



The Derrick. and The News-Herald • 2025

# BUSINESS

*Review & Forecast*

Friday, Feb. 14, 2025

Section F — Tourism



Yuto “Uting Star” Kobayashi, of Sapporo, Japan, makes a splash as he enters the water for casting during Franklin’s Rock In River Fest in August. See the story on F2.

File photo by Leigh-Anne Williams

Section

F

Section F of the Business Review & Forecast is all about tourism and how it has made the Oil Region a must-go-to destination.

Local chambers of commerce and other agency leaders realize the economic impact of travel and tourism and have worked to market the region as a travel destination by getting the word out to visit the area. And it’s not just about the events and activities. It’s also to experience the region’s charming small towns and learn about its rich history.

In addition, the Franklin Fine Arts Council had yet another extraordinary year; ARTS Oil City continues to craft a creative community; the Lyric Theatre project moved ahead; the Barrow Civic-Theatre continued to fill seats; and the Venango Museum’s 2025 exhibit will focus on entertainment during the oil boom.

Also featured are local artists, along with museums and parks that pull people to the area.

There’s also a Calendar of Events for the rest of the year.

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# Events, activities are region’s identity

**BY HELEN FIELDING**  
Staff writer

The Oil Region’s beautiful outdoors stands out by itself — and combined with events and competitions that bring in crowds of people, it continued to shine as a primary tourism draw to the area over the past year.

“Outdoor recreation competitions continue to be huge for us,” said Emily Altomare, communications and tourism manager at the Oil Region Alliance of Tourism, Business and Industry (ORA). “People love to come here to run or ride the trails and fish.”

All-terrain vehicles could soon be added to the list of popular recreational assets, as a countywide effort to legalize ATVs on designated municipal roads is currently in full swing, following in the tracks of an ATV feasibility study the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism completed in fall 2023.

As the state’s Designated Destination Marketing Association (DMA) — essentially, tourism promotion agency — for Venango County, the ORA helps expand and market locally held competitions, from bike races to Jeep runs to archery tournaments.

ORA Communications and Tourism Manager Emily Altomare said competitions often bring participants several times during the year to train, and they in turn bring family and friends to see the sights, dine and shop locally, and share their experiences on social media.

Last year’s Rock in River Fest stone-skipping competition brought competitors from as far as Japan, not for the first time.

And more events keep coming. For instance, in September for the first time, the Kayak Adventure Series’ Broodstock II fishing competition will come to Franklin for a weekend.

Competitors will fish waters within a one-hour radius of Franklin, and events will be held downtown, Altomare said.

Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jodi Lewis agreed as far as drawing visitors, “the biggest thing in this area is the outdoors. The trails, hiking, bicycling...mountain biking...they are bringing in a whole slew of people that maybe aren’t as familiar with the area.

“And I want to say from my observation, it’s an increase.”

One extra natural wonder in 2024 was the April 8 total solar eclipse.

“We had a ton of people come through our region, either as their final viewing spot or on their way to Erie and other locations in the path of totality,” Altomare said.

Meanwhile, local festivals continued to draw crowds — the Franklin Fine Arts Council hosted 65 events alone in 2024, Altomare said, citing Franklin Events and Marketing Coordinator James Shreffler.

Lewis called events the second-biggest draw next to the area’s natural resources — not just those in Franklin, but across the area.

But Lewis also highlighted the music, art, restaurants, history, museums and architecture that are plentiful throughout the area.

Then there’s heritage tourism, which attracts visitors to the museums and historical features in the Oil Region, a National Heritage Area, Altomare said.



File photo by Jamie Hunt

**Participants in the 2024 Allegheny Gnar race, started in 2023 by local mountain bike enthusiasts Jim Cole and Russell Lineman and part of the USA Cycling Downhill State Championship Series, load their bikes to be transported back to the top of the hill in Oil City after a race. The Allegheny River can be seen through the trees.**



File photo by Jamie Hunt

**Led by a volunteer-driven guide vehicle, visitors to the Ten Miles 4 Two Mile Jeep Run navigate a 5-mile trail loop at Two Mile Run County Park in July.**

### Rise of homeshares

Altomare estimated hotel attendance is at or above pandemic numbers, although hotel revenues are down this year due to last year’s loss of the Barkeyville Quality Inn to make way for the new Sheetz.

“That hotel alone contributed approximately \$20,000 a year in hotel tax, so losing it has negatively impacted our hotel tax,” she said. Part of the county’s hotel tax goes to the ORA to market the region. More “homeshares” are springing up, such as AirBNBs and VRBO residences, but not enough to make up for the loss of the hotel.

But Altomare expressed hope that more development in Oil City or Barkeyville could eventually make up for the loss, and the increase of homeshares still means an increase in tourism traffic.

In October, the ORA held a homeshare education event, which it plans to hold annually, for current and potential AirBNB, VRBO or homeshare property owners, as well as owners of traditional bed and breakfasts.

The same month, it held a second annual “Realtor Roundtable” event to connect local real estate professionals with tourism entities and the ORA’s tourism council.

Susan Williams, executive director of the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber is “excited” to see more AirBNBs and short-term rentals, but noted a lack of traditional hotel accommodations.

In order to attract developers of larger-scale hotels, “you’ve got to be able to show that you have people coming,” she said. “So it’s a chicken-and-egg situation.”

The chamber’s job, she said, is to make sure business owners are successful, part of which is trying to create year-round traffic from more than just events.

“It’s important that the community understands...that we give people a great experience and they want to come back all the time, not just when there are events and not just when the weather is nice,” Williams said.

With that in mind, the chamber holds ambassador trainings for local businesses and community groups to give them knowledge of the area and to create a welcoming community that people want to visit and revisit.

“If people come into the community and feel welcomed, they’re more likely to come back,” Williams explained.

Creating a sense of community pride and identity is a major goal of the chamber’s Community Heart and Soul program, as well.

“The hospitality industry, including outdoor rec, is a huge part of quality of life and that’s a major selling feature for real estate in our region, especially for those moving in from out of the area,” Altomare said.

### Tourism and community-building

Williams emphasized creating a place that people

want to visit has repercussions beyond tourism revenues.

“It’s not only important to bringing outside dollars in; it’s important for creating communities where people want to live,” she said, noting a community pleasant to visitors tends to be more attractive to live in, as well.

In turn, more people living in the area means more to work in the area or start local businesses.

“People say ‘We need more industry,’ and actually we have industries that are looking for people to work,” she said.

Altomare agreed a lack of workforce in the area “continues to be an issue,” although some local businesses have enough staff to be open seven days a week. “There are opportunities for those who want to work,” she said.

### Interactive map and other marketing

In 2024 on the region’s tourism website, Experience-TheOilRegion.com, the ORA unveiled an interactive map that allows users to see the range of attractions throughout the Oil Region National Heritage Area.

“Users can sort by topics, such as outdoor rec and heritage, then see photos and descriptions of the sites,” Altomare said.

In addition, the ORA sends out weekly e-newsletters to its more than 700 subscribers and posts to social media daily.

In 2025, the ORA will

highlight the work of three influencers with whom it contracted in 2024 to visit the region, take photos and write about their experiences. The influencers’ work will also appear in the ORA’s upcoming 2025-26 Oil Region Guide, which will be available in print and on Oil-Region.org and Experience-TheOilRegion.com early this year, Altomare said.

Other local organizations are stepping up with advertising, including the chambers of commerce and organizations, such as the Franklin Retail and Business Association and even the recently formed Cranberry Small Business Association.

Lewis said the public response to a business directory kiosk and Oil Region map, which were installed in downtown Franklin over a year ago, has been “great.” And the Retail Association and chamber have plans to partner on some advertising, helping to stretch both their dollar and their reach.

### Affordability amid inflation

Despite many Americans feeling the pinch of inflation, Altomare and Lewis both said they haven’t seen it slow tourism traffic because of the affordability of the area, especially compared with more urban destinations.

“The trails and waterways do not cost a cent...which makes them great options for

people traveling on a budget, especially young families with kids,” Altomare said. “We are also within a driveable distance of a large portion of the U.S. population, so many people can get here without a lot of travel expense.”

However, inflation has hit area businesses somewhat, particularly restaurants and shops, she said. Nonetheless, “locals are showing their support for these businesses with their wallets.”

“Do I think it might (affect us) at some point? Maybe,” Lewis said of inflation. “But most of what you can come here and do is low or no-cost...and the amount of AirBNBs that open up speaks to the fact that people are still coming here and staying here. So I don’t think we’ve seen that yet.

“I think we’ll continue to be the destination that we are, and we’ll all continue to do our part to work together and to add more things when we can. That’s such a great thing...that people are willing to work to make something happen.

“We are so, so very fortunate to have partners that do focused work on tourism,” Williams said. “We have to all work together on it.”

**HELEN FIELDING**, reporter for The Derrick and The News-Herald, can be reached at helenfielding.thederrick@gmail.com or 814-677-8374.

# Oil City Izaak Walton League receives large grant

### SUBMITTED ARTICLE

The Oil City Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America closed out 2024 on a high note and with great enthusiasm for programs coming up in 2025.

In December the Chapter was notified by the Pennsylvania Game Commission that it had been awarded a \$26,000 grant to help pay for construction of new earthen-berm backstops on the Hunters’ Trail range. This is the first step in a long-term plan

to ensure the Chapter’s Waltonian Park ranges remain the safest and of the highest standards of any in Western Pennsylvania.

Also in 2024, the Ikes brought the Project Appleseed, a nationwide rifle and pistol training and marksmanship program, to Venango County. The program returns in 2025 on April 26 and 27.

On its own, the Chapter offers numerous shooting sports and training,

The Ikes have two pro-

grams for youngsters. There is the Ikes’ Youth program for 11- through 20-year-olds every Friday evening, Sept. 13 to May 1. The Venango County 4-H air rifle program meets at 6 p.m. on Fridays. Any parent with an interested child can learn more simply by showing up.

A .22 caliber rifle meat shoot is held every Wednesday night with sign-up at 6:30 p.m. There is also a .22 bench rest silhouette shoot on the second Sunday

of the month, May through September. The Hunters’ Trail is held on the first and third Sundays January, February and March on the fourth Sunday of April and the third Sunday remaining months. Practical pistol shoots are held the first Thursday of the month from 6 to 9 p.m., and on the third Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon. Military Rifle shoots are scheduled periodically, with the dates announced on Facebook.

The Ikes are much more than a shooting club. They are a conservation and outdoor enthusiast’s organization. The Ikes hold the annual Youth Field Days; this year set for June 21, and the annual Oil Heritage Children’s Fishing Derby. A hunter’s education program, required for new hunters, is set for June 7, with registration held through the Game Commission.

One of the Ikes’ biggest annual events is the induc-

tion into the Venango County Conservation Hall of Fame, created by the Ikes in 2011 and housed at Venango Campus in partnership with the Oil Region Alliance.

The Oil City Ikes have a Facebook page (Oil City Chapter, Izaak Walton League) where updates and other information are regularly posted. The Chapter also welcomes inquiries regarding membership and range passes via email: oilcityikesmembership@gmail.com



# FFAC caps off another extraordinary year

## SUBMITTED ARTICLE

The Franklin Fine Arts Council (FFAC) capped off another extraordinary year in 2024, delivering a dynamic lineup of events that brought the community together through music, art and family-friendly fun. With more than 52 events on the calendar, Franklin continues to shine as an “Always Eventful” destination.

This calendar is the result of a thriving community effort. Volunteers, businesses, sponsors and board members came together in a powerful show of teamwork to keep Franklin vibrant and relevant. The 2024 FFAC board includes: Pat Dolecki, Amy Ivell, Robin Shields-Holtzman, Areta Mong, Rachelle Surrena, Ashley Smith, Nancy Lindsey, Cheryl Brickner, Matt Beith, Chris Latchaw, Mary Dickson, Darrellyn Freeman, Kristy Moore, Jay Poindexter, Jillian Harry and Jess Carroll. Special recognition goes to James Shreffler, who continued in his role as the City’s Events and Marketing Coordinator.

Franklin’s recipe for success is a spirit of cooperation that unites the City with the FFAC, the Franklin Retail and Business Association, the Franklin Industrial & Commercial Development Authority (FICDA), the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce and Franklin Moving Forward. This partnership, along with steadfast support from local businesses, industries and service organizations such as Franklin Elks, Moose, Rotary and Kiwanis, fuels the town’s energy and excitement.

From vibrant entertainment to children’s activities, a bustling farmers/curb market and a variety of year-round events, Franklin truly offers something for everyone. Leading the 2024 calendar was Franklin On Ice, an annual spectacle held the first full weekend in February. Crowds marveled as the DiMartino ice carvers transformed plain blocks of ice into jaw-dropping creations with live carving. Unseasonably warm weather, however, required City workers to dismantle the sculptures for safety once their bases began to melt just a couple days following the event.

Downtown shops and restaurants welcomed frosty spectators with hot cocoa and cozy atmospheres, while the Grumpy Goat Distillery hosted its annual Chili Cook-Off, where Franklin’s chili connoisseurs showcased their mouthwatering recipes.

As winter wound down, Franklin geared up for an exciting summer, kicking off with the Bill Beith Memorial Golf Tournament on June 10 at Wanago Country Club.

Summer mornings came alive with the Franklin Curb Market, where local farmers, artisans and bakers gathered

at the 12th Street Island every Wednesday and Saturday from May to October. Shoppers found fresh produce, homemade treats, and warm smiles. Meanwhile, evenings sizzled with the Friday Night Alfresco Patio Series at Bella Cucina and Benjamin’s Roadhouse, featuring local musicians and past Taste of Talent winners serenading diners from June through August.

The Taste of Talent vocal competition highlighted summer, drawing hundreds to Bandstand Park on Wednesday nights. With 3,411 votes cast over six performances, Aiden Quinn of Sligo claimed the \$1,000 grand prize, sponsored by New Directions Community Credit Union.

The music continued with Thursday Night Concerts at Bandstand Park. August’s final concert was a touching tribute to Ronnie Beith, featuring Encore performing her favorite tunes.

Franklin’s Liberty Fest Parade launched a week of Independence Day celebrations.

July 4th ended with a dazzling fireworks display over Riverfront Park. Families gathered early to claim prime viewing spots, enjoying music by Rochester’s Public Water Supply and fair-food favorites from local vendors.

The summer concluded with the Rock in River Festival, a unique stone-skipping competition at the confluence of French Creek and the Allegheny River. Participants of all ages traveled from across North America and beyond to test their skills. This year had the most international competitors ever! Rain arrived late in the event but didn’t dampen the enthusiasm of the competitors or judges. Each contestant had six attempts, with the highest skip count determining the winners.

