

Courier-Standard-Enterprise

THE WEEK OF APRIL 9-15, 2021

CANAJOHARIE-FORT PLAIN-ST. JOHNSVILLE, N.Y. USPS 087980

\$1.00



Eggshuberant

H.C. Smith Benefit Club celebrates its first large event since pandemic began. Page 3



Clockwise from above: Over a hundred people attended the H.C. Smith Benefit Club's 11th Annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 3.

From left, Lucas Buck, Jesse Yoder and Everett Lynch celebrate finding golden eggs.

From left, Vicki Devone, Karma Weaver-Porter and Aubree Moseley sort through their candy bounty.

JOSHUA THOMAS/
C-S-E EDITOR

Local police to re-learn pot laws, protocols

BY JOSHUA THOMAS
C-S-E Editor

Montgomery County Sheriff Jeffery T. Smith and several local police chiefs said that while additional training will be necessary to educate officers regarding new marijuana legislation passed at the state level on March 31, it's too soon to determine whether legalization laws will impact the character of county communities.

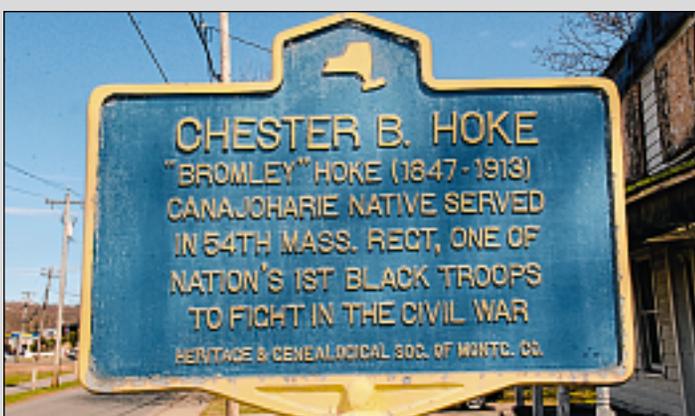


Smith

Smith said that while he hasn't had the chance to digest the entirety of the marijuana law-related changes just yet, he's reviewed a significant amount of the legislation. The Montgomery County Sher-

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THIS WEEK IN THE C-S-E



GMVLB makes appeal • PAGE 8

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145th year – No. 13

New restaurant provides scratch menu, take-out and dine-in options

BY JOSHUA THOMAS
C-S-E Editor

CANAJOHARIE — Ragotzkie Imports and Catering officially opened on April 6 in the 38 W. Main St. building that housed Mercato's Pizza Restaurant for decades. The take-out and dine-in restaurant has an extensive menu consisting of primarily scratch recipes, with Owner Brenden Ragotzkie also acting as his business' butcher, preparing all the restaurant's meat items.

Ragotzkie has worked as a butcher at Hannaford Brothers Company and Fred the Butcher for years, and also previously owned his own butcher shop. In

his experience working in that capacity, he found "that most people want stuff as prepared as possible," at which point he began looking for the perfect location to potentially house a restaurant.

"I like this community and this area," said Ragotzkie of the reason he chose Canajoharie as a home for his business, noting that the village seems to have great prospects, as swaths of individuals have recently been moving here from larger cities.

Ragotzkie purchased the building in November, and being that it had a ready-to-go kitchen and dining room, much of the preparation process consisted

of "lots of cooking!"

Ragotzkie Imports and Catering is open Tuesday through Friday from 3-8 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and is closed Sunday and Monday. Those hours, noted Ragotzkie, provide him the opportunity to cater during lunch hours.

Explaining that he has the capacity to cater high-volume events, Ragotzkie stated that he has potential to basically get customers anything they desire. "Whatever people need, I can get for them at a good price," he said, including items such as pork belly.

See **RESTAURANT**, page 7

The GMVLB is in the planning stages at the Hoke House, a historical site that the organization hopes to turn into an informational center and way station for canal travelers.

JOSHUA THOMAS/
C-S-E EDITOR



GMVLB appeals for village board to re-join the organization

BY JOSHUA THOMAS
C-S-E Editor

CANAJOHARIE — Two representatives of the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank attempted to clear up what they viewed as misconceptions about their organization by the Canajoharie Village Board during the April 6 monthly village council meeting.

During March's regular gathering of the village board, the group unanimously voted to leave the GMVLB, Mayor Jeff Baker expressing that should the organization fold, there are concerns that the village would be responsible for the land bank's debt.

