

# PROGRESS

VOLUME EIGHT

# CHENANGO

# 2021

AN EVENING SUN PUBLICATION

## Making progress with I.N.N. throughout 2020



Improve Norwich Now President Jen Westervelt and Vice President John Trottier after a board meeting, as part of their organization's mission, both seek to help remove barriers and provide supports for the people of Chenango County. (Submitted photo)

**BY ZACHARY MESECK**  
Evening Sun Reporter  
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**CHENANGO COUNTY** – Improve Norwich Now (I.N.N.) continued to make progress towards bettering its community throughout its second year, with a long term housing initiative, a program to help foster families, an application to help businesses, and a goal of improving youth literacy.

According to Improve Norwich Now Co-Founder Jen Westervelt, the organization has made some sig-

nificant strides despite the pandemic, and its major programs have seen great success.

Improve Norwich Now is a nonprofit with a mission to remove barriers and provide supports so that all people living in Chenango County can reach their full potential.

Westervelt said one way the organization worked hard during 2020 to help families throughout Chenango County is with its Fostering Futures program.

**Fostering Futures**  
Fostering Futures

NY Chenango County (FFNYCC) Director Cathleen Albrecht said the program's goal is to improve outcomes for children in the foster care system who have experienced trauma by providing practical supports to foster families so they are able to provide a safe, stable, nurturing and enriched environment along with connections to the community.

She said as part of her duties she recruits, trains, coordinates and supervises volunteer teams that go into the foster homes in a

supportive and encouraging way. While the coronavirus has made it somewhat difficult to recruit and sustain new volunteers, the current teams are doing well and still actively working with their communities.

"Our Fostering Futures initiative was created at the start of 2020, and at that time we had a single referral from the Chenango County Department of Social Services," said Albrecht. "At that time we had a goal of creating five teams by the end of the

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The district is in a constant state of reaction, spurred by COVID-19 positivity rates in its schools and the surrounding community. (Photo by Shawn Magrath)

## Norwich City School District charts new territory in a year shaped by pandemic

**BY SHAWN MAGRATH**  
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**NORWICH** – Uncertainty and resilience are two themes that schools have become all too familiar with during the age of COVID-19. The Norwich City School District is no exception, having been

dealt heavy blows by the pandemic, sharp cuts in state funding, and administrative changes to boot.

In spite of that, NCS D Superintendent Scott Ryan says he's optimistic about the direction the school district has taken, and he's now calling on the school and the Norwich commu-

nity to rally behind the Purple Tornado.

"One thing I've learned in my 20 years in education is that students and staff are increasingly resilient," Ryan said. "We are adapted to change. Everything that we've known about education has been thrown on its head in the last year; and

yet we still exist. I believe in resiliency. I believe in grit, and that's where we are as an organization. If we want to grow and get better as an organization, then we will."

The story of NCS D over the last year is anything but unique. The corona-

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COMMUNITY VIEWPOINT



## Robert J. Mackey, Superintendent Unadilla Valley Schools

Hindsight is 20/20:  
what did we learn?

"Hindsight is 20/20. The question is, what have you learned from this?" I can still hear my dad's voice behind that statement. As a teenager, I had a great deal of energy, what might even be perceived by someone who didn't know me as an inability to focus. School never came easily for me; the systems and structures didn't engage my mind.

In 1984, a professor at the State University of Oneonta invited me to attend a panel discussion for his course, Introduction to Teaching. I was taking the class with a different professor—you can imagine the type. He stood in front of the room and talked to us for 50 minutes about what teaching was, how to do it, and why it was important.

To this day I remember nothing about his class; however, at Dr. Meanor's suggestion, I went to the panel discussion that evening. A few teachers, student teachers, and principals spoke. That's when I learned I wanted to be a social studies teacher. This panel engaged my mind and brought full circle my dad's saying, "Hindsight is 20/20." It all became clear to me. School needed to be different for kids like me. I needed to get my hands dirty in the learning, to be an active participant. More importantly, I connected it to my high school friends and peers, realizing that they might have benefited from more active, engaging learning experiences, too.

As I reflect on those times, I'd like to say I never questioned my decision to become a teacher, but that couldn't be further from the truth! The lure of money and the frustration of being told what I needed to know and having to spit it back out on final exams in my college courses nearly influenced me to drop out of college as I entered my junior year. It was mid-August 1985. Sitting at the picnic table with my dad, I shared my frustration with college. I mentioned I might not go back but go to South Carolina instead to work for my brother in construction.

