

Cupid's COURIER



Behind the Blooms



A Recipe for Love



Through the Eyes of Ages



The Secret to 60 Years

Special Supplement to ^{THE} **REPORTER**

Who was Saint Valentine?

Valentine's Day presents an opportunity to express feelings of love. Greeting cards and heart-shaped chocolate boxes are traditional gifts, as are red roses. Most people know how and why Valentine's Day is celebrated, but few may know the person behind the holiday's name. The Catholic Church recognizes three different martyred individuals with the name Valentine, who each may hold ties to the Valentine's Day celebration. The name Valentine comes from the Latin "Valentinus," which means "worthy, strong or powerful." The name was a common moniker at the time. It is not known just how many Valentines were around in that era, but historians believe there were many. According to the Catholic Education Resource Center, the following three Valentines share February 14th as their feast days. The historical records are sparse, but here's what is known about these men.

1. One St. Valentine was a priest and physician in Rome. He comforted the martyrs during the persecution of Em-

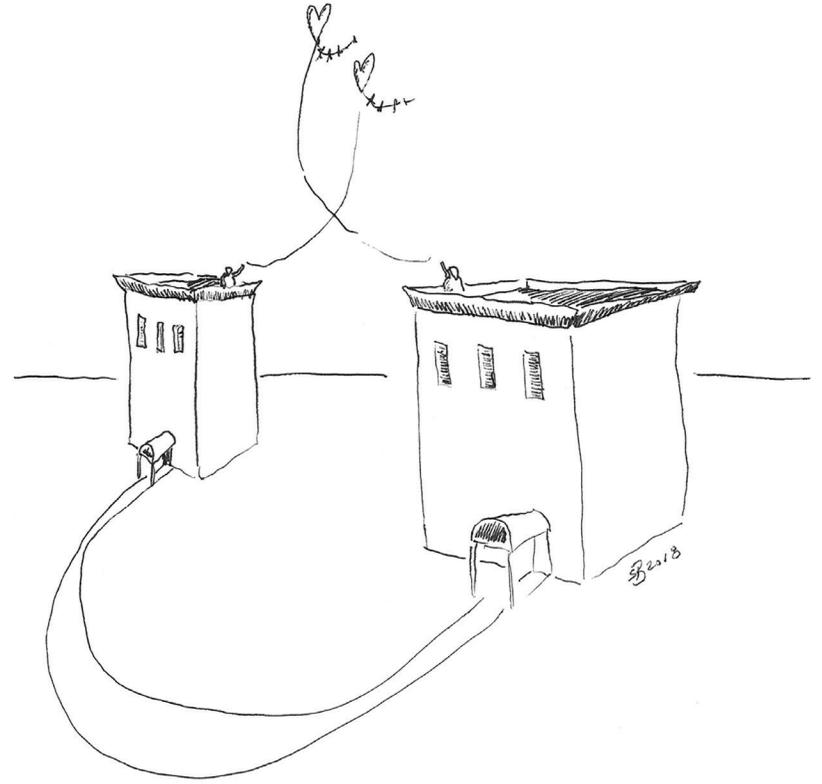
peror Claudius II. This Valentine was arrested and condemned to death by beheading for his faith.

2. Another St. Valentine was the Bishop of what is now Terni, located 60 miles from Rome. He also was arrested and beheaded under Emperor Claudius II.

3. The third St. Valentine suffered martyrdom in Africa, but not much else is known about him.

Historians are unsure which Valentine inspired Valentine's Day or if the day is meant to commemorate each of them. Stories about Valentine and his actions helping the faithful are used interchangeably.

According to Britannica, although the Roman Catholic Church continues to recognize St. Valentine, he was removed from the General Roman Calendar in 1969 because of the lack of reliable information about him. In addition to being the namesake behind Valentine's Day, he is the patron saint of lovers, epileptics and beekeepers.



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The secret to 60 years

Stamford couple shares tips for long-lasting love

By Alyshia Korba

STAMFORD - Charlie and Sandy Ferris met for the first time 62 years ago when Sandy's mother invited him to their house, having met him at the restaurant she worked at, but their love story did not start there.

"I didn't like him at first," Sandy recalled. "I used to come home from school with my best friend, and I'd look down the street and I'd say 'Oh gosh, he's there' and I'd go to my girlfriend's house."