As summer faded, Franklin turned its attention to the holiday season. September and October were bustling with preparations — cleaning and replacing Christmas lights, crafting new strands and searching for the perfect 35-foot Christmas tree.

The glowing tree became the centerpiece of Light Up Night, where the 2024 Electric Light Parade delighted spectators with its “Songs of the Season” theme. Featuring 73 creative units and pre-show performances by Dreamscape Vocalists, the evening ended with Pyrotecnico’s breathtaking musical fireworks display.

Franklin’s charm in December is like a scene from a Christmas movie, with twinkling lights on Liberty Street, festive window displays, the Santa Express and Christmas Walk in the Park. The effort behind this magic wouldn’t be possible without sponsors, volunteers and the City’s dedicated staff.

The Events and Marketing Office worked tirelessly to



promote annual traditions like the Kiwanis Easter Egg Hunt, Downtown Trick-or-Treat and the Pink Splash for the Cure. Meanwhile, community organizations enriched the town with festivals like the May Garden Mart, Franklin Blues & Barbecue and the iconic Applefest.

Looking ahead to 2025, Franklin Fine Arts Council is continuing its membership drive, inviting the public to contribute to programs that nurture the arts and events. In 2024, the Legacy Arts Program, led by FHS art teacher and FFAC board member Darrellyn Freeman, left its mark. Senior students selected local artworks to grace Franklin High School’s corridors, ensuring a lasting legacy for future classes.

Franklin’s cultural treasures await exploration. Enjoy performances at the Barrow-Civic Theatre, marvel at the Tiffany windows in St. John’s Episcopal Church, or immerse yourself in history at



the Venango County Historical Society. Outdoor enthusiasts will love the top-rated Allegheny River Trail and Sandy Creek Trail, with rentals available through Outdoor Allegheny River Services.

For more information about Franklin’s events and attractions, visit [www.franklinpa.gov](http://www.franklinpa.gov) or follow Franklin, PA Events/Marketing on Facebook.

The Franklin Events and

Marketing Department is located at Franklin City Hall, 430 13th Street, Franklin, PA, 16323, and can be reached by contacting James Shreffler at 814-437-1129, ext. 1123 or [events@franklinpa.gov](mailto:events@franklinpa.gov).

# Tracey Lander-Garrett finds renewed creativity in Oil City

## SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Tracey Lander-Garrett is a writer, poet and teaching artist who moved to Oil City in 2024 as an Oil Region Alliance Artist Relocation Grant Recipient. She arrived from Portland, Oregon, where she had lived “anxiously” for about two and a half years, barely producing work and feeling a distinct lack of artistic support and community.

Dedicated readers may remember Lander-Garrett as the subject of a June 10, 2024 article in the Derrick, “Artist Relocation Program helps author drawn to Oil City.” In this past year of Venango Country residence, she is pleased to report progress in fiction, poetry and teaching, all of which was made possible by ORA’s grant and the supportive environment she has found here.

She joined the Writer’s Flock fiction writers’ group, which meets the first Monday of every month at Oil City Library. Based on prompts from that group, Lander-Garrett wrote five new microfiction pieces: “Pickle,” “A Lady’s Work Is Never Done,” “Seeing Red,” “Shrinking Daisy,” and “Recovery.” One of those pieces, “A Lady’s Work...” was published in “Through the Briar Patch”, a Hollow Oak Press puzzle anthology edited by Amanda Pica.

In April, Lander-Garrett attended the Poconos Writers Conference in Stroudsburg for area fiction writers. She also took part in three different author signing events, appearing at at Oil City Library’s Festival of the Book in August, at Sparrow Books in Clarion Autumn Leaf Festival Crafter’s Day in October, and an author signing and open mic at Core Goods on Oil City Artist’s Day in December. Work continues on Book 5 of her Madison Roberts supernatural suspense series, titled Riddles Bright and Dark, with 15,000 words written to date.

Lander-Garrett has also continued to expand her work in poetry, attending Bridge Literary Center writing workshops at Oil City Library and Franklin Library.

She has written multiple new poems, in addition to several new Name-Nonsense poems. She read her poetry at multiple events, including an open mic at Baked Goods from Heaven and as a featured reader for a Virtual Open Mic with Bridge Literary Center, both in March. In June, she took part in the Ekphrastic Collaboration project at the Red Brick Gallery in Foxburg, writing a new poem titled “Interplay” inspired by Jaime Hunt’s photograph

“October Sunrise with Fog Rolling Downriver”, a collaboration that culminated in a reading and exhibition of the works side-by-side. She took part in another open mic in the back room at Cork & Screw Winery in September.

In November, she published three poems, “The Mallards,” “Coveting,” and “Birds of a Feather: A Villanelle,” in “Beak, Bone, and Feather,” an anthology of poetry about birds for Audubon edited by Patricia Thrushart.

Lander-Garrett will be working with Thrushart and Quimby Pickford Cheshire Publishers to publish a book of poems in 2025.

As a teaching artist, Lander-Garrett feels that her work as an educator allows her to give back to the community and keeps her connected to her artistic practice. To that end, she joined the Bridge Literary Center’s Steering Committee, pitching ideas for writing workshops. She taught two classes at Bridge-Fest in August at Venango Campus (World Building 1: “From Sandbox to Space Station” and World Building 2: “From Flying Monkeys to Emerald Cities”). She also helped organize the Bridge’s Halloween event, “An Evening of Spirited Stories,” with spooky crafts and readings,

and taught two writing workshops at Oil City Library: “Make a Monster” on Oct. 29 and “Poetry of Gratitude” on Nov. 22.

Furthermore, Lander-Garrett is collaborating with artist/maker Marcy Hall to create

project-based classes that will utilize the new MakerSpace on the 5th floor at 100 Seneca Street in downtown Oil City.

Last, but not least, Lander-Garrett is thrilled to announce her participation as an ACRE Selectee for 2025. She

will be working with Bridge-way Capital to learn how to be a more successful creative entrepreneur, better equipped to contribute to the richly rewarding creative community that she has found in the Oil Region over the course of this eventful year.

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# ARTS Oil City fosters creative community

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

ARTS Oil City, led by Barbara Pierce, is dedicated to arts revitalization and the artist relocation program. The program is housed within the Oil Region Alliance and receives support from the City of Oil City, which celebrates our local creative professionals and the contributions they make.

Artist relocation

The mission of leveraging the robust artistic legacy of the region, along with affordability and the beauty of the natural surroundings, is a strength of the arts revitalization efforts. Oil City's artist relocation program is among the most well-known in the country. While cities and towns of all sizes are actively recruiting artists and writers to relocate, our program has a unique appeal. Individuals and couples have come from big cities and small towns across the country.

Since the start of the ARTS Oil City, program nearly 100 artists, craftspeople and creative professionals have relocated to Oil City. In 2024, three families moved through the program, and several others made trips to explore and house hunt for a future move.

In 2025, ARTS Oil City will continue to host creatives visiting Oil City to research for their potential moves. With grant funding through the PA Council on the Arts, the program received national attention with an ad in Novum Artis Magazine (The New Artistic), and word is spreading even further about the opportunities available here. If



you are a native or long-time resident, ARTS Oil City encourages you to give a hearty welcome to the artists who make the choice to move here and contribute to our economy and revitalization. Try to look at our surroundings from their perspective and appreciate their views of the potential for the future.

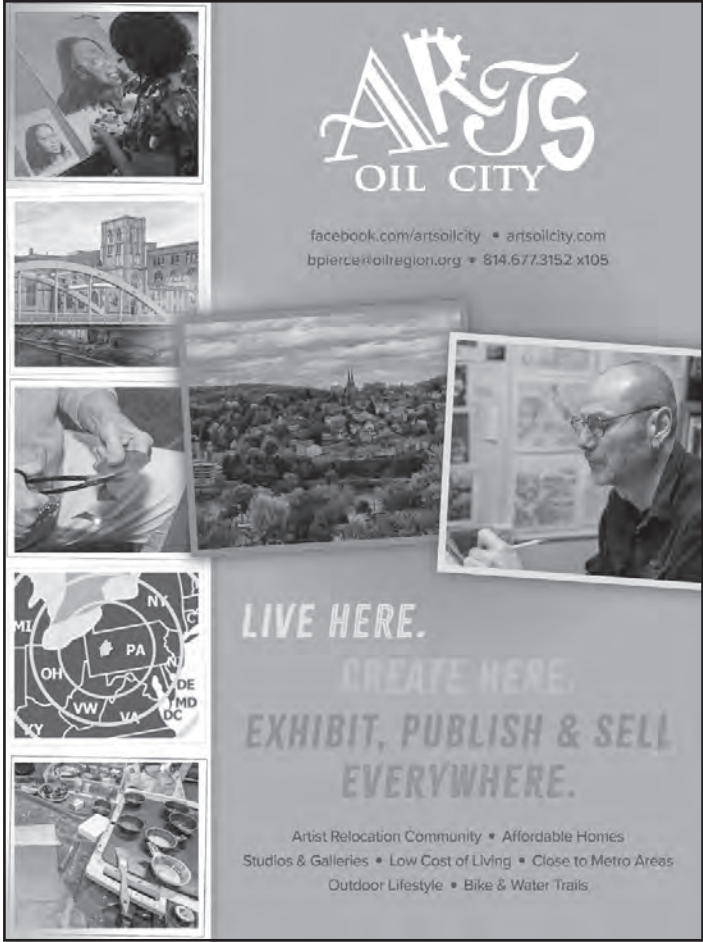
Art studios in National Transit Building

In the spring of 2023, a partnership agreement was signed between the Oil Region Alliance and the Oil City Civic Center (the non-profit owner of the National Transit Building.) ARTS Oil City and the ORA now manage the second-floor studios. Studio rentals have increased and there are currently twenty-one creatives working from 25 studios.

For artists interested in renting a studio, there are a few affordably priced smaller and medium sized spaces currently available. There is an application process and review to become a member of the Transit Studio Artists Association, required for studio rentals.

Artists Sunday: A national day of art

ARTS Oil City has coordinated local participation in Artists Sunday for the past three years. Artists Sunday is a nationwide event held on



the Sunday after Thanksgiving, with the goal of shining a spotlight on creative professionals during the busiest holiday shopping weekend of the year. The event has grown each year with businesses across the north and south sides opening their doors to host pop-ups for local and out of town artists.

The City of Oil City has issued a proclamation making the Sunday after Thanksgiving a day to support the arts.

Save the Date: National Artists Sunday is scheduled for Nov. 30, 2025. Artists,

writers and makers are invited to make plans now to participate. All local businesses and restaurants are encouraged to consider hosting an artist, musician, poet or other creative for the day.

Oil City selected by Bridgeway Capital

ARTS Oil City and the Oil Regional Alliance are very excited that Oil City has been selected by Bridgeway Capital to be the next Cohort City in their ACRE Program (Alliance for Creative Rural Economies). Bridgeway's mission

to empower creative entrepreneurs in rural communities through financial resilience, creative fulfillment, and social impact will make a valuable contribution to the individuals selected. The ACRE program is designed to foster resilient creative businesses in disinvested areas across a multi-state region of Appalachia.

Participants in the nine-month program will work closely with business coaches, regional industry experts and their peers to develop business plans, explore new revenue streams, and build connections within their local creative economy. This education and business development is financially supported by Bridgeway and represents a significant financial investment in the local community. Program participants include: Christopher Doll, Kaleb Lewis, Ryan Beichner, Skylar Austin, Katelyn Ziegler, Amanda Pica, Cassie Rhoads, Chelsey Rhoads, Diana Demey, Heidi Wirtner, Tracey Lander-Garrett, Angela Wyant, Crystal Roser, John Manders, Rachel Stine, Scott McCray, CJ Hurley. Gary Svetz was selected by ACRE to be the cohort's local Business Coach. Barbara Piece, working through her own business, Century Arts Design Studio, is the Ecosystem Coordinator.

Looking ahead

In looking to the next chapter of the arts as a part of community revitalization, Pierce says, "I am very excited for the opportunities we have in Oil City. We live in a beautiful river valley with state parks and forests nearby. We

have an incredible diversity of creative professionals who take inspiration from our surroundings every day and they bring their light, energy and vision to our lives. I think it is an ideal time to promote Oil City as a great relocation destination!"

Get involved

As the ARTS Oil City team looks to the future, they would like to encourage others to get involved! There are many ways you can support artists and the efforts of the arts revitalization committee.

Shop local galleries like the Transit Art Gallery and Gifts (TAGG), where original art, printed reproductions and handmade fine crafts can be purchased.

Attend open studios or make appointments to see the work of Oil City's artists in their studios.

Follow artists you admire through their newsletters, websites and social media. Tell your friends about the arts in our community and invite them to attend arts events with you.

Think of art first when you're buying gifts or greeting cards throughout the year.

Don't be intimidated! Many artists like sharing stories of the inspiration or meaning behind their work. If you see something that interests you, ask the artist about it!

If you want to support and collect art, but don't know where to begin, or don't think you have the budget for it, start small. Learn about the artists that interest you, follow their work for a while, and buy slowly as you are able.



## Lyric Theatre project progresses as CDCA prepares to release bid package

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

This year, the Board of Trustees for Colonel Drake Cultural Alliance, Inc. (CDCA) announced the completion of its construction fund raising efforts for the Lyric Theatre Rehabilitation Project with a \$40,000 grant from the County of Venango.

This completes the match portion of the State \$925,000 RACP grant. The balance of the match funds came from an Appalachian Regional Commission Grant for \$500,000, several local foundations, Karma Concerts and generous donations from local businesses and individuals.

CDCA also received a Pennsylvania State Local Share Account Grant of \$200,000 which is not eligible to be used as part of match funds. The construction portion of the 2.3-million-dollar project is estimated at approximately 2 million dollars. There continues to be ongoing

soft costs as the CDCA approaches the construction phase and begins to operate.

The CDCA would like to thank those who already donated to this project, and many have, for their generosity!

For those who have been thinking about donating, now is the time as CDCA needs any added financial help they can receive as they prepare to release their bid package and get on the 2025 construction schedule.

Checks can be made out to CDCA and mailed to CDCA, PO Box 1145, Oil City, PA 16301 or, for those who prefer to contribute online with a credit card, they can make a donation to the fund with Bridge Builders Community Foundation by using the following link: [bbcf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=2255](https://bbcf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=2255)

Other items of note through this year:

- Initiation of negotiations for a

"bridge loan" that will be paid off as each significant part of the construction is completed, verified and reimbursement from the grants is requested.

- Plan refinement included a full update of Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing design for current code compliance and was completed by Peno Engineering of State College while the final architectural detail design continues.

- The very popular Karma Concert Series will continue in its seventh year on Thursday nights through the winter season.