Dad listened, asked a few questions getting me to elaborate on my ideas to work and make money rather than spend it on college. I was only the third kid of the ten he and mom raised to attend college.

Finally, he looked me in the eye and said, "You're a smart kid. Sure, you can swing a hammer and make good money. But when you get to be my age you won't be able to climb on roofs to make money. Tomorrow, you're going to get in that car and go back to school and finish what you've started so you can do more things I've never been able to do." I knew I needed to go back.

I like to say that my dad was a graduate of the 8th grade during the Great Depression. He had no choice but to work and earn money so his mom, brother, and sister could survive those times. His education, like many of the Greatest Generation (as Tom Brokaw called them) was the school of hard

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## Norwich City School District charts new territory in a year shaped by pandemic —

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virus pandemic sent staff and students into a tailspin last spring, forcing school officials to close their doors and test the waters of remote learning for the remainder of the school year. By the summer, the district had a plan to reopen for the 2020-2021 school year, albeit a fluid one. It was the first hurdle leading into a chaotic school year of jumbled schedules, socially distanced lunchrooms, and innovative teaching strategies hardly tested in a K-12 public school setting.

"It's been difficult because there's so many things happening simultaneously," said Ryan. "We're constantly talking about this evolution of thinking and understanding of response to the pandemic; but there's no handbook for this."

Ryan, who previously served NCSD as the middle school principal and as the teaching, learning and personnel director, took the reins as NCSD superintendent in January, ending more than a year under direction of interim Superintendent Diana Bowers. He said attention in early 2021 is turned toward closing the educational gaps which students have widened since schools closed nearly a year ago.

"I really want to start to take the district in a direction that addresses kids who we know haven't

been actively engaged since March of last year," he said. "I would love to get to a place where we can, as a whole, be more proactive. Instead of waiting next to the computer for the governor's next edict, we're saying 'This is where we are.' We know what our kids need; now let's figure out how to get it to them."

But meeting every students' needs is becoming an uphill battle for the district, which is under threat of additional state funding cuts in its \$41 million budget. The district bore steep losses earlier this year, resulting in a district-wide reduction in personnel and resources for the 2020-2021 school year.

"That's been pretty significant," said Ryan. "Not only are we doing something we've never done before with the blended learning model that involves parents and caregivers, but we have to figure out how to do it with less staff and less support for kids and teachers. It presented some pretty significant challenges."

For all that, 2021 started with some uplifting financial news for the school district. In January, the New York State Comptroller's Office announced that, as of June 2020, NCSD improved in the state's fiscal stress monitoring system, a resource created by the comptroller to give an early warning for communities and school dis-

tricts with fiscal problems. The Norwich City School District was first flagged by the state comptroller back in 2018 and has been labeled with "significant fiscal stress" for two years. Having that label removed has been a tremendous step forward, Ryan said.

NCSD's 2020 fiscal monitoring score provides a baseline measurement of the district's ability to respond to the public health crisis and other financial uncertainty. A letter from the NYS Comptroller's Office states that the department expects these factors to be reflected in reports in 2021 and beyond.

"We encourage you to closely monitor your financial condition in the current and upcoming budget cycles, as unfolding events may pose heightened risks ahead," the letter reads.

In addition to ongoing fiscal matters, district officials also plan to focus these later winter months on student and staff wellness while examining gaps in their current student learning model. With remote learning presently at the forefront, NCSD schools are facing student engagement issues that mirror findings in schools all over the country.

For the time being, big developments at NCSD are being characterized by pandemic response, and many of the district's marching orders are coming from the Department of Health.



Gibson students volunteered to spread some Christmas cheer by making holiday cards that were distributed with Helping Hands bags handed out in December. (Submitted photo)

The district is in a constant state of reaction, spurred by COVID-19 positivity rates in its schools and the surrounding community. The threat of coronavirus exposure forced the school to switch entirely to remote learning in January 2021. The district's reopening plan specifies that should its schools need to implement short-term closure procedures - regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building - it will follow CDC recommendations and procedures.

"One thing we have learned during this pandemic is that things can change on a day-to-day basis," former Interim Superintendent Bowers stated in a community letter after the district saw one of its first positive COVID-19 cases in October. "As the rules change, we will adapt

and adjust to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff."

