le Roy Historical Society
23 EAST MAIN STREET, LE ROY, NY · JELLO GALLERY OPEN THURS-SAT 10-4 · SUN 1-4

Tracing the History of Jell-O

By LYNNE BELLUSCIO
Special to The Le Roy Weekend Gazette

Students at Brigham Young University in 2001 declared the second week in February as National Jell-O Week.

It was a humorous way of acknowledging Utah's high rate of Jell-O consumption. The local restaurants offered Jell-O and people enjoyed sharing Jell-O recipes.

Whether it had anything to do with the fact that Salt Lake City was hosting the winter Olympics in 2002 was never discussed.

Nevertheless, the following year, the Utah State Legislature declared Jell-O to be the official "State Snack." And so, the tradition continues 25 years later, although there is no indication that Jell-O will be served in Milan-Cortina, Italy during the 2026 Winter Olympics.

The story of Jell-O begins in 1897, when Pearle Wait, a carpenter in Le Roy, decided to register Jell-O as trademark. And that included the hyphen.

The Wait family believes that it was Pearle's wife May, who coined the name.

It's important to remember that Pearle did not patent a recipe for a sugary, fruit flavored gelatin dessert — he trademarked the word Jell-O. Eventually the Jell-O trademark would be placed on puddings, no-bake desserts, and even clothing.

At the time, there were other gelatins on the market including Peter Cooper's gelatin. He had patented a gelatin in 1845 which was a byproduct of his company which made animal glue.

Gelatins, or jellies as they were called, had been around for a couple of hundred years before Peter Cooper. They were delicacies enjoyed only by the rich and were often the centerpiece on the table.

Knox Gelatin, introduced in 1889 by Dr. Charles Knox, was an unflavored, unsweetened, powdered gelatin, marketed as a health food.

When Pearle Wait introduced Jell-O, he bought the sugar, flavoring, coloring, and powdered gelatin and then mixed the ingredients together, perhaps as some people believe, on his kitchen table. The first four flavors were strawberry, raspberry, lemon, and orange.

Wait made a living as a carpenter and built houses in Le Roy. In his spare time, he tried mixing cough medicines and other "patent" medicines as they were called.

But it seems that he didn't have much success selling his new gelatin product, and in 1899 he decided to sell the Jell-O trademark to a successful businessman in Le Roy, Orator Woodward for $450. That would be about $17,500 today.

Woodward was in the patent medicine business and dabbled in other ventures. As a young man, he made plaster of Paris-medicated nest eggs to put under hens to kill lice.

Woodward owned the Genesee Pure Food Company which manufactured a coffee substitute called Grain-O. Initially, he had difficulty selling Jell-O, but he decided to hire an advertising company in New York City, which quickly placed Jell-O advertisements in national magazines such as the Ladies Home Journal.

Jell-O produced brightly-colored recipe books which were given out free by his salesmen when they traveled town-to-town. They did not have to apply for a salesman's license because they weren't selling Jell-O door to door.

Woodward was also shrewd enough to supply his salesmen with small legal primers advising them of their rights. After the salesmen gave away the free recipe books, they would go to the local grocery store and supply them with boxes of Jell-O.

Like many other companies, the Jell-O Company chose a child to be the spokesperson for its products. It introduced the Jell-O Girl in 1904.

The Jell-O Girl was dressed in a green dress with red polka dots and her image appeared in Jell-O cookbooks, magazine ads, and on the Jell-O box into the 1940s. Jell-O hired the famous artist Rose O'Neill to paint her portrait which was used for advertising.

In less than 10 years, Jell-O was grossing $1 million annually.

Orator Woodward died in 1906. His eldest son, Ernest, soon became president of the company.

The Le Roy factory on North Street, located next to the railroad tracks, continued to expand. It was primarily a packaging plant employing up to 350 people.

The gelatin was manufactured in Woburn, Massachusetts at the Atlantic Gelatin Company. Another factory was located in Canada.

Jell-O advertising was critical to the success of the

See JELL-O A2

COURTESY OF LYNNE BELLUSCIO
Advertising played a big role in establishing Jell-O's popularity as a major brand.

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Looking Back with Lynne

The Story of Esther Stevenson

By LYNNE BELLUSCIO
Special to The Le Roy Weekend Gazette

PHOTO PROVIDED: LYNNE BELLUSCIO
Esther Stevenson (back row, left corner) with the 1911 Le Roy senior class.

In 1911, Esther Stevenson stood with the Le Roy senior class to have their photograph taken on the steps of the new Union Free School on Trigon Park. The class of 1911 was the first class to graduate from the new school. Esther is the tall girl standing in the back row on the far left, dressed in a dark skirt and white blouse. She and her brothers and eight sisters lived with their parents, Charles and Katherine Stevenson on East Avenue in the village.

After graduation, Esther continued her education at the Normal School in Geneseo and graduated on June 24, 1913. She then moved east to Hillburn, New York in Rockland County to start a job as a teacher in the Brook School. She taught in Hillburn for at least three years. According to the September 28, 1916, issue of The New York Age, a newspaper which published articles for the Black community across the state — "Miss Esther Stevenson, a teacher for the past three years in the public schools of Hillburn, N.Y. returned last Saturday morning to resume her occupation after having spent a pleasant vacation with her parents Mr. and Mrs. C.M. Stevenson of East Avenue."

It also noted that she had attended the Batavia Fair with her sister Gertrude. Further down the page under "Community News" from Hillburn: "The public School opened on Monday, September 25, with full attendance."

What the article doesn't mention, is that the school in Hillburn, unlike the school in Le Roy, was deeply segregated. Black students were only allowed to attend the Brook School. The Black families had been drawn to Rockland County to work in the foundry and wheel works. The community also had a fairly large population of Native American families who were drawn to the area. They all settled in an area known as "the Hollow" in the western part of town near a small creek and the area became known as the "Brook Community." The Hollow was separated from the White section of Hillburn by a major highway through Rockland County, which eventually became Route 17.

