

# 2025 PROGRESS CHENANGO

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## Art and community thrive at the Chenango Arts Council

**SARAH GENTER**  
EVENING SUN

**NORWICH** — The Chenango Arts Council has had another great year of supporting and promoting the arts in Chenango County.

Located at 27 West Main Street in Norwich, the organization is a nonprofit that aims to provide the Chenango County community with arts-focused performances, gallery exhibits, and workshops year-round. Their facility includes the historic Martin W. Kappel Theater, in which plays, musicals, and other performances are held, as well as the Mariea Brown and Raymond Loft Galleries that host art exhibits throughout the year.

In the past year, they've been able to expand and enhance their programming,

upgrade the theater, and continue to provide events and classes at an affordable price.

### Programs and events

The Chenango Arts Council is a hub of visual and performing arts that provides both opportunities for artists to showcase their work as well as a chance for area residents to enjoy theater, music, and visual art of all mediums that is suitable for all ages.

Approximately eight times per year, the Arts Council hosts gallery exhibits showcasing the work of both local artists and artists from out of the area. The exhibits kick off with an opening reception complete with light refreshments, baked goods donated by the Cottage Bakery, and the chance for visitors to talk

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Attendees at the 2024 Chenango Area Student Art (CASA) Show. Students from across Chenango County are invited to enter their artwork in the show, and students pursuing degrees in arts and music are chosen for scholarships. (Photo from the Chenango Arts Council)

## City of Norwich Youth Bureau brings families together

**KELLI MILLER**  
EVENING SUN

**NORWICH** — The City of Norwich Youth Bureau organizes and directs summer and winter activities designed to benefit the youth of the city and townships of Norwich, North Norwich, Plymouth, Preston and Pharsalia. Most programs are offered free of charge.

All recreational activities are instructional in nature, with a focus on learning the activity not competing. These activities include but are not limited to; baseball, softball, tennis, swimming lessons, soccer, cheer and wrestling.

"The purpose of the Youth Bureau is to administer, operate, monitor, and maintain youth recreational and service programs for area youths ages up to and including 21 years," said Youth Bureau Director Anthony Testani.

Testani said The Youth Bureau strives to promote physical, emotional, and social well-being of the youth by stimulating and supporting the development of services and activities designed to assist all youth in becoming valued, contributing members of society.

The City of Norwich Mayor Brian Doliver said, "The City



The City of Norwich Youth Bureau organizes and directs summer and winter activities designed to benefit the youth of the city and townships of Norwich, North Norwich, Plymouth, Preston and Pharsalia. Most programs are offered free of charge. (Submitted photos)

of Norwich Youth Bureau does so much for our community, especially the youth and it helps with quality of life and on such a small budget, I'm so pleased we can do the things we do."

Doliver said he is very thankful to have Testani as the Youth Bureau Director as he brings great ideas to the

program and is in tune with the kids interests.

"I can't say enough about Anthony Testani," he said. "He does such a wonderful job and pinches pennies until they scream and that's necessary because funding is always a challenge, we have to get very creative."

"We have the trips and

activities when the kids are out of school, it's like they take a small vacation and it's wonderful to do that for our youth," said Doliver.

He said they will continue to be creative to grow the program and keep it going because it brings a great

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## Art and community thrive at the Chenango Arts Council -

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with the featured artist.

In 2024, they were able to enhance the opening receptions with live music by local musicians, thanks to a grant from the Pearl and Everett Gilmour Foundation.

"We were very fortunate to get a grant that allowed us to bring live musicians into the gallery exhibits. So we are going to keep that going, it was very well received and the artists really liked that," said Chenango Arts Council Administrative Assistant Mary Beth Miller. "It just makes it much nicer and it makes it more of an enhanced experience."

In the past year, the Chenango Arts Council was able to showcase the artwork and art collections of Elizabeth Zieler, John Antonowicz, Bill Lebach, Jeffrey Glave, Danielle Haney, and Jeralyn Merideth. They also highlight the artwork created by their members with their annual Members' Exhibit, held each winter. Member artists are invited to submit up to three pieces of art in any medium to be included in the show.