While most schools in the Norwich City School District are now back to operating on a blended schedule of in-person and remote instruction, there's increasing demand to have students in the classroom more often. The district's currently planning a phased approach over the next few months to bring more students back if and when it's safe.

Ryan said he hopes that the coronavirus can be put on the back burner by next school year, making it possible to focus on other goals, including establishing a more solid mission and vision for the district's decision making. It's a process he hopes to start later this year.

"By June 30, my goal



Norwich City School District Superintendent Scott Ryan (Submitted photo)

is to re-imagine what we really want for our learners and establish a mission and vision as supported by goals for the entire district," he said. He added the need to establish "who we are and what we want for our learners."

"I think we have to change our mindset to these being our kids collectively," he said.



Norwich High School congratulated new inductees to National Honor Society in November. Front row: Zachary Russell, Lauren Squires, Nolan Reid, Emma Mullin, and Stephan Kman; Back row: Addyson Whaley, Rhianna Philbrick, Humala Gabone, Briannah Downey, Abigail Hansen and Margaret Dougher. (Submitted photo)

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# Robert J. Mackey, Superintendent Unadilla Valley Schools —

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knocks. He simply wanted better for his kids, as I do for mine and everyone else's. Hindsight really is 20/20.

I loved teaching. Few things I have ever done took so much energy, and nothing I have ever done gave me back that energy times 10! I had fun in the classroom, was involved in coaching and advising, attended plays, concerts, and games, all to get to know my students better.

I wanted school for them to be what it wasn't always for me. I wanted it to engage their minds and for learning to be fun. One day two principals at my school suggested I take a few administrative classes while in graduate school.

I did and learned something pretty important. For a social studies teacher, even this math was easy. If I could be a school administrator with the same energy and passion for learning as I had for teaching and connecting with kids, I could help hundreds and even thousands of kids get more out of school! However, the whole school had to become more like my classroom; active, a bit loud, fun, and student centered. I have always imagined what could keep me attentive and tried to make that the atmosphere of

learning in my classroom. I wondered how could I do that as a principal?

First, dispel the myth that the principal alone ran the school building. Second, ensure that everyone believed our building culture had to be student centered, and third, that all students can learn. There were some bumpy roads and detours along the way; I learned that change isn't easy for adults. But the results were undeniable. Student achievement reached unprecedented levels; the graduation rate became consistently 100 percent (No dropouts or "non-completers"). That really wasn't an effect of NCLB on our district; it was the connections our teachers had with the kids and community. We were able to figure out ways to keep kids in school, to make a high school diploma and beyond something within every kid's grasp.

No required test could ever motivate kids to learn or teachers to change. Only a collaborative culture could.

I remember the excitement as we stood at the doorstep of the 21st century hopeful for positive change and growth in public education, not knowing what NCLB would usher into the institution. Here we are, 21 years later, in the midst of

a pandemic that has bombarded teaching and learning with change unlike any federal or state mandated reform movement has ever delivered in the history of centralized schooling.

Reflecting on my years at Unadilla Valley, one focal point was the creation of a collaborative culture focused on learning, action, and results. Teacher teams meet regularly around student achievement data, and based on how the kids are learning, they design and deliver intervention or enrichment. Then they reassess the level of learning to ensure all students learn at high levels. We have been doing this work together for nearly 14 years. This collaborative culture has influenced the work of our leadership team immensely; it was never more apparent than it has been since March 13, 2020 when we met as an entire district staff to prepare for the inevitable, remote learning due to the COVID-19 virus infection rate. Change bombarded teaching, learning, feeding and so much that week-end and in the weeks and months that followed.

No one's life is without change due to this pandemic; but public education has been turned upside down and inside out. I have always been

proud of the efforts of our students and staff each day at UV, but during this time their efforts to reopen and stay open have been nothing short of monumental. Our goal was to open for kids and staff and attempt to provide sports and other extracurricular activities as well. We began meeting in late May and had our reopening plan ready to submit prior to the state deadline. It was a huge lift that required many teachers, support staff, administrators, health office staff, and school board members.

We hosted nearly a dozen family meetings for input and training on learning platforms before opening our doors to students on September 7. While nothing is ever perfect, our reopening has worked well due to the continued focus on collaborative leadership, ongoing monitoring of the reopening plan in action, and adjusting our work as necessary. We work together to ensure communication is clear, consistent, and timely to our stakeholders.

