

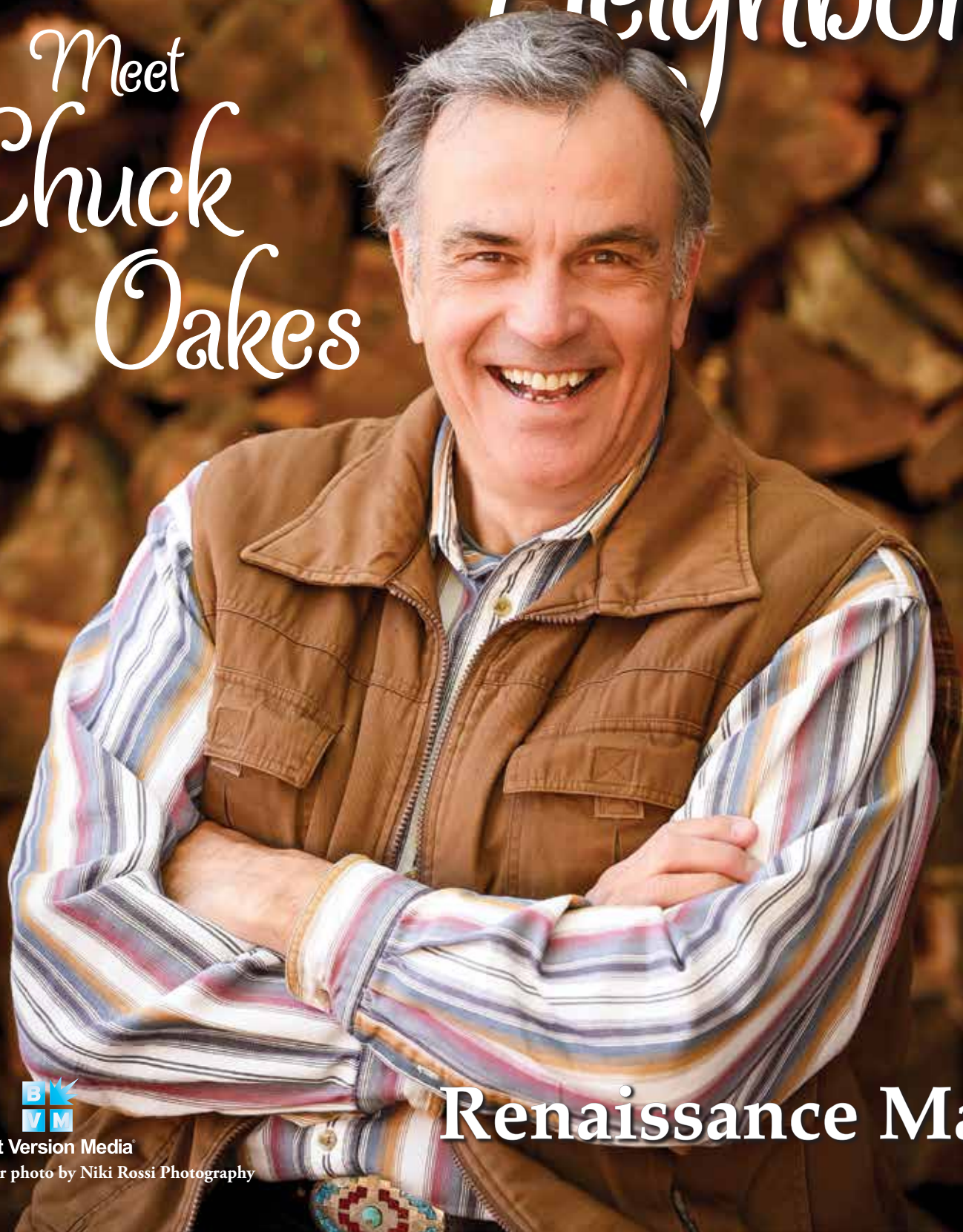
JANUARY 2016

# CLIFTON PARK

AN EXCLUSIVE MONTHLY PUBLICATION  
FOR RESIDENTS

## Neighbors

Meet  
Chuck  
Oakes



## Renaissance Man



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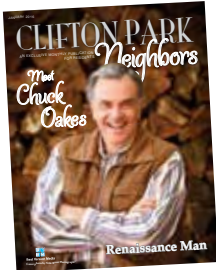
Have feedback? New ideas? We would be happy to hear from you! Please contact Jenna Caputo at jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com for information on how to submit ideas, articles, updates, reminders, events, high-resolution photos and more. We will do our best to include as much community information as we can within our space limitations.

