CJ COUNTRY RECORD

Wyoming County **Hometown Stories from Your Hometown Station @103.7FM and 104.9FM!** November 2026

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A Night at the Theater!

Kori Sciandra,
Editor of CJ Country Record

Fall in love with community theater, right here in a city near you. The Main St. 56 Theater, in Batavia, is home to the Batavia Players, a nonprofit community theater organization dedicated to making affordable and high-quality theater accessible to both Batavia residents and the surrounding communities.

Since the 1930s, the organization has been performing memorable productions, with local talented individuals leading the shows.

"We do 13 shows per year on average. Our company ranges in age from 5 to 85 years old," said President, Executive & Artistic Director, Patrick Burk. "We have performers that come from nine counties in Western New York."

Led by a board of volunteers and headed by Burk, the Batavia Players "provide educational programming that helps develop practical performance skills."

While the board continues to put together the upcoming 2027 season, Burk noted the importance of community theater.

"The biggest thing is providing arts to our community, especially our rural communities, at affordable prices," he said. "Ticket costs at theaters in cities like Buffalo or Rochester are significantly higher. We're trying to keep our ticket costs lower than $25 per ticket. This provides constant theatrical performances, on-stage performances, and live performances for a wide variety of people."

A show at the Main St. 56 Theater at 56 Main St., Batavia, is an experience. Whether you're looking for a family-friendly evening or a night out in the city, the theatre allows your imagination to take center stage.

The theater also provides volunteers and people who want to be involved in the theater an outlet to perform, create costumes, or help create set designs. There are more than 100 volunteers who dedicate their time and effort to community theatre at Main St. 56 Theater.

"There were 137 people who appeared on our stage last year. I keep thinking it's just such a positive thing for us to have this core group of people who really want to be a part of it and really good audiences who support our productions," said Burk.

The 2027 season is approaching, and productions are under selection. This treasured piece of Batavian history welcomes the community to attend a performance this season and support the future of community theater.

The company performs classic plays, one-act plays, full-scale musicals, cabarets, and more.

The theater has moved into the final act of its 2026 season, including the conclusion of a special performance of "The Miracle Worker," that wrapped in October and featured the early life of Helen Keller and how she started her education. This performance paid tribute to when Helen Keller appeared in Batavia, one hundred years ago, in May 1926, and spoke at the New York State School for the Blind as part of her statewide advocacy and tour.

Audience members have the chance to attend a November performance of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," slated for Nov. 6-8. Charles Dickens had started writing this mystery, but it wasn't completed because he suffered a fatal stroke and died halfway through writing it. The mystery has been developed into a musical.

In December, enjoy the holiday musical, "Annie," with performances from Dec. 10 to 13, and catch television personality, actor, and storyteller Mike Randall on stage at the theater in December as he performs in "A Christmas Carol," Dec. 18 and 19.

"All these shows open our nine-county area and allow many people to be part of the performing arts. We provide the location where people can perform, as well as provide for audiences to get first-rate productions on a regular basis," said Burk.

He continued, "We have a jam-packed end of the year!"

For more information or to see the 2027 schedule, call (585) 861-6471 or visit bataviaplayers.org.

Studio Diaries with Terry Clifford

Terry Clifford,
CJ Country Air Personality
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Monday through Saturday

Hello November, You're Lookin' Great!

Fall has come to its full, brilliant completion, and what a color bomb it was. I hope you got the chance to take in all the beauty that Western New York and the Southern Tier have to offer.

As we arrive in November, our thoughts turn to the time to gather with family and friends and embrace the simple joys of our harvest. Our apples this year are amazing: crisp, sweet, and juicy. The pumpkins and squash are going to fill our Thanksgiving table with color and delicious goodness.

As the days grow cooler, our neighborhood offers wonderful opportunities to come together, celebrate our community, and enjoy the simple pleasures of the season. There is much to be grateful for, even if the scoreboard doesn't read the way you want it to! I hear ya, the Yankees blew it—but as I have said for many years now, "There's always next year!" This season is also a great reminder of the importance of supporting our local businesses, welcoming new neighbors, and lending a helping hand to those around us. A smile, a wave, or a simple, short conversation can go a long way toward building stronger connections. Keep an eye out for upcoming community events, seasonal activities, and opportunities to get involved.

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Past the Last Stoplight

Jell-O: Both Versatile and Delicious

by Kori Sciandra, Editor

Is Jell-O a staple at your holiday meal? Have you ever wondered why it became so popular?