Hillburn is located in the town of Ramapo in Rockland County. It is a very old community, tracing its history back before the Revolution. Early school classes were held in a log cabin which also served as a church, but Black students and the Native American children were not allowed to attend school.

The town was incorporated in 1893. In 1889, a small 2-room school was built for the Black students. It was located in the Hollow and became the Brook School. In 1913, two more rooms were added which allowed two grades in each room, yet students still had to share desks, and the school never had indoor plumbing or proper heat.

Elaine Booten, who was Esther's niece, had two postcards of Esther standing with her students on the steps of the Brook School. Along the bottom was written: "Colored Section and School." Kate Savery served as principal. Her father was William Savery, a carpenter, who was born into slavery. Esther too was only a generation from slavery and had heard the "old folks sitting around the table in the kitchen talking about the times when Black people were owned." Kate Savery had graduated from Talladega College and moved to Hillburn at the same time Esther had arrived. Kate taught 7th and 8th grades and coached the boys' basketball team. During her tenure she resigned periodically in protest of the segregated system in Hillburn. Other Black students went on to college despite the segregation. One was Hulda DeFreese, who was born in 1908, attended Hillburn for eleven years and went on to Suffern High School and earned a BA from Geneseo and a MA from New York University. She joined the WAACs in World War 11 in 1942.

In 1912, a new school was built for the White students. It was a two-story tile and concrete building finished with stucco. It had 8 classrooms, a library, a gymnasium, a playground and indoor plumbing. Remember, Esther had graduated in 1911 from the new school in Le Roy. One can only imagine what it was like for her, growing up in Le Roy where the schools were never segregated, to be thrust into a segregated school system like Hillburn.

It is not known how long Esther taught at the Brook School. Census records indicate that in 1925 she was back home, living with her family. She eventually moved to New York City and lived with two of her sisters. She worked for a while as a seamstress and died in the Harlem Hospital on June 19, 1960. The question remains – did she know of the part the Brook School would play in the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas, which overturned the 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson doctrine of "separate but equal" doctrine.

In 1938, New York State passed legislation prohibiting segregated schools, but for many communities like Hillburn, the state mandate was ignored. The Black community in Hillburn was cognizant of the situation. In 1930, there were 129 students attending the Brook School – still with no library, gymnasium, proper heat, and only outhouses. Thomas Alexander who lived in Hillburn and had attended the Brook School, contacted the NAACP. The lawyer for the NAACP at that time was Thurgood Marshall. He drafted a petition to the New York State Commissioner of Education demanding an end to segregation. The Commissioner ruled the Brook School unsafe, which led to the integration of the district. Marshall would use this successful argument several years later in 1954 when he presented the case of to win the Supreme Court Case in 1954 known as Brown vs the School Board in Topeka, Kansas which ruled that racial segregation was unconstitutional, even if it supported an "separate but equal" position. Marshall went on to become the first Black American to be appointed to the supreme Court, serving from 1967 to 1991. In 2010, the NY State Legislature designated May 17 as "Thurgood Marshall Day" in honor of his work in civil rights.

Today, the story of the segregated schools in Hillburn is preserved in the documentary, "Two Schools in Hillburn." In fact, a photograph of Esther Stevenson, standing with her Brook School class quickly flashes across the screen. The Brook School was demolished many years ago. Only the foundation remains on private property. Efforts to buy the land and create a historic park have not been successful. A large plaque, explaining the story of the Brook School is displayed in front of the new Hillburn school.

Special thank you to several people who have helped discover information for this article: Jim Finnegan, Milne Library, SUNY Geneseo; Marianne Leese, Historian, Rockland County Historical Society; Trish Riggi, Woodward Memorial Library.

JELL-O

From A1

company. Commercial artists included Norman Rockwell and John Newton Howitt.

With the popularity of radio, Jell-O sponsored the Jack Benny radio show and his announcer would start the show with the famous song: "J E L L O!"

In 1923, the Genesee Pure Food Company changed its name to the Jell-O Company, in order to protect the trademark. In 1925, Jell-O and the Postum Company merged to become General Foods, and soon absorbed Minute Tapioca, Bakers' Chocolate, Birdseye Frozen Foods, Log Cabin Maple Syrup, and Maxwell House Coffee.

And interesting sidenot: Postum was owned by Margaret Meriweather Post, who owned a huge mansion in Florida. She would only serve food with the General Foods label, including Jell-O. After her death, the State of Florida bought the mansion, Mara Largo, in order to preserve it. The state later sold it to Donald Trump.

In 1964, General Foods closed the Jell-O factory in Le Roy, and moved production to Dover, Delaware. Some LeRoy employees moved to Dover with their families.

Since then, the Jell-O factory on North Street has been the home to a variety of small businesses and is now privately owned. It is located next to Machpelah Cemetery, where both Pearle Wait and Orator Woodward are buried.

In 1997, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of America's Most Famous Dessert, the Le Roy Historical Society opened the Jell-O Gallery Museum in the Academic Building behind LeRoy House on East Main Street.

Grants provided by General Foods/Kraft provided funding for a large entrance to the 100-year old building and the renovation of the exhibition room. Additional funds were raised by selling bricks in the "Jell-O Brick Road."

The Historical Society maintains a Jell-O archive. For information about the Museum and hours call (585) 768-7433.

In 2001, Carolyn Wyman, author of "Spam: A Biography" wrote "Jell-O: A Biography." In the book she answered a lot of Jell-O questions such as "Who invented Jell-O Jigglers?"

Other questions included:

- What is gelatin?
- How to make self layering Jell-O 1-2-3?
- How many different flavors of Jell-O have been introduced?
- What is the story about Jell-O and the Rosenberg spy case?
- Is Jell-O a salad or a dessert?
- Is Jell-O wrestling dangerous?
- What is the best Jell-O shot recipe?
- How to make glow in the dark Jell-O.
- Why was Jell-O used in the movie The Ten Commandments?
- What fruits prevent Jell-O from setting?