### MAGAZINE DEADLINES

Please submit your content by the 10th of each month. Clifton Park Living will usually arrive in your mailbox within the first week of every month. Dates may vary depending on the post office.

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**ON THE COVER**  
Chuck Oakes

## Hello CLIFTON PARK RESIDENTS

Happy New Year! 2016 is off and we are all focusing on our resolutions and goals for the year ahead. However, here at *Clifton Park Neighbors*, we're also focusing on our 1-year anniversary!

This past year has been an exciting one for us as we have had the privilege of getting to know all of you and the many wonderful businesses in the Clifton Park area. There are so many interesting stories in our community and we are excited to be a part of that in a small way.

As you make your way through the new year, please be sure to take a moment to let us know what you would like to see in your community magazine. We want to hear from you! Send us story ideas for any of our features: local families, non-profits, upcoming events, original photography, recipes, crafts, poetry, artwork, publications notices, etc. Our favorite part of this year has been YOU and we want to continue to share everything that is going on in your community. Email ideas/submissions to jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com. We are looking forward to all of the great new stories from your 2016 adventures!

We wish you a very happy and healthy New Year!



*Jenna Caputo*

CONTENT COORDINATOR

## TRAVEL INSPIRATION

Where are you and your family going to visit in 2016? The world awaits! Send us your travel pictures and stories and we will highlight them in this space.

Emilie Nadler is a graduate from Skidmore College. Her interests include photography, politics, news and environmental issues. This is a photograph of the London Eye.

*Do you have a photo or other creative piece to share? Send us submissions for original poetry, photography, publication notices/event announcements, quotes, recipes, original artwork, crafts – anything original and creative! Send submissions to jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com.*

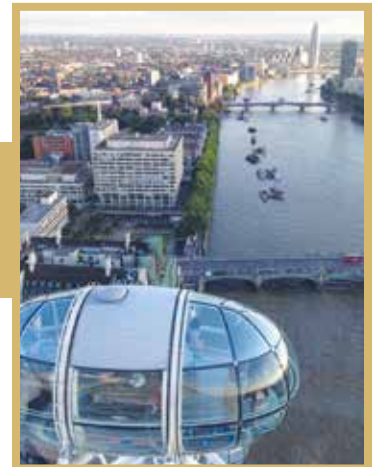


Photo by Emilie Nadler

### IMPORTANT TOWN PHONE NUMBERS

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Town Board Members.....371-6651  
Animal Control Officer.....371-6756  
Town Attorney *Tom McCarthy*.....371-6651  
Assessor *Walter Smead*.....371-6460  
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*Steve Myers*.....371-6702  
Building & Grounds Director  
*Mike Handerman*.....371-6651  
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Town Court, 5 Municipal Plaza .....371-6668  
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*Barb McHugh*.....371-6651  
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Sewer Director *Mike O'Brien*.....348-7313  
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If the person you wish to reach is not on the list above, please call 371-6651 to speak to a receptionist who will direct your call to the appropriate individual or department. The Town's office buildings are open from Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm, excluding holidays. The Town Clerk's Office is open until 7pm every Thursday. The Building and Parks and Recreation Departments are open at 8am Monday through Friday.



# Clifton Park's First Town Hall Was A Tavern

By John L. Scherer, Clifton Park Historian

Clifton Park's first Town Board meeting was held on April 29, 1828, at the tavern of James Grooms, Grooms Corners. This building, which still stands at the intersection of Grooms and Sugar Hill Roads, was built about 1825. In more recent times it served as a store and billiard parlor known as the Emporium. It is now a Historical and Cultural Center owned by the Town of Clifton Park. The Board meeting was held upstairs in a large room probably used as a ballroom or public parlor. This room remains basically the same as it did in 1828.

The Town of Clifton Park, originally named Clifton, was formed from Halfmoon on March 3, 1828. It had been a part of Halfmoon since 1772. The name was changed to Clifton Park on March 31, 1829, to avoid confusion with other places in the state called Clifton. The name was derived from the Clifton Park Patent granted to land speculators by Queen

Anne of England in 1708. This patent included most of the land that defined the new town. Since the granting of the patent, the area had been referred to in deeds and other official records as Clifton Park. The Town of Clifton Park was the twentieth and last town to be organized in Saratoga County,



which prior to 1791 had been part of Albany County.

