

Who Will It Be?

55th Honorary Irish Person To Be Named At March Breakfast

Ulster County is a land of legendary giants—those who are still among us making a difference and those who have passed on but whose remarkable service to the community will never be forgotten.

Another local hero is set to be immortalized on March 14 at the annual Peter B. Mathews St. Patrick's Day Breakfast from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. That's when the Ulster Chamber will name its Honorary Irish Person of the Year, a tradition that dates back 55 years.

The breakfast, being sponsored by The Reis Group, will be held at The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus, 503 Washington Ave., Kingston. Early registration is strongly recommended because the breakfast typically is a sellout.

The T. McCann Band and Ulster County Ancient Order of Hibernians Pipes and Drums will pump up the crowd with festive Irish music as suspense builds over the next honoree.

While the breakfast is one big jovial party with lots of shenanigans breaking out, its significance is not lost on the hundreds who attend each year.

It all started innocently enough in 1970 when longtime Chamber President Len Cane named Anthony Pizzarelli, President of Ulster Tool and Die Corp., the first "Honorary" Irish Person.

Ever since then, county officials, bank presidents, engineers, insurance professionals, hospital administrators, roofers, innkeepers,

gym owners, broadcasting legends and community advocates have earned the title and their place in history.

Chamber President Ward Todd surveys the crowd the morning of the event and makes his decision on the spot, and while in years past, only the non-Irish had a prayer of being picked, the rules have been relaxed since 2014 when Sister Mary Feehan was crowned on behalf of the Benedictine Sisters.

Last year's honoree, Alex Stier, still pinches himself when he thinks of the dignified company he's now part of, particularly the late and beloved Ulster County Clerk Nina Postupack, who was honored in 2023.

"For me, being named after Nina was especially moving. I still tear up when I think of it and am incredibly humbled to follow in her footsteps," said Stier, a real estate agent at Keller Williams. "Whenever I look at the people who have been honored before me, I am reminded of that famous quote by Sir Isaac Newton about 'standing on the shoulders of giants.' That's really what it is."

As the former owner of Home Plate Deli and Olive's Country Store, Stier had donated generous spreads of food to countless charitable functions over the years, but he's also served his community in other important ways—something Todd considers when he selects the honoree.

Stier, a former board member at Always There Homecare, currently volunteers for the

Kingston Kiwanis, People's Place and the Benedictine Health Foundation. He also is a longtime special needs advocate, who serves as a board member and treasurer at the Resource Center for Accessible Living.

Like most honorees, Stier was caught off guard last year when his name was announced. "It was a complete surprise to me," he said. "I was talking to Jimmy Bracco at the so-called 'bad boys' table in the back of the room, and I said to Jimmy, 'Who do you think it's going to be?' Jimmy said, 'Alex, it's you.' I said, 'Stop the bull.' I wasn't even paying attention when Ward called my name.

"I felt very humbled because there are so many people who do so much good in Ulster County, and to be recognized is a great honor but not something you look for. I'm just one of the people here doing what I can to make this a better place."

Stier advised those planning to attend to grasp the importance of the moment and never forget the giants who went before and how their good deeds made the region a better place.

"If your name is called, be able to receive the blessing because our Ulster Chamber is unique in itself. At one time, I belonged to 17 Chambers, and there's nothing like ours. There's a kinship here that's special, so go with it and appreciate the company you're now in," he said.

Chamber Breakfast Meetings are a great



Alex Stier and Ward Todd

way to stay on top of current events and connect with other local business leaders. For the St. Pat's Breakfast, advance registration and advance payment is required. Sorry, no walk-ins. Tickets are \$30 for Chamber members, \$40 for non-members. Call (845) 338-5100 or register online at www.UlsterChamber.org.

The Reis Group Will Be The March Breakfast Sponsor

The Reis Group is an independent full-service insurance agency with offices in Kingston, Saugerties, Goshen, Latham, and Walden. The Reis Group is proud to announce that at the end of 2023 we purchased Hunter Insurance Services, Inc. in Walden, NY. This acquisition supports our goals of growing both organically and through acquisition by acquiring quality insurance agencies in the region to increase our customer base and ability to service our clients. We recently moved our New Windsor location to a larger space in Goshen to better serve our Orange County customers.

The Reis Group is currently looking at two acquisitions in the Hudson Valley, and in addition The Reis Group continues to grow our footprint in Florida. Owen McKane said, "Many of our clients have second homes in Florida and want to keep their insurance with The Reis Group and with the people they trust to take care of their insurance needs." Paul Casciaro, a key employee, and several business partners have land or residences in Florida making it a truly natural extension of The Reis Group's business. Owen said, "We believe it's important

to take care of our customers and with so many of our New York customers moving to Florida, we needed to set up an office to help them the best we can."