Sandy said, however, the more she got to know him the more she liked him, and soon they were a couple. Sandy was 18 and graduating high school at the time; Charlie was 23 and had just returned after serving in the military. They married two years later and began building their life together.

Sandy spent much of her life working at Stamford Central School as a secretary to the superintendent and Charlie has done a variety of jobs including contracting and farming. He is currently the chairman of the Town of Stamford Board of Assessors and is the second longest-serving assessor in the state after working 49 years for the town.

The couple has one daughter, Colleen.

For the Ferrises, it is the small gestures that keep the love alive.

"He never leaves the house but when he does he hugs me and gives me a kiss," Sandy said. "We've done

that for 60 years."

"She is my rock. We've been through some hard times and we've been through some easy times and we got through it and we're still here," Charlie said.

Thinking back through 60 years of marriage, Sandy said one of her favorite memories of Charlie is seeing him walk through the door at the hospital carrying a large bouquet of roses after she had just given birth to their child; "and he told me they were for his daughter," Sandy said.

She said the three most important aspects of a successful marriage are patience, compromise and laughter. The two have kept laughing together as they get older, joking about how slowly they work on the farm these days at 80 and 85 years old.

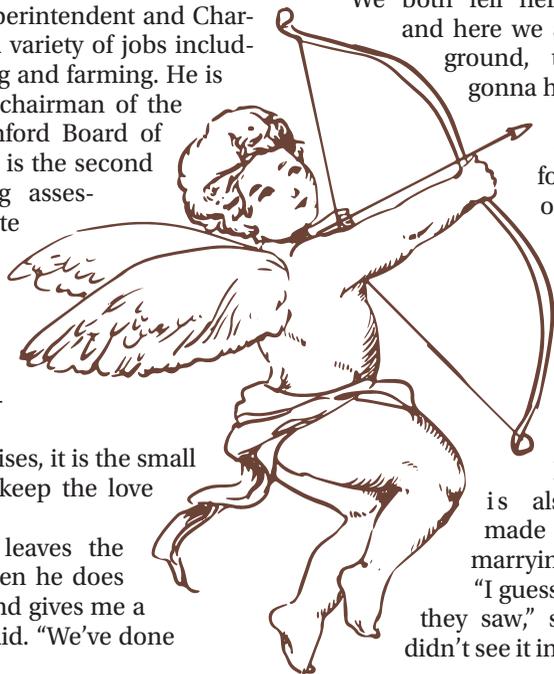
"If we have to get down on our hands and knees, it's just laughter, like who's gonna get up first?" Sandy said.

"We both fell here by the barn, and here we are, both on the ground, thinking 'Who's gonna help who?'" Charlie joked.

The couple still cares for a small herd of cows and flock of chickens on their farm and say they enjoy the farm projects they can do together.

Sandy said she is grateful to her parents and is also glad to have made them happy by marrying Charlie.

"I guess they knew what they saw," she said. "I just didn't see it in the beginning."



Alyshia Korba/The Reporter

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Behind the Blooms: Preparing the perfect Valentine's Day bouquet

By Alyshia Korba

SIDNEY - Most people start making Valentine's Day plans a couple of weeks, days or even hours before the big day, but for Sidney Flowers owner Sandy Wagner, plans are in the making a year ahead of time — starting after the last bouquet is delivered on Feb. 14.

"I always hear 'How hard can it be to throw some flowers in a vase?'" Wagner said. "The thing that people don't realize is that it's a really long and lengthy process to get ready for it [Valentine's Day]."

This process starts the Sunday before Valentine's Day when they start to put together the greenery and will work 8-12 hours a day to prepare. Wagner runs the shop Sidney with the help of her daughter, Morgan Clapperton. Wagner previously owned a florist shop in Deposit before starting a career as a nurse, but when she heard Sidney Flowers was for sale, she could not turn down the opportunity.

"I absolutely love it," Wagner said. "I was in nursing for 15 years, and it's the same thing — you're still helping people. You're still making people happy."

The first step in preparing for the day comes as early as October which is when Wagner orders her vases for Valentine's Day. This year, she had 36 boxes of vases delivered waiting to be loaded up with the flowers.

When Christmas rolls around, it is time to preorder the flowers. In anticipation of this Valentine's Day, she ordered 500 roses, 800 carnations and 120 lilies along with filler flowers and greenery. The carnations are in particularly high demand because several schools request them for their flower sale fundraisers.

