

Spring 2018
Volume 7, Issue 1
A quarterly publication

MSF Gazette

MAIN STREET FIRST • LITTLE FALLS • NEW YORK



BRAINSTORMING: LOOKING AT THE CANOPY

Two recent events have conspired to make residents and visitors alike think about our aging Little Falls canopy along the north side of Main Street. In late January, a heavy load of snow slid off the slanted rooftop of the building at the corner of Main and Mary Streets—it slammed into the canopy below, knocking some front sections dangerously askew. The DPW and Horender Construction were quick to respond and rope off the area. After assessing the damage, they were able to repair it. Then a couple weeks later, an ad for the upcoming film “A Quiet Place” aired during the Superbowl, and viewers got a glimpse of a scene that showed our Main Street: canopy, Hollywood sand, famous actors, and all.

By the time I got in to talk with Mayor Mark Blask about the state of the canopy, he was already on the case. From his office on the third floor of City Hall on the south side of Main Street, we had a fine view of the full extent of the canopy. We remarked that the place where the damage occurred was due to the



sloping roof, and that there are only two other similar vulnerable situations further down; most of the structure abuts buildings with flat rooftops.

“The City is committed to keeping the canopy safe and in good repair,” Blask stated emphatically. He looked out the window again and mused, “It is our city’s recognizable, signature ‘look.’” The mayor revealed that an engineering-and-construction firm will be assessing the canopy this spring and offering

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Curious? Have feedback or ideas for us? Want to help? PLEASE JOIN US!
Next scheduled meetings:

Monday, March 12

Monday, March 26

Monday, April 9

Monday, April 23

Monday, May 7

Monday, May 21

@ 6:30 pm

690 East Main Street,
Little Falls

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



**NYS AHPERD
Promotes Health &
Wellness**

Control Your Stress
Soothe Your Fears
Forgive and Forget
Walk Miles Each Week
Think Happy Thoughts
Slow Down On Sugar
Curb Cholesterol
Take a Deep Breath
Cherish Your Values
Be Gentle With the Earth
Appreciate Life
Eat Fruits for Dessert
Sit Up Straight
Seek Understanding
Cut the Caffeine
Stretch Out During the Day
Give Thanks
Mind Your Own Business
Wear Your Helmet
Keep a Happiness Journal
Be Kind
Resolve Conflicts Peacefully
Help Others
Seek Goodness
Volunteer
Celebrate Life
Love Others
Love Yourself
Be Peaceful



**PO Box 65
Little Falls NY 13365**

**MSF Gazette
SPRING 2018
Volume 7, Issue 1**

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

*This issue proudly sponsored by
NYS AHPERD*

ABOUT LITTLE FALLS: WHAT IS AN AHPERD?

Although the full name is the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, NYS AHPERD is not a New York State agency. It is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation based right here in Little Falls at 77 North Ann Street. Funding primarily comes from membership dues and professional development registration fees.

AHPERD is a statewide association representing over 13,000 health and physical education teachers and administrators in public and private schools, including higher education professionals, future professionals and athletics coaches. It provides conferences, newsletters, a website, and workshops at both state and regional levels. Day-to-day they provide technical assistance for their 3,300 association members throughout the state. Their largest event of the year is held each November at the Turning Stone Convention Center with over 1,700 people in attendance, offering 170 sessions and over 70 exhibitors.

Formed in 1924, their first office was in New York City. Then they moved to Albany, and then on to Latham for 17 years. For the past 20 years, the office has been in Little Falls under the leadership of Executive Director Colleen Canorro Corsi. Initially operating out of Colleen's home, the organization's growth and expansion under her leadership necessitated a move to a rental property on North Ann Street. In 2001, AHPERD purchased their present location, the former Newitt-Bly Funeral Home/Mohawk Valley Christian Academy. Of the six full-time employees working out of the local office, five make their homes in Little Falls.

Twice a year, AHPERD brings 40 people to Little Falls for two days of meetings. While staying at the



Did you know...? This historic building on the corner of Ann and Monroe Streets houses an interesting organization that provides six local jobs and occasionally brings groups of clients to Little Falls.

Little Falls Travelodge, the group gathers for meals on site at Casey's Restaurant and Lounge and at other fine local eateries. AHPERD is proud to be a member of the Little Falls business community.

