

Summer 2016
Volume 5, Issue 2
A quarterly publication

MSF Gazette

MAIN STREET FIRST • LITTLE FALLS • NEW YORK



ABOUT LITTLE FALLS: CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF LOCK 17

This summer is the 100th anniversary of Little Falls' Lock 17.

A lock is a watertight enclosure with gates at each end used in raising or lowering boats so that they may pass from one water level to another. Before the days of locks, most waterways were not navigable. There were too many changes in the water depth and dangerous obstacles such as rocks and waterfalls. Locks create a "staircase effect" by providing a staggered series of pools that allow boats to easily pass between levels.

Lock 17 has one of the highest hydraulic lifts in the country, with a rise of 40½ feet. It accommodates a boat 300 feet long by 45 feet wide. The construction was started in 1908 and completed in 1916. It replaced three locks which were originally built for access to the Erie Canal: Locks 36, 37, and 38.

The Erie Canal is an intricate water transportation system that links New York City to the Midwest. It opened up previously landlocked regions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to trade, development, and



settlers seeking new opportunities. Lock 17 greatly contributed to the growth and wealth of Little Falls since the town prospered from trade on the new transportation system.

When George Washington visited Little Falls in 1783, boats were being carried around the "little falls" rapids in the Mohawk River on wagons. He spoke of the importance of building a canal around the rapids to facilitate military transport and commerce. His observations resulted in the eventual construction of the 1790

(continued on page 6)

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

Next scheduled meetings:

Monday, June 20

Monday, July 18

Monday, August 1

Monday, August 15

Monday, August 29

@ 6:30 pm

690 East Main Street,
Little Falls

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

LEARNING TO 'LOCAL': A SIMPLER, HAPPIER LIFE



It is easy to take for granted those things readily available. Sometimes, it is only by not having a simple thing that we can truly appreciate it.

The suburbs of Los Angeles aren't a bad place, if they are all that you know. It never dawned on me, as a young child, or on my parents, that needing the "Mom-taxi" to get to the Little League practice or the Boys Club, or driving several miles just to shop for the basics, was at all unusual.

Then, in 1969, my family moved to Cooperstown, where Dad went to grad school. My ten-year-old soul was delighted with my new independence. I walked to Smalley's Theater. I rode my bike to the ballfield. Every morning, after I walked my paper route, I visited Schneider's bakery for a donut and a cup of hot cocoa before walking to school. On Sunday, the church was only two blocks away. My task after church was to walk to Main Street and bring home the Sunday paper. And, after a few months there, all the people in town knew my name. I was somebody. I recall this fondly.

Even at that young age, the superiority of living in a walkable community, without being dependent on an automobile, was apparent. The sense of community, too, was apparent.

Much has changed since then. As an adult, I eventually settled here in Little Falls. Once again, I get to appreciate the simple joy of strolling down the street, saying hi to the neighbors or maybe passing a friend on the way to the store for some milk or bread.

These are the simple things, the ones easily taken for granted. I value them because I did not always have them.

—Alan Chace

Alan Chace is a member of the City of Little Falls Planning Board.



PO Box 65
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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.

ABOUT LITTLE FALLS: SUMMERTIME, AND THE LIVING IS EASY--CHECK OUT OUR MANY FUN IN-TOWN ACTIVITIES

Summer pleasures are all the sweeter because they are fleeting. Before you know it, the leaves are changing and, well, you know the rest.

The “short list” of healthy family summer fun in Little Falls includes attending Diamond Dawgs baseball games, river paddling, golfing, swimming, rock climbing, biking, picnicking, and museum visiting.

Also, the second annual Cheese Festival will be held on Saturday, July 9, and Canal Days Celebration runs from Monday, August 8 through Sunday, August 14. Third Thursdays are June 16, July 21, and August 18. Live music, and theater productions from Little Falls Theater Company, provide the backdrop.

The Dawgs play at Vets Park, a facility second to none, and the emphasis is on family fun. The between-innings fan activities are great and the backdrop of basketball and tennis courts (free youth lessons through YMCA) completes the community experience. The 2015 league championship game was thrilling as the sell-out crowd cheered the hometown team to a come-from-behind win against arch-rival Amsterdam. Check their website or Facebook page for schedule and other details.



Kayaks can be rented at beautiful Rotary Park. River paddling allows one to explore nature and water wildlife up close while viewing Little Falls from a different perspective. Boaters can connect to the interior waterways leading to the Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean.

Little Falls has always been a river community— why not have fun and connect with our past?

Golfing at Little Falls municipal golf course is as much about natural beauty as it is about golf. The course offers



commanding views. Play a round during a quieter time, walk the course, and get some exercise surrounded by great scenery.