There is nothing more fulfilling in a long career than being on a team so focused on ensuring learning, caring, and safety are the true north of our school reopening. And, we still have efforts to make. We

are advocating for sports to begin immediately under strict restarting criteria. Bowling started last week as a virtual head-to-head match livestreamed to the bowlers' families. We want more opportunities for kids and staff to connect; the future is still bright, and together we can make our way!

We realized during this pandemic that learning is a personalized journey for kids and that connecting with kids and engaging them are at the heart of successful learning. Connecting with families has emerged as integral to ensuring all students learn at high levels. If you've been an educator or parent, you've always known these are the keys to raising productive citizens. Somewhere along the way as we've increased testing, continuously changed learning standards, and tried to use school, teacher, and principal "accountability" scores as a means politically to whip public education to greatness, we have forgotten the importance of the human connection.

This is an amazing opportunity to transform our institution. We have reopened schools during a pandemic with little guidance from any governmental entity. No mandates and

no help, during a teacher and administrator shortage unlike education has ever experienced; where fiscal resources are threatened and even taken away; where supplies and equipment take weeks longer to arrive than ever before.

Through all of this, local school boards and school staff have worked collaboratively to bring the magic of learning to life every day for millions of kids. Imagine what we can do with fewer mandates from above! Why can't all students have an option of blended learning rather than only seat time to complete classes? This would open up time in daily schedules for work-based apprenticeships, earning advanced certificates and college degrees in high school; open time for new electives without adding personnel or time to the day.

Bringing back the human connection, giving back local control of our schools, using technology and the lessons learned in this pandemic reopening to better personalize learning and engage students and families will ensure that all kids are more successful than we were. This is that once-in-a-lifetime chance to be an educator. What will we do with it? Hindsight is 2020.

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- You are trained to use the extinguisher and know you can operate it effectively.

If you have the slightest doubt about whether you should fight the fire - DON'T! Instead, get out and close the door behind you.

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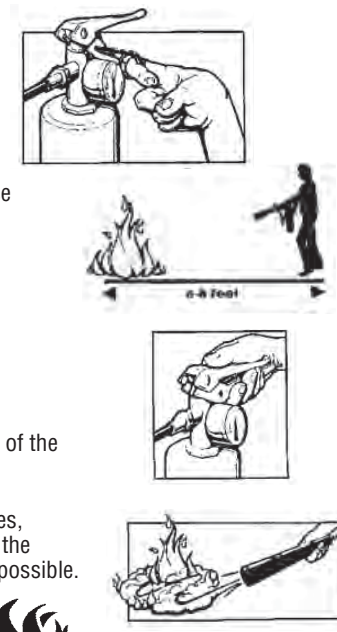
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## Making progress with I.N.N. throughout 2020 —

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year, and we managed to reach six teams.”

“I think one of the reasons Fostering Futures has done so well is we have many community members who really want to make a difference, but they need a solid tangible opportunity to put their heart at work – Fostering Futures is one of those opportunities.”

Albrecht said volunteers meet with foster families monthly to help determine what it is that the families need and how the volunteers can provide it. She said some volunteers provide a meal, others help with homework, and some play board games with the kids to give the parents a break.

“With a minimal expectation of just one interaction per month, it’s a very reasonable expectation and it makes a huge difference for the families involved,” she added. “The foster parents are actively involved, because here’s the thing, we as volunteers don’t dictate what the program involves, we ask the foster parents how can we help you and we make it work around that.”

“We’re really happy with the progress of that program, and we look forward to helping more families in 2021.”

Albrecht said anyone

who would like to support Fostering Futures can help support a local business at the same time with a give-back night scheduled for 4 to 8 p.m. on Monday February 15 at Gilligan’s in Sherburne.

Albrecht added that as the FFNYCC program grew, other members of I.N.N. were also working towards alleviating the issue of housing in Chenango County.

### Housing Initiative

Improve Norwich Now Vice President John Trottier has been leading the organization’s housing initiative, which was made possible thanks to a partnership with the Norwich Building Tomorrow Foundation.

“The housing initiative is a really exciting opportunity because here we have a home that was a City of Norwich tax sale property that was very dilapidated, and we were able to begin the facilitation of a complete renovation of this home,” said Trottier. “We are doing quality work so that this home can be something that will be a blessing to whichever family buys it.”