As an added note, "National Eat Your Jell-O Day" is always on July 12.

Finally, in preparation for the Nation's 250th Anniversary this year, it's time to bring out your Berry Blue Jell-O, introduced in 1992.

Buy some red Jell-O, Knox Gelatin, and Cool whip — by the way, all the Cool Whip in the United States is manufactured in nearby Avon and make some patriotic Jell-O.

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Le Roy CSD Dismisses Claim of 'Racially Hostile' Classroom Lesson

NYCLU criticizes district in aftermath of 'sharecropping' activity

By SOL HAUSER
shauser@livingstonnews.com

The New York Civil Liberties Union criticized Le Roy Central School District on Monday for its handling of an investigation into a class activity in which students were assigned to play the role of sharecroppers on a plantation.

The activity, which was led by a supervised SUNY Geneseo student teacher, took place over two days in an eighth-grade history class last September and involved students trading pretzels while playing roles such as former slaves, sharecroppers and plantation owners, according to Tovia Poles, whose daughter was in the class. The activity "was designed to demonstrate sharecropping as 'a form of legalized slavery' and the 'cycle of poverty,'" according to a letter NYCLU sent Monday to Superintendent Merritt Holly.

Poles' daughter, the only Black student in her class, was assigned to play a slave and called Poles after class feeling "anxious and singled out," she said at the time. Only 2 percent of Le Roy students are Black, while 88 percent are white, according to the New York State Education Department.

Poles immediately told Holly and an assistant principal of her concerns, but the next day, the same activity was repeated, and Poles' daughter left class early to call her from a bathroom.

"I'm assuming because of the fact that I reached out to the assistant principal as well as the superintendent, my daughter said that it was re-explained that the children were the free slaves and the student teacher was the plantation owner," rather than being slaves and a slave master, Poles told The Daily News in September. "It's different terminology, but the same derogatory meaning."

At the time, Holly told her the district would open an investigation into whether the lesson violated the Dignity for All Students Act, a 2012 state law intended to stop bullying and harassment in schools. The district retained Genesee Valley BOCES attorney Vanessa Hanks to run the investigation, while Poles sought support from NYCLU.

Ultimately, the district determined that the lesson was not in violation of DASA.

In the Monday letter, NYCLU attorney Camara Stokes Hudson said the district's conclusion was cause for "serious concern," saying that the activity was "objectively offensive and creates a racially hostile environment" and that the school focused on the exact words used in the lesson plan rather than the activity as a whole. Stokes Hudson also referenced state DASA guidelines that were developed after a 2019 incident in which a Watertown teacher assigned Black students to play slaves in a slave auction.

"The District's investigation attempted to exonerate the lesson by focusing on whether specific terms — 'slave master' versus 'plantation owner,' or 'slaves' versus 'former slaves' — were used," Stokes Hudson wrote. "Terminology alone does not determine whether conduct is harmful. Whether students were referred to as 'slaves' or 'former slaves' and 'sharecroppers,' the fundamental problem remains: the teachers assigned students to roles in a racial hierarchy and asked them to simulate an exploitative system that targeted Black Americans."

NYCLU asked the district to acknowledge that the activity "created a racially hostile environment," prohibit simulations that require students to take on roles in racial hierarchies, provide counseling to affected students and train all staff on how to approach similar subjects in ways "that center the dignity and psychological safety of students of color."

For Poles' daughter, the activity — and the investigation — brought social fallout in the classroom, too. While Poles says that has since largely been alleviated, she remains frustrated with the way the district handled the investigation, and with its failure to respond to Freedom of Information Law requests filed by NYCLU on her behalf.

"I feel so terrible that my children have to even experience something like this," she said. "I've lived in Le Roy since I was in nursery school, and I've never had any issues myself with the school district, so this hurts. It hurts."

Holly on Tuesday dismissed NYCLU's criticism, saying that the district's review was fair and corroborated by "an outside independent investigation."

"The District's review was initiated in response to a parent's allegations regarding terminology used in the lesson and that students were 'forced into a game about slavery,'" he wrote. "Neither was found to be accurate based upon information from multiple students and staff present for the instruction.

"The NYCLU narrative comparing this lesson to a simulated slave auction is unfortunate and misplaced," he continued, referring to mentions of a 2019 incident in which a Watertown teacher assigned Black students to play slaves in a slave auction. "The NYCLU letter included quotes from state DASA compliance guidelines referencing that incident.

"The District acknowledges the importance and sensitivity with which we must teach difficult historical topics involving discrimination and social injustices such as Black history, the Holocaust, Native American history, LGBTQ history, and women's rights," Holly continued. "As we communicated directly to the parent at the conclusion of the investigation, we remain committed to reviewing our teaching methodologies to ensure they align with best educational practices and providing professional development to prepare our teachers and, in turn, their students, for such instruction."

Poles said Wednesday that Holly's statement showed a lack of understanding.

"He issued that statement but refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing in the DASA investigation," she said in a text message. "They don't see any wrongdoing that they did."

Hudson, the NYCLU attorney, also objected to Holly's characterization of the activity.

"Forcing any Black student to simulate racial hierarchies creates a racially hostile classroom environment that threatens students' rights — full stop," Hudson wrote in an emailed statement Wednesday. "Instead of telling Black children to play the role of 'former slave' or 'plantation owner' and denying how this incident impacted its students, we encourage the District to develop alternative approaches for teaching systems of racial oppression. No child should ever feel traumatized, singled out, or discriminated against in their classroom."

MARK GUTMAN/DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO
The New York Civil Liberties Union has criticized Le Roy Central School which involved students trading pretzels while playing roles such as former slaves, sharecroppers and plantation owners, according to Tovia Poles, whose daughter was in the class.

Dio's Hosts Official Magic the Gathering Regional Qualifier

By SAMUEL ZERILLO
szerillo@batavianews.com

Dio's Eclectic Treasures in Le Roy hosted official Regional Qualifiers for the trading card game Magic the Gathering (MTG) on Sunday, with 12 individuals facing off for the chance to move on to national competition.