The Town Supervisor chosen at that first town meeting was Ephraim Stevens, a tavern keeper, whose tavern later became known as the Clifton Park Hotel. He also served as one of two Poundkeepers. Town Board meetings were often held at his tavern at Clifton Park Village, then known as Stevens Corners. The first Town Clerk was Henry Clow. Other officials chosen at the meeting were Tax Collector, Assessors, Overseers of the Poor, Highway Commissioners, Committee of Common Schools, Inspectors of Common Schools, Constables, Poundkeepers and Fence-viewers, the latter position indicating the important role of fences in town during the nineteenth century in retaining animals and livestock. John Clute from near Vischer Ferry became the first Justice of the Peace in 1830. James Groom, the owner of the tavern where the first meeting was held was

evidently not chosen for town office that first year, 1828. However, he did serve later as Town Clerk for the years 1832 through 1835. He became Town Supervisor in 1836 and 1837. Both Ephraim Stevens and James Groom later served in the State Legislature.

James Groom's father, also named

James, settled at the time of the American Revolution in Clifton Park at the corner that now bears his name. This older James Groom later moved to Albany. Just when his son built his home and tavern is unknown, but we do know that his tavern was not the only one in the area, nor the only one favored by the early Town Board.

The road from Grooms Corners east to the Elnora-Vischers Ferry Road had been laid out in 1819. At the intersection of these roads exactly one mile east of James Groom's tavern was a tavern owned and operated by Sylvenus Birch. This building still stands today. The Town Board alternated meetings between the two taverns. Many town residents used the level one-mile stretch of road between the two taverns as a racetrack.

One wonders why the infatuation of our early Town Board with taverns? The tavern or inn was of course the center of community life during the nineteenth century and it played an important role. Not only did it provide food and lodging for travelers but it served as a public gathering place for the community. Thus, in the days before town halls, it was only appropriate that our early town government should make use of both Groom's and Birch's taverns. ■



# Simple Oat Bars

By Jordan King

3 cups oatmeal  
1 cup peanut butter  
½ cup honey  
2 tablespoons flax seeds (or flax meal)  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
Pinch of salt

## Directions:

Melt peanut butter and honey in a pan on the stove. Stir in oats, flax, cinnamon and salt. Press into a parchment paper-lined baking pan. Refrigerate for approximately 1 hour or until hardened. Then cut into squares, serve and enjoy.



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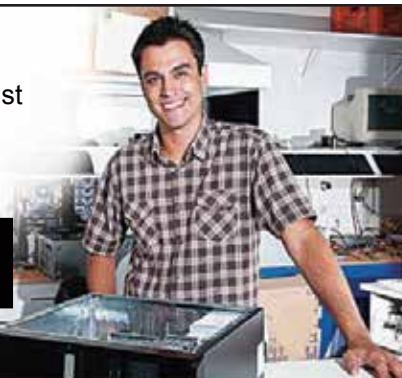
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## COVER STORY

*By Jenna Caputo Photo by Niki Rossi Photography*

# Meet Chuck Oakes: Renaissance Man

Chuck Oakes knew from an early age that he wanted two things out of life: variety and the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others. His life journey so far has allowed him to achieve both of these things.

Originally from Long Island, Chuck enjoyed many days on their family sailboat. Being exposed to the yachting and boat community at such an early age provided him with the opportunity to learn about and appreciate fine woodworking, which has evolved into his love of rustic furniture, waterfeatures and playing handmade acoustic guitars today. Growing up, Chuck also enjoyed canoeing, hiking, photography and the Wild West.

At eight years old, his family relocated to Los Angeles after his engineer father was transferred for his job. It was here where Chuck experienced his first life-changing event. He went to Hollywood Bowl to see the Kingston Trio play, then talked his way backstage after the show to meet the band. He developed a friendship with the band that continues to this day. It was this show that inspired him to learn guitar and he quickly took advantage of the unemployed actors/musicians in the area who were looking to make a little money. He studied for about six months before he began performing – first solo, then as part of The Princeton Trio. His guitar teacher was from the Gateway Singers – a folk group famous for their song “Puttin’ on the Style” – and he arranged for the trio to play on the Steve Allen show.

Chuck’s passion for music was undeniable and became a prominent part of his life. It was a passion he wanted to share. He introduced his neighbor, Lee Ritenour, to the guitar as well and gave him his first guitar as a present. Lee went on to become an international recording artist and a renowned jazz guitarist. He remains

one of Chuck's closest friends to this day.

At 11, Chuck's family once again relocated back east to Connecticut, where Chuck continued with his music and entered the world of community theater and modeling. He graduated with a degree in business management from the University of Hartford, studying voice in between his business courses. After graduation, he continued to play steady gigs in local hotels while he pursued his acting career. He had modeling and acting assignments that found him on billboards, in magazines, and in commercials – most notably as the “Stetson Man” for Coty Cosmetics and as a guest on the *Kate & Allie* TV show.