Colleen has been a long-time member of the Little Falls Rotary Club, having served as president and treasurer. She and her associates are quick to lend a helping hand with many of the club's projects. They have also joined the Little Falls Not-for-Profit Coalition to collaborate with other local organizations.

For more information about NYS AHPERD, visit their website: <https://www.nysahperd.org/>

—Mike Evans

"It is a shame for a man to grow old without seeing the beauty and strength of which his body is capable." —Socrates

ABOUT LITTLE FALLS: RESPONSIBLE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORDS HELP FIGHT BLIGHT

Responsible landlords help make good neighborhoods. Conversely, irresponsible landlords contribute to neighborhood blight. Two responsible Little Falls landlords were interviewed for this article—Mark Metott is a Little Falls resident, and Bruce Kopf lives in Rhode Island.

PROPERTY CONDITION

Q. How do you ensure that your rental units are prepared and safe for occupancy?

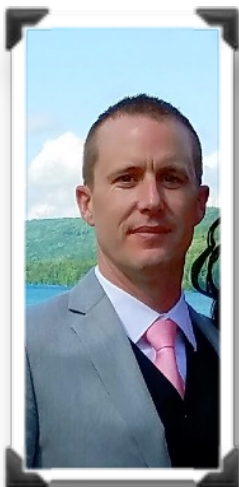
A. Ensuring that rental units are safe for occupancy is vital. Meeting all federal HUD guidelines and local code standards helps ensure the condition and safety of the property. Landlords should be willing to live in their rental units.

Q. When occupied, how often do you inspect your units for proper care and maintenance?

A. The landlord or building manager should collect monthly rents in person. This allows for the opportunity to speak with each tenant and address issues that may arise. Personal contact and landlord accountability are key.

Q. What percent of rental income do you devote to property repair and upkeep?

A. Roughly 15% of all rental income is devoted to property repair and upkeep. This allows for timely larger repairs that arise.



Mark Metott

"It's important to me personally to view each unit as somebody's home, and to ensure that the apartment is remodeled and updated to a level that I myself would be happy to live in."
—Mark Metott

LANDLORD / TENANT RELATIONS

Q. Do you require references from past landlords?

A. References are always required as part of a rental agreement; employment and credit histories and background checks are also helpful, as are discussions with previous landlords about the prospective tenant's adherence to previous rental agreements. This helps avoid problems.

Q. How important is it to respond promptly to tenant complaints about necessary repairs?

A. Critical. The need to address necessary repairs is important, not only to safeguard property, but also to overall landlord / tenant relations. Tenant dissatisfaction can result in property abuse. It is a two-way partnership. Tenants must have confidence that their unit will be cared for as promised. Ignoring landlord responsibilities can lead to a domino effect that can destroy the relationship with the tenant and possibly result in property damage.

Q. What comprises an effective landlord / tenant contract?

A. Length of agreement, rental price, time of payment, conditions that are required to be followed, pet policy, safety precautions, an emergency contact list, and steps for problem remediation are all important. These items must all be spelled out and agreed to before occupancy begins. Each tenant must also have renters insurance. Tenants are entitled to a safe and quiet environment. In-building smoking is prohibited.

Q. Have you ever had to evict a tenant? What steps did you have to follow?

A. Yes, generally through mutual agreement. If not, NYS law requires that: 1/ a non-payment petition must be filed in City Court, 2/ Tenant notice must be served by a third party, and 3/ a court date is set. In City Court, the judge hears both parties and then makes a ruling about what next steps have to be followed.

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ABOUT LITTLE FALLS: RESPONSIBLE LANDLORDS

(continued from page 4)

FINANCES

Q. Is Little Falls a good place to own investment property?

A. Yes, generally. Little Falls has some great neighborhoods; easy access to stores, restaurants, hospitals, schools, parks and recreational trails; and a lot of interesting history.

Q. Do you require security deposits and any other “up front” payments beforehand?

A. Security deposits and first month rents are required when the rental lease is signed, before occupancy begins.

Q. How do you determine what rent to charge?

A. The number of bedrooms, property condition, ease of access, and other amenities determine the rental price. Rents in Little Falls typically range between \$500 to \$850 per month.