Competitors brought their best decks, and had to have them checked and verified by the official judge of the event to make sure there were no fake cards in the mix. Then the 12 participants dove into five rounds of intensive gameplay, with the top eight point leaders moving on to the finals.

The tournament started at 10 a.m. and lasted well into the afternoon before a champion was crowned.

After the initial rounds passed, the top eight that moved on to the finals were Michael White, CJ Kopczynski, Adam Pannone, Matthew Murray, Matt Yacuzzo, Jeremiah Vezza, Kent Atkins and Kaleb Kronimus.

Once the finals were underway, it would be no. 1 seed Michael White who came away with the championship win.

White received a few unique prizes including an exclusive MTG holographic card, a pin, a lanyard, and most importantly, the opportunity to move on to the national competition at the Regional Championship Qualifiers in either Washington D.C. or Cincinnati, Ohio.

Daniel Dioguardi, co-owner of Dio's, discussed what it took for his store to get approved as an official site for a MTG Regional Qualifier.

"Well, I think part of it is your play metrics, having the right space and stuff like that and just showing a consistency and your store being able to do it," Dioguardi said. "That being said, but I don't think the approval process is painstaking, but there are certain qualifications. I mean, we obviously met them. We have the seating capacity and stuff like that."

Dioguardi hopes to host more events like this in the future, and see the number of participants rise.

"I was talking to our judge (for the MTG tournament), we were talking about holding another one in the summertime and then another one in fall. So that would be the first step. Just holding a little bit at a time. Get it worked up that we do it, getting new people here, different seasons, you know, just stuff like that. But as a store, I believe you can hold three (Regional Qualifiers) per quarter if I'm not mistaken, if I read it right. So that's three chances, three people to be able to go to each Regional Championship Qualifier," Dioguardi said.

For Dioguardi, the best part of bringing events like this to his store is seeing the excitement from participants about the hobbies they love.

"I mean I hear it, like everybody getting along, talking about their hobby, their fun," Dioguardi said. "Most of the people love it and they have fun and enjoy it, and I think that's what I enjoy most, is even if I can't mingle with them because I'm doing other things, I can still hear them having fun and enjoying themselves."

Dio's is celebrating one year of being in operation this February, and for the owners, getting the chance to host an official MTG Regional Qualifier felt like a great way to mark that anniversary.

Dioguardi and his wife Tonya hope to continue to expand offered events and programs that are available to the community at the store, including Warhammer and Dungeons and Dragons.

PHOTO PROVIDED: DANIEL DIOGUARDI
Michael White was named the winner of the Magic the Gathering Regional Qualifier in Le Roy.

ROOTED IN CHRIST
Le Roy Church Directory

Calvary Baptist Church of Le Roy
8703 Lake Street Road, Le Roy
www.calvarybaptistLeRoy.org
Sunday worship service begins at 10:15 a.m.
If you do not already have a church that you attend regularly, we would like to invite you to give Calvary Baptist Church a try. We have Sunday School for all ages at 9am and our Sunday worship service typically includes singing a mix of both traditional and contemporary songs and hymns, a children's message, and a sermon from the Word of God.

First Baptist Church of Le Roy
5 E. Main St., Le Roy
(585) 768-7600
fbcLeRoy1@gmail.com
Our Sunday Worship Service is at 10am.

First Presbyterian Church of Le Roy
7 Clay St. (on the corner of Main and Rte 19)
(585) 768-8700
We welcome all to join us for Sunday service every week at 10:00am.
The Thrift Shop is now closed for the season. We thank our community for your support this year, and look forward to seeing you when we're open in the spring!
Until then, we'll be accepting donations at the church on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00am 'til noon.

Le Roy United Methodist Church
10 Trigon Park, Le Roy
(585) 768-8980
office@LeRoyumcny.org
www.LeRoyumcny.org
Worship on Sundays at 10:30am
Watch our livestream on FB: facebook.com/villageofLeRoy/

Living Waters Church
30 Main St., Le Roy
(585) 768-7570
livingwatersLeRoy.org
Sunday service is held at 10:00am each week.
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Watch live on Facebook: www.facebook.com/livingwatersLeRoyny
YouTube Livestream: www.youtube.com/@livingwaterschurch3612

Our Lady of Mercy & St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Family
44 Lake St., Le Roy
(585) 768-6543
ourladyofmercyLeRoy.org
Mass Times @ OLM: Saturday Vigil 4:30pm; Sunday: 7:30am, 9:30am, 5:30pm; Weekday: 7:30am M-F, 9:00am Sat.
Mass Times @ St. Brigid's: Saturday Vigil 5:00pm; Weekday: 7:30am Thursday
Mass times may change in the near future.
YouTube Livestream: youtube.com/@ourladyofmercyLeRoy1890/streams

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www.stmarksLeRoy.org
Facebook: stmarksLeRoy
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Coffee hour following
Sunday school for children & adults
First Sunday of the month at 9:30am
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Group Publisher HEATHER A. ZERILLO hzerillo@batavianews.com
Regional Managing Editor BEN BEAGLE bbeagle@livingstonnews.com
Associate Editor SAMUEL ZERILLO szerillo@batavianews.com
How to reach us: 438 E. Main St., Batavia, NY 14020
PHONE: 585-250-0555
E-MAIL: gazette@batavianews.com
ADVERTISING: sales@batavianews.com
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CO.STARTERS Program Accepting Applications

Program's new sessions begin in March in Avon

By DAN FOLTS
dfolts@livingstonnews.com

Dreams, hopes, and ambitions. That's what many prospective business owners start with.

That was the case for Jessie Held, long before starting her community wellness business in Caledonia.

"The seed was planted nearly a decade ago," said Held, owner of Magic Held Here, which was recently named the Most Promising New Enterprise of 2025 by the Livingston County Area Chamber of Commerce.

Held wanted a country house with space to host a yoga studio, retreats, and workshops as early as 2015, but when that did not become available, she continued to teach yoga and dream.