In our continued commitment to supplying top tier risk management services to our customers, The Reis Group offers the services of two loss control professionals, a human resource consultant, and many more services, while remaining a boutique firm. We're not a gigantic firm that's publicly traded. They tend to lose focus on interpersonal relationships.

The Reis Group continues its partnership with a local IT Company named CMI-Tech, Inc. to deliver Cyber Security and Cyber Risk Management Services to our clients. Cyber security is becoming an increasingly important part of every organization's risk management program, and this partnership will help our clients stay safe in these turbulent times.

While The Reis Group Started in 1969, some of the company's history goes back to the 1800s and Paul and Owen are excited to continue the great tradition of The Reis Group and the great agencies that joined over the years to make the company what



is today. The Reis Group has 50 incredible employees and thousands of customers throughout the Northeast as well as other parts of the United States and Canada. Paul and Owen said the company is experiencing tremendous growth right now and it's very exciting as business owners to have such a great team of professional people working with us and to work on so many exciting opportunities.

Twaalfskill Hosts Next Mixer Longtime Club No Longer A Secret

Some call The Twaalfskill Club the best-kept secret in Kingston, but that's all about to change if the new leadership has its way. The venerable golf and social club, nestled off 282 West O'Reilly St. in Kingston, will host the Chamber's next networking Mixer from 5:00-7:00 p.m. on March 19. Gary LaConture, the Clubs Membership Chairman, said hosting a Mixer was the idea of John Burlingham, who sits on Twaalfskill's Board. Burlingham, a former Chamber Board Chair, explained that the Chamber is growing with many new and diverse members and that showcasing Twaalfskill would be a great idea. "We know a lot of the older Chamber members," LaConture said. "We're looking to grow our membership and new members of the Chamber could become new members of ours. "We've done some great things here at the club and we know a lot of new people are moving into the area, so our goal was to kind of use the Mixer as a jumping off point to show the new Twaalfskill. We're a private club that most people don't know about." The Twaalfskill Club was founded in 1902 and is one of the country's oldest continuously operated golf courses. The club boasts more than 250 members. LaConture said Twaalfskill's board members will be making the rounds at the Mixer to explain the benefits of membership, and attendees can also meet Club President Jim Sass, new General Manager and Executive Chef Chris Morelli as well as PGA pro Jeffrey Schaller Jr. Chamber members can also look forward to valet

parking, great refreshments including beer and wine, and raffles. The club will give away five memberships valued at between \$5,000 and \$10,000, LaConture said. While the golf course will not be open that night, attendees can see it from the porch and LaConture said plenty of veteran members from the club will answer questions and talk up the course, which was designed in the Penal style of the 1920s and known for its small greens, tight landing areas and natural layout. "We're the only private course in the city of Kingston," LaConture said. "We feel that's a major benefit for people who appreciate a family-run and fun organization." Twaalfskill members also enjoy access to a 60-by-35-foot outdoor pool, a 20-by-15 kiddie pool, clubhouse dining, a bar, golf lessons from a PGA pro, a bar, and additional facilities. During the winter months, members gather for food and to watch football games, golf events, and more. Morelli said he and the others at Twaalfskill are excited to meet everyone from the Chamber. "It's been around for a very long time, since 1902, and we really want to expose the community to that and let them know we're a valuable resource up here," he said. "It's a beautiful place. It's really a nice community." The Twaalfskill Club can be reached



Mixer

March Mixer

Wed, March 19
5-7 pm

Twaalfskill Club
282 West O'Reilly St.
Kingston, NY

SPONSOR:

at (845) 331-5577 or www.twaalfskillclub.org.

Chamber Mixers are a great way to network and promote your business. Be sure to bring plenty of business cards. This free networking event is open to Chamber members and prospective members. Reservations are a must and can be made by calling the Chamber at (845) 338-5100 or by registering online at www.ulsterchamber.org

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A Fresh Way To Network

Broadway Bubble To Host April Business Card Exchange

The Chamber's quarterly Business Card Exchange on April 3 promises loads of networking opportunities in a unique location where conversations unfold effortlessly.

That's the expectation as the Broadway Bubble and Community Hub at 718 Broadway in Kingston hosts the event from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m., giving area business leaders a glimpse of the combined laundromat and multi-space neighborhood spot.

"We're very excited to host it," said Enma Villacis, Manager at Broadway Bubble. "It's a big place, and we have a lot of different programs going on, so it will be a great opportunity to show the community what we're doing in this space."

No doubt, Broadway Bubble has an altogether unique spin on the conventional laundromat. Sure, you can throw a load of clothes into the washing machine, but while you're waiting, you can go up front in the building to take a free English or GED class.