CITY POLICY

Q. How effective is the City’s rental registry law?

A. This seems to be well enforced, and I have no issue with this law. I hope that it has helped cut down on irresponsible landlords who allow properties to become dilapidated.

Q. How important is effective municipal code enforcement?

A. Effective code enforcement can help ensure responsible property maintenance, which helps all homeowners in our community.

IN SUMMARY, GOOD LANDLORDS:

- * Follow the law
- * Maintain their property
- * Value good tenant relations
- * Respond promptly to complaints
- * Live up to rental contracts

—Jeffrey Gressler



Bruce and Dorothy Kopf

"An emergency contact list is given to each tenant that includes fire, police, National Grid, electrician, plumber, appliance provider, and day of garbage pickup. First line of contact is owner or property manager. All reported breakdowns or repairs are dealt with in a timely manner."

—Bruce Kopf

HELP FOR VICTIMS OF THE FEBRUARY EXPLOSION AND FIRE ON WEST MAIN

The seven families affected by this event last month continue to need help. Please consider making a donation. Checks can be sent to or dropped off at Little Falls Presbyterian Church or Little Falls Community Outreach, both at 16 Jackson St., Little Falls, NY 13365. Please note “donation—Little Falls explosion” on your check’s memo line.

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping. To this day, especially in times of disaster, I remember my mother’s words and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers—so many caring people in this world.” —Mister Rogers

LOOKING AT THE CANOPY *(continued from page 1)*

recommendations (whether they will also do the work is, of course, TBD). “This is information we need now.”

Erected in 1978, the canopy has had repairs before and most likely will again. The mayor acknowledged that while the City was able to absorb the expense of the recent repair, there is no line item in the budget for it, and grant money may be hard to come by (or not in a timely manner). Grant money, when available, tends to go to historic preservation projects, and the canopy is just not old or historic enough.

I asked Preserve Our Past, our local historic-preservation advocacy group, about that “not historic enough” part and received this interesting answer: Initially the NYS Historic Preservation office denied Main Street’s inclusion in the Little Falls Historic District designation, but “a change in the State’s position *allowed* the buildings on Main Street...as the canopy was deemed inconsequential to the character of the existing building designs.” That said, ideally POP would like to see a style and design “more in keeping with the architecture of the contributing buildings.”

As some may know or recall, the canopy was installed some years after Urban Renewal removed the south-side counterpart buildings along Main Street and Shoppers Square was constructed. Because the remaining buildings and their windows faced south, some think the canopy was meant to keep the sun from glaring in and fading window displays (stores in other towns with similar configurations use awnings, special window glass, and other methods to cut down on glare).

The main reason those who like our canopy give is that it protects the sidewalk. In winter, we can walk to local businesses without slogging through snow or slipping on ice. In other seasons, it shelters us from rainfall (“It saved the Cheese

Festival when the skies opened,” one local person reminded me) and hot sun.

A call to Tony Carlisto, whose firm Ward Associates designed and implemented the canopy, clarified why it was really built. It was meant to preserve our remaining storefronts. At the time, there was a million-dollar grant to pay for it, which included sending the electrical power for each and every storefront underground; facades and windows were altered or upgraded then or later. Similar canopy designs in the City of Kingston in Ulster County were the inspiration.

As the canopy continues to age and develop problems, the City and its citizens need to consider our options. Tearing it down altogether would be difficult and expensive—and unpopular. A recent poll by the Little Falls Planning Committee shows that 85% of the business owners like the canopy and don’t want to lose it, and many residents agree.

Removing it altogether would also bring to the fore the design and condition of each and every façade—expensive and tricky issues, to be sure. The canopy could be upgraded, or replaced with a more Victorian design (more in harmony with the buildings it abuts), in whole or even one building at a time. All of these tacks require money, of course.

Well, no matter what any of us think of the canopy and no matter the resources our City may or may not have, there’s no denying it is going to continue to require our attention and ideas.