Eventually, when the timing was right, she sought help at the Livingston County Economic Development office and enrolled in its 10-week course called "CO.STARTERS."

"CO.STARTERS helped me understand my business as a business. While my passion lies in the creative and wellness side — including art, yoga, branding, and events — the program forced me to look at the numbers: how to cover costs, how to value my time, and how to shift from a passion to a professional enterprise."

The LCED office is offering another round of its 10-week course on Monday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Avon Town Hall, Genesee Street, from March 16 to May 18.

Cost for the course is typically $600, but Grow LivCo is making the course available to participants for only $100 per person.

Interested individuals must apply to participate as the class size is limited to 12. Priority for enrollment will be given to Livingston County businesses and/or residents. Applications are due Feb. 16.

Held will be co-facilitating the course with Deputy Director of Economic Development Maureen Wheeler.

"She shared with me that one of her goals this year was to get more involved in the community, and she mentioned specifically wanting to speak at an event or facilitate an event," said Wheeler.

"So, we started brainstorming together and thought this would be a great match," Wheeler said.

Held took the class in 2024, and then she went on to win the "Dream-o-vate" competition, a retail business plan competition that encourages entrepreneurs to compete for the chance to open a storefront and earn a business startup package.

"I think it's great that the students will get to hear from an existing business owner who has gone through this process very recently and can talk about the hurdles that she ran into and the solutions she came up with," Wheeler said.

"I think that'll be really beneficial for them," said Wheeler.

"I am so excited about this session because my main goal as a co-facilitator is to bridge that gap between the big, visionary thinking we all love and the actual, practical execution it takes to get there," Held said.

Both Held and Wheeler are certified instructors for the CO.STARTERS program.

"The curriculum is brilliant because it starts with the 'who' and the 'why.' It forced me to get clear on who my customer was and what specific problem I am solving for them. For me, that is providing an intimate atmosphere for connection — whether through yoga, women's circles, or community events," Held said.

Many local entrepreneurs have gone through the program. Last year, there were 56 participants, plus another 20 to 30 in 2024, said Wheeler. Businesses such as Cedar House Wellness in Geneseo, T's on Genesee in Avon, and Dansville Gymnastics have all participated in the program.

This year, however, there are some changes. For one, the class is no longer tied to grant funding. It is a standalone course.

But the course will also be different this year because Wheeler wants to emphasize the process of adapting a business to a changing environment through inquiry and experimentation.

"This curriculum is much more fast-paced, and it's all about testing assumptions. We start off right away putting their assumptions down on paper, then talking to potential customers to see if are they headed down the right path, or if they need to pivot," Wheeler said.

"We're really teaching them that process so that they can use it over and over again to continue moving their business in a successful direction," she said.

Wheeler also emphasized that participants will get to learn from each other, not just her and Held. There will also be guest speakers at each session tailored to the kinds of businesses that the participants want to start, and Wheeler has plans to take enrollees to visit some of the businesses in the county as well.

"We're really building this entrepreneur ecosystem, and they are networking with each other and continuing to make partnerships," Wheeler said.

The Economic Development office can also help with potential financing, business locations, and marketing efforts.

"The biggest part of it is on them to get out and talk to customers. On day one in the class, we talk about how important those customer conversations are. It's actually something we track over the course of the 10 weeks," Wheeler said.

Wheeler says they will also encourage entrepreneurs to start small.

"If they can pop up at a farmer's market, or pop up at a festival or event, or offer something through social media just to test that product, test that service, and make new customer connections, that's the best way to go," Wheeler said.

"And there are cases — and we consider this a success as well — if somebody takes the class and realizes, 'I don't want to start a business,' or they start small and realize it isn't for them, they didn't invest so much upfront to realize that. So, that's the goal, too — that they don't go into debt testing this out," said Wheeler.

That small start is what got Held's business off the ground. Her first studio space was in a renovated outbuilding that was once a chicken coop.

"It has allowed me to grow a business organically while remaining a stay-at-home-mom first. I am in control of my schedule and my events, and I know that as my children grow, Magic Held Here will grow right alongside them," Held said.

Besides the renovated "Coop Studio," Magic Held Here also hosts a 23-foot bell tent called "Avalon" for events as well as through pop-up partnerships, including yoga sessions in the Salt Cave at Native Wellness & Aesthetics, outdoor classes at Genesee Valley Lavender Farms, and an annual Brooms and Brews event at Strange Design Public House.

"The best advice I can give any entrepreneur is to look at the resources already at your fingertips. Start with your circle — your friends, family, and industry peers. The more information you gather and the more time you dedicate to your craft, the faster you'll gain clarity on what you truly want your business to be," Held said.

"Once that vision is clear, don't hold back," she said. "Tap into every available resource to bring it to life."

For more information about the Livingston County Economic Development and the CO.STARTERS program, visit www.growlivco.com

'Music at St. Mark's' Returns This Week in Le Roy

By MATT SURTEL
msurtel@batavianews.com

Popular favorites. New musical languages. Bluegrass.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church is gearing up for the fifth annual "Music at St. Mark's" concert series starting this month. The free concerts run 7 to 8 p.m. Thursday evenings at the church on at 1 East Main St.

Four acts are being featured this year, including:

Strummerz

Strummerz presented music of the 50s, 60s and 70s on Thursday.

Rich Conroy and Don Bouchard of Batavia comprise the group. They're well-known for rock favorites and their Irish music, which they perform as No Blarney.

Their laid-back and entertaining concerts include fan favorites, program officials said in a news release. Conroy and Bouchard are guitarists and singers, and both initially got started by studying classical guitar.

Ravi Padmanabha and David Mussen

Ravi Padmanabha and David Mussen will perform March 19. They have played music for many years in various groups.

Their recently formed duo encompasses a newfound musical language, series organizers said.

The duo have combined years of various musical styles using gongs, crystal bowls, tabla, hand pan, clarinet, and ocean drum to create a full musical experience that traverses ambient meditation to ecstatic trance music, series organizers said. Their music is a balance of composition and improvising.

