

Spring 2016
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MSF Gazette

MAIN STREET FIRST • LITTLE FALLS • NEW YORK



BRAINSTORMING: “ARTSPACE” POTENTIAL IN LITTLE FALLS?

On January 25, architect Robert Heins, chairman of the Utica Artspace Committee, spoke to a full house at the Little Falls Public Library. Artspace Projects Inc., a leading nonprofit developer of inexpensive spaces for artists and creative workers to live and work, is exploring choosing Utica for an upcoming project. Heins also shared his thoughts about the possibilities of Little Falls starting a similar project.

When Utica held a public meeting about this exciting initiative, several Little Falls business owners and residents attended. They were interested to see if there was any way Little Falls could participate in a venture like Artspace. Heins was instrumental in getting this project off the ground in Utica, having been involved in a similar project downstate. He explained that “Adding studio spaces is a goal recommended in urban planning. Plan to help keep and attract creative talent while impacting economic growth.”

Those who attended his presentation here had the chance to share ideas and provide feedback about Artspace projects and their potential effects on Little Falls art and business

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The big turnout for a recent talk by Robert Heins at the Little Falls Public Library is a strong indication of keen local interest in this exciting, innovative concept!



**SECOND ANNUAL
LITTLE FALLS
CHEESE FESTIVAL**

**SATURDAY, JULY 9
10 AM TO 5 PM
MAIN STREET**

**FULL DETAILS AT
www.littlefallscheesefestival.com**

Curious? Have feedback or ideas for us? Want to help? PLEASE JOIN US!

Next scheduled meetings:

Monday, March 28
Monday, April 11
Monday, April 25
Monday, May 9
Monday, May 23
Monday, June 6
@ 6:30 pm
690 East Main Street,
Little Falls

(For more details about our group, please see the back cover/p. 8)



(courtesy photo)

DARRYL HARRINGTON

Longtime Main Street First member Darryl Harrington passed away with his wife Susan and family at his side on December 18 after a short courageous battle with cancer. In addition to Susan, Darryl is survived by his sons Keith, Jon and Lynn, his daughters-in-law Laura and Toni, and grandchildren Laura, Patrick, Alice, twins Luke and Ruby, Jake, Ellen, twins Jack and Charlie and Susan's children Amy and Josh.

A native of England, Darryl was passionate about family and all things to do with trains and railways. He was a past Rotary president, a proud Episcopalian, a would-be LF Historical Society board director and a loyal friend to many.

Darryl designed our first MSF website and, in 2012, he conceived of, planned, organized and moderated a two-hour energy workshop at Benton Hall. He was also an enthusiastic participant in all of our public works projects.

Darryl left a lasting legacy for having lived in Little Falls for only thirteen years. We are grateful for having known this man.



MAIN STREET FIRST
little falls ■ new york

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MSF Gazette is published quarterly and distributed throughout the city of Little Falls, Herkimer County, New York. This issue, and an archive of back issues, is also available online at www.mainstreetfirst.com.

Suggestions and contributions (articles and art) are always welcome; please contact someone on the staff or write to mainstreetfirst@yahoo.com.

*"The measure of life is, after all, not its duration but its donation. How much will you be missed."
--Peter Marshall*

ABOUT LITTLE FALLS: HERITAGE HEROES - TERRY TIPPIN AND THE MASONIC TEMPLE



Little Falls would be a different place without our castle. The Masonic Temple's red tile roof, with its two towers on the corner of Prospect and School Streets, is an iconic piece of the Little Falls skyline. The unique structure stands in good repair today because of the vision and determination of one woman, Terry Tippin.

First, a little history. Construction of the Little Falls Masonic Temple was completed in 1914 at a total cost of \$55,217.62, including furnishings. The building's architect was William Neil Smith; he cited the French Medieval Period as his inspiration for the magnificent brick, stone, and stucco structure. The 1914 cost translates to approximately \$1 million 2016 dollars!