- Volunteers continue to work to remediate, as much as possible, any further damage to the front of the building that will be almost completely replaced.

Those with questions or wishing to learn more can contact CDCA at [info@lyrictheatreoilcity.org](mailto:info@lyrictheatreoilcity.org) or visit their website at [www.lyrictheatreoilcity.org](http://www.lyrictheatreoilcity.org).

## Venango Museum's 2025 exhibit explores oil boom entertainment

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

The Venango Museum of Art, Science and Industry saw many visitors and guests from all across the U.S. during its 2024 season.

The museum, located at 270 Seneca Street in Oil City's North Side business district, opened for its regular operating season in April 2024 with a limited-time exhibit called Oil Fields To Outfields: Baseball In The Oil Region. The exhibit provided an overview of baseball in Pennsylvania's Oil Region from the end of the Civil War until the 1950s. The exhibit highlighted just some of the many players, teams and games throughout the region's history in connection to its industrial past. The Baseball exhibit closed on Dec. 28, 2024.

A new and limited-time exhibit will replace the Baseball exhibit when the museum reopens for its 2025 season in April. The new exhibit will provide an overview of entertainment during Venango County's oil boom.

Along with the Oil Fields To Outfields: Baseball In The Oil Region exhibit in 2024, the museum's permanent exhibit Oil: Black Gold or Black Magic? continued to draw in guests from throughout the region and beyond.

The exhibit details how oil impacts everyday life from the economy to politics and even the environment — for better or for worse. Also on display was the exhibit Our Pennzoil Story, which provided a history of the Pennzoil company in Venango County.

In November the museum's Annual Christmas Tree Display opened with various trees decorated by local schools, businesses and organizations. Free admission was offered to the museum to visitors throughout the Christmas season thanks to service club sponsors.

The Museum welcomed approximately 3,500 visitors and guests in 2024. As always, the museum's busiest visiting season is summer, lasting from Memorial Day to Labor Day, with many visitors visiting from the Pittsburgh, Erie and Cleveland areas. Outdoor enthusiasts continued to make use of the free admission to the Oil City Visitor Center located in the museum which features an exhibit detailing Oil City's past as the transportation and financial trading center of the early oil industry, as well as a

literature cabinet containing information on all things to see and do in the Oil Region.

Along with exploring the museum's exhibits, visitors and guests participated in the many museum programs and events throughout the last year. Programs included everything from children's tours of the museum to Summer STEM, Art, and Music Workshops for children ages 8 through 12.

The Best Sandwich in the County contest returned during the summer, along with tours of the historic River Ridge Mansion. The museum also participated in nationwide programs such as the Blue Star Museum program, which offers free admission to the nation's active-duty military personnel and their families, including National Guard and Reserve. Other museum events included everything from concerts by the Erie Philharmonic to a silent film showing with a live score accompanied by the museum's historic 1920s Wurlitzer Theater Organ.

Many of the museum's programs, events and fundraisers will return in 2025 when the museum reopens for the season, including children's tours, special music programs, various workshops and more.

In 2024, the museum also began undertaking a \$60,000 restoration project for its 1928 Wurlitzer Theater Organ — originally from Oil City's Latonia Theater. The Museum worked with Musical Restorations LLC, based in Dayton, Virginia, on the first phase of the project which included fixing over 40 dead notes caused by internal mechanical issues, lessening the number of wind leaks, tuning the organ, getting the chrysoglott and glockenspiel functioning reliably, getting the tremulants to turn on and function reliably and much more. The next phase of the project will take place in 2025 and will focus on restoring the instrument's percussions.

The museum will reopen for the 2025 season in early April. The museum's regular hours of operation are April through December, Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission rates to the museum are \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students, and children 5 and under are free. Museum members are also free. For more information, visit [www.venango-museum.org](http://www.venango-museum.org), send an email to [venangomuseum@gmail.com](mailto:venangomuseum@gmail.com), or call 814-676-2007.

## The Fallen Shoppe owner Kaleb Lewis showcases makeup skills at local events

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Kaleb Lewis, a renowned special makeup effects artist with over a decade of experience in television and film, has cemented their reputation as a creative force. Based in Pennsylvania, Lewis showcased their exceptional talents both locally and nationally in 2024 while representing the region and running their Titusville-based business, The Fallen Shoppe.

This past year, Lewis embarked on an extraordinary journey, starting with a trip to St. Louis to participate in the TransWorld Halloween Attraction Show, the largest of its kind. Locally, they brought the Bridget-

roll character to life for Oil City's "Not on the Bridgefest," contributed to the Erie Comicon and Eerie Horror Fest, and created a stunning escape room for "The Secret at Wildcat Mansion" and makeup for "Dracula" at the Barrow-Civic Theatre.

Lewis also made a mark at the Hannah Project's inaugural Halloween Ball and even featured the Grinch at Titusville's Holiday at Burgess event. Additionally, they traveled to Louisiana to work on a feature film, further showcasing their versatility and dedication to their craft.

Looking ahead to 2025, Lewis aims to focus on expanding The Fallen Shoppe, prioritizing prosthetic makeup and offering

educational opportunities to foster local and regional pride through the arts. Their acceptance into the prestigious ACRE program will provide the tools needed to refine business management skills, ensuring The Fallen Shoppe continues to thrive as a hub of creativity for the community.

Reflecting on the past year, Lewis expressed gratitude for the lessons learned and excitement for the future, saying, "This year has taught us so much, and we're ready to grow in every way possible." With their passion, talent and drive, Kaleb Lewis is set to continue making an indelible impact on the arts and the community they call home.



<div>Faller Furniture</div> <div><div>443 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Clarion, PA</div></div>		<div>HONOR ROLL OF BUSINESS</div> <div>PLEASE JOIN US IN HONORING THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES FOR PROVIDING YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY.</div>		<div>Venango Regional Airport</div> <div><div>1560 Airport Rd. Franklin 814-432-5333</div></div>			
<div>St. Paul's Senior Living Community</div> <div><div>339 E. Jamestown Rd. Greenville, PA 724-588-7610</div></div>		<div>Reinsel Funeral Home</div> <div><div>116 East Bissel Ave. Oil City, PA 814-677-3049</div></div>		<div>Log Cabin Restaurant</div> <div>8 years under new ownership</div> <div><div>106 East State Rd. Seneca 814-676-1011</div></div>		<div>Sehman Tire Service, Inc.</div> <div><div>622 13th St. Franklin 814-432-2721</div></div>	
<div>The Wayside Restaurant</div> <div><div>1123 Old Fryburg Rd. Lucinda, PA 814-226-7344</div></div>		<div>Lang Motors</div> <div>"2010 PIADA Quality Dealer of the Year"</div> <div><div>821 Martket St. Meadville 814-724-2500</div></div>		<div>Clarion County Rod &amp; Gun Club</div> <div><div>305 Miller St. Knox, PA 814-797-2437</div></div>		<div>Tionesta Builders Supply Home Improvement Center</div> <div><div>613 PA-36, Tionesta 814-755-3561 81 T-580, Shippenville 814-226-5040</div></div>	
<div>Franklin Precision Casting</div> <div>The oldest continually operating casting foundry in Pennsylvania</div> <div><div>655 Grant St. Franklin, PA 814-437-6891</div></div>		<div>Morrison Funeral Home</div> <div><div>110 Petroleum St. Oil City 814-677-4000</div></div>		<div>McNerney's</div> <div><div>245 Seneca St. Oil City 814-676-4470</div></div>		<div>Oil City Housing Authority</div> <div><div>110 Moran St. Oil City 814-676-5764</div></div>	
<div>Franklin Elk's Lodge #110</div> <div><div>1309 Buffalo St. Franklin, PA 814-432-8119</div></div>		<div>YWCA of Oil City</div> <div><div>109 Central Ave. Oil City 814-676-6528</div></div>		<div>Riddle Brothers</div> <div>Complete Collision Repair Unibody &amp; Frame Specialists</div> <div><div>3743 US Rt. 322 Franklin 814-432-8663</div></div>		<div>Cross Creek Resort</div> <div><div>3815 State Rt. 8 Titusville 814-827-9611</div></div>	
<div>Belles Lettres Club</div> <div><div>405 W. First St. Oil City. PA 814-677-3074</div></div>		<div>Rossbacher Insurance Group</div> <div><div>7137 US 322, Cranberry, PA 814-677-4095</div></div>		<div>American Legion Post 720 Berlin Bowser</div> <div><div>70 Veterans Rd. Knox 814-797-5615</div></div>		<div>Heffern Septic Tank Service &amp; Portable Toilets</div> <div><div>668 Buttermilk Hill Rd, Franklin 814-432-3072</div></div>	
<div>Lander's General Store</div> <div><div>27110 Rt. 66 Lucinda. PA 814-226-9688</div></div>		<div>Provanta Propane</div> <div><div>2096 Allegheny Blvd. Reno 814-676-8300</div></div>		<div>Klapec Trucking Company</div> <div><div>1643 Allegheny Blvd. Reno 1-888-8-KLAPEC</div></div>		<div>Titusville Redevelopment Authority</div> <div><div>110 West Spring St. Titusville, PA 814-827-3668</div></div>	
<div>Titusville Hospital</div> <div><div>406 West Oak St. Titusville, PA 814-827-1835</div></div>		<div>Wiegel Brothers Marine</div> <div><div>701 1/2 Elk St. Franklin 814-437-2077</div></div>		<div>Constable Refuse Service</div> <div><div>Rt 322 West Franklin 814-432-2509</div></div>		<div>Bert Klapec Inc.</div> <div><div>673 N. Seneca St. Oil City, PA 814-678-3478</div></div>	
<div>Mercer County State Bank</div> <div><div>3279 S. Main St. Sandy Lake 724-376-7015</div></div>		<div>Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative</div> <div><div>23534 Hwy 86 Cambridge Springs 800-352-0014</div></div>		<div>Fairview Cheese</div> <div><div>1734 Perry Highway Fredonia 724-475-4154</div></div>		<div>Rankin Auction Service</div> <div><div>Clarion 814-379-9862 814-764-3502 AuctionZip.com</div></div>	
<div>PNA Club</div> <div><div>410 Seneca Street Oil City, PA 814-676-4679</div></div>		<div>Galaxy Federal Credit Union</div> <div><div>1313 Liberty St. Franklin 814-432-1207</div></div>		<div>Hirsch's Meats</div> <div><div>Corner of Rt. 322 &amp; Rt. 338 Kossuth 814-797-5206</div></div>		<div>William N. Rupert Mortuary, Inc.</div> <div><div>430 Mendenhall Ave. Knox rupertfuneralhomes.com</div></div>	
<div>Clarion Free Library</div> <div><div>644 Main St. Clarion, PA 814-226-7172</div></div>		<div>Franklin Service &amp; Supply, Inc.</div> <div><div>119 Grant St. Franklin 814-432-8016</div></div>		<div>Sandy Lake Implement</div> <div><div>3675 Sandy Lake Rd 1 ½ Miles N. of Sandy Lake on Rt. 173 724-376-2489</div></div>		<div>Central Garage of Clarion</div> <div><div>750 George Rd. Clarion, PA 814-226-7160</div></div>	



<div>Meadville Livestock Auction</div> <div><div>61</div><div>years</div></div> <div>Saegertown, PA 814-763-2240</div>	<div>HONOR ROLL OF BUSINESS</div> <div>PLEASE JOIN US IN HONORING THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES FOR PROVIDING YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY.</div>		
<div>Franklin Commons Apartments</div> <div><div>60+</div><div>years</div></div> <div>9 Cestwood Drive Franklin, PA 814-432-3199</div>	<div>Two Mile Run County Park</div> <div><div>57</div><div>years</div></div> <div>471 Beach Rd. Franklin, PA 814-676-6116 www.twomilerun.net</div>	<div>McCleary Business Machines</div> <div><div>52</div><div>years</div></div> <div>Rt. 338 Knox, PA 814-797-5733</div>	<div>King's Landscaping</div> <div><div>47</div><div>years</div></div> <div>154 Siverly Ave. Oil City, PA 814-676-6125</div>
<div>Ronald Gross Trucking, Inc.</div> <div><div>60</div><div>years</div></div> <div>1037 Winfield Rd. Cabot, PA 724-352-1270</div>	<div>Franklin Housing Authority</div> <div><div>57</div><div>years</div></div> <div>1220 Chestnut St. Franklin, PA 814-437-3343</div>	<div>Anderson Metal Industries, Inc.</div> <div><div>52</div><div>years</div></div> <div>1385 Pittsburgh Rd. Franklin, PA 814-437-7814</div>	<div>Lofink Auto Body</div> <div><div>46+</div><div>years</div></div> <div>780 Sunville Rd. Franklin 814-432-3574</div>
<div>Russ Black Insurance</div> <div><div>60</div><div>years</div></div> <div>3339 Rt. 257 Seneca, PA 814-676-5761</div>	<div>Tom's Riverside</div> <div><div>55</div><div>years</div></div> <div>New Bethlehem, PA 814-275-2650 Knox, PA 814-797-2240 Rimersburg, PA 814-473-3915</div>	<div>K. Hoffman Door, LLC</div> <div><div>51</div><div>years</div></div> <div>805 Atlantic Ave. Franklin 814-432-8206</div>	<div>J &amp; J Sauer Southern Auto Parts</div> <div><div>46</div><div>years</div></div> <div>4930 Sandy Lake Greenville Rd. Sandy Lake 724-376-2768</div>
<div>Cooperstown Sand &amp; Gravel</div> <div><div>60</div><div>years</div></div> <div>3070 US 322 Franklin, PA 814-374-4412</div>	<div>Sanford Company Janitorial Supplies</div> <div><div>55</div><div>years</div></div> <div>Franklin, PA 800-864-2693 www.sanfordcompany.com</div>	<div>Grandview Estates Mobile, Modular &amp; Manufactured Housing</div> <div><div>51</div><div>years</div></div> <div>2875 PA-157 Venus 814-354-2850</div>	<div>Broadwood Towers</div> <div><div>46</div><div>years</div></div> <div>400 Broad St. New Bethlehem, PA 814-275-4000</div>
<div>Franklin Animal Clinic</div> <div><div>60</div><div>years</div></div> <div>1623 Pittsburgh Rd. Franklin, PA 814-437-5768</div>	<div>Friedhaber's Appliance</div> <div><div>55</div><div>years</div></div> <div>14 East First St. Oil City, PA 814-676-5694</div>	<div>Thomas School of Dance</div> <div><div>51</div><div>years</div></div> <div>14 E. First St. Oil City 814-282-5365</div>	<div>Snug Harbour Restaurant &amp; Lounge</div> <div><div>46</div><div>years</div></div> <div>6447 Rt. 66 Fairmount City 814-275-3355</div>
<div>Lowry Auto Body, Inc.</div> <div><div>60</div><div>years</div></div> <div>605 Wiley Ave. Franklin, PA 814-432-3050</div>	<div>Heath Oil Inc.</div> <div><div>55</div><div>years</div></div> <div>5821 US 322 Franklin, PA 814-432-8003</div>	<div>New Directions Community Credit Union</div> <div><div>51</div><div>years</div></div> <div>101 N. 13th St. Franklin, PA 25 East First St. Oil City, PA www.newdirectionscu.com</div>	<div>The Indian Museum</div> <div><div>45</div><div>years</div></div> <div>7519 Mentor Ave. #A112 Mentor, OH 44060 440-951-3813</div>
<div>Hi-Level Golf Course</div> <div><div>60</div><div>years</div></div> <div>148 Hi-Level Lane Kossuth, PA 814-797-1813</div>	<div>Blairs Key Locksmith</div> <div><div>54</div><div>years</div></div> <div>715 Grant St. Franklin, PA 814-437-6903</div>	<div>Pin Oak Village</div> <div><div>51</div><div>years</div></div> <div>139 Acorn Dr. Seneca, PA 814-676-0193  pinoak@positive-housing.com</div>	<div>Betts Brothers Collision</div> <div><div>45</div><div>years</div></div> <div>42590 W. Central Ave. Titusville 814-827-4299</div>
<div>Leeper Market</div> <div><div>59</div><div>years</div></div> <div>32836 Rt. 66 &amp; 36 Leeper, PA 814-744-8811</div>	<div>Good Tire Service</div> <div><div>54</div><div>years</div></div> <div>Exit 53 Knox, PA 814-797-2591</div>	<div>Nicolls &amp; Auction Offices in Cochranon &amp; Meadville</div> <div><div>50</div><div>years</div></div> <div>25865 Bell Hill Rd. Cochranon 814-333-1988</div>	<div>Baytree Farm</div> <div><div>45</div><div>years</div></div> <div>2265 Rockland Nickleville Rd. Emlenton, PA 814-671-3922</div>
<div>Community Ambulance Service, Inc.</div> <div><div>58</div><div>years</div></div> <div>Franklin • Oil City Seneca Always dial 911 &amp; ask for Community Ambulance Service</div>	<div>Franklin Retail Association</div> <div><div>53</div><div>years</div></div> <div>PO Box 702 Franklin, PA 814-208-5687</div>	<div>Oak Hill Apartments</div> <div><div>49</div><div>years</div></div> <div>10 Taylor St. Franklin 814-432-4035</div>	<div>Bauer Truck Repair</div> <div><div>44</div><div>years</div></div> <div>140 McClain-Watson Rd. Shippensburg, PA 814-226-6023</div>
<div>Community Services</div> <div><div>58</div><div>years</div></div> <div>206 Center St. Oil City, PA 814-678-7766</div>	<div>Wolfs Camping Resort</div> <div><div>53</div><div>years</div></div> <div>308 Timberwolf Run Knox, PA 814-797-1103</div>	<div>Gahr Excavating</div> <div><div>49</div><div>years</div></div> <div>1102 East 2nd St. Oil City, PA 814-676-1830</div>	<div>Drayer Electrical Services, LLC</div> <div><div>43</div><div>years</div></div> <div>5312 Georgetown Rd. Franklin, PA 814-432-5478</div>