Dr. Padmanabha is known locally as the dentist and owner of LeRoy Dental Center, but he also is a composer, improvisor and multi-instrumentalist. He has spent many years studying and playing a wide variety of music including jazz, world, Indian, and experimental music.

He has studied with many masters from India, has led various musical projects and is on numerous recordings.

Mussen is a multi-instrumentalist musician and songwriter based in Buffalo. He has a passion for music and its intersection with culture, which has led him to explore various genres and styles of music throughout his career.

A versatile musician, he is equally comfortable playing western swing, original music or Afro-Latin street music. He believes that music is a powerful tool that can bring people together and bridge cultural divides with the power to heal and transform lives for the better.

Pablo Willey-Bustos and Priscilla Yuen

Pablo Willey-Bustos and Priscilla Yuen will present "Gracias a la Vida: Music and Poetry of Chile" on April 16.

Willey-Bustos is a tenor and Yuen plays piano. Musical selections include pieces by classical and contemporary composers and will include commentary by Willey-Bustos.

Willey-Bustos holds bachelor's and master's degrees in vocal performance from the Eastman School of Music and is currently an instructor at the Eastman School and Nazareth University. He was invited in 2020 to create a course on Spanish lyric diction for Summer@Eastman, which attracted a wide range of students from across the globe.

Willey-Bustos has had multiple operatic engagements and often appears as a guest soloist. In addition to teaching and performing, he is also the Music Director at the First Unitarian Church of Rochester.

Yuen received her undergraduate training at the University of Missouri and her Masters of Music degree in Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music from the Eastman School of Music where she is now a faculty member.

A noted accompanist, Yuen regularly supports instrumentalists and vocalists from across the Eastman community as they prepare for recitals, competitions and recordings, and she has also served as the accompanist for the International Trombone Festival.

She also serves on the piano faculty at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Creek Bend

Creek Bend will round out the series on May 21.

The popular bluegrass band has been based in Buffalo for more than 30 years, where it has been playing and producing local concerts with the greatest names in bluegrass music. The band members play a wide range of instruments.

Rich Schaefer, bass player is an original member of Creek Bend. As the MC, Rich mixes one liners and story telling with the musical stage presentation.

Schaefer was the voice of bluegrass for the longrunning "Bluegrass on a Sunday Night" series on WBFO in Buffalo.

Brendan Gosson is the new addition to Creek Bend, playing fiddle and mandolin. He also plays with the Folkfaces and the Buffalo Bluegrass All Stars and is well known in bluegrass circles in upstate New York, having played for a long time in the Syracuse area.

He teaches fiddle at the bluegrass academy for kids at the Grey Fox Bluegrass festival.

Chris Panfil plays guitar, mandolin, fiddle and vocals. He played "Bluegrass Southern Style" in the 1980s in Florida and later, in Nashville, played with many Grand Ol Opry stars, recorded demo sessions and performed in the house band at the "Stagecoach" Lounge, a popular musicians hangout in Nashville.

He joined Creek Bend to perform and play the northeastern US bluegrass festival circuit and has written several songs for the band.

Mark Panfil, dobro, banjo, harmonica, and vocals, has played with Creek Bend since 1983. He is a music teacher at an elementary school in Western New York where he also directs a student fiddle group.

He was formerly a part of the Erie Lackawanna Railroad, a school performance group for Young Audiences, Inc. He has taught dobro at the Augusta Heritage Workshops in Elkins, West Virginia for more than 15 years and his harmonica prowess has earned him Youtube notoriety for his "hands free" method of playing without hands or a rack.

This upcoming series highlights a wide range of very talented musicians, organizers said. For more information, please visit stmarksleroy.org/upcoming-events.

This series is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Regrant Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by GO ART!

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Question of the Week

Question from The Le Roy Weekend Gazette staff

Favorite recipe that includes Jell-O?

HAVE AN ANSWER? SHARE IT WITH US IN THE COMMENTS OF OUR FACEBOOK POST!

Previous question - **"What's something stupid you bought that seemed okay at the time?"**

VALARIE W.	LYNNE B.	ANGIE M.
Hamburger press	Avocado green shag carpet	That time I decided a pet goat was exactly what I needed.... Which was quickly shown to be a bad idea

Have an answer you want to share with us directly? Send your answers to bfunderburk@batavianews.com

Question of the Week sponsored by: www.CasperFarmsBeef.com • Crystal (585) 478-6326 • 6671 Main Road, Stafford, NY 14143

What's Up Le Roy?

Events Coming Up in Our Community!

Saturday, Feb 14
9am - 10:30am
Great Backyard Bird Count
Join the Genesee County Parks for the Great Backyard Bird Count! The GBBC is an annual community science event sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Birders around the world will be counting birds throughout the weekend. Our observations will help scientists understand bird populations in the wintertime. Join us for an easy-paced walk, we'll spend time watching birds visiting feeders so dress warm! Beginners are welcome. Field guides and binoculars will be available to borrow. Cost is $5/person, $10/family. Meet at Pavilion B near Veterans Memorial.
Genesee County Park & Forest
Memory Lane, East Bethany

10am - 2pm
2nd Annual Paws For a Cause
To benefit volunteers for animals & the Genesee County Animal Shelter. Please stop by to drop off items from the provided donation list or make a monetary contribution. We'll also be hosting a chance auction featuring gift certificates from local businesses.
Smokin' Eagle BBQ & Grill
9 Main St., Le Roy

9pm
Sip Happens
Valentine's Night at Euphoria Bar & Lounge is where flirting meets finesse. Cupid-inspired cocktails, Smooth & sexy vibes by DJ Dan, Love is optional... vibes are mandatory. Couples welcome. Singles encouraged. Come dressed to impress & ready to sip.
Euphoria Bar & Lounge
60 Main St., Batavia