At the time of its May 1915 opening, some 350 masons and 173 female members of the Order of the Eastern Star began meeting in their new facility. Little Falls had a population of nearly 13,000 people at the time and was the industrial hub of the central Mohawk Valley.

By 1995, however, the Little Falls Lodge #181 was in decline due to falling membership and financial difficulty. Their stately building was in need of repair and the members became intent on selling the structure.

At that point, Terry came to Little Falls looking for a one-room schoolhouse in which to locate her pottery studio. Instead, the queen bought her castle, took up occupancy, converted the first floor into her

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"Restoration of old and significant places is a service to the human spirit and to the journey through struggle and also triumph."

--Sr. Maureen Carroll, Executive Director, Francis Erma, Inc.

Q&A WITH MARK BLASK, NEW MAYOR OF LITTLE FALLS

What is your highest priority?

The first order of business is making sure we pass a fiscally sound, responsible budget.

As with many small towns and cities across Upstate New York, we have costs of services going up without any additional revenue coming in. My job as Mayor, and one that I take very seriously, is being a steward of the people's money. In an effort to save money, we will look to streamlining processes and gaining efficiencies where we can.

There will certainly be some belt-tightening going on through the budget process; I am hopeful that by doing that we can maintain the same level of services and programs without an increase in taxes.

What is a specific challenge you would like to address?

We have too many run-down houses. There are a lot of negative ramifications from having a run-down house in a neighborhood: it's potentially unsafe, it reduces the value of the homes around it, it's unsightly (and not good if you are looking to entice people to move to Little Falls), and the taxes are likely not being paid.

I have asked the Codes committee to lay out specific measures for how we can minimize this blight. There will be a lot of time and effort spent on reducing the number of houses in ill repair. It's important. We have to deal with this issue head on.



What are your hopeful accomplishments for the next four years?

I want to get more people to move to Little Falls—I'm convinced they will once they see all that we offer.

We need to first make ourselves as attractive as possible, then we need to aggressively market the city.

In addition to the great work that our DPW does on a daily basis, we are fortunate to have a Beautification Committee as well as Main Street First to help polish the apple. I could spend the rest of this interview highlighting the many positives we have going for us as a city. Instead of doing that, I will try to sum it up with this: Little Falls is a naturally beautiful city with tremendous schools, a low cost of living and a sense of community that you feel pretty soon after moving here. It's a special place.

The challenge is making people know we are here and what we offer. Our Tourism Committee will soon develop a plan as to how we go about aggressively marketing our great city.



Are there specific strengths that Little Falls possesses upon which you hope to build?

One of the best things about Little Falls is its high level of volunteerism. There is a tremendous amount of people who spend their own time and resources trying to make this a better place to live. They organize festivals, help with clean-up projects, and agree to sit on city boards. These are often thankless jobs and the fact that so many people choose to participate tells you how vested folks are in our city.

When I think about City Hall’s role with all the different volunteer groups, the aphorism “a rising tide lifts all boats” comes to mind. We need to be supportive and appreciative, understanding all the while the importance of those who volunteer their time.

How are you staying in communication with the citizens of Little Falls?

It’s important to me to let people know about issues that affect them as soon as possible. We primarily use Facebook to get the word out; it seems to be the fastest way to disseminate information.

We received a lot of positive feedback after we posted about a recent arrest as well as taking off the on-street winter parking ban. We will continue to provide information, erring on the side of too much rather than too little.

I also receive a lot of questions via e-mail—I welcome those. My e-mail address is mayor@cityoflittlefalls.net.

What would you like to tell the people of Little Falls?

Be proud of your city. Take advantage of the many different facilities we have here. Whether it be renting a kayak for a nominal fee and checking out the Canal, shooting hoops up at the courts, or hosting a reunion at Moreland Park (which will soon get a fresh coat of paint!), get out and see what there is to do. Come check out the farmer’s market on Saturday mornings, head over to Moss Island, or take a walk up to Buttermilk Falls.