Each bouquet starts with a request from a customer which could be as specific as choosing each flower to be used or as broad as giving no direction. They will then select flowers from their stock, which are delivered from their three distributors in Albany, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The flowers are dry packed for delivery, so after unwrapping them, removing any extra foliage and cutting the stems, the flowers are fed "flower food" and left in a bucket of water to rehydrate for a few hours.

"They come wrinkled, looking like they aren't even gonna pull through, but they just need to hydrate," Wagner



Alyshia Korba/The Reporter

Sidney Flowers is located at 67 Main Street in Sidney.

explained.

To maintain a fresh stock of flowers, they are kept in buckets of water in a refrigerator to delay wilting; however, flowers that are aging a little too slowly and need encouragement to open their blooms may be placed in warm water

near a heater.

Wagner said one of the struggles of Valentine's Day is people making late orders, and this has been exacerbated by the Super Bowl being moved to the Sunday before Valentine's Day.

See **Behind the Blooms...** page 5

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Behind the Blooms...

continued from page 4

"There is not one husband who is sitting on their couch Super Bowl Sunday going 'I should order flowers for my wife,'" Wagner said.

She said ideally, people should put in their orders at the start of February to ensure that they will have the flowers of choice available, but most people order the week before or week-of Valentine's

Day.

The flowers are then arranged one by one in a vase. Once the designer is satisfied with the arrangement, the bouquet is topped off with a "Sidney Flowers" card and placed on a table with all of the other bouquets to be delivered. For Valentine's Day, bouquets are organized by town to make delivery more efficient.



Alyshia Korba/The Reporter

Flowers have their excess leaves removed and stems trimmed before being placed in water to help them last longer. Recipients of bouquets should change the water frequently and re-cut the stems to get the most life out of their flowers.



Alyshia Korba/The Reporter

Sandy Wagner selects roses for an arrangement. Flowers are carefully selected to ensure the longevity of the bouquet.



Alyshia Korba/The Reporter

While the shop primarily does custom orders, Sandy Wagner said one of her goals for this Valentine's Day is to have more bouquets ready for walk-in customers.

On the big day, Wagner recruits all the help she can get, including from her husband, Mike Wagner and the previous owner of Sidney Flowers, Pat Cristelli. She said this should be a good year for Valentine's Day sales because the holiday is on a Wednesday. Wagner explained that this gives people enough time after the weekend to remember to get flowers and allows them to do more workplace deliveries rather than home deliveries. She said it is often a difficult year when Valentine's Day is on a weekend because many people choose to take their spouse out for dinner on the weekend instead of buying them flowers.

The flowers can generally be delivered to anywhere within a 30 minute drive from Sidney, and they usually finish all of the deliveries by 4 p.m. Orders can

be made online at sidneyflowers.net, by calling 607-604-4248, or at the shop at 67 Main Street, Sidney which is open 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday.

Once the busiest day of the year is seemingly through, Wagner still has one more task on her to-do list — to start planning for next year. She said she likes to make note of what went well and what could change while it is fresh on her mind. Even though the work is never ending, the responses from customers make it all worthwhile for Wagner.

"People give flowers a bad name," she said. "They say 'why buy flowers if they're going to die?'. Yeah, but if you could see the look on somebody's face when they get them — flowers say what you can't."

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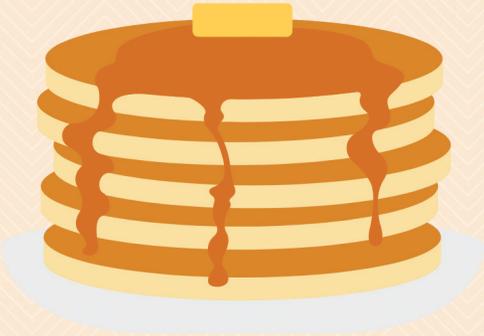
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A recipe for love

EIGHTYmain celebrates pop-ups, pasta

By Lillian Browne

rec-i-pe - noun: a set of instructions for preparing a particular dish, including a list of the ingredients required; something which is likely to lead to a particular outcome.

For Will Johnson, chef at EIGHTYmain in Delhi, a recipe starts with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. He mixes in a passion for food and heritage, with a hefty serving of commitment to com-

not just customers, they are an audience.

eightymain has a pop-up menu on Thursdays in the winter. "Grey days during the winter season can get folks down and we want to give the community a place to come to enjoy some food they may not be able to get locally. Our team gets to experience styles of food, ingredients and service styles they normally wouldn't," Johnson said.