As with any industry, self-employment in the entertainment industry is always a risky venture. Chuck says that it was “all-consuming, allowing for little else in one's life. Having high personal standards added pressure to my life. While I eventually had representation on both coasts, it took its toll. The constant pressure and expectations eventually affected my autoimmune system and I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (a continuing challenge). In the entertainment business, you ‘die on your own dime’... the show must go on!”

Chuck decided to tap back into his college education and redirect his career into Human Resources and the corporate world by first becoming a corporate recruiter. Later, he had a position with ShopRite in New England. His efforts there in hiring workers with disabilities caught the eye of President Reagan's Council on Hiring Workers with Disabilities and he received a phone call from a council representative. At the time, this was a relatively new topic and they were looking for more information. Chuck wrote a white paper for them and became an advisor

for the council.

He then began to focus on helping workers that lost their jobs due to corporate downsizing. He published his first book, *When the Pink Slip Comes Home* as part of a package that included a handbook and audiotapes. This new passion has followed him through the years and Chuck continues to work as an outplacement specialist and offers workshops and counseling for displaced workers.

The past 10 years brought Chuck into another new phase of his life as he became the primary caregiver for his aging parents. He learned many creative techniques to support his parents and enhance their home for their later years. Sensory supported elements became a focus to make the home a relaxing and supportive environment. These elements are “the acknowledgement of whatever active senses the residents still enjoy. Then, to assess and make improvements around the residence to make life safer, healthier and more enjoyable through the use and application of sensory supported techniques and devices, including waterfeatures, aroma devices, lighting, etc.” He subsequently published two books on aging based on his experiences, including his latest, *Your Home, Your Castle*.

These experiences also led to his certification as a Stephen Minister. “The Congregational Church in my town recognized my experience and commitment to our aging population and asked me to be a specialized trained expert on loss and grief. It fit with my overall career so in about eight months, I was commissioned as a Stephen Minister (an international, Christian position).” After his parents passed, he decided to move to the Capital District to be near his brother and nephews who live in the Albany area. He wanted a change – a time for



renewal and healing.

Chuck continues to write and has once again ventured into the entertainment business, playing his music on a limited basis and engaging in acting and modeling. He also continues to pursue his love of photography and focuses his work on ghost towns and historic railroads. His photos have been featured in exhibits, malls, restaurants and travel articles, and he gives presentations on related topics throughout the area.

Chuck has established himself in Capital District life, is on the Board of Directors for his community HOA in Clifton Park and in his spare time enjoys building rustic planters, garden railroads and riding his motorcycle. His motto, “Savor and enjoy every moment, for life can change in a heartbeat,” has carried him throughout his years from one adventure to the next as he continues to look for ways to help others along his journey.

To contact Chuck for more information on his presentations or books, visit his websites at [www.chuckoakes.com](http://www.chuckoakes.com) (aging matters) or [www.chuckoakes.net](http://www.chuckoakes.net) (programs and performances), or email him at [Chuck@chuckoakes.com](mailto:Chuck@chuckoakes.com). ■

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at [jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com).



# No Secrets to Losing Weight... It's Mostly Common Sense

By Ellis Medicine

There are no big secrets to reveal regarding how to successfully lose weight; most of what you need to know is common sense. There is no magic pill or magic wand out there to help you lose weight. In order to be successful, you have to consume fewer calories than you burn, which means eating less and exercising more.

"Everything in moderation, including moderation," as Oscar Wilde once said, are words to live by, especially when it comes to diet and exercise.

The skinny on a proper diet can be found at [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) and by talking with your doctor. Essentially, you should eat a variety of foods from the main food groups that are high in nutrients. Additionally, be sure to keep unhealthy things like saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt and alcohol to a minimum. You should also stay away from the "diet" mentality. Don't think of it as having to be on a diet. The changes you are making are for a healthy lifestyle for life.

Define your long-term goals and then start by making small changes. Success will come if you start small. Aim to make one tweak a day: add a new fruit to breakfast, skip your pre-dinner cocktail or use a smaller plate at a buffet.

Some people have to ask themselves if they are using food as a coping mechanism to deal with stress in their lives. If the answer is "yes," you should talk with your doctor or possibly see a counselor to help you better deal

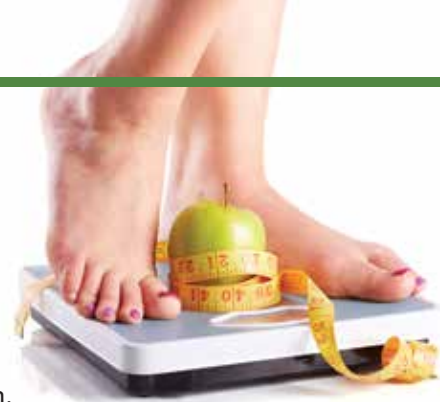
with the underlying problem.