<div><div>Insurance Services</div><div>601 Grant Street · Franklin</div><div><div><div>43</div><div>years</div></div></div><div>Cynthia Cauvel 814-432-3365</div><div>Nick McLaughlin 814-432-2011</div><div>Kyle Jacoby 814-346-1881</div></div>				<div><div>HONOR ROLL OF BUSINESS</div><div>PLEASE JOIN US IN HONORING THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES FOR PROVIDING YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY.</div></div>			
<div><div>Reitz Agency</div><div>1140 Liberty St. Ste. 102 Franklin, PA</div><div>814-432-8955</div><div><div><div>42</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Hartland Homes &amp; Excavation</div><div>814-354-2618</div><div><div><div>39</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Seneca Veterinary Clinic</div><div>2646 State Rt. 257 Seneca, PA</div><div>814-676-8470</div><div><div><div>36</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Electralloy / GO Carlson</div><div>175 Main St. Oil City, PA</div><div>814-678-4100</div><div><div><div>33</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>Cheri Schiffer Salon</div><div>1237 Liberty St. Franklin, PA</div><div>814-432-2600</div><div><div><div>41</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Oil Creek &amp; Titusville Railroad</div><div>409 S. Perry St. Titusville</div><div>814-676-1733</div><div><div><div>39</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Williams Travel Plus</div><div>1 year under new ownership</div><div>8 State St. Oil City</div><div>814-677-1237</div><div><div><div>36</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Oil City Arts Council</div><div>206 Seneca St. Oil City, PA</div><div>814-676-1509</div><div><div><div>33</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>Waterproofing Specialties</div><div>3360 Ridgway-Johnsonburg Rd. Ridgway, PA</div><div>814-772-9291 877-644-9226</div><div><div><div>41</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Burger King</div><div>5753 State HWY 8 Harrisville</div><div>814-786-9785</div><div><div><div>39</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Clarion Beverage</div><div>9 North 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Clarion</div><div>814-226-7031</div><div><div><div>36</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Palmer's Country Store</div><div>10695 Rt. 66 Clarion, PA</div><div>814-764-5930</div><div><div><div>33</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>Professional Cycle Inc.</div><div>23070 US 322 Cochranton, PA</div><div>814-425-3537</div><div><div><div>41</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Virgile Iron &amp; Steel</div><div>3 Years Under New Ownership</div><div>191 State Rt. 8 Oil City</div><div>814-676-1100</div><div><div><div>38</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Varner Funeral Homes Inc.</div><div>1632 Bald Eagle St. Sligo - 745-2220</div><div>538 Main St. Rimersburg - 473-3200</div><div><div><div>35</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>All Seasons Temporaries</div><div>1288 Liberty St. Franklin, PA</div><div>814-437-2148</div><div><div><div>32</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>Clarion Antique Mall</div><div>10403 Rte. 322 Shippensburg, PA</div><div>814-226-4420</div><div><div><div>40</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Main Street Market</div><div>714 Main St. Polk</div><div>814-432-5558</div><div><div><div>38</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Clark Electric, Inc.</div><div>53 South 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Clarion</div><div>814-226-6100</div><div><div><div>35</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Barrow Civic Theatre</div><div>1223 Liberty St. Franklin</div><div>814-437-3440</div><div><div><div>32</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>Liberty Electronics</div><div>189 Howard St. Franklin, PA</div><div>814-432-7505</div><div><div><div>40</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Lifelike Taxidermy</div><div>510 Kennerdell St. Franklin</div><div>814-432-4142</div><div><div><div>37</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Certified Auto Care</div><div>South Fifth Ave Clarion, PA</div><div>814-226-4624</div><div><div><div>35</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Frenchcreek Production</div><div>100 N. 13<sup>th</sup> St. Franklin</div><div>814-437-1808</div><div><div><div>32</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>Hartzell's Water Conditioning, Inc.</div><div>Thank you for your business!</div><div>1-800-821-5261</div><div>www.hartzellwaterinc.com PA 44941</div><div><div><div>40</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Hugh Water Services</div><div>7344 US-219 Brockway, PA</div><div>814-265-8981</div><div><div><div>37</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Lee's Fine Detail &amp; Auto Sales</div><div>1850 Allegheny Blvd. Oil City, PA</div><div>814-677-6514</div><div><div><div>34</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Hards Fabrication &amp; Welding Inc.</div><div>231 Gilmore Dr. Seneca, PA</div><div>814-677-2460</div><div><div><div>31</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>Hilltop Beverage</div><div>16 years under new ownership</div><div>1218 15th Street Ste 1 Franklin, PA</div><div>814-432-4810</div><div><div><div>40</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Best Printing</div><div>111 Walnut Street Oil City</div><div>814-676-5311</div><div><div><div>37</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Jane's Stromboli Home Baked Goodness</div><div>Stoneboro Store: 724-376-3828</div><div>Home: 814-786-9733 www.janesstromboli.com</div><div><div><div>34</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Coal Oil Johnny's Eatery</div><div>117 East State (At the Light) Pleasantville, PA</div><div>814-589-5500</div><div><div><div>31</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>WV Glass</div><div>11521 Rt. 58 Sligo, PA</div><div>814-745-2323</div><div><div><div>39</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Gravatt Painting &amp; Services, Inc.</div><div>PO Box 657 Franklin</div><div>814-437-7577 <small>State Register Number PA 038888</small></div><div><div><div>36</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Jacob A. Weaver Company, LLC</div><div>7033 State Rt. 173 Cochranton</div><div>814-425-2500 Ext 221</div><div><div><div>33</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Jones Party Magic</div><div>3830 US 322 Franklin, PA</div><div>814-432-7812</div><div><div><div>31</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				
<div><div>Agway</div><div>550 N. Seneca St. Oil City, PA</div><div>814-677-2031</div><div><div><div>39</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Corbin's Stained Glass Studio</div><div>217 Main St. Summerville</div><div>814-856-3133</div><div>See us on Facebook</div><div><div><div>36</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Whispering Pines Golf Course</div><div>15630 Middle Road Meadville, PA</div><div>814-333-2827</div><div><div><div>33</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>	<div><div>Oakwood Mini Storage</div><div>Rt. 62 &amp; Rt. 157 Oil City, PA</div><div>1-800-494-2299</div><div><div><div>31</div><div>years</div></div></div></div>				



# HONOR ROLL OF BUSINESS

PLEASE JOIN US IN HONORING THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES FOR PROVIDING YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY.

<p>J &amp; V Visions Collision Center</p> <p> 843 Buffalo St. Franklin, PA 814-432-8723</p>	<p>Missy's Arcade Restaurant</p> <p> 116 Diamond St. Titusville, PA 814-827-8110</p>	<p>Prime Fitness</p> <p> Specialty Fitness Systems Franklin</p>	<p>257 Buy Sell Trade</p> <p> 4317 State Rt. 208 Oil City, PA 814-670-0900</p>
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# Drake Well showcases oil region history

## SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Drake Well Museum had another successful year in 2024, with visitation continuing to grow. Over 16,830 people visited the museum from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, returning to pre-pandemic numbers. The site also hosted eleven different programs and events, including its popular “Drake Day: Circus!” event in August.

Drake Well’s Site Administrator, Michael Knecht, credits 2024’s strong numbers to the significant increase in school tours, thanks to a special program offered by the museum which provides free admission and assistance with transportation costs for schools. “We had 1,867 school students from October 2023 through May 2024 – that is an 84% increase from last year,” says Knecht. “Our Admission and Transportation Scholarship Program for schools was a huge success in getting schools back to Drake Well.”

School tours were stagnant at Drake Well Museum over the last few years following the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the ever-increasing costs faced by many school districts. Knecht worked with Museum Educator Sarah Goodman and Executive Director of Friends of Drake Well Emily Weaver to come up with an idea for a program that schools could apply for through the museum to receive free admission and/or assistance with transportation costs.

Weaver was able to secure grant funding to help pay for the program. “Thanks to grants received from Oil Region Alliance, Bridge Builders Community Foundations & United Way of Venango County, Crawford Gives, and the John K. Henne Charitable Trust, we were proudly able to offer free transportation and admission for any school wishing to visit and tour Drake Well Museum and Park during the 2023-24 school year,” says Weaver.

The funding received through the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism was made possible with a C2P2 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation through grant funding from the Heritage Area Program and the Environmental Stewardship Fund.

All schools in the northwest Pennsylvania region were eligible for the program, including public,

private and homeschool groups.

“We especially wanted to see an increase in local school tours,” continues Weaver, “Over the years, even prior to the pandemic, we have seen less local school districts bringing students to the site. It is so important for the youth of our region to understand and appreciate the events that happened here over 160 years ago, events that changed our region as well as the world at large!”

Over thirty schools and day care center educational programs benefited from free admission and transportation, bringing in over 1,000 students in ages ranging from preschool to senior high school. Drake Well Museum is offering the program again for the 2024-2025 school year, thanks to funding received from Crawford Gives and the John K. Henne Charitable Trust.

Schools and teachers interested in scheduling a tour should contact Goodman at 814-461-0005 or email sargoodman@pa.gov.

Located off Route 8 south of Titusville, Drake Well Museum and Park is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in partnership with Friends of Drake Well, Inc., a non-profit community-based organization.

The two entities also partner in the administration and operation of Historic Pithole City near Pleasantville, and McClintock Well #1, located between Oil City and Rouseville. Friends of Drake Well, Inc., works to support Drake Well Museum in achieving its mission to uncover, preserve and share Pennsylvania’s rich petroleum history, connecting past to present through a diversity of perspectives and inspiring its global audience to strive for a sustainable energy future.

Drake Well Museum is open year-round to visitors, with reduced hours of operation during the winter months. Hours from Nov. 1 through April 1 are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday through Sunday; after April 1 the hours change to a five-day schedule, operating Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Historic Pithole City’s Visitor Center is currently closed for the winter season but will reopen May 31, remaining open Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. until Sept. 1.

The staff at Drake Well Museum and Park consist of five permanent/year-round positions and one seasonal position under the PHMC and an additional eight positions under



Contributed photo

Friends of Drake Well, including two full-time, year-round staff and various part-time and seasonal staff.

PHMC staff include Michael Knecht, Site Administrator; Sarah Goodman, Museum Educator; Sarah Bell, Museum Curator; Stewart McKinley, Facility Operations Supervisor; and Tom Lindsay, Maintenance Repairman. James Becker was employed throughout 2024 as the site’s seasonal Semi-Skilled Laborer. Friends of Drake Well staff include Emily Weaver, Executive Director; Toni Brown, Visitor Services & Curatorial Assistant; Vickie Ruppertsberg, part-time Museum Store Manager; and Frances Fulton, part-time Museum Store Clerk. In addition to these positions, Friends of Drake Well also employs three seasonal operators for the Drake Well Replica: Gene Hale, John Hetrick and Dave Mock; as well as a seasonal coordinator for the Pithole site. The Pithole Coordinator for the 2024 season was Parker Los.

Drake Well Museum welcomes student interns to the site each summer, providing great experiences for those seeking to work in museums and archives, non-profit management, education and other fields of study. Drake Well welcomed four interns during the summer of 2024 – Damon Navaroli, Alex Huffman, Anne Schwanke and Alyssa Shick. Damon was the PHMC Keystone Intern, working primarily with collections and archives. Alex, Anne and Alyssa were hired through Friends of Drake Well, receiving a well-rounded experience in both museum education and non-profit management. Drake Well Museum will once again be hosting student interns in the summer of 2025; links for applications are available at [www.drakewell.org](http://www.drakewell.org). The deadline to apply is Feb. 9.