Rock climbing at picturesque Moss Island draws climbers from far and wide. Permits can be obtained from the City Clerk in City Hall.

Free summer fun is also available. Our municipal swimming pool, Moreland Park, the Canal bike trail and Historical Society Museum are available for the asking.

On hot summer days, the city pool is the place to be for kids and families. Buttermilk Falls is also right nearby.

Moreland Park has picnic facilities, a playground, and hiking trails. Enjoy the magnificent view from the overlook en route and then an evening cookout in the natural setting.

Our Historical Society Museum is free, educational, and visitor-friendly.

Vacations, staycations, daycations—there you have it, great inexpensive summertime activities that can be enjoyed without a long drive. What's more, all of these facilities are community-owned. We are fortunate!

—Jeffrey Gressler

“And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.”

— F. Scott Fitzgerald

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



Volunteers are always needed; please visit the website to register, or contact:

**Tony DeLuca at the Little Falls Family YMCA,
823-1740**

[www.littlefallsny.com/
canaldays/](http://www.littlefallsny.com/canaldays/)

Donate your returnable cans/bottles to good causes! 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.

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**

SUMMER APPEAL TO THE LITTLE FALLS COMMUNITY

The Little Falls Food Pantry on Furnace Street continues to **urgently need donations**. Many of our neighbors and fellow residents struggle to feed themselves.

Please drop off your check or donation at the YMCA on Jackson Street, or mail a check to: 15 Jackson St., Little Falls, NY 13365.

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

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UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

JUNE 2016

- ❖ every Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm. Farmers' Market, M&T Bank parking lot.
- ❖ Thursday, 6/16. "Super Third Thursday" at participating area businesses, featuring the Art Walk--art displays on Main Street, live music, free children's activities, yarn bombing, street art, and more. Please visit www.shoplittlefallsny.com or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details.
- ❖ Monday, 6/20, 7:30 pm. "Summer Solstice." MVCA, 401 Gallery, Canal Place. Welcome summer with a special solstice event rooted in Northern European and Scandinavian cultures, followed by simple reception at the Arts Center. Free.
- ❖ Thursday, 6/23, 7 to 8:30 pm. "NOTES..." MVCA, 401 Gallery, Canal Place. A night of poetry and vocal music with Stephen Kocuba, Megan Breit, and Ann Kocuba. Poetry selections of Marina Tsvetaeva, a 20th century Russian poet. Music by Frankfort vocalist Megan Breit, graduate of HCCC and musical theater student.
- ❖ Tuesday, 6/28 at 5:00 pm. Little Falls Historical Society annual picnic. Rotary Park.

JULY 2016

- ❖ Tuesday, 7/5 at 7 pm. Monthly Common Council meeting. Little Falls City Hall.
- ❖ every Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm. Farmers' Market, M&T Bank parking lot
- ❖ Saturday, 7/9, 10 am to 5 pm. 2nd Annual Little Falls Cheese Festival. Main Street. Please visit www.littlefallscheesefestival.com for full details. Vendors, live music, LiFT play, cheese-themed specials at Little Falls restaurants, and more.
- ❖ Saturday, 7/9, 2 to 4 pm. "Full Circle" Regional Art Exhibition/Opening Reception. MVCA, 401 Gallery Canal Place. Free. Exhibit will be on display through 8/13.
- ❖ Thursday, 7/21. "Super Third Thursday - Midsummer's Night Picnic" at participating area businesses. Please visit www.shoplittlefallsny.com or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details.
- ❖ Saturday, 7/30, 7 pm. "Love Song Conversations." \$20 per person. MVCA, 401 Gallery, Canal Place. Vocal concert by internationally famous soprano Erin Morley and pianist/conductor Vlad Ifinca, just prior to their European tour. In collaboration with Bellinger View, Little Falls, this program will feature love songs by various composers, including Debussy, Fauré, Poulenc, Grieg and others. A relaxed evening of "conversations" with the audience about the composers and their pieces.

AUGUST 2016

- ❖ Tuesday, 8/2 at 7 pm. Monthly Common Council meeting. Little Falls City Hall.
- ❖ every Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm. Farmers' Market, M&T Bank parking lot
- ❖ Monday, 8/8 through Sunday, 8/14. 29th Annual Canal Celebration. Fun and activities for the whole family, throughout the city. Full details and schedule: www.littlefallsny.com/canaldays/
- ❖ Thursday, 8/18. "Third Thursday" at participating area businesses. Please visit www.shoplittlefallsny.com or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details.
- ❖ Friday, 8/19 from 6 to 8 pm. "Printmaking and Pinot" \$25 per person, MVCA Studio 411 Canal Place. A fun night of printing and sipping wine.