—Teri Chace

“On the canopy: I don't know if at its conception I would have recommended its construction, but I most certainly would not recommend its removal.”
— a Little Falls resident

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

MARCH 2018

- ❖ Saturdays, 3/10 and 3/24, 9 am to noon. Little Falls Winter Farmers' Market, indoors at the Travelodge, 20 Albany St., "rain, shine, or snow." For more information, please visit and "friend" the Facebook page, [LFWinterFarmersMarket](#).
- ❖ Thursday, 3/15. "Third Thursday" at participating area businesses. "Everything Green" theme and specials. Please visit [shoplittlefallsny.com](#) or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details.
- ❖ Saturday, 3/17, 7 to 9 pm. St. Patrick's Day "Get Your Green On" party with musical trio "Arise & Go." Little Falls' Elks Club, 2 W. Gansevoort St.. Sponsored by the Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door—available at Ole Sal's Cafe & Creamery, The Sandwich Chef, and Paca Gardens.
- ❖ Sunday, 3/18, 4 pm. Film, "The Florida Project," Valley Cinemas, \$8, all proceeds benefit Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts.
- ❖ Tuesday, 3/27, 7 pm. Historical Society presentation. WCA, 534 Garden St. All welcome.

APRIL 2018

- ❖ Tuesday, 4/3 at 7 pm. Monthly Common Council meeting. Little Falls City Hall.
- ❖ Wednesday, 4/4, 7-8 am. Not-for-Profit Coalition meets. Elks Club, 2 West Gansevoort St.
- ❖ Friday, 4/6, 7 pm, classical piano recital; world-renowned pianist Agne Radzevichuite returns to Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts' 401 Gallery. A program of Chopin, Ravel, Schumann, and Scarlatti. Free-will donations will benefit the artist.
- ❖ Saturday, 4/7, 4 pm. Tentative. A screening of the new film "A Quiet Place" (partially filmed on location here in Little Falls), at Valley Cinemas, \$8, all proceeds benefit Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts.
- ❖ Saturdays, 4/14 and 4/28, 9 am to noon. Little Falls Winter Farmers' Market, indoors at the Travelodge, 20 Albany St., "rain, shine, or snow." For more information, please visit and "friend" the Facebook page, [LFWinterFarmersMarket](#).
- ❖ Thursday, 4/19. "Third Thursday" at participating area businesses. "Recycle." Please visit [shoplittlefallsny.com](#) or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details.
- ❖ Tuesday, 4/24, 7 pm. Historical Society presentation. WCA, 534 Garden St. All welcome.

MAY 2018

- ❖ Tuesday, 5/1 at 7 pm. Monthly Common Council meeting. Little Falls City Hall.
- ❖ Wednesday, 5/2, 7-8 am. Not-for-Profit Coalition meets. Elks Club, 2 West Gansevoort St..
- ❖ Saturdays, 9 am to noon. Little Falls Farmers' Market, moves back outside to the M&T Bank parking lot. For more information, please visit and "friend" the Facebook page, [LFFarmersMarket](#).
- ❖ Thursday, 5/17. "Third Thursday" at participating area businesses. "Healthy You." Please visit [shoplittlefallsny.com](#) or the Think Local Little Falls Facebook page for full details.
- ❖ Tuesday, 5/22, 7 pm. Historical Society opening reception, 319 South Ann St. All welcome.
- ❖ Wednesday May 23, 1 pm. Little Falls Historical Society Museum, 319 South Ann St., opens for the season.



upcoming FESTIVALS in Little Falls!

Saturday, July 14 LITTLE FALLS CHEESE FESTIVAL

Monday, August 6 to Sunday, August 12 LITTLE FALLS CANAL CELEBRATION

Saturday, September 8 MOHAWK VALLEY GARLIC & HERB FESTIVAL



**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

- ❖ Pursue grants to support a tree survey and urban reforestation project.
- ❖ Partner with the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank to fight blight in our neighborhoods.
- ❖ Partner with Bassett Research Institute to develop and present a project highlighting community development best practices.
- ❖ Plan and execute a major clean-up project in the City.

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.



MSF'S LONG-TERM GOALS

- ❖ Support the development and implementation of a sustainability-based comprehensive plan.
- ❖ Expand and engage our membership, especially young adults.
- ❖ Find and pursue grant opportunities for projects aligned with MSF's purposes.
- ❖ Hold educational community sessions on topics of interest that are aligned with MSF's purposes.

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:
contact@mainstreetfirst.org
Visit our website at:
mainstreetfirst.org

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

To receive a copy of this quarterly newsletter electronically, please send your request to:
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PLEASE RECYCLE, DON'T LITTER!