Events and programs at Drake Well were well attended this year; over 1,740 people attended fun events such as Drake Day, Wisdom & Wine, Fall Gas Up and more. The museum and grounds were open for the Great North American Eclipse on April 8, 2024. The site sat on the edge of the path of totality, allowing for full coverage just shy of one minute! Despite that short amount of time, 255 visitors chose to watch the historic event at Drake Well. Historic Pithole City had strong attendance throughout 2024 including 461 attendees for its ever-popular Lantern Tours in October.

Lots of events and programs are scheduled for both Drake Well and Pithole in 2025; a full calendar of events can be found on the Drake Well website as well as on its Facebook page.

Improvements and updates to Drake Well’s outdoor exhibit area continued during 2024, with some of the projects slated for completion in 2025. Interpretive planning called for better wayfinding and reconfiguring of the different themes in the outdoor exhibits.

A new exhibit area, the “Business of Oil,” sits across from Mill Run which runs down through the park. A bridge was constructed across the run, connecting the main outdoor area with this new section. The replica of the Grant Well Office building was moved to the exhibit along with a building that will house a blacksmith and cooper shop. The blacksmith and cooper shop, expected to be open and functioning by fall of 2025, will provide educational demonstrations of how these two trades were conducted in the 19th century Oil Region and their importance to the early oil industry.

Another important component of this section will be an exhibit displaying an engine with a central power, showing how an oil lease would have operated in mid-twentieth century Pennsylvania. The engine and power were manufactured by Bovaird & Seyfang in Bradford in the 1930s and were used on a lease in Bradford belonging to the Wooster family. The heavy equipment and the building that housed it were transported to the museum grounds this past summer for storage. It will be several years before the engine and central power will be set up and functioning for interpretation.

The museum also acquired an original 1978 Chevy truck used by the Otto-Cupler Torpedo Company to haul nitroglycerin to well sites. The highly explosive nitroglycerin was used to revitalize old, underperforming wells in the area. The truck is currently being repaired and restored for interpretive use. It was generously donated to Drake Well Museum by E & K Equipment of Titusville.

The most important part of both Drake Well Museum and Historic Pithole City is their volunteers! As Museum Educator, Goodman oversees volunteer recruitment for both sites.

“We have a great team of volunteers here at Drake Well,” says Goodman, “but our numbers continue to decline every year.”

Some of the many ways in which volunteers help at Drake Well include, but are not limited to, school tour guides, regular tour guides, curatorial assistants, educational outreach and staffing the front desk of the museum during its hours of operation. There is also a need for volunteers at the Pithole site, especially docents who can interpret the history of the legendary boomtown to visitors. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer for either Drake Well or Pithole should contact Goodman directly to set up an introduction and training.

There is always something new to discover at Drake Well Museum and Park, the new year promises to be another great success! For more information about Drake Well Museum and its programs, visit [www.drakewell.org](http://www.drakewell.org), call 814-827-2797, email [ra-phdrakewell@pa.gov](mailto:ra-phdrakewell@pa.gov), or find us on Facebook at Drake Well Museum and Park.

Drake Well Museum and Park is located at 202 Museum Lane, Titusville, PA 16354.

# Barrow-Civic Theatre fills seats with hit shows

## SUBMITTED ARTICLE

The Barrow-Civic Theatre is owned and operated by Franklin Civic Operetta Association (FCOA). Since 1993, the theatre has been committed to being a leader in the cultural growth, diversity and vitality of the region. Their vision is to provide expanding opportunities for quality programming and entertainment for the broad-based audience, while maintaining financial stability.

A non-profit organization, FCOA’s Barrow-Civic Theatre provides creative arts opportunities to all ages throughout the year, with a Season of Shows running from January through December.

Following another full year of programming, tremendous community support, fundraising efforts and grant awards, the theatre has had another successful period of growth.

2024 saw the return of the Main Stage Season of Shows, the Youth Theatre Program, the Barrow Theatre Institute, Off-Barrow productions, and several performances by outside musicians and entertainers. Award winning artists such as Phil Keaggy and Beatlemania Magic performed to sold-out audiences.

Franklin Civic Operetta Association keeps its mission statement at the core

of all theatrical presentation choices.

The Franklin Civic Operetta Association is committed to providing leadership and education in cultural development and performing arts to the region, striving to create a legacy of quality entertainment by tapping the resources of all age groups and encouraging the pursuit of artistic talents.

The first Main Stage production of the year was The Play That Goes Wrong, a 1920s whodunit full of disaster & hilarious consequences. Andrew Lloyd Webber’s and Tim Rice’s Jesus Christ Superstar was the theatre’s first large musical of the year and played to near sold-out audiences. The SpongeBob Musical took them to Bikini Bottom just in time for the heat of summer. They were excited to present the charming tale of Annie as our 2024 Applefest musical, and they rounded out their Main Stage season with a captivating performance of Dracula over the Halloween weekend.

In August, they celebrated 65 years of Franklin Civic Operetta Association productions with an Anniversary presentation of A Tribute to Musicals of the 1970s: Dinner and a Show.

Their Off-Barrow program continues to grow and produce shows better fit for their Little Theatre Stage. 2024 performances included Liberty Caba-

ret: Unplugged, She Kills Monsters, God of Carnage, and two separate Red-Eye Theatre Project events.

FCOA’s Youth Theatre Program presented an exhilarating all-youth musical, YT Walks the Broadway Beat, and the acclaimed Summer Theatre Camp. Several of the Main Stage shows also featured Youth Theatre students, including large youth ensembles in SpongeBob the Musical and Annie.

Continuing to strengthen community partnerships remains a priority for BCT’s leadership. Collaborative marketing events, local business promotion and increased facility rentals have been among the many partner opportunities provided. Examples include hosting character events at local businesses, cross promoting on merchandise, using local vendors for production and marketing materials.

The theatre is proud to continue serving as a performance space for the Silver Cornet Band, Venango Symphony Orchestra, HOLeY Jeans, Oil Region Ballet, and several area dance studio recitals and galas.

Franklin Civic Operetta Association continues to produce the musicals and plays presented in the Main Stage and Off-Barrow seasons at the Barrow-Civic Theatre. The 14-member Board of Directors is 100% volunteer

and members serve as producers and business managers for the shows.

The Barrow-Civic Theatre continues to value and benefit greatly from a dedicated staff of top-notch individuals. The theatre ended 2024 with no turn around in staff, and includes 3 full-time and 7 part-time employees. Zachary Covington remains Executive Director, while Kristy Moore continues to grow and flourish in her role as General Manager. James Amero continues as the Technical Director. Jenalee Schenk is the Theatre Relations Coordinator and oversees all marketing and graphic design. Gary Barton remains in the position of Box Office Supervisor and Holly Galmish completed her first year as Bookkeeper. Zachary Dempsey is Buildings and Grounds Manager, and Deb Shoup, James McDonald and Ben Augenbaugh are the theatre’s custodians. Also, throughout the course of the year, they employed a Tech Intern as well as a few temporary Tech Assistants brought on to help with various projects.

The FCOA Board of Directors continues to invest in the sustainability and technological improvements of the Barrow-Civic Theatre building. In an effort to maintain their commitment to improve the production value of performances, continu-

al upgrades are made to lighting and sound equipment. The “Replace the Stage” Fundraising Campaign which occurred in 2023 allowed for the completion of several projects on the Main Stage during the 2024 FY, including lighting fixture installations and new stage curtains.

Audience numbers revealed a steady increase in attendance throughout the year and BTC is hopeful that 2025 will continue this growth trend. The Season of Shows for the coming year is sure to provide something for everyone. Shows that will be running during the year include Rumors, Monty Python’s Spamalot, Footloose, Singin’ in the Rain, and Frozen, Jr.

The Theatre will also see a return of the annual Youth Theatre shows and Summer Camp. Red Eye Theatre Project, biennial presentation of Handel’s “The Messiah,” Silver Cornet Band and Venango Symphony Orchestra concerts, Oil Region Ballet and other dance recitals, and so much more! Visit their social media and website [barrowtheatre.org](http://barrowtheatre.org) for dates, to purchase tickets, and for additional information.

Memberships, sponsorships, subscriptions and show tickets are all available now for all 2025 shows.

# Melting EmPOURium’s Roser expands artistic offerings

## SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Busy! That’s the word to sum up the year for The Melting EmPOURium. Artist and owner Crystal Roser is very grateful for all the opportunities she had in 2024 to make and sell her art, and she is looking forward to 2025 being even busier for growing her business and creating.

Crystal is a local mixed media artist. Her studio, The Melting EmPOURium, is located on the 2nd floor of The National Transit Building’s annex on Seneca Street in Oil City.

At her studio, Roser creates one-of-a-kind art using mediums such as acrylics, alcohol inks and epoxy resin. Some of her most popular art includes abstract pour paintings, handmade jewelry, vinyl record clocks, stools, wooden coasters, ornaments, tumblers and glassware.

In fact, her colorful wine glasses have become so popular that she has been creating as many as possible to sell. She even made an order of 80 to be sold at Deer Creek Winery locations. This amazing commission gave Crystal the chance to master her skills. The glasses can also be purchased at Transit Art Gallery and Gifts, located in Oil City, or by placing a custom order directly with Crystal. Following customer requests, Crystal has also begun creating her art on other pieces of glass, such as shot glasses and stemless wine glasses.

Crystal’s other art pieces can also be found at Porch Music Store/Artist’s Attic in Franklin, where she has acrylic pour painted jewelry and vinyl record stools for sale.

Some amazing highlights of 2024 for The Melting EmPOURium include the Whim-

sical Wonders event that occurred in June which showcased the entire collection of Crystal’s art at Transit Art Gallery and Gifts.

Crystal was also selected to display her art in an exhibit called “Peace by Piece” in Meadville at Hatch Hollow gallery, an exhibit focused on art to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the Woodstock Music Festival. Crystal entered three pieces of pour painted vinyl record art: a stool, a clock and a melted vinyl bowl.

In the fall came Shop Small Saturday and Artist Sunday. Crystal was up in her studio, giving a behind-the-scenes look at what goes into creating her art. Many people have shown interest in learning how she creates her pieces, and she loves teaching others and looks forward to instructing classes this year.

A big leap in followers on Facebook has helped The Melting EmPOURium with an online presence. Crystal credits this to her many friends and fellow artists who have shown her great support. Because of shared posts and almost 700 followers, The Melting EmPOURium has made sales in different states across the country and even internationally. Last year was the best year of sales so far for this small art business.

## Looking to 2025

Starting in February, new products will be available such as clothing with Crystal’s art printed on it.

A big leap for Crystal and The Melting EmPOURium will be her acceptance and participation into the ACRE program. This amazing enrichment program will give

Crystal opportunities to grow and learn as a creative entre-

preneur which will help her business tremendously.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## February

**Feb. 7** — Nature Art Showcase and Sale, 5 to 7 p.m., lobby of Barrow-Civic Theatre in downtown Franklin; free public display; including free public “Meet the Artists” reception; original artwork depicting outdoor recreation, natural resources and landscapes; acrylic, oil and watercolor paintings; traditional and digital photography; stained glass; woodcarvings, 3-D items blending nature’s own materials and wide-ranging art media; most exhibit entries can be purchased on-site; conducted by Council on Greenways and Trails with Penn Soil RC&D Council; for more info, see [nwpagreenways.org](http://nwpagreenways.org) or call Marilyn Black at 814-671-2058

**Feb. 8** — Franklin On Ice, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Fountain Park

**Feb. 8** — Nature Art Showcase and Sale, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., lobby of Barrow-Civic Theatre in downtown Franklin; free public display; original artwork depicting outdoor recreation, natural resources and landscapes; acrylic, oil and watercolor paintings; traditional and digital photography; stained glass; woodcarvings, 3-D items blending nature’s own materials and wide-ranging art media; most exhibit entries can be purchased on-site; conducted by Council on Greenways and Trails with Penn Soil RC&D Council; for more info, see [nwpagreenways.org](http://nwpagreenways.org) or call Marilyn Black at 814-671-2058

**Feb. 8** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Emlenton, hike toward Rockland and back; 6 miles total

**Feb. 8** — Pithole Cabin Fever Party, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Historic Pithole City, 14118 Pithole Rd, Pleasantville; if there is snow, take a sled; free admission, donations welcome; [drakewell.org/events](http://drakewell.org/events)

**Feb. 15** — Snowman in the Forest Day, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., River Pavilion by the playground on River Road, approximately one mile up-river from the Route 36 Cooksburg Bridge, Cook Forest; chili cook-off; carriage rides, sledding, snowman building, ice skating (ice skates available); snowshoe interpretive hike within the old growth forest along Cook Trail, meet at the new River Pavilion; happy dog contest; event sponsored by the Cook Forest Vacation Bureau

**Feb. 19** — Venango Area Chamber of Commerce’s annual dinner, Cross Creek Resort, Titusville; reception at 5 p.m., dinner and presentation from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

**Feb. 19-March 12** — Beginner Fly Tying Classes, 6:30 p.m., Emerging Technology Center, 191 Howard St., Franklin; four classes; lasts approximately two and half hours each Wednesday evening; all materials and tools will be provided for use with individual instruction; classes are limited to 12 individuals; anyone 12-17 years old must be accompanied by an adult; cost for all classes, \$50; pre-registration required along with a non-refundable deposit of \$20; checks should be made payable to Keystone Fly Fishers, 1021 Bredinsburg Road, Franklin, PA 16323; [keystoneflyfishers1@gmail.com](mailto:keystoneflyfishers1@gmail.com); Facebook, Keystone Fly Fishers; 814-673-5478

**Feb. 21-23** — Community Playhouse, Inc. Honky Tonk “Bringing Back Broadway,” Oil City Moose Club on Halyday Run Road; Feb. 21-22, 7:30 p.m.; Feb. 23, 2 p.m.; \$15 with optional dinner \$30 served from 6:15-6:45 p.m. Feb. 21-22 only; reservations, call 814-677-7469

**Feb. 25** — Keystone High School Choral Pop’s Concert, high school auditorium (time to be determined)

## March

**March 1** — Otter Watch, 7:30 to 10:30 a.m., Park Office, Cook Forest State Park; take binoculars and spotting scopes for a driving tour to otter hotspots along the National Wild & Scenic Clarion River

**March 1** — Oil Country Bluegrass Festival, 11 a.m., Oil City Moose Lodge No. 78, 541 Halyday Run Road, Oil City; theme: Sweet 16; two 50/50 raffles; guitar, mandolin and banjo raffles; basket raffles; food; cash bar; free and open to the public; proceeds benefit CASA of Venango County and the Oil City Arts Council