Job seekers can use the computer lab to search for employment, seniors can participate in a program called "Coffee and Crosswords" and families can take the kids outside to play at Ganna's Way, a fenced-in backyard with basketball hoops and toys.

Broadway Bubble also hosts many social functions throughout the year such as an Easter egg hunt, Mother's Day tea, Father's Day barbecue, community baby showers, graduation celebrations and special activities during the holidays, including an electrifying light display at Ganna's Way.

In 2021, the NoVo Foundation bought the building that housed the laundromat as well as Radio Kingston's studio and offices. The former radio station space has been transformed into a multipurpose classroom space.

Operated by the community-based nonprofit Kingston Midtown Rising,



Broadway Bubble has been upgraded with new equipment and a new parking lot. There's also a free coffee and snack nook and a dedicated indoor play space with books, board games and toys.

Other improvements are also underway at the laundromat, which holds 50 washing machines and 60 heavy-duty dryers that operate at reduced fees.

Broadway Bubble offers free dryer use every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and free soap on request. On any day of the

week, if patrons can't pay, they're allowed to use the facilities at no charge.

Broadway Bubble also offers wash and fold

services (at \$1.25 a pound) and laundry pickup and delivery in the Midtown area, a new service that meets the needs of busy families, the homebound elderly and those without a car.

Villacis said Broadway Bubble's staff will welcome the chance to give Chamber members a tour of the facility when they gather for the Business Card Exchange. The staff hopes that attendees see how much the laundromat

fosters connection, hope and a sense of belonging among vulnerable and marginalized populations, while providing a valuable service in the city of Kingston.

"We want to expand the business, but the main point is to let people see all that we're doing for our community," Villacis said.

Broadway Bubble can be reached at (845) 750-1668 or thebroadwaybubble.com.

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Chamber Foundation's International Women's Day Brunch

Novella's New Paltz

2 Terwilliger Lane | New Paltz, NY

\$70 Chamber Members • \$65 Leadership Ulster 2025/Alumni

\$75 Non-Chamber Members

Purchase Tickets @ UlsterChamberFoundation.org

Sponsors: Central Hudson, O'Connor & Partners, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

Friday March 14 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

**55th Annual Peter B. Mathews
St. Patrick's Day Breakfast**

Featuring T. McCann Band

The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus

503 Washington Avenue | Kingston, NY

Pre-Registration Only; No Walk-ins

\$30 Members-Advanced Pay • \$40 Non-Members

Sponsor: The Reis Group

Wednesday March 19 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Networking Mixer @ The Twaalfskill Club

282 West O'Reilly Street | Kingston, NY

There is no cost for Members and Prospective Members.

Reservations are required.

Sponsor: Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union

Tuesday April 1, 2025 - Application Deadline

Black Business Award Nominations

Nominate a Local Black Business, Business Leader or

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Sponsorship Opportunities:

Jess Davis 845.338.5100 x4 or Jess@UlsterChamber.org

**More Info and Registration UlsterChamber.org
Questions (845) 338-5100**

ChamberNews

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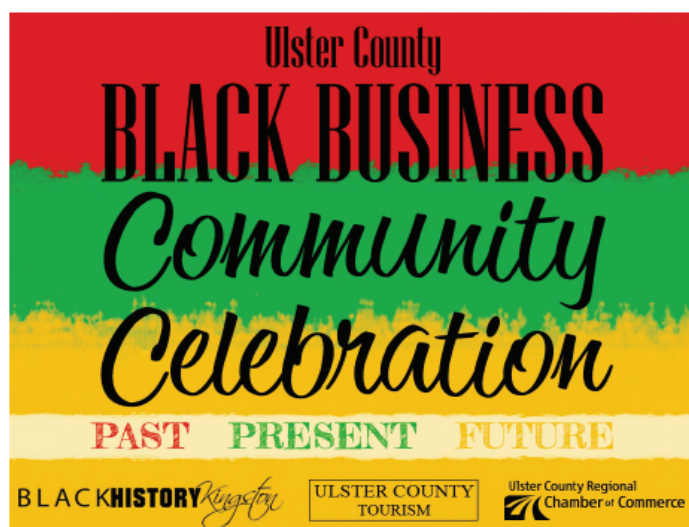


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Black Business Community Celebration Awards NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN!



Nominate a Local Black Business, Business Person, or Organization online @ www.UlsterChamber.org

For a nomination to be valid, the Nomination Form must be complete and submitted no later than 5 pm on Tuesday, April 1, 2025.

Interested in becoming a Sponsor? Contact Jess Davis at 845.338.5100 x4 or Jess@UlsterChamber.org



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