"Anyone who is a member of Chenango Arts Council can submit up to three pieces of work in a variety of mediums," Miller said. "It's open to a lot of different categories: drawing, paint-



The Chenango Arts Council is able to bring in a variety of high quality performances, including Cirque-tacular with their "Spring-a-Ding-Ding" show. (Photo from the Chenango Arts Council)

ing, ceramics, mixed media, there's been graphic design things in the past."

For fans of the performing arts, the Chenango Arts Council provides a vast variety of shows and performances each year, ensuring there's something to suit all interests.

Chenango Arts Council Executive Director Alecia O'Neill said they make an effort to bring in local acts as well as shows from other areas to give the community the opportunity to see perfor-

mances they may otherwise never get to experience.

"We support our local artists, but at the same time it's also important for us to bring performances and experiences to the community that they would [otherwise] have to travel to Oneonta and pay three times as much," O'Neill explained. "So we try to keep a balance of all of that with our audiences and our students in mind, as well."

In the past year, the Arts Council has brought in Natasha Neely, a Dolly Parton

impersonator from Nashville, Tennessee, with her show "Dolly! And Her All-Star Band;" Cirque-tacular with their "Spring-a-Ding-Ding" show; Pennsylvania-based Christmas rock band Twelve Twenty-Four; and a Film and Strings event featuring the 1922 silent film "Nosferatu," among others. They also offer a free Halloween movie series each year in partnership with the Guernsey Memorial Library, as well as free movies in February. Additionally, the

Norwich Theater Company (NTCI) rents the Martin W. Kappel Theater to perform one play and two musicals each year.

For those looking for a more interactive approach to the arts, the Chenango Arts Council offers many different workshops and classes throughout the year, taught by local artists.

Miller said they try to provide a variety in their workshops as well, ensuring anyone in the community can find an artistic medium to try.

A fan favorite is the Arts Council's Paint and Sip classes, where participants can enjoy drinks and camaraderie while painting their own work of art, guided by an instructor. They have also offered workshops focused on crocheting, ceramics and pottery, watercolor painting, oil painting, creative writing, and crafting your own Christmas elf.

"There are so many talented people that we're really lucky to have and work with," said O'Neill. "It seems like when we have a new class, people love it and want to do it again, which is encouraging to the teacher, to the artist, too."

A fun, interactive piece of the Arts Council's repertoire is their Murder Mystery events. Audience members get to interact with NTCI

performers before the start of the show, enjoy a drama-filled performance rich with intrigue, then cast their vote on who they think the murderer is.

"Everybody tries to interact with everybody they see to make sure they get the information, and in the theater portion a lot of that is you're kind of sitting there and you can see what all the characters have to say," said Miller. "People are allowed to ask questions and things like that. They can check out the interactions between the characters."

"It's not necessarily you're sitting at a table and watching it unfold. You start at this kind of little reception and then you go in and sit like you're going to watch a play, and then the rest of the plot unfolds," she added. "It's a fun little mystery and the audience can solve it."

### Supporting young artists

O'Neill and Miller agree that one of the most important roles of the Chenango Arts Council is exposing local youth to the arts, and showing them all the opportunities available to them as artists.

"One of the things I find, personally, really important is career opportunities that kids don't necessarily know

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# Art and community thrive at the Chenango Arts Council -

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that you can do," said O'Neill. "If they make a living and pay the bills doing something that's not something they're passionate about, they can go home and dance or play the violin or paint. So it makes for a good quality of life."

"It's good for self esteem and confidence and just generally feeling good about yourself," she added. "That's how the new generation of theater or art lovers are going to get started, because they got exposed to it, so that's really important."

O'Neill said they aim to make their shows and programs family-friendly, so that youth can attend and experience the arts, whether visual or performative. Her hope is that exposure to the arts at a young age will show kids that they can pursue creative hobbies into adulthood, and even as a career.

"You can make a living being a dancer. You can live in New York City and do something you love and travel around the world and get paid for it. So I think it's really important for our kids to see that, to be exposed to that, and say 'wow, I could do this for a living,'" she explained.

"A lot of people, when you say, 'oh, theater,' they automatically think just acting. But everything that you could possibly imagine goes into making a performance: fashion design, sewing, carpentry, painting, not only acting but singing, dancing, teaching singing and dancing, being a choreographer or a pit master, playing an instrument in the orchestra," she continued. "And, once again, you can do it professionally. You could be a roadie, you could be a designer. You can do so many things."