An example of a pop-up menu is



Lillian Browne/The Reporter

Chef Will Johnson readies components for a dinner menu at EIGHTYmain in Delhi.

munity to create his seasonal pop-up menus and handcrafted pasta in a variety of shapes.

His menus are fused with Italian and Argentinian influences with a New York twist. During farmers market season, he can be seen making the rounds towing a big cart to be filled with fresh produce and other locally grown and crafted food items.

EIGHTYmain began with a unique concept, Johnson said, evidenced by a Plexiglass wall covered with marker-based well-wishes, praise and other messages from customers. Patrons are

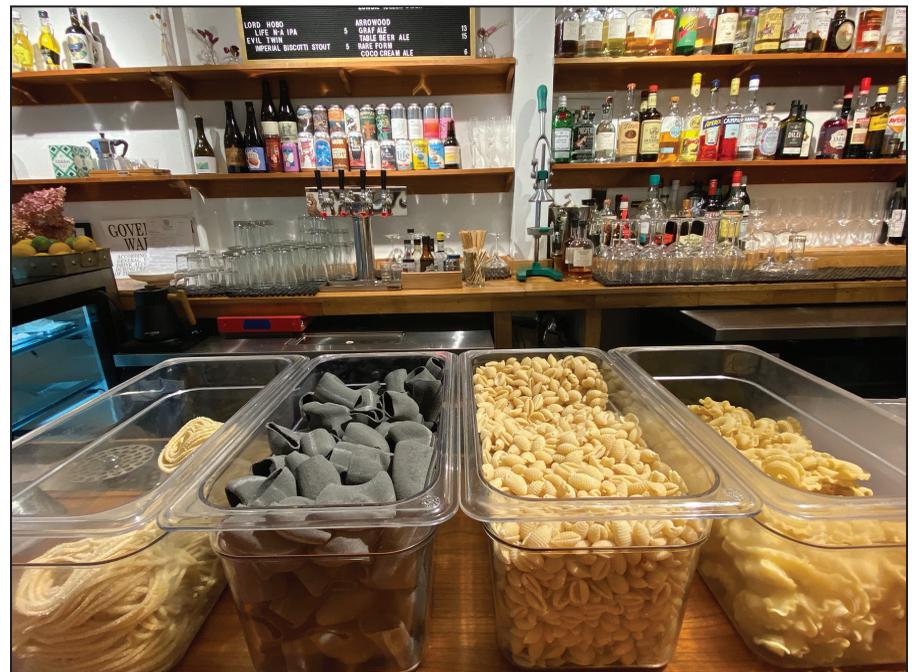
"The Four Horsemen" tasting menu - a lighthearted take on the identities of the horsemen: famine - a small bit of high quality ingredients; war - red and spicy; conquest - smoke and crumbles; and, death - "Most of us don't get to see our own deaths coming, you'll find out what dessert is when it gets to the table," he said with amusement.

To perfect a Valentine's Day menu or another romantically-inspired menu, Johnson advises including food items you know the person you are preparing a meal for likes. Evoking nostalgia, he continued, is powerful.



Lillian Browne/The Reporter

EIGHTYmain is located at 80 Main Street, Delhi.



Lillian Browne/The Reporter

Hand-rolled and hand-crafted pasta is made daily and a menu focus.

"Bringing people back to a time or place through food is a very special thing."

If he were doing a tasting menu for Valentine's Day, he said, he would focus on products that are known or thought to be aphrodisiacs and or red/pink. "Light dishes mostly. No one wants to

finally get home after a nice date and feel like they can't move from eating too much," he said.

Delhi has a great food scene, Johnson continued, and his goal is to make Delhi the food destination of Delaware County. The hospitality community has sup-

See A recipe for love... page 9

A recipe for love...

continued from page 8

ported the restaurant since its opening in 2022, he said: "We have some amazing supporters in other food establishments in the area and wholeheartedly support them as well. A rising tide raises all boats, no?" Johnson asked.