The winter months tend to keep us indoors more, so it does take some extra effort to exercise. Consider walking at the local mall and exercising in your home with a treadmill or to a workout video that suits your level of activity.

Standard guidelines suggest adults should engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Sixty minutes of moderate to higher intensity activity on most days of the week, while not exceeding caloric intake requirements will provide greater health benefits and better weight management for most people. *You should consult your doctor before you begin any new exercise routine to ensure it's safe for you.*

Sometimes obesity cannot be treated by diet and exercise alone. For people who are severely obese and can't lose weight by traditional methods or who suffer from serious obesity-related health problems, weight loss surgery may be a viable option. Visit [www.ellismedicine.org](http://www.ellismedicine.org) for more information about Ellis Medicine's comprehensive, nationally recognized weight loss surgery program. So are you ready to make 2016 the year you get healthier? Before you answer, consider what good health is worth to you? Better yet, ponder what is more valuable than your health.

For more information about nutrition services, including programs available at the Ellis Medicine's Medical Center of Clifton Park, visit [www.ellismedicine.org](http://www.ellismedicine.org) or call 518-243-4345. ■



## Fit Tips

- **Get motivated.** Keep yourself motivated during your weight loss journey by doing the "write thing." Writing down your weight loss goals reinforces them in your mind.
- **Want it.** Another "stick with it strategy" is to use the word "want" instead of "should." Saying you should do something, like exercise, implies that you feel the activity is a burden. Telling yourself you want to work out or you want to eat less is the better approach.
- **Shop the perimeter.** When grocery shopping, stick to the outside walls of the store to get the freshest, healthiest foods. The packaged, less healthy food choices tend to be kept in the aisles in between.
- **Wear a pedometer.** A pedometer can actually prompt you to be more active. Aim for 2,000 steps per day, and work up to 10,000. Consult your physician before beginning any new physical activity.
- **Protein first!** Gram for gram, protein has the same number of calories as carbohydrates and half the fat, but takes longer to digest, so you feel full longer. Include a serving of lean protein with each meal and snack.
- **Stop smoking.** The adverse health effects for smokers are staggering. Sign up for a smoking cessation class at [www.ellismedicine.org](http://www.ellismedicine.org) or call the New York State Quitline at 1.866.NY.QUIT (1-866-697-8487).



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# New Year's Financial Resolutions

By Ryan Lambert, Lambert & Spratt Financial Partners, an office of MetLife

The New Year is a great time to reevaluate where you stand financially. It wouldn't be New Year's without resolutions but we all know the key is sticking to them; here are four steps to get you started on the road to financial health.

## 1. Create a budget

You need to look at yourself as a company, you have both cash inflows as well as outflows. The problem is we know how much comes in by looking at our paystubs or tax return but few of us know where we spend all of those dollars. After you track this for a period of time using a tool such as mint.com the picture becomes clearer.

## 2. Optimize your investments

The key here is not acting as a stock picker but looking at your overall exposure to stocks, bonds and cash. Diversification within each of these will help you weather

market fluctuations that are always present without abandoning your plan.

## 3. Expect the unexpected

Here we are talking about your insurance coverages. Like your investments, these change over time as we age and should be reviewed annually. The following are the most overlooked insurances:

Protect your paycheck with disability insurance. Some of this may be available through your employer but it is usually not sufficient to cover all expenses and may need to be supplemented.

Protect your family with life insurance. Similarly, you may have some through an employer but most people have no idea how to calculate their specific need.

## 4. Protect your estate

Without a proper estate plan, the courts will determine how your assets are distributed and guardianship of your minor children. Your will, power of attorney, living will and health care proxy should be reviewed every three to four years to ensure they still reflect your wishes. Be sure to also check all beneficiary designations on IRA's and other investment accounts since many of these will pass outside of your will.

This may seem like quite a bit to think about but if you seek out help you can manage to address all of these areas.

Happy New Year! ■

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# Welcome to the Neighborhood

By Pete Bardunias, President/CEO, the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County



The Chamber of Southern Saratoga County (CSSC) celebrated its new downtown Clifton Park offices on September 24, and President/CEO Pete Bardunias (left) got some support from colleagues Linda Hillman (center) and Tom Nolte (right). Nolte, a longtime chamber professional in the capital region, is the President/CEO of the Colonie Chamber of Commerce, while Hillman recently retired after leading the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce for the past 15 years. The CSSC moved into its new headquarters at 58 Clifton Country Rd. in order to have a more visible presence in the center of Saratoga County's largest and fastest growing community. The offices also provide convenient access for travelers or newcomers in the area while staying at area hotels. For more information visit [www.southernsaratoga.org](http://www.southernsaratoga.org).