You live here for the same reason I do: because it’s the best place in the valley. Enjoy it.

Thank you, Mayor Blask, for your time. Main Street First stands ready to assist our city in accomplishing these goals.

BRAINSTORMING: “ARTSPACE” POTENTIAL IN LITTLE FALLS? (continued from page 1)

communities. Projects like these will need to be a cooperative effort between all segments of the community, artists, business owners, community groups, city government and residents.

Ideas gathered at the meeting are being used to gauge community support for a similar project in Little Falls. Reaction to the idea was overwhelmingly positive, and a group of residents has begun sharing ideas about how to move forward.

Excited? Intrigued? Willing and able to help? To learn more about or participate in the local effort to bring such a project to Little Falls, please contact Chris Van Meter.

To learn more about Artspace, you can visit their website:

<http://www.artspace.org/artspace-consulting>

--Rob Richard

"The arts are the best insurance policy a city can take on itself." -- Woody Dumas, former mayor of Baton Rouge, Louisiana

ABOUT LITTLE FALLS: HERITAGE HEROES - TERRY TIPPIN AND THE MASONIC TEMPLE

(continued from page 3)

living quarters, the basement into “Tip's Pottery” and began proper stewardship of the building. Several years ago, her companion Louis Baum added his talents and energy to the effort.

The Masonic Temple now serves as a much-sought-after venue for concerts, wedding receptions, and other social functions and community events. On selective occasions, Louie and Terry provide tours of the historical structure coupled with a running institutional and local history of Free Masonry.

The Masonic Temple is a Little Falls treasure central to our history and its preservation is important to our future.

A community needs to revere and honor those who save its historic buildings—in this case, Terry Tippin, the queen and her Masonic Temple castle. Hail to the queen!

--Jeffrey Gressler



LEARNING TO 'LOCAL': MY SLICE OF CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

Chocolate cream pie, coconut cream cake, strawberry shortcake, blackberry pie, lemon meringue, or pumpkin pie with crushed pecans. Decisions, decisions. So many mouthwatering options. Of course my favorite is chocolate cream pie. And Bonita knows it. That's one of the pleasures of visiting The Sandwich Chef on Main Street in Little Falls. Bonita, the owner and chef, can read my mind faster than I can. She knows that is the slice of pie for me.

Regularly visiting a mom & pop shop such as the Sandwich Chef is a wonderful ritual that makes me feel part of the larger community. It's more than a place to come for daily nourishment. It's a place I can go to gripe about the snow, or marvel about the warm weather with a neighbor over our morning muffins and hot coffee. I come for warmth and for some convivial interaction with friends and neighbors. In addition, I always learn the latest information about what is happening in town, such as the upcoming Garlic Festival or the opening of new nearby businesses and shops. It's nice to feel "in the loop" about what is happening in town.

Before he retired, my father ran his own business for many years. There is nothing quite like the pride of being responsible for your own means of living. Small business owners are fully responsible for every aspect of their service, so they tend to be passionate and work long and hard at their jobs. They take nothing for granted, and they strive to give the best service possible. They are responsible for every aspect of their business. They are focused on the customer and making the customer feel happy and secure.

Of course there is room for all types of businesses in a small town like Little Falls, and I support them all. But I like to support mom & pop businesses in particular because I feel that they are passionate and committed members of the community. They remind me of my father. They live here, and they send their kids to the local schools. They care very



Fresh, and served to you by the people who made it-- these treats are among the many pleasures and advantages of dining locally.

much about what is going on in town, and they contribute to local charities and events. I want them to succeed because they are living proof of the American Dream: through talent and hard work, they are self-sufficient and contribute to their community.

So I will continue to get my gas at Stewarts, and those delicious avocados at Price Chopper, but please Bonita, save that last slice of chocolate cream pie for me. It has my name on it.

--Adrienne Neff

This article kicks off a new feature, "LEARNING TO 'LOCAL'" short personal essays by Little Falls residents about how they came to value doing business, eating out, or running errands locally.