For kids to experience the arts hands-on, the Chenango Arts Council offers the Kids Summer Art Camp each summer. Miller said youth are taught a variety of artistic mediums during their week of art camp, and all supplies are provided.

To foster a love and appreciation for the arts during the school year, the Chenango Arts Council provides the Grants for Teachers program each year. In 2024, the Arts Council awarded a \$500 grant to a Chenango County teacher to integrate the arts into their students' curriculum.

The grants are not just for art teachers either; O'Neill said the goal is for teachers of any subject to bring the arts into their classroom.

Golden Artist Colors supported this initiative by providing \$500 gift certificates to be awarded to local teachers for the purchase of paint.

At the end of the school year, Chenango County student artists are invited to participate in the Chenango Area Student Art (CASA) Show.

Miller said art teachers in county schools select students, and their specific pic-



Every year, the Chenango Arts Council features work by member artists in their Members' Exhibit. Artists can submit up to three art pieces in any media, from drawing to painting, ceramics, sculpture, photography, and more. (Photo by Sarah Genter)

es of art, each year to be showcased at the CASA exhibition. In 2024, every high school in Chenango County sent in student work.

"That's always really interesting to see the student artwork. They're pretty amazing, some of the things they come up with," said O'Neill. "You've got to hand it to the teachers who bring out the creativity in the kids. Obviously they feel safe to express themselves, which is also super important."

The show gives students a chance to show off their hard work, and furthers the Arts Council's goal of showing local youth the pathways available to them as artists.

At the CASA Show, the Chenango Arts Council also presents two students with scholarships: the Lucy Funke Scholarship is awarded to two local students going on to study an arts-related field in college, and the Chenango Music Scholarship is given to one student pursuing a degree in music.

First place, second place, and honorable mention winners are selected during the CASA Show, and winning students are given the opportunity to have their artwork displayed on the NBT Bank Wall of Art as well. Miller said they even used the Wall of Art to help a student work their way up to solo gallery exhibits.

"Some student artists have been able to show, like the winners of our student art show and then a young student had reached out to us because they wanted to get into maybe solo exhibiting. So that was a good first step for them to be able to do the NBT Wall of Art last year," she said. "Helping them to bridge into showing their work and things like that. Thinking about pieces that they'd want to put in and evaluating that and things like that is a good first start."

## Spirit of collaboration

One of the reasons the Chenango Arts Council has been able to maintain both high quality performanc-

es and workshops as well as affordable prices is due to their strong relationships with other community organizations.

O'Neill said much of what they offer would not be possible without the generous support of many local foundations, who provide grant funding that allow the Arts Council to keep ticket prices low, enhance their gallery openings, and expand their performance season.

Sponsors such as the Greater Norwich Foundation, the Pearl and Everett Gilmour Foundation, NBT Bank, NBT Insurance, Preferred Mutual, the Community Foundation for South Central New York, and the Arts in the Community Grant administered by the Earlville Opera House have supported the Arts Council's 2024-25 performance season.

"They really help us to be able to offer our shows at an affordable price point, because that's so important to be able to do," said Miller.

"We need them, we love them, and we have a great working relationship with all of them," O'Neill added.

Partnerships with other local organizations also support the Chenango Arts Council and their programming, such as Guernsey Memorial Library for the free movie series in October, NBT Bank for the Wall of Art, and the Norwich Theater Company, who rents the theater for their annual shows.

Community members also get involved every other year with the Chenango Arts Council's Gala Fundraiser. Their most recent gala was held in 2024 with the theme "Bowties and Diamonds."

The event featured black and white, sparkly decor, dinner and drinks, raffles of gift items and baskets donated by local businesses, live music, a 50/50 raffle, and a live painting done by Chenango County artist Ryan Warner.

All proceeds from the bi-annual fundraiser go toward supporting the Chenango Arts Council and their programming.

## The upcoming year

Looking toward the future, the Chenango Arts Council plans to continue providing a variety of high quality performances and workshops, keeping prices affordable, and upgrading the theater.

The Chenango Arts Council was selected as a recipient for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding in 2023. They were awarded \$570,000 in grant funding to upgrade the Martin W. Kappel Theater with new lighting, seating, and audio-visual equipment.