GMVLB Executive Director Tolga Morawski stated that "land bank debt is not the responsibility of the village," explaining that the organization currently has more assets than debt. That small amount of debt

will be paid with proceeds, said Morawski, noting that should a situation ever arise wherein an entity would be responsible for the GMVLB's debt, it would be Montgomery County, not the participating villages.

GMVLB Vice Chairman Karl Gustafson stated that he felt himself, Mayor Baker and Trustee Francis Avery had a productive meeting months ago wherein the land bank was discussed at length.

"We spent a good deal of time clearing up a lot of questions Mayor Baker and Trustee Avery had," he said. "And I thought we came to a pretty good agreement that we're moving along, some of the misgivings had been cleared up and it was a really a productive meeting."

He expressed to the mayor and trustee that they could contact him anytime with questions. "I hadn't heard anything, so I

assumed everything was fine," Gustafson said, noting that he was "caught off guard," to learn via the C-S-E that the village was leaving the GMVLB.

Said Gustafson, "As a taxpayer, it frustrates me that I see the villages of Fort Plain, Fonda, Fultonville, Palatine Bridge, and St. Johnsville — and everybody else — wrapping their arms around the land bank's programs and taking advantage of the projects we're doing, and my own village has decided that maybe they don't want that."

Gustafson said "there are other projects on the horizon that will be very exciting for the village," expressing that the GMVLB would like to "leave the door open for any future discussions," with the village board, the goal being to "figure out where we could find some common ground and get back on track."

Morawski outlined a potential

future project that could provide a massive boon for the village.

He said that the GMVLB is currently working on a project with a developer aiming to install a significant amount of housing units in western Montgomery County. A current idea is to split the units between Fort Plain and Canajoharie, with either existing properties being remodeled or new construction taking place.

"They are definitely interested in new construction," said Morawski, noting that a contract has been created for the first 20 units in Fort Plain, with the project being contingent on finding 40 units in total.

The \$49 million project could potentially facilitate the investment of \$10-11 million in Canajoharie, Morawski said, adding that the GMVLB hires all local contractors, as "we really try to invest in our communities."

The GMVLB has already invested about \$55,000 in the village, including the demolition of a property at 153 Erie Boulevard, which is now clear and on the market.

The GMVLB is also currently working on the Hoke House — the historic home of the Hoke family, which was purchased at tax auction in 2003 and sat vacant until the GMVLB's acquisition.

Grants have been issued to the land bank for work at the Hoke House, 131 Mohawk St., the goal being to make it into a historic location with displays and information about its ties to the 54th Civil War Regiment (one of the first Black army regiments to fight in the Civil War).

The upstairs would be turned into a handicapped-accessible way station for canal travelers.

The Hoke House project is currently in the design phase.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring bulk pick up tentatively scheduled for April 28

CANAJOHARIE — The Village of Canajoharie spring bulk pick up is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 28.

Items must be placed at curbside by 7 a.m. the day of pick up and no earlier than 12 hours prior to collection.

Piles must be no larger than 10

feet long and 5 feet high. Lumber must not exceed 4 feet in length. Items requiring a prepaid sticker include: white goods, tires, mattresses and box springs, televisions, couches and tires.

Items not acceptable include: vehicle/engine parts, propane tanks, recyclable items, items containing freon, motor oil and paint cans containing liquid. Paint cans must be empty or contents must be dried.

Call the village office to in-

quire about sticker pricing at (518)-673-5512.

Poetry Reading to feature Moira Linehan April 27

CANAJOHARIE — The Arkell Museum and Canajoharie Library will host a Poetry Reading and Author Talk featuring Moira Linehan on Tuesday, April 27, at 1 p.m.

In Linehan's new work of poetry "& Company" the writer reconstructs the life of her ancestors through works of art that show how women worked in the past. Linehan will read excerpts from "& Company," discuss her inspiration and process, and answer questions from the audience.

Linehan's poetry is based on art located in numerous museums across the country. Arkell Museum's painting "Girl Cro-

cheting," by Edmund Tarbell, is the subject of one of her poems.

This is a free virtual program on Zoom. Registration is required. Register with your email address and a confirmation email will be sent with a link to the presentation. Register at: tinyurl.com/xw9b7vzn.

With questions, call Curator of Education Mary Alexander at (518)-673-2314 or email: mal-alexander@mvlb.info.