A visit to the Jell-O Museum at 23 East Main St., LeRoy, gives visitors just the right flavor of nostalgia.

"The Jell-O Museum was opened in 1997 by the LeRoy Historical Society to tell the history of 'America's Most Famous Dessert,' which was invented and manufactured in LeRoy from 1897 to 1964," said Tyler Angora, LeRoy Historical Society curator.

The museum invites visitors to explore Jell-O history, see molds and flavors, and share their memories that include Jell-O.

"The museum allows for people to travel back to their childhoods...," he said.

Invented by Pearle Bixby Wait in LeRoy in 1897, Jell-O became a national phenomenon.

"Wait was a carpenter and had tried out various other inventions that never worked, until Jell-O, which he struggled to get off the ground. The struggle led him to sell Jell-O and all its patents to Orator Woodward, a local businessman, in 1899. Wait sold Jell-O for just $450 to build a house for his family, not knowing it would turn into the company it did," said Angora.

Jell-O grew to become a nationally known dessert simply because it was easy and quick to make.

"Over time, fun, funky recipes came out that appealed to the masses," he said.

Jell-O Museum hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday—open from the first Thursday in May to the Sunday before Christmas.

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People You Should Know

Ray Zaun, co-owner of Crooked Line Farm & Orchard

Planting Roots After Years of Service

After serving a long and commendable career in the United States Air Force, Ray Zaun, of Bath, decided with his wife, Lisa Zaun, that it was time for a change.

Ray served in the Air Force from 1983 to 2006 as a development engineer and then program management (63A4).

"Most of my experience is in Space Programs (GPS and communication systems)," he said.

Ray, who retired after 23 years as a Lt. Col. (O5), was stationed stateside, with several business trips to Europe and about six weeks spent in Afghanistan during his service.

He and Lisa met in their high school English class many years earlier. They married in 1983, share two children, and now five grandchildren who all live in Florida.

"We are originally from Corning, so we decided to come home in 2011. I had been behind a desk for most of my Air Force career and decided I wanted to do something outside," he said.

The couple opened a U-Pick fruit orchard, with more than 25 varieties of apples, at Crooked Line Farm & Orchard, at 7780 Cold Springs Road, Bath.

"We think we were the first in Steuben County and may still be. While growing fruit has its challenges, the look on people's faces when they bite a freshly picked apple makes us smile," said Ray.

The farm will remain open through the beginning of November, but catch Crooked Line Farm & Orchard at local farm markets, including the Corning Indoor Winter Farmers' Market at 1 W. Market St., Corning.

Community Calendar

Annual Blissful Shopping Event | **Sunday, Nov. 15 | Noon to 4 p.m.**

Held at the Blissful Event Center, 3474 East Main St., Bliss. Enjoy cookies, refreshments, crafts, vendors, and more. For more information, call (865) 223-2411.

Silver and Gold Senior Group Potluck and Meeting

Thursday, Nov. 19 | 6 p.m.

Held at the Castile United Church of Christ, 4 Washington St., Castile. Open to all seniors aged 60 and older.

JAMM Session: Getting 'The Twinge'

By Jimi Jamm, CJ Country Program Director

There's a feeling I get when I hear a song that's special. I call it The Twinge.

It's hard to quantify. It's just this little feeling in my gut when something hits exactly right. Sometimes I'll actually say "whoa" or "YES" aloud. And after programming just about every format imaginable over the years, that feeling still gets me excited.

Honestly, it might be my favorite part of this job.

When I first hear a record, I don't care how big the artist is. I want the song to earn it. Great artists make average records sometimes, and an artist nobody knows can walk through the door with something undeniable.

I'm looking to get knocked on my butt. Maybe it's an incredible hook. Maybe it's the vocal, the lyrics, or the production. Usually, it's some combination you can't completely explain. You just feel it.

That's what happened the first time I heard Ella Langley's "you look like you love me," and again with "Choosin' Texas." There was something there immediately. They felt special. They felt timely. They felt like records that were going to make some noise.

Then there are the "secret weapons"—great records that might never become massive national hits but can become part of the personality of your station.

That's why I love being locally programmed. I can hear something, believe in it, and put it on the radio.

Not to be different for the sake of being different. Just to find great songs. And every once in a while, you feel The Twinge. Man, I still love that feeling.

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