"We are renovating the theater, upgrading it, while still keeping the historical aspect of it in mind," said O'Neill. "We're going to have brand new LED lights, which will save us money and it's much more flexible for the Theater Company and also for our productions, and we'll be able to bring in even more spectacular shows because we'll have amped up equipment and boosting our electric capacities and things like that as well, as well as upgrading the theater itself."

Although implementing these upgrades will likely stretch over the next few years, O'Neill said they are plugging away at the improvements while being mindful of performance schedules.

"That's going to be happening over the next, probably 2026 and into 2027 it should be completed, bearing in mind that we don't want to interrupt the Theater Company's schedule or our performance schedule," she said. "We're going to be doing it in stages."

Another exciting opportunity for the Chenango Arts Council is the New York State Council of the Arts grant for \$40,000 they were awarded in December of 2024. Miller said the grant will be used to extend their current performance season and to build their next season.

"We're very fortunate that we are a direct grantee of the New York State Council of the Arts. We received \$40,000 that's going to go into a lot of exciting stuff,

like shows. We've been putting on some really great shows and we're excited to continue that," said Miller. "We're going to have the ballet in April, and we're building our next season which is looking really good. We're going to have some really fun, exciting stuff, and we're actually looking at extending this current performance season, adding an extra show. So stay tuned for that."

O'Neill said the grant will also help them to maintain affordable ticket prices, which can be a challenge.

"It's always a challenge to find that balance of quality and affordability for our performances," she said. "But we're very lucky that we have this grant, and we intend to spend it wisely and make the most of it and the most beneficial to our audience and our neighbors."

Another challenge for the Arts Council is finding teaching artists to lead workshops and classes. Miller said the difficulty comes from both artists having the time to teach a class, as well as finding artists who feel comfortable with teaching.

"We're always looking for new teaching artists, and sometimes it can be you get ones that very consistently offer classes and then others where life gets in the way and they have to bow out," Miller explained. "If it's in a medium that people are really like, 'this is what we want to come take,' then you have to find somebody else whose life isn't in the way to be able to come teach, and that can be a challenge because life gets in the way and sometimes you have to prioritize other things."

Offering workshops in popular mediums is a high priority for the Arts Council, because it gets people in the door and experiencing the arts. They continue to look for ways to get people interested in the arts and attending events at the Arts Council, whether it be performances or classes, or combining different art forms.

"We've turned to the com-

munity to get involved, to have a show or maybe to teach a workshop, to attend things, or just check it out, and that's been a lot of different ways over the years," said Miller. "Like combining music and gallery openings to provide two different art forms, and more participation that way, to different workshops like writing workshops, ceramics workshops, to get different people to teach, to maybe try something new that they haven't done. Different ways just to outreach to the community just to get them to maybe lead art or just try something new. That has evolved a lot over time as well."

Despite these potential challenges, the Chenango Arts Council is ready to tackle the new year head-on and continue to provide a variety of art to the Chenango County community.

Miller said this is made easier by the vast supply of talented artists in the area.

"The benefit is there's a lot of artists around here, a lot of really talented artists in a lot of different mediums, so that's great. There's a lot of great people to be able to work with. There's a lot of great individual artists and a lot of great organizations to be able to work with," said Miller. "There's a lot of natural beauty too, so if you want to be a painter or a photographer, there's a lot to work with."

"I think also we have become a lot more approachable. I think that the community realizes that we have a lot to offer for regular people," O'Neill added. "I think we've grown to be approachable, that people realize that we're affordable and that we have a huge variety of things to offer."

## More information

The Chenango Arts Council is run by Executive Director Alecia O'Neill and Administrative Assistant Mary Beth Miller. The Board of Directors includes President Denise Reppert, Vice President Megan McKown, Treasurer Roy Fuller, Secretary Sarah Green, Jim Baldwin, Joni Eaton, Mary El Emerson, Lisa Feigenbaum, Elaine Genute, Greg LaMonica, Virginia Lee, and Joseph Skundrich.

The Chenango Arts Council is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Individuals can also schedule times to view the gallery by contacting the Arts Council at 607-336-2787 or info@chenangoarts.org.

For more information on the Chenango Arts Council, visit [ChenangoArts.org](http://ChenangoArts.org), the Chenango Arts Council Facebook page, or @chenangoarts on Instagram.



# City of Norwich Youth Bureau brings families together -

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quality of life to the families in the area.

"We're very lucky to have Anthony," Doliver added.