The G-Box gym ([www.thegboxgym.com](http://www.thegboxgym.com)) opens in the Clifton Park Center with a ribbon cutting and proclamations by area officials. Cutting the ribbon was owner Glenn Brown, along with his staff, joined by volunteer ambassadors of the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County as well as Assemblyman Jim Tedisco (holding proclamation), Mike Mansion representing Senator Hugh Farley (3rd from left), Clifton Park Center General Manager Rob Ristau (behind Brown), and Chamber of Southern Saratoga County President/CEO Pete Bardunias. Brown created the G-Box as "a gym with a culture, an old school feel, elite training, and an atmosphere unlike any other.... unleashing everyone's true potential." For more information call (518) 836-6111.



Meet other business neighbors at [www.southernsaratoga.org](http://www.southernsaratoga.org).

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Open daily for free skating. Rentals available. Special events, clinics and entertainment available throughout the season.

Time: 11am-8pm

(closed 3-4pm for maintenance)

Cost: FREE

## Monday-Saturday, January 4-9

### TRAINS & TOYS HOLIDAY SHOW

@Museum of Innovation & Science, Schenectady

The Model Trains are back at miSci this holiday season! Explore the intricate 19- x 27-foot display of running O Gauge (Lionel) model trains. Stay and play! The Play Space is full of science toys you don't have at home.

Time: M-S 9am-5pm; Sun 12-5pm

## Saturdays, January 9-30

### SARATOGA FARMERS MARKET

@Saratoga Spa State Park, Saratoga

The Saratoga Farmers' Market is a year-round market offering a wide variety of plants, flowers, meats, eggs, produce, cheeses, honey, baked goods, beer, wine, spirits and freshly prepared & ready-to-eat foods! **All Locally Grown, Raised and Produced!** The Market is a great family destination for live music and an activity for kids at every market!

Time: 9am-1pm | Cost: FREE

## Saturday, January 9

### ALBANY SYMPHONY: BERNSTEIN

& BRAHMS

@Palace Theatre, Albany

Guest conductor, Joann Falletta, will lead the Albany Symphony Orchestra, featuring Roman Mekinulov on cello, for this performance. Pieces include: Bernstein's On the Town, Three Dance Episodes; Miguel Del Aguila's Concierto en Tango for Cello and Orchestra; Brahms's Symphony No. 2

Time: 7:30pm | Cost: \$19-\$60

## Sunday, January 10

### REIKI, YIN YOGA, MUSIC

@One Big Roof, Saratoga

Don't miss this chance to benefit from a mixed-modality wellness experience as 4 talented practitioners come together! The R.Y.M.

Workshop will include a 90-minute Yin yoga class that incorporates Reiki, essential oils & vibroacoustic music. Reiki is a Japanese technique that uses healing energy to reduce stress & increase relaxation, while promoting overall well-being. Yin yoga is a passive style of yoga that targets deep connective tissue & fascia, rather than muscle. By holding seated or reclined poses for an extended period of time, greater flexibility & improved range of motion are achieved. Vibroacoustic therapy uses live music to reduce emotional & physical pain and promote harmony & balance within the the mind, body & spirit. No prior experience needed, all are welcome! Pre-registration required. Call or email April Hannah: 518-421-4245, [info@hannahshealing.com](mailto:info@hannahshealing.com).

Time: 11am-12:30pm | Cost: \$40

## Wednesday, January 13

### CRISS ANGEL AND THE SUPERNATURALISTS

@Palace Theatre, Albany

Experience a show that redefines magice like Cirque Du Soleil did for the circus. Included are some of Criss' favorite, original and signature illusions which have only been seen as

part of his Las Vegas show.

Time: 7:30pm | Cost: \$39.50-\$69.50

## Thursday-Saturday, January 14-16

### ALBANY CHEFS' FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

@Hilton Albany, Albany

This year's festival includes the Mayor's Opening Celebration at City Hall; Grand tasting, including 250 wines, spirits and beer for sampling; Battle of the Bartenders: Manhattan Edition; Barista Albany; Educational seminars and competitions; Rising Star Chef Pavilion & Craft Beer Pavilion; "Slider Slam" Competition; Gala Reception 6-course dinner and more! Benefits the arts community of Albany.

Time: 5:30pm | Cost: Varies

## Friday, January 15

### SAVOY DIAMOND DANCE

@Saratoga Music Hall, Saratoga

Join us at the historic (and very large) Saratoga Music Hall on Broadway for hours of live music by nationally known musicians, dancing, DJ'd music between sets, discounts on dance lessons, munchies and a free beginner dance lesson at 7:30. For more information: [dance@saratogasavoy.com](mailto:dance@saratogasavoy.com) or 518-587-5132.