“The profit from the sale of the home will fund programs like Fostering Futures and other Improve Norwich Now projects, and we are pleased to be able to hire local contractors and



Dean and Drew Westervelt clear snow in front of an I.N.N. home rehabilitation project in the City of Norwich. (Submitted photo)

engage volunteer community members to make this renovation a reality.”

Trottier projected that the house will be finished and sold by the end of this year, and said I.N.N. really appreciates the extensive community support that it has received for the project.

“We’ve even had someone who spent time in the home as a child who has reached and said they are excited to volunteer for that project in the near future,” he added.

### Give Have Need

The goal of Give Have Need was to maintain a simple way for businesses to maintain cash flow and break into the digital marketplace, especially during times where businesses are dealing with reduced

business as a result of the pandemic.

Improve Norwich Now board member Eric Wich said people can browse local businesses by category, set their desired gift card amount, and add it to their cart. All proceeds go straight to your chosen businesses, minus a dollar processing fee.

“I spearheaded the effort with Metis Consulting and was supported by other board members in Give Have Need’s creation and implementation,” she said. “We have 17 businesses signed up, and we are able to support more than \$1,000 worth of transactions.”

“At this point there is a website domain, a Facebook page, and a ready to use system.”

He added that while the program has done well and is fully operational, Improve Norwich Now is hoping to collaborate with another organization that could use it to help even more businesses.

“We are prepared to hand over this valuable tool to another community entity who can support it long term,” said Wich. “While there is no financial overhead for this program, there is a record keeping system that has to be maintained, and our current Improve Norwich Now team is unable to maintain the commitment.”

“We recognize that there may be another entity out there who would be

able to take this program and offer it on a wider level to benefit even more businesses and community members.”

Another initiative spearheaded by I.N.N. is called the Reading Reef, which is a small area at the Norwich Family YMCA previously called the “Book Nook.”

### The Reading Reef

“Literacy has been an integral part of INN since the beginning, and our literacy team was happy to partner with Girl Scout Troop 30182 and their leader Melissa Conant to help make it happen,” Westervelt said. “Unfortunately due to the coronavirus we weren’t able to host another One Community One Book event, but we wanted to make sure we were still doing things to help encourage child literacy.”

“The Reading Reef is an under the sea themed section under the main staircase at the Norwich YMCA which includes books, games, and a mural.”

She said the girl scout troop was responsible for creating the space, and the project also was supported by Curtis Lumber, Lowes, Walmart, and Catalog Outlet Stores through product donations. She added that the literacy team is looking forward to hosting another One Community One Book event in the future, it’s a great way to engage the community in promot-

ing literacy and increasing exposure to all that our small businesses have to offer.

### Aunt Mary’s House

Aunt Mary’s House is an initiative whose goal is to be a safe haven for pregnant and parenting young mothers, and to allow them to gain opportunities, resources and knowledge toward becoming self-sufficient.

Westervelt said Aunt Mary’s House started off as an I.N.N. initiative that grew into its own entity. She said the organization has involvement from a variety of sectors within Chenango County that ranges from Liberty Resources to SUNY Morrisville, local churches, a local attorney, community members and more.

“Aunt Mary’s house was something that was sparked in connection with the INN housing initiative, and has become an independent endeavor,” she said. “Currently we’re operating as a pass through organization, and we’re incredibly proud of the progress they’ve made.”

She added that as I.N.N. grows within the Chenango County community it’s encouraging to see people walking around wearing I.N.N. t-shirts along with lawn signs throughout different communities.

“INN is always ready to welcome new volunteers to the team; if any of these initiatives interest you please reach out to us,” said Westervelt. “Together, we will Improve Norwich Now.”

Anyone interested in learning more about Improve Norwich Now may visit its facebook page, or visit their website at <https://improvenorwichnow.org/> for additional information.

Donations can be made directly at <https://my.simplegive.com/app/giving/Impr9999718> and lawn sign purchases are available there as well.

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SUCCESS STORY

The Greater Norwich Foundation

Although many local people have heard of The Greater Norwich Foundation (GNF), usually as a result of publicity from its beneficiaries, few are familiar with its history or activities.

In the fiscal year ended March 31, 2020, the Foundation distributed a total of \$472,776. Of that total, \$394,776 was in grants to non-profits, and \$78,000 was in scholarships to Norwich High School students headed to, or already in, college.