- ☀ Every Thursday this summer (except June 16th) -- CRUISE-INN LITTLE FALLS MARINA
Join us every Thursday night from 5 to 8 pm for a car cruise-inn like no other! Share your passion for motorized stuff. Current or classic, car, truck, van, motorcycle, tractor, atv, snowmobile, chain saw, go kart etc.

New Businesses Roundup!

Main Street First welcomes the following recently opened/relocated businesses.

Chapter Designs
and Elliott and Black
32 West Main St.
unique home goods +
natural soaps and scrubs
985-2837

Little Falls Fuel and Hardware
441 West Main St.
painting – plumbing – electrical – heating
508-5329

Magic Clean Car Care
520 Garden St.
automotive cleaning/detailing
prices for all budgets
508-4340

Mark's Pizzeria
pizza – pasta – parties – takeouts
612 East Main St.
508-5405

Rose Petals Florist
great new location
343 S. Second St.
823-7073
all-occasion flowers – deliveries

ABOUT LITTLE FALLS: LOCK 17 (continued from page 1)

Western Inland Navigational Canal. Little Falls is the only place where one can see remnants of all three canals—WINC, the original Erie Canal (the lock below Lock 17 on the south side) and of course the present Erie Canal. I think he would have been pleased to see how much the canal system has transformed the Mohawk River for the better.

Today Lock 17 is primarily enjoyed for recreational purposes. Shane Mahar, deputy communications director for the state Thruway Authority and Canal Corporation, reported in a recent *Times Telegraph* article that “approximately 100,000 vessels traveled through the locks throughout the states’ canals—Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca. The number includes recreational boaters, commercial tugs and barges, tour boats, boats for hire, and others. The canal system has a total economic impact of \$6.2 billion to the economy, including \$380 million in direct tourism spending.”

This year our annual Canal Celebration takes place from August 8 to 14, and it centers on Lock 17’s Centennial Anniversary. Please visit www.littlefallsny.com to see the full calendar of events.

Little Falls Historical Society Museum has a 2016 exhibit on the Centennial of Lock 17. The exhibit includes many vintage photos, original Lock 17 paintings, and a display of original Lock 17 artwork submitted by Little Falls High School drawing and painting class students.

Also, please check out the Canal Corporation website’s extensive “Calendar of Events” at: <http://www.canals.ny.gov/news/events/calendar/calendar.cgi>

—Adrienne Neff

*“[He] often said that if you didn't know history, you didn't know anything. You were a leaf that didn't know it was part of a tree.”
—Michael Crichton*

BRAINSTORMING: GOOGLE WORKSHOP EMPOWERS LITTLE FALLS BUSINESSES



When it comes to creating a thriving economy and community, Little Falls residents and business owners are asking themselves, “How do we attract outside dollars into our community?” and “How do we encourage Little Falls residents to shop locally?” The first step in achieving both of these goals is making sure that people--both inside and outside the community--know what our community has to offer.

Imagine potential visitors driving by on the New York State Thruway, hungry for lunch or wanting to stretch their legs, wondering what’s in Little Falls. Or imagine local residents wondering what activities might be going on here versus driving to Utica.

Google has found that 97% of consumers look online for local goods and services, and four out of five look online for local information. Yet, only 37% of small businesses have claimed a local business listing on a search engine.

Main Street First’s Think Local Committee decided to help change that. Think Local partnered with the Mohawk Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Google, and Little Falls High School to bring a free *Build and Optimize Your Online Business* workshop to Little Falls.

The workshop took place on April 5 and attracted 25 attendees, thanks to the active outreach efforts of Think Local Committee members. That number represents nearly a quarter of Little Falls’ 106 businesses, 89 of which have either a website, Facebook page, or both.

During the workshop, attendees established or improved their Google Business Listing, which means that they will now appear at the top of the page in Google search and maps as a local business, with their contact information, hours, and other details prominent on the page. This sort of online presence is a great step toward attracting passing visitors who may be wondering what’s available in Little Falls!

The workshop included a Q&A session with local digital marketing experts from Brockett Creative Group, MPW Marketing, Quadsimia, and Site-Seeker. Building on questions about social media and websites, the conversation soon took on a uniquely Little Falls flavor when it transformed into what one panelist described as a “town hall discussion” about how the community could work together to increase awareness and build business.

The enthusiasm was palpable, and one attendee commented that the “information was top notch and the ‘forum’ at the end was fabulous.” Attendees were also thrilled about the partnership with the school district, pleased to be utilizing our community’s resources to bring valuable trainings like this to our city.

—*Judy Wolf*

Judy Wolf is the government contracting coordinator at the SBDC and a member of Main Street First's Think Local Committee.

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MAIN STREET FIRST
little falls ■ new york

PO Box 65
Little Falls, NY 13365

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

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