Time: 7:30-11pm | Cost: \$16

## Saturday, January 16

### TRY HOCKEY FOR FREE

@Empire State Plaza, Albany

OGS and USA Hockey invite boys and girls to Try Hockey For Free as part of Hockey Weekend Across America. Local youth, ages 4-12 are encouraged to experience ice hockey for the first time and learn the basic skills in a fun, safe environment. Pre-registration is required.

Time: 9-11am | Cost: FREE

## Saturday, January 16

### FAMILY YOGA



**@Saratoga Farmers Market, Lincoln Baths, Saratoga**  
Family yoga is back at the winter market! On the third Saturday of every month, certified yoga instructor Patty Rodecker will hold FREE Family Yoga classes at 11am and 12pm. The 30-minute classes will be family-friendly and designed for yogis of ALL ages and abilities. Bring your mat or just wear your sneakers and enjoy a gentle, fun program designed to put a smile on your face and peace in your heart! Please register ahead by emailing Julia at: [Julia@saratogafarmersmarket.org](mailto:Julia@saratogafarmersmarket.org).  
*Time: 11am, 12pm | Cost: FREE*

**Saturday, January 16**  
**HATTIE'S 15TH ANNUAL MARDI GRAS BENEFIT**  
**@Canfield Casino, Saratoga**  
Michael Panza and his team from Fine Affairs will transform the Canfield Casino into "New Orleans of the North". Guests will enjoy the culinary expertise of Chef Jasper Alexander, dance the night away to the sounds of Garland Nelson and Soul Session, and so much more!  
*Time: 6-10pm | Cost: \$100 per person*

**Saturday, January 16**  
**3RD ANNUAL A PURPLE TIE AFFAIR**  
**@National Museum of Dance, Saratoga**  
You'll enjoy delicious food and drinks from Longfellows, live music from The Accents, dancing, raffles, and prizes in support of two great causes: The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Nick's Fight To Be Healed Foundation For Pediatric Cancer. Wear your favorite cocktail party attire and be sure to wear something purple to show your support!  
*Time: 7pm*  
*Cost: \$55 per person, \$100 per couple; \$65 per person at door*

**Saturday, January 23**  
**PILATES FOR THE JUNIOR**

**LEAGUE OF SCHENECTADY AND SARATOGA COUNTIES**  
**@Reform: A True Pilates Studio, Saratoga**  
Join us for our Pilates for A Purpose class on Saturday January 23rd! The class will be accepting donations for The Junior League Of Schenectady and Saratoga Counties. This is a 50-minute Pilates Mat Class suitable for all levels. Bring a mat if you have one. Please show a few minutes early to fill out paperwork if you are new to the studio.  
*Time: 10-11am | Cost: FREE*

**Saturday, January 23**  
**ANNUAL MOONLIGHT SKI & SNOWSHOE**  
**@Camp Saratoga, Gansevoort**  
Join us at the popular and highly anticipated Annual Moonlight Ski and Snowshoe at Camp Saratoga on Scout Road. Luminaries will glow along 2.5 miles of groomed trails. Along the way you will find fields and forests, warming bonfires and plenty of hot chocolate. The terrain is suitable for all levels and ages and includes a smaller 1-mile loop. Participants can drop-in anytime during the evening, no registration is needed. Snowshoes and cross-country skis will be available on a first-come first-serve basis in the I.P Winter Lodge off of Parking lot #2. The rental fee is \$5/ person for non-members. Parking will be directed by WWPP. This event is weather permitting. Call 450-0321 for more information.  
*Time: 6-9pm*

**Sunday, January 24**  
**STAR WARRIORS: THE OPERA**  
**@Arthur Zankel Music Center, Skidmore College**  
There's a crisis at the opera house. Opening night is tomorrow and the composer just cancelled. Help brilliant Maestro Verduccini fashion a whole new opera before your very eyes by stealing

all the best numbers from the greatest operas of all time and turning them into "Star Warriors: the Opera!" It's destined to be a classic! Hits by: Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, Donizetti and others.  
*Time: 3pm*

**Saturday, January 30**  
**NEW YEAR NEW PUPPET LIFE**  
**@The Genius Plaza, Clifton Park**  
The "New Year New Puppet Life" celebrates the new year and offers children the opportunity to think about excitement of discovering new things, games and activities in a fun environment. It combines a delightful mix of zany puppetry and live interaction that is enjoyed by all. It's a great show for pre-school age children (2-5) but all children are welcome to attend.  
*Time: 10-11am | Cost: FREE*