**March 6** — Wisdom & More: T.C. Joy Radiators, doors open at 5:30 p.m. for social hour, followed by the presentation at 6:30 p.m., Drake Well Museum and Park; Dr. Rhonda Clark will present on T.C. Joy Radiators of Titusville; admission, \$5 for members of Friends of Drake Well and \$10 for non-members

**March 8** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Route 66 in Vowinckel; shuttle to Amster Springs; hike back; 6 miles total

**March 9** — Pennsylvania’s Birthday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Drake Well Museum and Park; celebrate Pennsylvania’s 344th birthday; free admission

**March 13** — Third Annual Women in Business Expo, 5 to 7:30 p.m., The Haskell House, Clarion

**March 13** — Wisdom & More: Whale Oil, doors open at 5:30 p.m. for social hour, followed by the presentation at 6:30 p.m., Drake Well Museum and Park; researcher Jamie Jones will present on the whale oil industry and how it was affected by Drake Well’s success in August 1859; admission, \$5 for members of Friends of Drake Well and \$10 for non-members

**March 13-15** — Keystone High School musical “Mamma Mia!”; high school auditorium (time to be determined)

**March 13-15** — Allegheny-Clarion Valley High School musical, 7 to 8 p.m.

**March 13-15** — Oil City High School musical “Bye, Bye Birdie,” 7:30 p.m., high school auditorium

**March 15** — Polar Bear Float, kayak trip, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., meet at the Park Office, conducted by Cook Forest State Park; \$25 per boat (participants may take their own or one will be supplied) with check or money order made out to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; participants must have dry suit or dry top/bottom combination, cold weather boots, waterproof gloves, waterproof stow bag, complete change of clothes; pre-register by March 10 by contacting the park office at 814-744-8407

**March 20** — Wisdom & More: 19th Century Fashion, doors open at 5:30 p.m. for social hour, followed by the presentation at 6:30 p.m., Drake Well Museum and Park; historian Cynda Sites will present on 19th century fashion and etiquette; admission, \$5 for members of Friends

of Drake Well and \$10 for non-members

**March 22** — Clarion Chamber’s Annual Awards Dinner, 5:30 to 9 p.m., The Clarion Moose

**March 27** — Wisdom & More: Oil and Gas Development in the U.S., doors open at 5:30 p.m. for social hour, followed by the presentation at 6:30 p.m., Drake Well Museum and Park; renowned author and scholar Daniel Raimi will present “Oil and Gas Development in the United States: Where have we been and where are we going?”; admission, \$5 for members of Friends of Drake Well and \$10 for non-members

**March 29** — Eagle Watch, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Cook Forest park office; take binoculars and spotting scopes for a driving tour to eagle hotspots along the National Wild & Scenic Clarion River

## April

**April 4** — Marienville Variety Show, 7 p.m., East Forest School, 120 W. Birch St., Marienville; songs, skits, jokes and family fun; theme, “Occupations”; for more information, call 814-758-7181

**April 6** — Franklin High School Madrigal concert, 4 p.m., high school auditorium

**April 12** — Easter Egg Hunt, set-up at 9:30 a.m., start at 11 a.m., Fountain Park, Franklin (rain date, April 14, set-up at 4 p.m., start at 6 p.m.)

**April 12** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Environmental Center; shuttle to Route 66; hike back; 8 miles total; short shuttle to Forest Road and hike back; 4 miles total

**April 16** — Oil City Community Clean-Up Day, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (details subject to change)

**April 19** — Peter Cottontail Express, 1 p.m. departure time; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; 814-676-1733

**April 25** — Oil City Uncorked, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., South Side (details subject to change)

**April 25** — Friday Night Music on the Square, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Town Square in Oil City (details subject to change)

**April 26** — Free Music in the Alley, 6 to 7 p.m., Oil City’s South Side (details subject to change)

## May

**May 1** — Rocky Grove High School spring choir concert, 7 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 3** — ATV & UTV Safety Class, 8 a.m., MACA Building, 149 MACA Dr., Marienville; to register, call 814-758-7181

**May 3** — Franklin Curb Market, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D

**May 3-4** — May Garden Mart, Fountain Park, Franklin; May 3, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; May 4, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**May 4** — Engine Start Up Day, Drake Well Museum and Park; some of the engines in the outdoor exhibits will come out of winter hibernation, including the steam engine inside the Drake Well replica; presentation by Norm Shade on the Bessemer Gas Engine Company and its successor, the Cooper-Bessemer Company; regular admission applies

**May 6** — Franklin Senior High band concert, 7 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 8** — Oil City Middle School spring chorus concert, 7 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 8** — Rocky Grove High School spring band concert, 7 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 9** — 11th Annual Clarion Cheers, Beers & Wine Walk, 5 to 8 p.m., early bird starts at 4 p.m., downtown Clarion

**May 10** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Tadler Trailhead at Clear Creek State Park; shuttle to Gateway Lodge; hike back; 8 miles total; or drop-off for a short 4 miles

**May 10** — Oil City Area School District’s Swing Out, 7:30 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 11** — Mother’s Day Special, 1 p.m. departure time; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; 814-676-1733

**May 13** — Franklin Elementary/Junior High band concert, 7 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 15** — St. Stephen School spring concert, 6:30 p.m., school gymnasium

**May 15** — Franklin Junior/Senior High choir concert, 7 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 18** — North Country Trail kayak, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Gravel Lick; shuttle to Cook Forest launch; 4 mile trip

**May 20** — Oil City Middle School spring band concert, 7 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 22** — Oil City High School spring band concert, 7:30 p.m., high school auditorium

**May 23-24** — Mayfest, Route 208 in Fryburg; theme: From the Past... Rewind

**May 29** — Keystone High School commencement, 7 p.m., high school football field, weather permitting

**May 29** — Redbank Valley High School graduation, 7 to 8 p.m.

## June

**June 1** — Franklin High School graduation, 6 p.m., Franklin High School football stadium

**June 3** — Cranberry High School graduation, 7 p.m., high school gymnasium; ticket only

**Thursdays June through August** — Curb Market, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Central Avenue Plaza, Oil City; 814-677-3152, Ext. 101 (details subject to change)

**June 4, 11, 18, 25** — Curb Market Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D, Franklin

**June 5, 12, 19, 26** — Thursday Night Concerts, 7 p.m., Bandstand Park, Franklin

**June 6, 13, 20, 27** — Alfresco Fridays, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., Bella Cucina & Benjamin’s Roadhouse, Franklin

**June 6** — Oil City Area High School commencement, 6 p.m., Oil City High School football stadium

**June 6** — Friday Night Music on the Square, 7 to 9 p.m., Town Square in Oil City (details subject to change)

**June 7, 14, 21, 28** — Curb Market Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D, Franklin

**June 14** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Deer Creek; hike to Station Road and back; 5 miles total

**June 14-15** — Blues & Barbecue, Bandstand Park, Franklin

**June 15** — Father’s Day Special, 11 a.m. departure time; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; 814-676-1733

**June 25-July 23** — Taste of Talent, Wednesdays at 7 p.m., Bandstand Park, Franklin

**June 27** — Penny Carnival, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Fountain and Bandstand parks and 12th Street Island, Franklin

**June 28** — Liberty Fest Parade, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Liberty Street, Franklin; ice cream social and band concert after the parade in Bandstand Park, Franklin

**June 30** — Pet Show, 5:30 p.m., Bandstand Park, Franklin

## July

**July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30** — Curb Market Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D, Franklin

**July 2** — Cranberry Fireworks Display, at dusk, Cranberry Mall in Cranberry

**July 3** — I Love Clarion Celebration, 5 to 10 p.m., location to be announced; sponsored by Pennsylvania American Water and Penn Highlands Healthcare

**July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31** — Thursday concerts, 7 p.m., Bandstand Park, Franklin

**July 4** — St. Joseph’s 86th Annual 4th of July Celebration, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., St. Joseph Church parish grounds, Route 66, Lucinda; includes dinner, drawings, games of skill and chance, music; 814-226-7288; [www.stjoseph4thofjuly.com](http://www.stjoseph4thofjuly.com); Facebook @stjoseph4thofjuly

**July 4** — Marienville July 4th Celebration, 1 to 10 p.m., MACA Park; food, raffles, auction, swimming, softball, volleyball, parade at 4 p.m., music by TRIXX at 7 p.m., fireworks by Rizers at 10 p.m.; for more information, call 814-758-7181

**July 4** — Fireworks/band, 5 to 10 p.m., Riverfront Park, Franklin

**July 4** — Friday Night Music on the Square, 7 to 9 p.m., Town Square in Oil City (details subject to change)

**July 5, 12, 19, 26** — Curb Market Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D, Franklin

**July 5** — St. Joseph’s 11th Annual 5K Run/Walk, 8 a.m., Lucinda Train Station, 1040 Lander Dr., Lucinda; 814-226-7288; [www.stjoseph4thofjuly.com](http://www.stjoseph4thofjuly.com); Facebook @StJoLiberty5K

**July 5** — Veterans/Military Special, 11 a.m. departure time; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; 814-676-1733

**July 11-13** — Emlenton Summer Festival; according to [summerfestival.emlentonpa.com/](http://summerfestival.emlentonpa.com/)

**July 12** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Environmental Center; shuttle to Gravel Lick; hike back; 6 miles total

**July 20-26** — Clarion County Fair, Redbank Valley Municipal Park; according to [clarioncountyfair.com/](http://clarioncountyfair.com/)

**July 23** — Wednesday Music on the Square for Oil Heritage Festival, 7 to 9 p.m., Oil City; presented by Oil City Main Street Program (details subject to change)

**July 23-27** — Oil Heritage Festival, all day, Oil City

**July 23-27** — Oil Heritage Festival Art Show, Oil City; in conjunction with Oil Heritage Week; local and regional artists display their artwork throughout the city at multiple venues; applications accepted children through adult

**July 24-26** — St. Stephen School Festival, school parking lot

**July 26** — Christmas in July, 11 a.m. departure time; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; 814-676-1733

**July 27** — Tiki Train, 11 a.m. departure time; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; 814-676-1733

## August

**Aug. 1** — Taps on Tracks, doors open at 4:30 p.m., train departs at 6 p.m.; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; ages 21 or over; everyone must present photo ID at check-in; advance reservations required; limited seating; 814-676-1733

**Aug. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29** — Alfresco Series Friday, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., Benjamin’s Roadhouse and Bella Cucina, Franklin

**Aug. 1** — Friday Night Music on the Square, 7 to 9 p.m., Town Square in Oil City (details subject to change)

**Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30** — Curb Market Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D, Franklin

**Aug. 2** — Taste of Talent semifinals, 7 p.m., Bandstand Park, Franklin

**Aug. 3** — Taste of Talent finals, 4 p.m., Bandstand Park, Franklin

**Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27** — Curb Market Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D, Franklin

**Aug. 7, 14, 21, 28** — Thursday Night Concerts, 7 p.m., Bandstand Park, Franklin; Ronnie’s Tribute will be held Aug. 28 at 7 p.m.

**Aug. 9** — Speeder Rides, 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. departure times; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; no one under age 12; appropriate footwear required; space is limited and reservations are required; 814-676-1733

**Aug. 9** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Route 322; shuttle to Deer Creek; hike back; 7 miles total; or shuttle to Meyers Road and hike back; short 3 miles total

**Aug. 10** — Drake Day, Drake Well Museum and Park; celebrate the anniversary of Edwin L. Drake striking oil in Titusville on Aug. 27, 1859

**Aug. 15** — Bridgefest, Center Street Bridge (details subject to change)

**Aug. 16** — Rock in River Festival, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Riverfront Park, Franklin

**Aug. 16** — Bridgefest, Veteran’s Bridge; presented by Oil City Arts Council

**Aug. 17** — The Drake Well Marathon & a half, 7 a.m. start; run along shaded streets and creek banks; all proceeds benefit Friends of Drake Well, Inc.; for more information and to register, visit <https://rddwm6.wixsite.com/thedrakewellmarathon>

## September

**Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24** — Curb Market Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D, Franklin

**Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27** — Curb Market Saturdays,

8 a.m. to 1 p.m., City Parking Lot D, Franklin

**Sept. 7** — Grandparent’s Day Special, 11 a.m. departure time; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; 814-676-1733

**Sept. 7** — Marienville Community Picnic, 2 to 5 p.m., MACA Building, 149 MACA Dr., Marienville; take a dish to share; for more information, call 814-758-7181

**Sept. 12** — Allegheny River Music & Arts Festival, 6 to 9 p.m.; indoor events on the Northside and Southside of Oil City as well as the Oil Region Venango Campus (details subject to change)

**Sept. 13** — Fall Gas Up, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Drake Well Museum and Park; experience the engines and equipment that powered Pennsylvania’s oil fields; displays will include operating and stationary antique engines, farm and oil field equipment, tractors, models and more; admission, \$10 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens and \$5 for children ages 3-11; members of Friends of Drake Well are free; entrance into Drake Well Museum and its outdoor exhibits is included with admission; the museum will be open to visitors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; collectors may take engines and equipment to display at the event; exhibitor registration will take place the day of the event, no pre-registration is required

**Sept. 13** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Highland; shuttle to Gravel Lick; hike back; 5 miles total; picnic

**Sept. 13** — Pet Fest, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bandstand Park, Franklin

**Sept. 13** — Allegheny River Music & Arts Festival, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Justus Park Center Stage in Oil City; arts, crafts and music on north and south sides (details subject to change)

**Sept. 19** — Oil City Uncorked, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., Oil City’s Northside (details subject to change)

**Sept. 19** — Friday Night Music on the Square, 7 to 9 p.m., Town Square in Oil City (details subject to change)

**Sept. 20** — Cranberry Festival, all day, Cranberry Mall in Cranberry

**Sept. 21** — North Country Trail kayak, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Parker; shuttle to Dotter Road to launch; 8 miles total

**Sept. 26-28** — Marienville Oktoberfest; crafts and food vendors, raffles, auction, entertainment, parades, contests; for more information, 814-758-7181

## October

**Oct. 3-5** — Applefest, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday; Fountain and Bandstand parks, Franklin

**Oct. 4** — Historic Pithole City Lantern Tours, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.; visitors will walk the former streets of the oil boomtown and meet some of Pithole’s most famous historical figures along the way; tour departs every 10 minutes, with each tour lasting approximately 90 minutes; visitors should arrive early, wear weather-appropriate clothing and take a flashlight; tours cover steep hills and semi-rugged terrain; guests should wear sturdy shoes suitable for walking; tours are walking only; golf carts and other vehicles are not provided; tickets go on sale Sept. 1; [drakewell.org/events](http://drakewell.org/events)