Sunday, Feb 15
8:30am - 11:30am
Fundraiser Breakfast to benefit All Babies Cherished
Served buffet includes pancakes, eggs, sausage patties, breakfast potatoes, fruit, coffee, and juice!
Knights of Columbus Hall
15 W. Main St., Le Roy

Wednesday, Feb 18
7pm
Ash Wednesday Worship Service
The Lenten Season is right around the corner.
First Baptist Church
5 E. Main St., Le Roy

Saturday, Feb 21
1 - 4pm
Godfrey's Pond Spaghetti Dinner!
Are you looking for a delightful afternoon filled with good food, great company, and an opportunity to support a meaningful cause? Join us at Godfrey's Pond in the Clubhouse for a special pasta dinner event that promises to be an enriching experience for everyone involved. Ticket Purchase: Tickets for the dinner can be conveniently purchased online through the link below or on our website: https://godfreyspond.com/spaghetti-dinner-fundraiser-2/. Alternatively, you can reserve your tickets by contacting Maralyn Watts at 585-443-0453 and pay at the door upon arrival. Adults (Age 11+) = $15.00, Children (Age 6-10) = $10.00, Children (Age 5 and Under) - FREE
Genesee County Fish & Game Protective Association
7935 Bigelow Dr., Bergen

4pm
Sprinkle Showdown: Survey Says Style
Join us for an evening full of laughter, good food, friendly competition, and community fun — all while supporting Sundae's Sprinkle of Hope and the families we serve.
Dinner & Audience Admission: $20
Audience Only Admission: $10
Lottery Drawn Teams (of 5): $10
All proceeds from the Sprinkle Showdown go directly to helping individuals and families facing health challenges by providing medical equipment, gas and grocery assistance, and other vital support through Sundae's Sprinkle of Hope.
Botts Fiorito American Legion Post #576
53 W. Main St., Le Roy

6pm
Meat Raffle
Doors open at 6:00; first pull at 7:00
Bring your singles, snacks and coolers!
Online and cash sale available.
$15/person
$120/table of 8 - includes large pizza!
Oakfield Fire Dept.
20 Albert St., Oakfield

Saturday, March 21
10am - 3pm
2nd Annual Lucky Paws Basket Raffle & Vendor Show
a fun-filled day of shopping, prizes, food, music, and furry friends that you won't want to miss!
Batavia City Centre
102 Main St., Batavia

Wednesday, Mar 11
6:30pm
Le Roy Garden Club Free Program: Buffalo Garden Walks Armchair Tour
The famed Buffalo Garden Walk is an annual event that is one of the high points of summer in Western New York. Join us for an armchair tour of some of the fabulous gardens featured over the years, presented by CCE Master Gardener Brenda Fox. This meeting is free and open to the public. We suggest that non members give a $5 donation at the door to help support the Garden Club's community projects. Stay for refreshments and sit in on the Club's business meeting to learn more about what we do as a volunteer organization. Please sign up to let us know you're coming: https://bit.ly/gardenclub2026mar. The event is also posted on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/events/1435293201370673.
First Presbyterian Church of Le Roy
7 Clay Street, Le Roy, NY

ONGOING:

Mondays
10:30 - 11am
All Ages Storytimes
Join Miss Melissa or Miss Sara for stories and songs of a new theme each week, plus a mix of flannel board activities, instruments, and/or bubbles! Children 1 - 5 years old, but siblings of all ages are welcome to join. Registration is appreciated!*
*Registering for one will sign you up for the remainder of the session, Oct. 20 - Dec. 15. This gives us a general idea of how many people to expect from week to week.
Woodward Memorial Library
7 Wolcott St., Le Roy

6 - 10pm
Modern Monday
$10 entry (includes 1 booster pack of current set)
Weekly event:
Sign-ups begin at 5:00 pm
Round 1 begins promptly at 6 pm
Players entering after 6 pm will receive a round 1 loss
Format: Modern Constructed. 3 rounds
Prizes: Go 3-0 and get $15 in Store Credit!
Go 2-1 and get $5 in Store Credit!
Additional prizes will be awarded based upon 1st, 2nd, 3rd place running leader board for this event and set. Final day will be last Monday prior to prerelease of the next set.
Dio's Eclectic Treasures
8 Lake St., Le Roy

Tuesdays
6 - 8pm
Weekly Flesh & Blood Armory
We would love to offer the community FaB at our play space. We are open to hosting whatever people are interested in playing! Bring a friend or group on out and enjoy yourselves! Top 6 prizes.
Dio's Eclectic Treasures
8 Lake St., Le Roy

Fridays
1 - 7pm
Friday Night Magic the Gathering
People are welcome to come (in pairs or groups) anytime during our business hours (1-7pm) and play free play. Sign up for the event through the WPN event link website. People are welcome to do this any day (Mon-Sun) between 1-7pm. D&D, Pokémon, YuGiOh, or any other family friendly game play also welcomed in our game room! Contact us via call or text if you have any questions (585) 356-7579
Dio's Treasures
8 Lake St., Le Roy

MAGIC MAZE ● WORDS HEARD IN A CONTROL TOWER

I I F D B Y W U S Q O M K F Y
I F D B Z E T I D E P X E F A
X W U N S Q T M T O N R L O W
J A F F I R M A T I V E H E N
F D C A O A G E E Y W G V K U
T S Q B P O G B N L L O K A R
I H A F T E C A B Z B R Y T S
W G N I D N A L Y K W A U Q S
V U X S D N U O R A O G N R O
Q A P N M L D N E C S E D U R
T R O H S D L O H J B M I L C

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: CLEARED FOR

Abeam · Abort · Affirmative · Climb · Cross runway · Descend · Expedite · Go around · Hold short · Landing · Roger · Say again · Squawk · Taxi to gate · Unable

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Super Crossword — NBA PLAY

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Weekly SUDOKU

	1		7	4			8	3
4	9	8	6	5		1	2	
		2			1			5
		6		8		3		
3			1		5	8	9	
	1		3	4		5		2
	2					4	6	1
			4			2	5	9
	4			6				

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆
◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of Honduras?
2. FOOD & DRINK: What is the name of the Pillsbury Doughboy?
3. TELEVISION: In which state is the sitcom "Roseanne" set?
4. PSYCHOLOGY: What is the fear represented in the condition called arachibutyrophobia?
5. MUSIC: Which 1992 Radiohead song has the lyric "I wish I was special"?
6. MOVIES: Who is Indiana Jones' nemesis in "Raiders of the Lost Ark"?
7. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president is known for giving the longest inauguration speech to date?
8. LITERATURE: "Cry, the Beloved Country" is a novel set in which country?
9. HISTORY: Which organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1917?
10. ANATOMY: Which element is a primary component of bones?