Testani said, "The mission of the Youth Bureau is to connect area youth to positive programs and activities that will help educational growth, physical and emotional health, healthy choices, and a sense of belonging to a community."

He explained through grant funding and sponsorship, The City of Norwich Youth Bureau participants engage in educational trips each summer. The trips include visits to local zoos, museums, The Wild Animal Park, Rail Explorers and more.

Doliver agreed with the sponsorship and mentioned the community comes through for them so many times and they have the boards, businesses and not-for-profits that contribute along with a yearly fund raiser that he said is very popular.

He said it's not just the City of Norwich that supports the program, other towns contribute for their trips like Plymouth, Preston, Pharsalia, and a number of towns in the greater Norwich area.

"We contact each of the towns every year and what they raise helps contribute to the trips the youth take through the year," Doliver added.

## Major developments in 2024

Testani said the number of registered participants in 2024 programs was record breaking with 1,058 in attendance.

"This was the most participants going back to 2011, the last year I have available data," he said. "This included 228 kids registered in our Winter programs, 431 in our Summer programs and 399 kids and adults registered to participate in our trips."

Testani noted 2024 winter proved to create an obstacle when Weiler Park ice rink was not able to make ice, so he quickly acted on creating a temporary ice rink in East Park. He said free skating and ice skates were provided to community youth.



In the summer the Youth Bureau opened six new pickle ball courts at Weiler Park, helping residents stay active all year long. (Submitted photo)

"In the summer, we opened the new pickle ball courts at the ice rink at Weiler Park," he added.

"Using funds from grants, six pickle ball courts were painted to the surface of the ice rink," said Testani. "This transferred a facility that was used two to three months a year, to a facility that can now be used year round."

Looking back on the past year, Testani said he learned to ignore negative input on social media.

"There were a few negative comments on social media regarding the ice rink in East Park last winter, along with some regarding the pickle ball courts at Weiler Park," he said. "In the end, both additions proved to be very popular and used daily," Testani added.

## 2025 challenges and opportunities

Testani mentioned their major plans for 2025 includes adding more programs.

"In 2024 we offered ultimate frisbee and karate for the first time," he said. "Both were very popular programs."

Testani explained they look to expand the programs to include different activities for all ages but realize the challenges will be with staffing as hiring kids to run programs is always a challenge.

Also, he noted, adding more programs may bring challenges to find additional funding.

Testani said the Youth Bureau has evolved over the years by adding new activities to the program, investing in educational trips and taking responsibility for the staffing of lifeguards at Kurt Beyer Pool each summer.

He said they also supply attendants at the Borden Avenue Ice Rink.

"We need to continue to understand what activities will bring kids into our programs," he said. "By continuing to offer the same things year after year, we could see a decline in the number of kids participating."

The City of Norwich Youth Bureau offered seven levels of Red Cross certified swim instruction at Kurt Buyer Pool from July through August 2024 and many youth learned swimming and water safety.

The Buyer Pool also offered open swim time hours that were extended at the request of the Mayor.

"The pool had been opening at noon and closing at 6:00 p.m.," Testani said. "The mayor wanted to know if we could look into expanding the hours."

"Working with the pool

director and lifeguards, we discussed keeping the pool open until 8:00 p.m. on Saturday nights," he said.

Testani mentioned they had concerns about getting enough lifeguards to safely keep the pool open during the couple of extra hours but it worked out.

"Several of the lifeguards were willing to work," he added. "The expanded hours were very well received and we'll offer them again this summer."

## Living and working in Chenango County

Testani gave his appreciation toward the amount of support from the community, including the town supervisors.

"Our trips are funded by donations from foundations and local businesses," said Testani. "Every year these foundations and community members provide the funding for five to six trips. This allows us to offer admission, along with transportation, free to kids."

He said the recreation programs are a shared expense with the towns of North Norwich, Norwich, Pharsalia, Preston and Plymouth.

"Without the support of the town supervisors, we would not be able to offer these programs free to residents of

those towns," he added.

Testani reflected that one of the major challenges they face is offering the programs at convenient times and locations for all the participants.

He said they find offering the programs in the afternoon is the best time for the majority of participants, although an afternoon time slot does make it difficult for working parents to drop off their child.

Testani said offering evening programs makes it more difficult in finding instructors and available playing fields.