**Oct. 11** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Brenniman; shuttle to Sarvey Mill; hike back; 5 miles total

**Oct. 11** — Annual Autumn Leaf Festival Wells Fargo Gala, 5 to 10 p.m., The Haskell House, Clarion

**Oct. 18-25** — Autumn Leaf Festival, Clarion

**Oct. 24** — Downtown trick-or-treat, 4:15 to 5:30 p.m., 1200 block of Liberty Street

**Oct. 25** — Halloween Train, 11 a.m. departure time; Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad, Titusville; train boarding at 409 S. Perry St., Titusville; 814-676-1733

## November

**Nov. 8** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Fern Road; shuttle to Station Road; hike back; 4 miles total

**Nov. 21** — Franklin Chamber’s Wine Walk, 5 to 9 p.m., downtown Franklin

**Nov. 22** — Light Up Night, 6 p.m., Liberty Street, Franklin

**Nov. 29** — Small Business Saturday, Oil City; kicks off the Small Business Bingo Contest that runs through Dec. 13 (details subject to change)

**Nov. 30** — Artists Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., downtown Oil City; open to the public; approximately 50 artists, craftspeople, creative professionals and emerging artists; local and regional artists will have open studios and pop-up shops in businesses across the downtown area; examples of products include painting, photography, jewelry, prints and cards, art puzzles, wood working, textiles, mixed media art, decorative arts and crafts, handmade candles and home furnishings, comic art and graphic novels, knitted and crocheted clothing items and novelties, furniture and found object 3D art, ceramics, local authors with novels, illustrated books, fantasy and poetry; start at The National Transit Building, 206 Seneca St., second floor or any participating business; maps and a directory will be available on Facebook at ArtsOilCity a few days before and at all participating venues

## December

**Dec. 5-7** — Oil City’s Christmas Past, various downtown venues; Friday Night Parade and lighting of the Oil City Rotary tree (details subject to change)

**Dec. 5** — Jingle Bell Run (5K Run/Walk), 9 a.m., starts at Town Square in Oil City (details subject to change)

**Dec. 6** — Fourth Annual Ugly Christmas Sweater Parade, 6 p.m., downtown Clarion

**Dec. 13** — Old Fashion Christmas Retail, downtown stores in Franklin

**Dec. 14** — North Country Trail hike, 10 a.m.; Clarion Chapter of the North Country Trail; meet at Environmental Center; hike H



# Literary arts group advances to Bridge writers

**SUBMITTED ARTICLE**

The Bridge Literary Arts Center is dedicated to the prosperity of literature, language and art in the greater western Pennsylvania region. The Bridge Literary Center began thirty years ago in 1993 as The Bridge Coffee House, featuring monthly literary and music performances by regional and non-regional writers, musicians and artists at the Barrow Civic Children's Theater in Franklin.

In 2011, The Bridge added monthly workshops, open mics and a literary arts journal in order to offer writing enthusiasts more exposure and opportunities to connect with the goal of creating a consistent and shared writers' community.

In 2023, The Bridge Literary Arts Center has been proud to be associated with The Bridge Builders Community Foundation. Since then, we have increased our offerings of workshops and open mics at area locations, such as the Oil City and Franklin Libraries, the Transit Building, Core Goods, and the Cork and Screw, as well as special open mics on Zoom.

The workshops and open mics create opportunities for our area writers to meet and commune, share and respond to each other's creations, and develop a larger community of fellow writing enthusiasts. We're proud of our recent workshops, taught by the well-published area writers Tracey Lander-Garret and

Philip Terman, who offered three focused writing workshops at the Oil City Library, including a workshop before Thanksgiving on the theme of "gratitude" and a workshop to coincide with the holiday season featuring writing that "celebrates the magical celebratory season of winter." These workshops were enthusiastically attended.

In addition, The Bridge Lit Center is thrilled to sponsor an annual day-long literary festival. The festival, held at the Oil Region Venango Campus, features award-winning writers in many genres teaching writing workshops; a Book and Community Fair in which authors and community organizations can introduce and share their works and information; and opportunities for participants to network and commune.

Taking advantage of the campus' pristine location, the festival also includes hike-and-write and bike-and-write activities, as well as inviting visual artists to join us. We were delighted to share the beautiful campus location with visual artists, perched at their easels and canvases around the pond while the writers wrote and shared their efforts in the nearby gazebo. It truly was an artistic community that we hope will continue to evolve. We are grateful for the co-sponsorship of The Oil City Arts Council, and are thrilled to continue working with them.

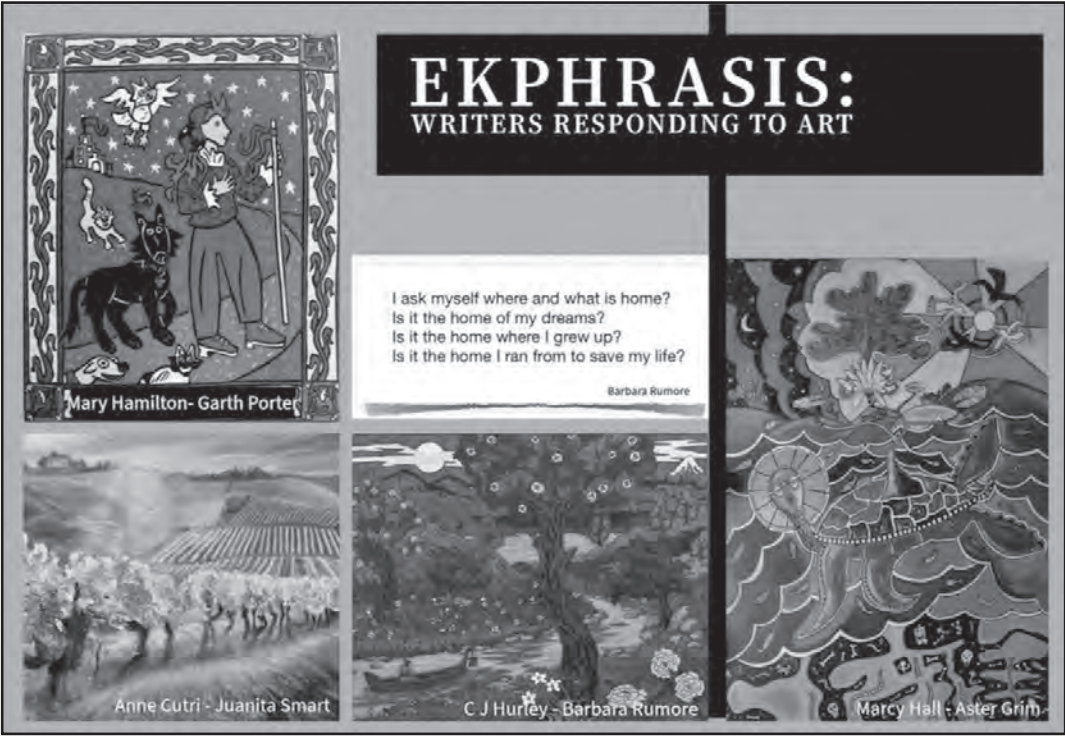
As our name implies, "bridging" area writers, artists and citizens of all stripes

is fundamental to our mission. In early June, The Bridge was delighted to collaborate with area artists for an "ekphrastic" (writings inspired by visual art) exhibit at Foxburg's Redbrick Gallery.

Organized by the artistic director Jason Lewis, 15 artists shared their work with 15 writers, who in turn created a short literary work in response. At the opening, the writers read their ekphrastic pieces in front of the artwork each inspired. It was truly a fruitful collaboration. Those interested in the events works can visit: [alleghenyriverstone.org/event/art-poetry-group-collaboration](http://alleghenyriverstone.org/event/art-poetry-group-collaboration).

The Bridge Lit Center also participated in the Oil City Arts Council's Artists Sunday. The Bridge presented an open mic and authors' fair at Core Goods in Oil City. This year for the group's next open mic on Feb. 8 at the Cork and Screw, The Bridge is thrilled to collaborate with The Writer's Flock, a lively writers' group.

The Bridge is excited as they plan writing events for 2025. Along with continuing their monthly writing workshops, open mics and literary festival (to be held in the fall) they are looking forward to expanding their literary arts journal to include a diversity of writings to reflect even more our region's wide-ranging perspectives and styles. We're particularly thrilled to partner with the Venango Campus in March for more



focused writing workshops.

In sum, The Bridge is excited to explore even more events and opportunities, such as working with area citizens in sharing their stories; offering workshops in a wider array of area locations; hosting non-regional

writers in our area for greater accessibility for those who may have travel challenges.

In 2025 The Bridge aims to further their dedication to the prosperity of writing and literature by empowering the region's citizens to develop

and share their passions for the literary art.

Those wishing to learn more about The Bridge can email them at [bridgeliteraryartscenter@gmail.com](mailto:bridgeliteraryartscenter@gmail.com) or visit their website at [www.bridgeliteraryartscenter.org](http://www.bridgeliteraryartscenter.org).

# Hoover and a'Day sustain artistic collaboration

**SUBMITTED ARTICLE**

Mike Hoover and Lane a'Day are a collaborative team of artists who have been working together for over a decade. Hoover regularly works out of his Transit Arts Gallery (TAG), #27B art studio space, where he focuses on encaustic and/or acrylic painting. He regularly sells his works through SaatchiArt.com/wax+ and at the Transit Art Gallery and Gifts, located in the TAG building.

He plans on maintaining his business model of direct sales and service to area consumers, for a minimum of the next few years. He has successfully continued generating consistent artworks through the last several decades. His career includes participating in different capacities and functions for several arts organizations, through several years. Hoover is a prolific reader, submits fiction writings for publication, honorably served abroad during Vietnam, and holds an AA degree.

After settling from the overwhelming task of late-in-life relocation that began in 2022, moving from western states to Pennsylvania, a'Day is now preparing to increase her art business participation overall. "I am looking at tackling regional, national and international shows." where she has already enjoyed some acclaim.

A'Day, who still works full-time in a "day job" career, has remained active as an artist in 2023, where she produced 45-50 art-driven

pieces. She works principally in outdoor painting and actively works in textiles (formal crochet).

Despite ongoing professional career developments, a'Day has been active in the arts for some decades, "Production and proliferation are not a problem for me," she states, indicating, "I'm from a family of engineers, we always took tools and organization rather seriously, in art school, at times, I would be done with assignments when some peers were not yet completely set up at their stations."

Though recently from the west coast, originally, Hoover was from inland Washington State and a'Day from the mid-west, "We're familiar with snow. Pennsylvania weather was not problematic for us when considering relocation to this area," Hoover and a'Day agree. A'Day, a quick-draw outdoors plein air painter, states, "It was a bit of a childhood dream to live in Pennsylvania as I always thought it was magically beautiful."

Hoover and a'Day have and continue to build an extensive collection — now over 500 pieces — of visual art and decorative arts publications in their private arts library at Innis Park Studios.

**During 2024**

Hoover was awarded a 1st Place category in the annual Oil Heritage Festival Art Show for one of his several relief sculptural wall art pieces.



es. He was also invited and participated in the June 30, 2024, Red Brick Gallery show titled, EKPHRASIS: Writers Responding to Art (Emlenton, PA). A'Day earned a 3rd Place category in the annual Oil Heritage Festival Art

show for her painting titled "What the Fire Said," a work titled by Hoover.

A'Day and Hoover travelled to the Adirondacks mid-summer for a casual competition-free social week of live portrait and plein air painting with 100 other regional, national and international artists.

**Changes in physical facilities, business expectations**

Also in 2024, a'Day and Hoover purchased an open lot next to their "Innis Park Studios" location in Oil City. After careful consideration, a'Day began constructing a Chartres Walk Path (healing spiritual labyrinth) that is projected to be completed in late spring 2025.

"The site is already operable; and, when winter weather clears for the outdoor space, we will be further investing in: completing grounds landscaping, installing additional lighting and security, and building outdoor seating for visitor comfort," a'Day said.

A'Day and Hoover arrived at the Innis Street location for its outstanding potential to support the arts, longitudinally, "The Innis Park Studios location is a beautiful early 20th century historic structure that was meticulously maintained by its prior owners. It sits on an established roadway, next to an open space that reveals historic architecture and nature all around," a'Day states of their smaller brick structure on the southside.

"Perhaps one day local municipal interests will protect this roadway and all the view opportunities it has to offer." A'Day admits investments in the structure has included new metal roofing, legacy wind-downs, exterior water abatement landscaping and ongoing landscaping, including that not related to the Chartres Walk

Path. Historically, a'Day and Hoover have assisted museums, art associations and galleries with their operations.

**Special activities or promotions**

During 2024's "Artist's Sunday," Hoover enjoyed a positive day in his #27B studio at the Transit Building. "I was surprised with the turn out," Hoover stated. A'Day had a successful day clearing past inventory from prior shows, charter and public school education demonstrations, and festive 'paint party' models, she has taught in the past. "It felt really good to clear out the closet and get some deeper organizing done before 2025," she reports.

**Looking forward**

Hoover regularly asks a'Day to take it easy and relax. "I'm not ready for that," a'Day states. I have way too much energy right now."

Hoover and a'Day are sole proprietors without regular employees. On rare occasion, a temporary hand may be hired for arduous activities. Hoover retired several years ago after a career in civil service where he exercised considerable management improvements toward worker safety and security. He was pleased and excited to be admitted into the TAG studios when he arrived to Oil City with a'Day. A'Day continues to work full-time, beyond retirement, 100% remotely, as a licensed professional and part-time advisor in a human service industry.

# Hollow Oak Press weaves riddles and codes with their second fiction anthology

**SUBMITTED ARTICLE**

Hollow Oak Press, LLC finished up its second year of business with a new publication and an open submission call for their third.

Founded in 2023, Hollow Oak Press aims to provide a paid platform for new and emerging writers, both local and global. The press was founded by long-time Oil City resident Amanda Pica. The publication team also includes Jessica Ritchey, Associate Editor; Austin Gray, Layout Editor; and Scott Richards, Contributing Editor.

This independent publishing company was a recipient of the Creative Ventures Grant in 2023 and 2024, in collaboration with Arts Oil City and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Pica has also been selected to participate in the Oil City cohort of the Alliance

for Creative Rural Economies (ACRE) through Bridgeway Capital in 2025.

Following the success of "The Wordsmiths" in 2023, the Hollow Oak team published a second high-concept anthology in 2024 titled "Through the Briar Patch". This collection of speculative mysteries has a twist in the book itself — the entire book is a puzzle to solve. Through the Briar Patch includes local authors Austin Gray, Jessica Ritchey, Tracey Lander-Garrett and Amanda Pica, as well as stories from other authors throughout the US and UK. Hidden among the pages are elements of several interlocking puzzles. Readers who solve the book will unlock a bonus story that is only accessible to those who complete all the puzzles.