MSF encourages readers to find their own favorites; please visit the frequently updated listings on www.shoplittlefallsny.com.



MAIN STREET FIRST
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Main Street First, Inc. is an organization of Little Falls residents as well as other stakeholders in the cultural and commercial life of our city.

Main Street First, Inc. does not act on the behalf of individual businesses in Little Falls, but is dedicated to the interests of our residents in preserving and revitalizing the Little Falls City Center.

PURPOSES: The purposes for which the Corporation is formed are to combat community deterioration in the city by organizing the community to create sustainable initiatives to revitalize the city, by supporting city revitalization through smart growth principles, the creation of a comprehensive master plan, the participation of all interested parties in directing the city’s future, citywide residential revitalization, the development of green and sustainable technologies throughout the city, to provide financial assistance and volunteers for the improvement and maintenance of the city’s buildings and homes, and to increase recreational facilities. To do any other act or thing incidental to or connected with the foregoing purposes or in the advancement thereof, but not for the pecuniary profit or financial gain of its members, directors, or officers.

MSF’S SHORT-TERM GOALS

- ❖ Continue to work with local businesses to promote monthly “Third Thursday” events.
- ❖ Expand and develop our network of volunteers.

MSF’S LONG-TERM GOALS

- ❖ Continue to expand and improve the “Think Local Little Falls” venture.
- ❖ Position MSF as a strong partner with Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful (KMVB).
- ❖ Pursue grant opportunities for projects aligned with MSF’s mission and principles.

These are the sorts of things we discuss and plan at our meetings. Join us! Bring your ideas, skills, and energy and help us reach these and other good goals for our community.

To receive a copy of this quarterly newsletter electronically, please send your request to: mainstreetfirst@yahoo.com.



HOW TO JOIN MSF

If you would like to get involved, have questions or ideas, or are thinking of joining, we invite you to come to our meetings — everyone is welcome!

Email us at:
mainstreetfirst@yahoo.com
Visit our new website at:
www.mainstreetfirst.com

Facebook:
“like” the Main Street First page
“like” the Think Local Little Falls page



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD: NEWS, UPDATES, AND LOCAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Canal Celebration Committee held the first [Work Session Meeting](#) on March 1, 2016 at the Little Falls Community/Senior Center, 524 East Main St.

Volunteers are needed and everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend future organizing meetings.

Details and schedule:

www.littlefallsny.com/canaldays/



The **Little Falls Micro Fund**: If you or someone you know needs one-time financial help in the form of an interest-free loan of \$2,000 or less, please contact:

P.O. Box 817, Little Falls, NY 13365

littlefallsmicrofund@gmail.com

www.littlefallsmicrofund.org

(315) 219-9396



Little Falls Micro Fund
Helping Our Community Grow

YARD WASTE REMINDER

(leaves, grass, and twigs)

Curbside pickup begins in April--second Tuesday of the month, through October.

* no more than 3' x 3' x 3' will be picked up at one time

* do not bag or box, must be loose

* leave in front of your house, not in the road

* branches/twigs must be bundled and no more than 5' in length

* do not include plastic pots and containers--organic waste only

From May to July, city residents may also bring yard waste to the DPW Garage on Loomis Street, Mon.-Fri., 7 am to 3 pm, or Sat., 8 am to 11 am.

QUESTIONS/MORE INFORMATION:

CITY OF LITTLE FALLS DPW: 823-0890

Donate your returnable cans/bottles to good causes!

The following area groups use this fundraising method:

- * Little Falls Cub Scouts Pack 16
- * HALO (Help Animals Live Organization)
- * Herkimer County Humane Society
- * Project Linus

Just take them to:

RD's Redemption Center, 1600 Rte. 5S, Little Falls, and let them know you want the money to go to the group of your choice.

SPRINGTIME APPEAL TO THE LITTLE FALLS COMMUNITY

The Little Falls Food Pantry at 45 Furnace Street, 823-1793, continues to **urgently need donations**. Many of our neighbors and fellow residents struggle to feed themselves.