**Saturday, January 30**  
**TWO TOWNS ONE BOOK**  
**@Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library, Clifton Park**  
*The Martian* by Andy Weir is the 2016-winning book for the Two Towns-One Book Community Read. Join us to explore answers to important questions during the season's kickoff event: "The U. S. Space Program." Is the book science fiction or, perhaps, realistic fiction? Is travel to Mars possible? Why should Mars be explored? Discover the development and successes of the space program with Lester Gerhardt, engineer and RPI professor in both Engineering and Science. Dr. Gerhardt was personally involved in the development of space flight simulation for astronaut training. He coordinated Space Week, celebrating the 30th anniversary of man landing on the moon and mentored many students who have lived and worked on the International Space Station. The event is appropriate for families with school-age children. Registration is recommended.  
*Time: 2pm | Cost: FREE*

# Everyday Heroes

By Mary Beth Printskey

The everyday heroes.

Here's to all of them.

They aren't the ones you read about in the morning  
newspapers or watch on the nightly news.

Awards and medals are not granted to them.

But, they are heroes just the same.

The people who walk among us in our everyday lives.

The ones who make a silent difference.

They get up every morning, against all odds,  
and start over.

Grieving. Depressed. Frustrated. Overwhelmed by life.

Heroes, just the same.

Clean slates.

Starting over.

Chalk, like yesterday, can be erased from the board.

Sometimes, it leaves a bit of dust on the slate.

Just a hint of a reminder to go forward.

It's never enough to stop them from the journey.

Never.

The heroes take some of the dust with them.



Carrying it on their sleeves. Breathing in some of it.  
Leaving a trace of it as they continue to walk their paths.

Leaving a trace behind,  
taking some with them as they go into today.

Reminders.

Try as they must, one can never remove all of the chalk  
dust from the day before.

Sometimes, days are rewritten. Chapters, repeated.

It can take a long time to learn from mistakes.

Sometimes.

But, they get up and keep going.

New chalk in hand, writing all over, again.

Heroes get up, stand up and start over.

Crumpled. Shattered. Broken.

But, they begin, anew.

Here's to the everyday heroes.

The ones who start all over.

Against all odds, they get up.

They erase yesterday, leaving just a hint of reminders.

But, they go forward.

One step at a time. Two steps ahead.

Two steps forward, one step back.

Never leaving behind all of the dust.

Taking some of it with them as a reminder  
of how far they have come.

Each yesterday.

Here's to the everyday heroes.

That is who we are, the everyday heroes.

You and me.

Here's to each of us who start over with a nearly clean  
slate, bringing forth just a dusting of yesterday.

Starting over, again. ■

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# New Year, New You – Blah, Blah, Blah

By Jenna Caputo

I've been seeing it everywhere - "New Year, New You!" Initially, it's a nice sentiment – It's a fresh year, make a fresh start. Now is your chance for a change.

But let's face it - we all know those New Year's resolutions are pretty much shot by March. And what really changes? You're still you. Ok, so the number on the calendar went up one more notch, but everything else is still the same. You still have the same job. You still have the same body. You still have the same problems. That pile of work you left on your desk just before the Christmas break is still going to be there. Your to-do list hasn't been deleted. In fact, it now is even longer since it has your New Year's resolutions added to it. Nothing has been truly erased – it's all still there.

I'm not trying to be a "Negative Nelly" here. I'm just being realistic. As nice as the thought is to wipe the slate clean with the New Year, it just can't happen.

Instead of *New Year, New You*, how about *New Year, Better You*? Because let's face it, you're still you. And that's a good thing! You've spent your whole life becoming who you are. You've worked hard to get here, and even if you don't like everything about your life, you don't really want to erase your history. That's your backstory - it leads up to the

exciting climax. A new year is really just a new chapter in the book of your life. Which way is your story going to go now?

When thinking about my New Year's resolutions this year, I've decided to get rid of the notion of a whole new life and fresh start. I am merely turning the page and developing my story in a better direction. I am an ongoing masterpiece. I will keep the good things and revise the things that need some work. I am the master behind my own story – I control the pen, so it is up to me to decide what comes next. My decisions determine whether my character is a strong one or a boring one. I might stumble. I might fall back on some old habits. But I know the direction my story needs to take and I will continue to work toward that, and enjoy every aspect of the journey along the way.

A good story has twists and turns, highs and lows. We must learn to relish the same in our own lives. We don't need to completely change. We just need to strive toward that better revision, develop our story, and add to our plot.

Here's to a New Year, BETTER You! ■

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