"Through the Briar Patch" and "The Wordsmiths" are

available for purchase in paperback on the Hollow Oak Press website, [www.hollowoakpress.com](http://www.hollowoakpress.com), as well as all major online booksellers. Copies are available to borrow from the Oil City Library. The Wordsmiths is also now available for purchase as an ebook.

In late 2024, Hollow Oak Press announced the submission call for their next high concept anthology, Short(b)

reads, which will release in the fall of 2025. Each story chosen for the Short(b)reads anthology will feature food, then recipes for that food will be developed and published alongside each tale. Readers will be able to prepare the dishes and eat along with the characters.

The team at Hollow Oak Press thanks the community of Oil City for their support and encouragement.



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# Pierce and Hurley embrace ‘Artful Living’ in Oil City

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

For over 20 years, local artists/designers Barbara Pierce and CJ Hurley have striven to bring their mission of “Artful Living” and personalized design touches to their clients. Their studio, located in the National Transit Building, is dedicated to the creative work that each of them do.

Barbara is known for her expertise in color for architecture, which she uses in her color consultations for home owners and building owners around the country. CJ is an artist who concentrates in painting, and is known for his “fantastical landscapes” of places that are “part real; part imagined”. Together they implement their “Artful Living” philosophy into clients’ homes through the design and decorating segment of their business.

New fine art print offering

In the fall of 2024, their business, Century Arts Design and Fine Art Studio, LLC, launched a new line of Limited Edition Giclée prints. These prints are made from CJ’s original paintings, then hand-signed by the artist. Additionally, they expanded their existing line of Open Edition prints, which are a great way for those new to buying art to get started. In 2025, the couple have a new marketing strategy for the prints, and plan to reach new markets, in addition to adding these to the offerings at shops and galleries that currently carry their work.

To get the best quality prints, the couple looked to regional resource, Meadville Fine Arts, LLC, operated by Tim and Mary Kirk.

Spiritual Art

Another new venture for the couple in 2025 is launching a line of prints based on CJ’s studies of Far Eastern spiritual traditions. Although these prints will be available to their regular clientele, the couple are targeting this line of prints at religious stores, metaphysical shops, yoga studios and healing sanctuaries. “Our



marketing plan is encapsulated largely through our participation in the 2025 ACRE Program,” Barbara says.

Art exhibits in the east and west

More in store for Century Arts Design and Fine Art Studio in 2025 includes, the wrap-up of CJ’s participation in the Northwest Pennsylvania Artist’s Association 50th Anniversary exhibition. The exhibition, held at Mercyhurst University’s Cummins Gallery, ran for three months beginning in October of 2024, and just ended on Jan. 17.

CJ also has plans to send new work to the Portland Art Museum where he has been represented for about 15 years. “I have had a good number of sales at the Museum’s Sales Gallery this past year,” says Hurley, “I need to replace paintings that have sold, and there is a Spring Exhibition that I will have the opportunity to participate in as well.”

Roycroft Renaissance Master Artist

CJ enjoys national recognition as a Roycroft Renaissance Master Artist in Painting. 2025 marks the 20-year anniversary of CJ’s applica-

tion and acceptance as a juried member of this group. The Roycroft is the oldest surviving Arts & Crafts colony in America dedicated to traditional handicrafts.

Local Residential Design Project

Locally, the pair have been putting their interior design and decorating skills to work for several years with a young couple that have a beautiful Arts & Crafts Foursquare style home. The homeowners are very attuned to detail and they have all been dedicatedly working together on the design and decorating of the home. The owners have taken on all the restoration work themselves and have been slowly doing meticulous plaster repair and painting room by room.

Custom new home in Maryland

Another fun and rewarding project that has captivated CJ and Barbara’s time and creative energy over the past year was a custom designed tile kitchen backsplash for long time clients who live in Chevy Chase, MD, outside of Washington DC.

They have been working with these clients since 2017 on every design detail for a

new custom home. “The final icing on the cake for the kitchen we designed years ago has been the tile for the backsplash,” says CJ.

Contact CJ and Barbara

Home owners and building owners interested in learning more about the architecture they own, or receiving professional assistance with color, exterior design, interior design, or want help with the design of their gardens can contact CJ and Barbara at their studios in the National Transit Building in downtown Oil City: 206 Seneca Street, Studio 22D; 2nd Floor. 814-493-8642; barbara@cjhurley.com; www.cjhurley.com.

More about Century Arts Design and Fine Art Studio

CJ and Barbara relocated to Oil City in the summer of 2016. Barbara’s corporate design and product development career moved them about the country in their early adulthood and took them to Portland, OR in 2001. While living in Portland, they were inspired to fulfill their dream of working together, and combined CJ’s art and design business with Barbara’s skills to build the studio they operate today.

As much as they loved the Pacific NW, they wanted to be closer to aging parents, other family and lifelong friends in the east. After searching for a place that met their needs, they settled on Oil City. They were drawn here because of the river that runs through the center of town, the nearby state park, forests and abundant water found in creeks, streams and nearby Lake Erie. Oil City meets their needs for frequent drives to the Buffalo, NY area, North Carolina and Southern Virginia.

In addition to work in their own studio, since the fall of 2022, Barbara has been an advocate for local arts through her part-time work with ARTS Oil City. She took over the management of the program and loves her work helping and inspiring other artists.



# Dia Jade falls in love with Oil City community

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Dia Jade is a young creative whose artistic voice seeks to share vast perspectives of communities whose voices are overlooked and often left unheard. They are a fine artist who graduated from College from Creative Studies in Detroit, Michigan. During their studies, they found immense joy in their identity and decided then that creating art that aligned with their identity was their life passion.

Living and studying in Florence, Italy allowed them to explore the world further and gain new perspectives. Meeting and communicating with people from different cultures allowed them to absorb the world at large and find new ways of universal understanding. In the past year Dia moved to Oil City. Since being here, they have found themselves falling in love with the strong sense of community and passion for art Oil City has to offer.

Working at Woods and River Coffee, Dia has learned the natural ebbs and flows of this community and is overjoyed to be welcomed into it. As someone who came from the, “bustling fast-paced way of life in Detroit” they say that they enjoy the calmness and breathing room Oil City has to offer.

The art that this artist has to

offer is vast. Dia is a multidisciplinary artist whose main focus is on photography. Within photography, they work analog and digitally. They love to teach others about the passion that stems from the hands-on approach to photography, and the skill it takes to take a photograph with intent. They are skilled with the process of printing archival work, and how to properly store and frame art pieces. Dia says that they are an open book and love to share their own understanding of art with many who are willing to learn.

Dia has had an extensive list of exhibitions around the world, their most recent gallery took place in Budapest, Hungary for their Significant Colour gallery. This gallery showcased multiple artists whose work aimed to communicate deep messages and underlying stories through their own voices of color. They hope that their extensive knowledge of gallery work will allow them to help set up and participate in local galleries here in Oil City.

Dia is a recipient of the ACRE program and is excited for the journey this program will spark for them in their creative journey and self discovery. They hope to have their art find a home here in Oil City, just how they did as a person.

# Rhoads Gone Rogue enjoys strong start in community

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

The Rhoads Gone Rogue is a new business located in Studio P in The National Transit Building Art Studios.

Chelsey and Cassie Rhoads moved to Oil City from north Georgia in June 2024 with their nine-year-old daughter, RJ, as part of the artist relocation program. They quickly jumped into the booming arts community and rented a studio space in October 2024.

“We’ve been visiting friends in Oil City for several years and have loved every minute of our time here. We finally decided to uproot and ‘go rogue’ at the beginning of 2024 to work towards moving here. We wanted to focus more on slowing down, spending time together and our creative pursuits,” explains Chelsey Rhoads. “We really love the

sense of community here and support there is for artists and small businesses.”

The Rhoads Gone Rogue offers a variety of products, from handmade candles and wax melts, puppets and creatures, photography and art prints, apparel, home goods and more. They love storytelling in everything that they do — whether it be through short stories, photographs, puppetry or a collection of unique candle scents.

“We joke that we are shining examples of an artist’s attention span,” says Cassie Rhoads. “We do a little bit of everything, and we enjoy sharing that with the community. We love when people stop by the studio and we can show them what we do.”

The Rhoads have been hard at work since they moved, participating in their

first Artists Sunday as well as the Maker’s Market at Clifford Carpets & Rug Gallery. They have enjoyed meeting so many people in the arts community, as well as everyone who has made time to stop by the studio or attend events.

They are looking forward to growing in 2025 and expanding on their current projects. Chelsey is planning several different candle collections and is hoping to partner with some local businesses on some collections as well. She started making candles in 2020, as many mainstream candle scents trigger her chronic migraines. She set out to create a candle made without a lot of the synthetic ingredients in typical candles, and began blending her own scents that are both migraine- and pet-friendly. She has also recently exhibited some of her

photography at The Manos Gallery in Tarentum.

Cassie has been hard at work on several projects, including creatures such as fire sprites and flower sprites. She is planning to expand on her digital artwork line of shirts, notebooks, stickers and more, as well as expanding back into her previous work as a puppet maker and teaching some classes in the new year. She was also recently selected for the ACRE program through Bridgeway Capital, and is excited about participating in the program and exploring more ways to grow their business.

The Rhoads Gone Rogue can often be found in their studio at 206 Seneca St in Oil City, but you can also find them on Facebook and Instagram. They also recently opened an online shop at www.therhoadsgonerogue.com.

# Jae Austen Art finds inspiration in flora and fauna

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Inspired by the native flora and fauna of Venango County, the art business Jae Austen Art was officially kicked off last summer. Skylar Austin, the solo artist in charge, has begun integrating into the local art community by participating in public art projects.

She is a multimedia artist, dabbling in all kinds of art crafts, including but not limited to crafts like painting, sewing, printmaking, sculpting and weaving. You’ve probably seen projects she’s collaborated on during visits through Oil City, such as the most recent mural on the library steps, and the freshly painted faces of the Christmas Cutouts that were placed around town.

Jae Austen Art was accepted into the ACRE program

(Alliance for Creative Rural Economies) along with other local artists. This will help the newly created business learn what it needs to grow in finances and marketing, which will aid in creating an engaging and positive impact on the community.

“I want my art to encourage people to fully appreciate the nature that surrounds them in our city, trails and parks. The aim is for that appreciation to lead to conservation, and a desire to protect what makes this area special,” said Austin.

In regards to the new year, Austin plans for Jae Austen Art to continue growing by making even more art and furthering involvement in the community. In the future, she hopes to be able to put together a gallery exhibit of her artwork.

# Big Dog RC’s offers a variety of options for any enthusiast

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Big Dog RC in Stoneboro turns 15 years old this year. The business, owned by John and Robin Raskob of Sandy Lake, is a hobby shop with both indoor and outdoor racetracks for radio controlled model cars. They also feature a fully-licensed kitchen facility to provide tasty meals to hungry drivers, continue to be one of the “Top Rated” Indoor, RC model car racetracks in the country and may be the only “A+” rated track facility by the Better Business Bureau!

The business brings in an average of over 200 drivers a week for their year-round, weekly racing events. Drivers from the surrounding states of Ohio, New York and West Virginia regularly attend. The age of drivers range from 5 years old all the way to well over 70. Some visit the business for the large hobby shop which features cars, trucks, planes, boats and drones. Others visit for one or more of the three weekly racing events held on Wednesdays, Fridays or Saturdays. Spectators are always free, and most events are broadcast on Facebook Live. There’s also open track days on Thursdays and Fridays for drivers to run their models.

The “tri-level” 1/24th scale indoor rock crawling course continues to be popular. Small 4x4 trucks, that can fit in the palm of your hand, take their turn trying to negotiate the course. There’s mountains, hills, bridges and more, including a simulated “mud pit.” The course is free to use! Complete, ready-to-run 4x4 trucks start at about \$100, and the shop carries a full line of upgrades for those who are serious about this aspect of the hobby.

Big Dog RC hosted several events for one of the longest running RC Clubs in the country. The “Midwest Series Nitro RC Club”, which has been around for over 50 years, held several of their 2023 points races on the big asphalt onroad track. Drivers came from around the country to compete. With speeds of over 60 mph, the races also attracted plenty of spectators. There are two events already scheduled for this summer, along with a Formula 1 series complete with pitstops!

One of the largest RC Manufacturers in the world, TAMIYA RC, based in Japan, has a championship series in the USA. There are 10 races across the country. Qualifiers from the 10 events are invited to the National Championships, with the winners in several classes earn-

ing an “All Expense Paid” trip to Japan with the Tamiya Race Team to compete in the World Championships. Kits to build your own legal race car start at under \$150. Big Dog RC will host one of the 10 championship races this year on June 28, spectators are Free!

The 1/10 scale Drag Strip, featuring an NHRA type “Christmas Tree” with all the lights, bells and whistles, continues to expand with a newly sealed surface slated for 2025. The Drag Strip will host events fairly regularly on Saturdays when the weather is good. Zero to 60 mph times under 2 seconds are common. Some cars are now reaching speeds of over 70 mph in just 132’, that’s 700 “scale” miles per hour! The runoff of the strip has been extended to accommodate the increased speeds!

Indoors, Big Dog RC has a dedicated dirt offroad track of 4,200 square feet with over 400 tons of clay. The track is changed every six to eight weeks by forming new jumps and turns to keep the layout fresh for the drivers. Also, a 75’ x 30’ Dirt Oval offers racing three times a week. Recent events have had over 50 drivers racing their Sprint Cars, Modifieds and LateModels at scale speeds of over 200 mph!

Cars range in size from 8” long that fit in the palm of your hand to almost 3’ long, weighing over 30 pounds. At Big Dog RC, custom Sprint Cars, Asphalt Modifieds and Midgits are just a few of the models built and sold exclusively by the company.

The “All Access Track Pass” gives drivers access to the tracks 24/7, 365 days of the year. The pass lets drivers come in on their own schedule to keep their skills sharp. Several drivers are working extra hours or second and third shifts and can’t enjoy the hobby during our normal hours — this gives them something fun and safe for them and their families to do. The Access Pass lets them use the facility on their time, even if it’s 3 a.m. on a Sunday!

Big Dog RC features one of the largest hobby shops in the area, with pricing at or below what you find online. They also handle warranty service and do repairs. The shop also features a fully-licensed kitchen serving all sorts of food and snack items, some saying the “Best French Fries” ever made! You’ll find Big Dog RC just off I-79 at 482 Stoneboro, Lateral Rd., Stoneboro, PA. 16153. Their website is www.bigdogrc.com and Big Dog RC on Facebook, phone 724-376-2379.