

TOWN OF RIDGEWAY

YEAR IN REVIEW - 2022

WEATHER

A February 17, 2022 snowstorm, which dropped 22 inches of snow, paled by comparison to late December's Christmas Storm, the blizzard which had been heralded as "the storm of a lifetime", and which certainly lived up to the forecasts. Conditions in Orleans County were extreme and life-threatening, a driving ban was in place, many lost power, warming stations were made available. Erie County was socked with one hundred inches of snow.

On Saturday, November 5, a balmy 81 degrees was recorded in Medina.

COVID

Following an initial surge in January (855 cases reported January 5-11 as compared with 379 the previous week), the positivity rate gradually declined.

Gov. Hochul announced an end to the face mask requirement on Feb. 10. but stipulated that masks would still be required in health settings and on public transportation. Free, at-home Covid tests were made available from municipal offices and libraries. Gradually, COVID became less of a disruption in our lives, and we slowly resumed pre-pandemic activities such as attending large gatherings and traveling. In the fall, Covid infections and re-infections continued, as well as influenza and respiratory viruses.

BUSINESS

In January, Dr. Joseph Misiti announced plans to donate his practice and move it to the Orleans Community Health facility. Two additional physicians were hired: Dr. Jennifer Griffith and Dr. Thomas Russo and a Physician's Assistant: Sean Yeckley. Dr. Misiti, who has served the community for over forty years, planned to continue his association with the practice.

The New York State Department of Transportation announced in January that the 2021 project to replace the State Route 104 Bridge over the Oak Orchard Creek in

the Town of Ridgeway was honored as the American Public Works Association's Project of the Year in the Genesee Valley Chapter's "Structures less than \$5 million" category.

Eight hundred hardy wine-lovers braved the snow and cold of the afternoon of Saturday Feb. 5 to partake of a variety of wines in the popular Wine About Winter event.

A new hotel, The Comfort Inn opened in March. Located on Maple Ridge Road in Medina, the hotel offers fifty-eight rooms and seven suites.

Also in March, Gloria Brent opened Modern Mercantile at 135 East Center St. in Medina. Canal Country Artisans and Filomena's Favorites had previously been located at that site. Modern Mercantile is an antiques and collectibles emporium which hosts forty-two vendors and features a "man-cave" for males who are accompanying shoppers.

Hans and Dan Rosentreter opened The Coffee Shop Café in downtown Medina at the former site of HeBrews at 114 East Center St. Freshly brewed coffee and in-house baked goods complement the welcoming atmosphere.

Julie Berry celebrated the one-year anniversary of the opening of her bookstore, the Author's Note, on Main Street in September. She offered treats, cake, prizes and giveaways to show her appreciation of her customer's support.

A Buffalo News article on Nov. 6, 2022, announced that LynOaken Farms was employing Big Wheelbarrow, an online supply chain software platform, to facilitate and streamline their ordering and sales procedures.

In November, The Landmark Society of Western New York recognized the ambitious transformation of Bent's Opera House with the Barber Conable Award, the organization's top preservation award, "for have returning this Erie Canal village landmark to its historic role as a community gathering space and performance venue."

The ClearSource brand launched in 2022 by Western New York Energy was awarded an Excellence Award in Energy for the advanced methods employed to manufacture ultra-high-purity alcohol products. WNYE completed a \$38 million expansion which produces pharmaceutical, industrial, and beverage-grade alcohol made from locally sourced corn.

George Bidelman assumed sole ownership of Hartway Motors on North Main Street, having been involved as a partner for two years. Frank Payjack started the business in 1939.

PEOPLE

The Orleans Renaissance Group and the Print Shop came up with what proved to be a very popular idea for summer entertainment: a series of free blues music concerts which were held at State Steet Park on Thursday evenings in July and August. As many as 800 people attended per show.

The Medina Busker Festival debuted in September and complemented Ale in Autumn which attracted several hundred beer-tasting aficionados on a fall Saturday afternoon. The Busker Festival was a free event which featured street performers and musicians playing downtown.

Bent's Opera House presented an evening of Enlightenment era baroque music in September and also offered Swing dancing lessons which proved to be very popular. These activities were hosted in the newly remodeled third floor of Bent's Opera House.

Randy Reese started a local community-centered internet radio station, which plays music from the 1960's to the present on thecanalsideradio.com. In addition to music, the station also airs local news, community announcements and weather reports.

During the summer, Medina artist, Brandi Zavitz adorned the wall under the Glenwood Ave. Bridge with a gently evocative mural which features local buildings, scenes, and events.

A giant mural of a gently billowing American flag now brightens the exterior south wall of the Butts-Clark American Legion Post building on North Main Street in Medina. The project was completed by sign painter Mark Weld of Barker.

The Fourth Annual Hometown Heroes Banner program featured 240 banners honoring local veterans.

The Medina Sandstone Society inducted three members into the Medina Sandstone Hall of Fame: the Erie Canal Culvert in the Town of Ridgeway, St. Joseph's

Catholic Church, Lyceum and Cemetery Chapel in the Village of Albion and the Ryan Quarry House at 4160 South Holley Road in the Town of Clarendon.

A newly published biography focused on the life of a former Medina resident. British researcher, Julia Sheppard, completed her research on pharmaceutical entrepreneur, Silas M. Burroughs, Jr. and launched her book “Silas Burroughs: the Man who Made Wellcome” at Lee-Whedon Memorial Library in September.

Town of Ridgeway resident, David Bogden, was among those named Orleans Hub 2022 Outstanding Citizens of the Year. He was honored for 34 years of service to Meals on Wheels.

Georgia Thomas was selected as Grand Marshal for the Parade of Lights Parade Old Tyme Christmas Celebration in November. A record crowd gathered to watch the forty floats parade by. The Metz Family float entry was awarded the grand-prize for the second year in a row.

Richard “Dick” Nellist passed away on December 4, 2022. Dick served as the Town of Ridgeway Historian for twenty years and was an active member of the Medina Historical Society. He had a keen grasp of local history, was generous in sharing this knowledge, dogged in his pursuit of answers to the queries he received and always gentlemanly in demeanor. In 2017, he and his wife, Shirley, were honored as “Heritage Heroes” for their efforts in preparing detailed records of the 11 cemeteries in the Town of Ridgeway- over 11,000 burials all told. Now available online on the Genweb site (www.orleans.nygenweb.net) these records are an invaluable resource for local historians and genealogists.

Longtime area physician, Dr. John Boulos, passed away on December 14, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cooper, Historian January 2023