RIVALS SPORTS INSIDER

Wilson Hits Game-Winner, Le Roy Girls Basketball Takes Down Geneseo in Defensive Battle

By SAMUEL ZERILLO
szerillo@batavianews.com

Le Roy girls basketball put on another defensive clinic in a Tuesday night matchup against Geneseo, as the Oatkan Knights would end up taking down a very tough opponent with a final score of 36-34.

This was a back-and-forth battle throughout, as Geneseo led for the first three quarters of the game, with Le Roy always keeping it close.

It was Kylie Wilson who would provide the heroics for Le Roy in this one, as she would drain a 3-pointer with 34 seconds left to go in the contest to give Le Roy its first lead of the game.

The Le Roy defense took it from there, staying strong as the clock wound down to ride that two-point lead into the win.

Wilson ended the game with a team-leading 10 points and added four steals.

Bailey Caton and Makenna Gallo both dropped nine points for Le Roy. In addition, Caton picked up five rebounds, and Gallo picked up seven.

Maddie Paddock played a great all-around game, posting four points, nine rebounds and three steals.

Cora Weaver also scored four points while getting four rebounds and two assists.

Olivia Bucci finished with 11 points, four rebounds, two assists and two steals, while Sierra Whitney notched nine points, three rebounds, and an assist for Geneseo.

Le Roy moves to 10-9 and will play its final regular season game against another tough opponent in Letchworth (15-1) at 7 p.m. on the road Friday.

Geneseo drops to 13-6 after the loss and will had its final matchup of the regular season on the road against Fillmore (12-3) on Thursday.

Monday's results:
CALEDONIA-MUMFORD 44, PAVILION 22

Cal-Mum (6-11): Leigh Nickerson 13 points, 5 rebounds, 4 assists, 5 blocks; Olivia Amorese 11 points, 8 rebounds; Shea Drazkowski 9 points, 8 rebounds, 3 steals; Kennedy Williams 6 points, 6 rebounds; Mady Ross 4 points

Pavilion (3-16): Emma Tillotson 10 points; Charlotte Rudgers 7 points; Mollie McMaster 3 points; Natalie Nichiporuk 2 points

Coach's quote: "Really nice win (Monday). Pavilion is a very talented young team, and Coach Schwenebraten always has them ready to play," Cal-Mum head coach Griffin Mervine said. "We did not get off to a great start on either end of the floor, but executed really nicely in the second and third quarters. Mady (Ross) came in and gave us a really good spark in the second quarter, and it was nice to see Shea knock down three 3s. We have Senior Night on Wednesday, and we know Wheatland-Chili will be ready for us."

PHOTO CREDIT: PAULA CATON
Le Roy girls basketball defeated Geneseo on Tuesday.

McNear Drops 30-Point Double-Double to Give Cal-Mum Boys Basketball Win Over Letchworth

By SAMUEL ZERILLO

Bonefede, Pangrazio Power York Boys Basketball Over Le Roy

By MIKE ROSE

PHOTO CREDIT: PETE WELKER
York's Parker Bonefede drives against Batavia earlier this season. Bonefede scored a game-high 36 points in York's win on Wednesday.

Le Roy Girls Basketball Rallies Back for Overtime Win Over Batavia

By SAMUEL ZERILLO

Statement Win for Le Roy Youth Basketball Fifth Grade (Red)

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RIVALS SPORTS INSIDER

PHOTO PROVIDED: JAYME QUTERMOUS
Le Roy won the Division 1 title on Tuesday at the LCAA Championships.

Le Roy Cheerleading Captures LCAA D1 Championship Title

By MIKE ROSE
mrose@batavianews.com

Scott Headlines 7 Individual Wins in Class B2 from Le Roy, Letchworth, B-H Boys Wrestling

By MIKE ROSE

PHOTO CREDIT: BRIAN ROOK

Fish Fries are back at the Masonic Community Center! 12 Bank Street, LeRoy, NY. Starting Friday, February 13th, and every Friday thru Good Friday, fish fries will be available 4PM until sold out.

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RIVALS SPORTS INSIDER

Fix dominates, Byron-Bergen/Le Roy Boys Swimming and Diving Claims Class C Title

By SAMUEL ZERILLO

SAMUEL ZERILLO/THE DAILY NEWS
The Section V Class C championship winning Byron-Bergen/Le Roy swimming and diving team.

Peet, Patanella, Martin Win to Lead Cal-Mum Boys Wrestling to First 'B3' Title Since 2000

By MIKE ROSE

MIKE ROSE/THE DAILY NEWS
Cal-Mum won its first boys wrestling sectional championship since 2000 on Saturday.

B-B/LR Girls Swimming and Diving Wins Fourth Straight GR/NO Championship

By MIKE ROSE

PHOTO CREDIT: SARA STOCKWELL
The Byron-Bergen/LeRoy girls swim team claimed its fourth straight Genesee Region/Niagara-Orleans Intersectional Championship title on Friday, finishing first overall with 274.5 points.

Discover, Learn & Connect @ WML. www.WoodwardMemorialLibrary.org. Explore our diverse programs for all ages and find your next favorite activity! 7 Wolcott Street, LeRoy, NY 14482. 585-768-8300. Mon-Thurs 10-8, Fri 10-5, Sat 10-2. Come & see what's happening at the library! WOODWARD MEMORIAL LIBRARY