Grants this past year were given to Guernsey Memorial Library, Catholic Charities, Chenango Arts Council, Chenango Blues Association, Chenango County Historical Society, Chenango County SPCA, Chenango Valley Home, The Place, Chenango Foundation, Chenango Housing Improvement, City of Norwich, Colorscape, Cornell Extension, Creative Works, First Baptist Church, FIRST Team 145, Friends of Rogers, Hospice & Palliative Care, Morrisville College, Norwich Theater Company, Norwich Volunteer Firemen, Norwich YMCA, and Chenango Memorial Hospital. The amounts of the grants ranged from \$1,600 to \$100,000. In past years, many other organizations have applied for and received grants.

GNF has been doing this for 55 years. It was founded by Warren E. Eaton Jr., Eugene M. Cole Jr., and H. William Smith Jr. with seed money from the Community Chest of Norwich and contributions from the founders and the initial board of trustees. The first trustees were George W. Bengert, Robert S. Eaton, Cyrus M. Higley, Jean M. Newton, Charles A. Smith, Otis A. Thompson, John B. Turner, H. Lynn Wilson, M.D., and Percy W. Woodruff. Although both Norwich banks were represented, the "upper" by Mr. Higley and the "lower" by Mr. Thompson, the latter, having a trust department, was designated as custodi-

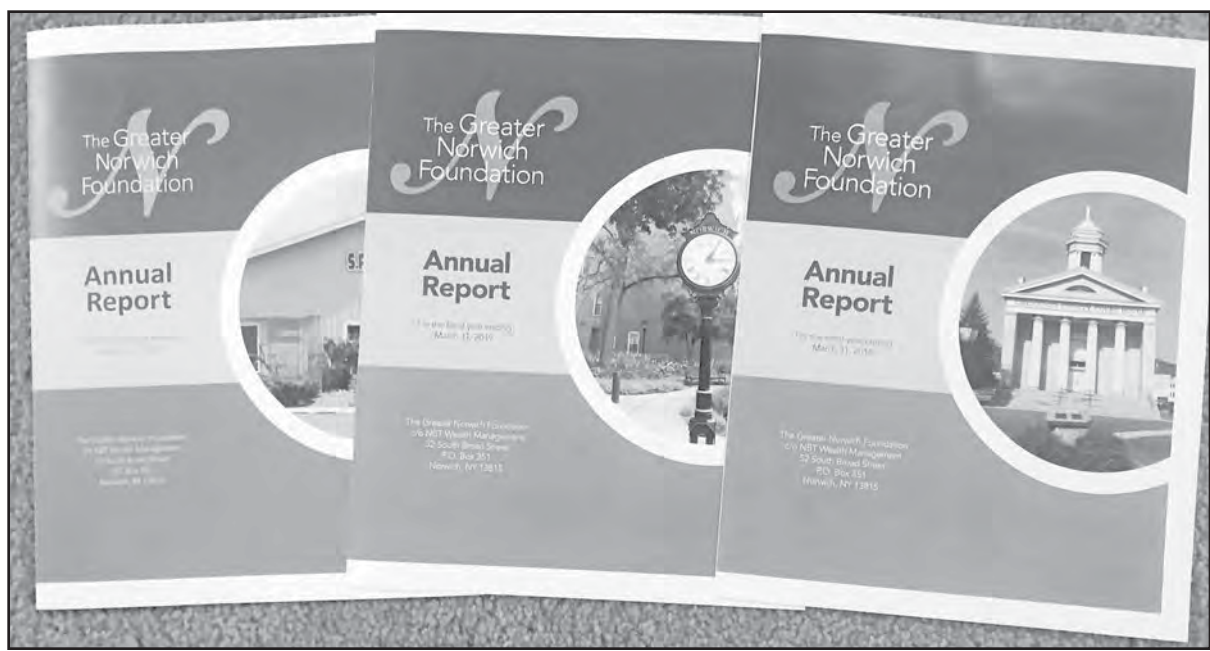
an of the funds of the trust. At its first meeting, with George E. Raymond acting as secretary, the reason for the establishment of the GNF was expressed as follows:

"For several years, a civic-minded group of Norwich citizens had numerous discussions regarding the desirability of creating some form of trust fund for the benefit of this community. They were convinced that there are many people who see the area needs and would like to do something for their home community, but fail to act because the individual contributions they can make appear small to them. Collectively, however, their gifts could become significant and effective, but there was no organization in existence that met this need.