He also mentioned the weather can be a challenge for outdoor activities and noted the ice rink at Weiler Park has not been open for the past two winters and summer storms impact hours at the Kurt Beyer Pool and recreation programs.

Testani said one of his employment challenges is in finding the part-time seasonal employees.

He said he is always looking for students that may be searching for their first job or someone local to work a few hours over the summer.

"Most of the hired students stay for a year or two, then move on to something with more hours or once in college, they lean toward something more closely related

to their field of study," said Testani.

"Finding certified lifeguards has been the most challenging position to hire," he added. "Due to the cost of becoming certified along with two years of no closes being offered during the pandemic, there has been a shortage of lifeguards."

Having said that, Testani noted staffing grew to over 30 employees over the summer with hiring of lifeguards for Kurt Beyer Pool and the recreational programs.

"For many of the students, this is their first job," he said.

In 2024, Testani said they hired 43 area students and nine adults to staff their programs.

The Youth Bureau Director is the only year round employee of the Youth Bureau. The position is part time working on average 19 hours per week. Office hours are Tuesday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

For more information on the City of Norwich Youth Bureau and their programs, visit [NorwichNewYork.net/government/youth.php](http://NorwichNewYork.net/government/youth.php) or the City of Norwich Youth Bureau Facebook page.

To contact the Youth Bureau Director, call (607) 334-1206 or email [youthbureau@norwichnewyork.net](mailto:youthbureau@norwichnewyork.net).




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# Gallery Three-Two-One



Gallery Three-Two-One is a well-known family-run art store and studio, operated in Oxford by artists Sarah and Ron Smith. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

**SOPHIA ROOT**  
EVENING SUN

OXFORD - Gallery Three-Two-One is a retail art store and studio, family owned and operated in Oxford New York, for more than 30 years. As well as offering their own art, the gallery sells art and jewelry from more than 250 artists.

Even though the Gallery was founded 30 years ago, the founder has been making pottery long before that. Founder and former owner Bill Troxell discovered his love for pottery in his middle school art class. Under the instruction of teacher Fred Buhner, Troxell was inspired to begin teaching pottery himself. After his tour with the Peace Corps in India, he returned to the states and began teaching at a studio outside of Boston.

In 1974, Troxell returned to Oxford and

bought a 100-year-old barn on State Street in Oxford to make a pottery studio of his own. He eventually expanded the studio to a retail location with the help of Robert Hammond and the Chenango County Chamber of Commerce. Troxell successfully secured a Community Development loan, as his proposed business promised to feature Chenango County manufacturing and contribute to local economic development.

The business expanded thanks to some footwork by Troxell and his wife Diane. They attended trade shows and craft fairs all over the United States to gather vendor goods and items to sell at their store back in Oxford. Troxell states, "Part of the reason we opened the store was so Chenango County could understand and gain exposure to local and high-quality handmade products."

Just four years ago, Troxell sold the store

to his daughter, Sarah Smith. She now owns Gallery Three-Two-One and operates it with her husband Ron. Sarah had been interested in learning how to make pottery for a while and remembers fondly, "I told my dad I wanted to start making pots with him, and he told me he doesn't teach beginners. I was teaching in Schenectady at the time and started taking pottery classes in Troy."

Upon moving back to Oxford, Sarah started adding to the Strong Stone Pottery collection. She eventually started her own line of pottery, maintaining the processes that have been in practice for more than 40 years but expanding on the stylistic offerings. Strong Stone Pottery has also transitioned from using wholesale clay to making their own, Sarah buys raw materials from Kingston and Syracuse.

As Gallery Three-Two-One transitions to the younger generation, they are hosting

more open houses and are growing their social media presence.

Bill and Diane are still involved under the new management. They have created porcelain jewelry with 24 karat gold leafing, dubbed Tropicals, that is sold in the store. Bill states, "I am there to troubleshoot when something goes wrong with a glaze, and I am lucky enough to do some decoration on some pots for Sarah." Diane works in and around the store. She is the main operator of the Jigger, an English pottery machine that makes a template for their dinnerware, and she is teaching her son in law, Ron, how to use it.

Troxell said, "I have never regretted passing the torch to Sarah, she was ready to take over and I was ready to transition. Her kids love the studio, and she'll be in there until eleven at night and at five in the morning before school. She really has a hand for it, she has mud in her veins."

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