Donations can be dropped off at the Pantry or the YMCA on Jackson Street.

While nonperishable food items are always welcome, monetary donations are better still. For every \$1 you donate, \$5 worth of food can be purchased to feed the hungry in our community. Donate directly here in town, or you may mail your check to the Food Bank of Central New York, 7066 Interstate Island Rd., Syracuse, NY 13209, attn. Mrs. Stress; note "Little Falls" on the memo line.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

MARCH 2016

- ❖ Friday, 3/11 and Saturday 3/12 at 7:30 pm both evenings. Little Falls High School musical, “Once Upon a Mattress.” Tickets are \$7.
- ❖ Saturday, 3/12 and Saturday, 3/26. 9 am to 1 pm. Indoor Winter Farmers’ Market, Travelodge.
- ❖ Thursday, 3/17 (St Patrick’s Day). “Third Thursday” at participating area businesses. Please visit www.shoplittlefallsny.com or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details. New event: MVCA Coffeehouse presents , from 6:30 to 8 pm, “Suzanne Bladek & Friends.” Cover charge is \$5.
- ❖ Thursday, 3/17. D.H. Burrell Overlook Mansion, 55 Douglas Street, St. Patrick's Day Celebration/A Farm-to-Table event. Cash bar opens at 5 pm. Irish dinner at 6 pm, followed by an hour of Irish folk music and stories. \$50 per person--reserve with Jessica at 868-8304 or online at www.overlookstpatriksday.brownpapertickets.com.
- ❖ Saturday. 3/19 at 1 pm. MVCA gallery. Author Rosann Scalise will present her book on her father Nicholas Peter Scalise’s artwork. Free. Copies of the book as well as his artwork will be for sale.
- ❖ Saturday, 3/19 at 5 pm and Sunday, 3/20 at 3 pm. MVCA film series presents “Brooklyn” at the Valley Cinemas. \$5/members, \$8/nonmembers.
- ❖ Saturday, 3/19 at 8 pm. The “Not Too Far from Home” Comedy Tour, Black Box Theater. \$15/advance, \$20/day of show. For tickets and more details: www.theinnatstonemill.com/black-box-theatre/
- ❖ Tuesday, 3/22 at 7 pm. WCA at 534 Garden St. Historical Society meeting (public welcome): vintage Little Falls photos. Free.

APRIL 2016

- ❖ Tuesday, 4/5 at 7 pm. Monthly Common Council meeting. Little Falls City Hall.
- ❖ Saturday, 4/9 and Saturday, 4/23. 9 am to 1 pm. Indoor Winter Farmers’ Market, Travelodge.
- ❖ Saturday, 4/9 at 1 pm. Reception for local artist John Famulare as his solo art exhibit opens at the MVCA gallery. Free.
- ❖ Thursday, 4/21. “Third Thursday” at participating area businesses. Please visit www.shoplittlefallsny.com or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details.
- ❖ Tuesday, 4/26 at 7 pm. WCA at 534 Garden St. Historical Society meeting (public welcome): never-before-seen Little Falls metal artifacts. Free.

MAY 2016

- ❖ Tuesday, 5/3 at 7 pm. Monthly Common Council meeting. Little Falls City Hall.
- ❖ Saturday, 5/7 and Saturday, 5/21. 9 am to 1 pm. Farmer’s Market moves back outdoors--M&T Bank parking lot.
- ❖ Thursday, 5/19. “Third Thursday” at participating area businesses. Please visit www.shoplittlefallsny.com or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details.
- ❖ Sunday, 5/22 at 2 pm. Reception for local artist Alan Vincent as his solo art exhibit opens at the MVCA gallery. Free. Same day: Grand Opening for the MVCA retail shop “The Selective Eye,” to kick off the Summer 2016 season--many new artists featured.
- ❖ Tuesday, 5/24 at 7 pm. Little Falls Historical Society Museum opening reception, 319 S. Ann St.