That objective was achieved in December, 1965, when The Greater Norwich Foundation was created as a perpetual trust fund to be operated exclusively for local charitable, religious, educational, scientific, and other like purposes."

Other operational details were spelled out and agreed upon at that first meeting, and those details are still being followed by the present trustees, 55 years later. All of those prescient originators have gone to their rewards now. Today's board of trustees consists of James I. Dunne, Thomas C. Emerson, Patrick J. Flanagan, Timothy J. Handy, James A. Hoy, Frederic B. Miers, Linda T. Palmatier, Patricia M. Smith, and Peter V. Smith. NBT Bank is represented by Mary Ann Scheer. Two long-time trustees who have retired, Jane E. Eaton and Esther C. Flanagan, have been named trustees emeritae.

The nine individual trustees serve 3-year terms, with three expiring each year. None of the trustees receive compensation for their service, but all make substantial annual contributions to the trust. There



GNF produces an annual report, which is available to the public which also serves as an informational brochure for potential new donors and applicants. (Submitted photo)

have been many active and faithful people who have served as trustees between 1965 and today. We would be remiss, however, if we did not make special mention of the late Edward J. Lee, who donated his legal services for many years, and notably negotiated the agreement with the IRS for our awarding of scholarships.

The assets of the Foundation at its beginning were \$22,348. As of March 31, 2020, the market value of the assets was \$9,720,473. Even allowing for inflation, it is evident that GNF has grown. Although there is no public campaign nor effort at publicity, the reliance on those people who wanted to help Norwich, first mentioned by the original trustees, has resulted in substantial donations.

Remembering the reason that the GNF was established, and realizing that people with many millions can set up foundations named after themselves, the trustees frequently award grants in memory of donors to the Foundation.

Over the years, there have been many gifts large and small that have helped increase the assets of the GNF. Donors whose gifts have each numbered in the hundreds of thousands have had the names of Burr, Eaton, Curran, Edwards/Willard, Flanagan, Forsythe, Galvin, Ivory, Overgaard,

Robbins, Smith, Tracey, Turner, and Woodruff.

Some donors have asked that scholarships be established in their names, and that has been done. Most of the scholarships given through the GNF are for four years, as long as the student provides evidence of continued good standing. Many donations are bequests, received through wills or other trusts.

The trustees are charged with identifying the wisest purposes and the best agencies to put the income from the trust to work for the benefit of the community. In situations where a donor stipulates a specific use, the trustees select the best-qualified agency or non-profit

to achieve those purposes. Advantages of donating to the GNF are that the gifts join those of others to be prudently invested for growth, and that, as the needs of the community change, the income can be directed to where it is most needed.

Recognizing the value to the Norwich community of certain institutions, they have received grants every year for many years; examples are the Hospital and the YMCA. Some applicants receive start-up grants until they are able to exist independently, such as the Northeast Classic Car Museum and the Business Improvement District. Other applicants come to us every four or

five years to finance a special piece of equipment or a special initiative.

Although GNF doesn't normally support churches (Catholic Charities and The Place are not considered churches), the trustees have come to realize that churches in the downtown area are part of the architectural milieu of the City center, and some face financial straits combined with physical maintenance needs. We try to have an open mind. One geographical restriction the trustees adhere to fairly closely is that embodied in our name: The Greater Norwich Foundation.

GNF makes every effort to be transparent, and to that end it produces an annual report, which is available to the public and can be found at NBT Bank. It is distributed to donors, the Evening Sun, local attorneys, and others. It also serves as an informational brochure for potential new donors and applicants.

Questions may be directed to Mary Ann Scheer at 337-6193 or Jim Dunne at 336-9134.

Advertisement for The Gazette newspaper, featuring headlines such as 'New Berlin's own social network...', 'Chenango County Department asks re comply with contract', and 'Facing several challenges in 2021, Chenango County supervisors change leadership'. Includes a subscription table at the bottom.

Advertisement for Miller Movers, featuring the slogan 'We've Been Moving You Home Since 1954!' and contact information: 607-334-4184, millermovers.com, mmovers@frontier.com.