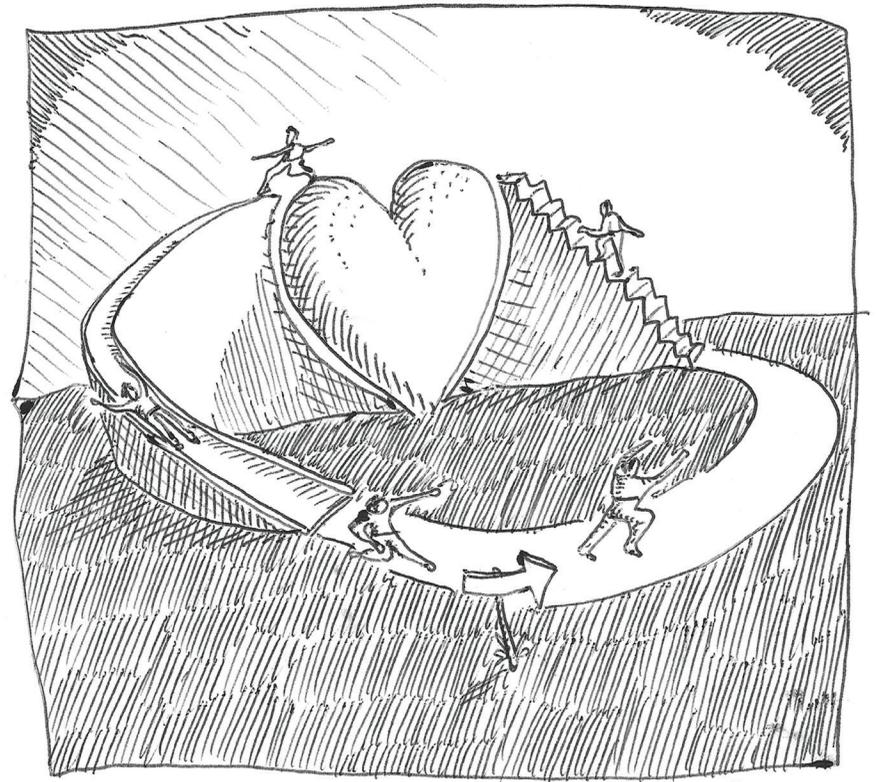
EIGHTYmain's offerings are many, including handmade pasta named for its shape and color - Creste di Gallo, Gnochetti Sardi, Paccheri al Nero (which derives its black color from squid ink) and Spaghetti alla Chitarra. Pasta is made daily and is available as a menu item and for purchase in one pound packages.

Sauces are paired with the shape of the pasta. Sauces include a Bolognese, a pesto sauce, tomato alla norma and more. As an example, Johnson said, the Creste di Gallo pasta pairs well with

Bolognese. He adds chicken liver to the sauce, he said, and to have a chicken-related pasta shape paired with a chicken-based sauce ingredient just makes sense. The house cream sauce, he explained, contains prosciutto and peas, and would normally be served with a delicate pasta. However, he said, he goes in the opposite direction and pairs the sauce with a shell-shaped Gnochetti Sardi.

His culinary prowess, combined with a commitment to local sourcing and passion for his craft, have turned EIGHTYmain into a place where customers can indulge in a savory menu with love served on a plate.

For more information visit eighty-main.com



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Lillian Browne/The Reporter

James Arrufat, owner of EIGHTYmain, prepares a cocktail.

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Through the Eyes of Ages: What is Love?

Valentine's Day is a time to celebrate the diverse forms of love that enrich our lives. For children, it's a day filled with heart-shaped crafts, sweet treats, and exchanging valentines with classmates. The focus is on the simple pleasures of affection and friendship, emphasizing the importance of expressing care and

appreciation.

Adults tend to experience love through a more nuanced lens, shaped by life's experiences and the complexities of relationships - romantic partnerships, familial ties, and friendships.

We asked children and adults "What is love?" Here's what they had to say:



Ethan Evans, DA kindergartner
When my daddy lets me eat stuff like carrots and green beans.



Patrick Burnside, WCS kindergartner
When I give my mom and dad a hug.



Elliana Pruschki, DA kindergartner
When my mom hugs me.



Jack Gardepe, DA kindergartner
You love your parents because they make you food like scrambled eggs.



Reese Terry, WCS kindergartner
Showing that you care.



Nettle Crowell, DA kindergartner
Spreading kindness.



Jami Aubin, WCS staff
Kindness and patience



Rob Kehoe, Ashland
It's driving 75 mph on a motorcycle on a nice day.



Claire Swislosky, Sidney
It's strong feelings for something. We work hard at our relationship and work through it together.



Cindy Baker, WCS computer technician
My grandchildren



Elizabeth Brosi, Delhi
Love is my dog, Maggie.



Jan Bray, Bovina
Total acceptance



Emily Clerkin, Walton UPK teacher
Spending time with my daughter

Labor of love: Navigating the workforce with your significant other

By Alyshia Korba

Maintaining a work-life balance is regarded as a necessity for a happy family, but it gets more complicated when you go home with your business partner each night — something Hidden Inn owners Kurt and Lisa DuBois know too well. The couple has been running the Hidden Inn in South Kortright for approximately two years now, but previously owned another restaurant together for six years.

The two have known each other since they attended Oneonta City School District, but did not start dating until approximately 13 years ago. The two met while they were both leaving failed relationships and have now been married for 10 years.

"It's been fantastic ever since — she's changed my life," Kurt said. "The support system I have now is second to none."

"He came at the right time," Lisa agreed.

The two have a combined family of three daughters — Alexis DuBois, Isabella DuBois and Katie Tiska. Alexis and

Isabella help out at the restaurant when they can, Kurt said.

The restaurant and inn keep Kurt and Lisa busy, but they are able to manage the work by dividing the labor, they said. While Kurt can often be seen doing more of the physical work, Lisa is working behind the scenes. The couple said their secret to managing the nonstop work that goes into owning a business is having a getaway to work toward. For the DuBoises, that escape is their biannual trip to Aruba. They said they plan their trips so they have one before summer, their busiest season, and one right after.

"If you don't have those things to look forward to in life, you're going to be a miserable business owner," Kurt said. "Owning any business will kill you if you let it."

The couple also emphasized the importance of communication, both in business and relationships. After each night of tending to tables in the restaurant, the couple ends their day at their own dining room table where they talk out the ups and downs of the day.

"You have got to talk about the good and the bad, try not to raise your voice

and don't ever go to bed angry," Lisa advised.

While the DuBoises success depends on strong communication, attorney duo Carly Walas and Daniel O'Leary face the opposite problem as a code of ethics prohibits them from discussing their work with each other. Walas is an attorney practicing in Delhi and O'Leary is a court attorney for Delaware County,



contributed Photo
Attorneys Carly Walas and Daniel O'Leary spend their free time hiking together.

Family and Surrogate Judge Gary Rosa.

Despite the challenge, the couple said that working in the same field helps them to support each other.

"It's tough because we can't talk about the particulars of any of our cases or clients because of confidentiality," Walas said, "but we know what each other's going through." O'Leary agreed, saying, "We know the stress that we're both under."

Walas and O'Leary met and started dating while they were both studying at Albany Law School. They have now been together for 11 years and married for six. Walas is originally from Long Island and O'Leary is from Kingston, but the pair moved to Delaware County after graduating law school when O'Leary began working at a law firm in Walton.

"I took the drive out with him and was studying for the bar exam in the car in the parking lot while he interviewed,"

Walas recalled. "I just remember driving out here and being like 'I don't feel like I'm in New York anymore.' It's so beautiful and the mountains were just captivating."

The natural beauty of the area especially appealed to Walas and O'Leary as they enjoy hiking in their free time, and they recently gained a new hiking partner — their 16-month old son, Luke.

"You think you know what love is, and then you have a baby, and it's a whole new love," O'Leary said.

"And then you can't even think of what your life was before him," Walas added. "He kind of completed our family."

Working as a team has been essential in managing both the care for Luke and



contributed Photo
Carly Walas and Daniel O'Leary said their 16-month-old son, Luke, is an animal lover like his parents and enjoys playing with their three dogs.

their respective work. Walas said Luke often goes to work with her when their babysitter or O'Leary's parents are unable to care for him. O'Leary said having a consistent work schedule as the two start their family was a major factor in his decision to work as a court attorney.

Walas and O'Leary said the most important part of navigating a relationship with busy schedules and stressful jobs is to be understanding.

"Try to put yourself in their shoes and know what they're going through," Walas said.



Alyshia Korba/The Reporter

Kurt and Lisa DuBois have been running the Hidden Inn in South Kortright together since reopening the 1893 establishment in 2022.

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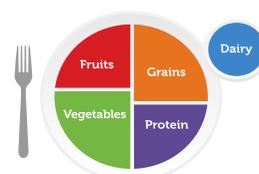


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