**SUCCESS STORY****Clippinger Law Offices**

“Lawyers Retire, Move out of Rural Upstate NY at Alarming Pace” was in the July 1, 2019 edition of the New York Law Journal and it caught the eye of Mary Alyce Sporing, an attorney on Long Island.

There on the front page was her father, Scott Clippinger, posed outside his law office in the Village of Smyrna.

Clippinger was featured as both a member of the New York State Bar Association’s Task Force on Rural Law and as an example of the issues facing lawyers in rural areas. The number of attorneys practicing in rural areas has been rapidly decreasing in recent years, as many have taken government jobs, retired or have passed away. And young attorneys are not settling in these areas, often because of heavy debt from their education.

Mary Alyce read that her dad had said “his daughters . . . also lawyers, have no taste for rural life, and nothing Dad says will bring them back.” Mary Alyce accepted the challenge and on July 1, 2020, she joined Clippinger Law Offices, having moved back to Chenango County with her husband Rob Sporing, and sons Wade and Malcolm.

Scott Clippinger and Mary Alyce Sporing have a general practice, principally, in Real Estate, Workers’ Compensation, Criminal Law, Traffic Ticket and DWI Defense, Business Creation, and Wills and Estate Planning. These services are offered by the attorneys and their highly skilled staff of six.

These include Joanne Tarbell, Real Estate Paralegal; Toni Carpenter, Workers’ Compensation Administrator; Judi Clippinger, Legal Administrator; Karen Page, Receptionist; and Allison Beckwith, part-time File Clerk. In addition, another second generation staff member has recently joined the firm. Johanna Wentworth, whose mother ran the real estate department for many years, saw Mary Alyce’s post on Facebook that Clippinger Law was looking to hire an Office Assistant and joined the team. She has been a great addition to our real estate department.

In addition to legal services, Clippinger Law Offices also acts as a resource to its neighbors and communities by supporting local groups and organizations.

Clippinger Law Offices are located at 1 West Main Street in Smyrna, and at 48 Hale Street, in the Curtis Lumber Building, in Norwich.

**SUCCESS STORY****Savurn Memorials**

Savurn Memorials is owned and operated by Mark, Shari and Zachary Williams. We are local residents who have lived in the Norwich area for over 50 years.

Mark retired after working 30 years at the local public works department. Mark will be instrumental in setting, cleaning and engraving headstones in the cemeteries.

Shari is responsible for the business operations of Savurn Memorials. Shari recently retired from a local meetings and conventions management company. She has many years of experience in the customer service arena.

Zachary has been employed with a local energy products company for the past nine years. He will interact with customers to provide options to help in determining the perfect headstone for your loved one. He will also assist with the setting, cleaning and engraving the headstones.

On December 20, 2016, our daughter/sister Savannah Williams was preparing to leave her college campus to travel home for the holidays. She never made it. She was in a fatal car accident. As you can imagine it was a complete shock to our family.

Never having to deal with something this tragic before, we catapulted into having to make major decisions in a very quick time period (such as cremation vs. open/closed casket, what type of urn, what day to have the service, etc.). It all was such a blur. After a couple of months, we were faced with selecting the perfect headstone to memorialize our daughter/sister.

As you can imagine, it was and still is, very difficult to learn to “move on”. However, we realized we are in a perfect position to give back to you, someone in a similar situation of losing a loved one. It was decided we would provide a safe, comfortable and compassionate environment in which you can work through the process of selecting the perfect way to memorialize your loved one without pressure.

Therefore, we decided to open Savurn Memorials, LLC as a tribute to Savannah. Located in Norwich, NY we will serve the residents in the surrounding communities.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our customers who we have had the honor and pleasure of serving now that we have been in business three years. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to be part of memorializing your loved one.

Our family looks forward to being of service to our local communities for many years to come.



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 Molly Montgomery - Sales  
 Jennifer DeCaro - Kitchen/Bath Sales  
 Kevin Kerr - Outside Contractor Sales  
 Shane Thompson - Kitchen/Bath Sales

*Back Row left to right:*  
 Joe Ward - Inside Contractor Sales  
 Eric Voorhis - Yard Foreman  
 Joe Bryant - Driver  
 Kyle Fitzpatrick - Operations  
 Alex Williams - Inside Contractor Sales  
 Dan Kenyon - Manager

*Missing:* Raushanna Sutton - Assistant Manager/Sales, Brian Mead - Operations



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