

Shortsville woman charged with animal cruelty

Finger Lakes Times

MANCHESTER — A Shortsville woman was arrested Thursday after Ontario County Humane Society officers found numerous cats alive in a mobile home, as well as five dead cats.

Tracy A. Wijayapala, 38, of Shirley Street, was charged with aggravated animal cruelty, an unclassified felony. She was released with an appearance ticket for Manchester Town Court.

Humane Society officers said the charge came after town code enforcement officials responded to a complaint of numerous cats living in a trailer at Lehigh Valley Estates on Route 96 in Manchester. Officers added that the floors were covered in cat urine, feces and garbage, and two kittens were among the dead cats.

Officers, wearing Tyvek suits due to the unsanitary conditions, said 12 cats — in various states of health — were taken to the humane society shelter in Hopewell. They added that Wijayapala was caring for the cats but not living there.

Finger Lakes Railway repairs tracks in SF

By DAVID L. SHAW
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SENECA FALLS — Work is continuing on upgrades to the six miles of railroad tracks that run from Cayuga Lake through the former village of Seneca Falls.

The work is being done by the 10-member track maintenance department of Border City-based Finger Lakes Railway.

So far this year, 1,000 track feet of new rail has been installed from near Route 89 heading west, with another three-quarters of a mile to go.

New railroad tracks and ties also will be added this year along the track that passes through the former village of Seneca Falls.

The railway has hired a contractor to cut brush and remove trees along the right of way adjacent to the tracks.

There will also be grade crossing improvements at Lamb Road and replacement of crossing lights and gates at Cayuga Street.

"Our crews inspect the tracks every week and make general safety repairs all year long," said Jon Gadsby, track manager.

Gadsby said the track

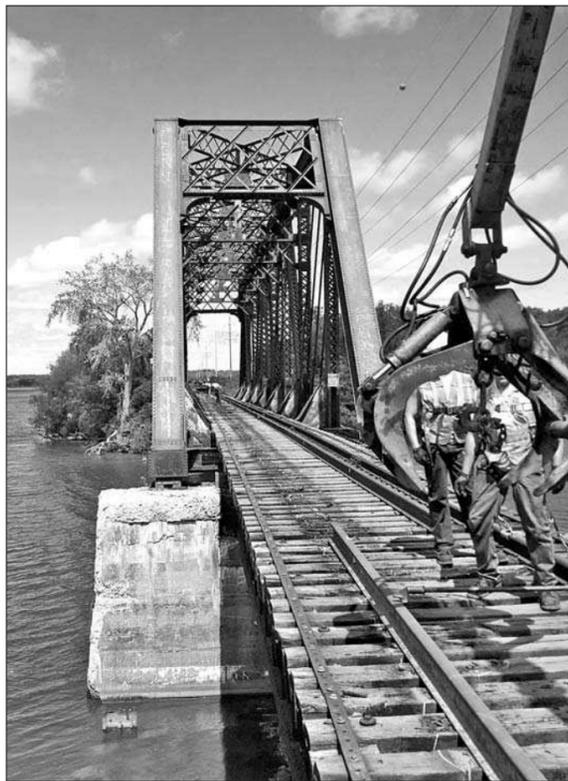


Photo submitted by Finger Lakes Railway

Two Finger Lakes Railway track department workers, Chris DiSanto and Rob Higgs of Lyons, change sections of rail on the Cayuga Rail Bridge, formerly known as the Silver Bridge.

maintenance department also plans to do rail replacements and tie renewals. Crews will use

sophisticated equipment to replace worn ties and tighten bolts.

The condition of the rail

line is inspected by the state Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Federal Railroad Association on a regular basis.

Finger Lakes Railway has applied to the DOT for a grant to make the upgrades in Seneca Falls, including realigning the rail line with the right of way and making further grade crossing upgrades at Park, State, Mynderse, Clinton and Walnut Streets.

Gadsby said it is in the best interest of the railroad to maintain the lines to a high standard so the locomotives and heavier, longer rail cars can travel safely through the many villages, towns and cities the rail serves, plus across hundreds of rail crossings to and from customers sidings.

The cost of track maintenance can be substantial, Gadsby said. One new wooden tie, two tie plates and four spikes cost nearly \$80 per installed tie, not including the replacing of steel rails with longer, denser sections at \$88 per foot.

Each mile of track has some 600 ties.

Finger Lakes Railway owns all the track it operates as part of a 30-year agreement with the six

local Industrial Development Agencies where the tracks are located, including Ontario and Seneca.

The railway pays the cost of all regular maintenance. It is awaiting word on an application it submitted for state funding for the upgrade project, which has a price tag of \$2.16 million. The railroad would have to pay 10 percent of that.

The rail line through Seneca Falls has been there since the late 1830s. It serves as a main conduit between its CSX connection in Solway and Finger Lakes Railway's headquarters and freight yards in Border City.

Finger Lakes Railway owns and operates 167 miles of track, including the line that goes to the former Seneca Army Depot in Romulus where rail cars are stored.

Its customer base has grown to 89 active shippers, with connections to the CSX, Norfolk Southern, Canadian Pacific and New York Susquehanna and Western railroads.

Since Finger Lakes Railway began operations in 1995, it has hired 45 full-time employees and now has 14 locomotives. It also leases 581 railcars to serve its customers.

Watercolor 101



Spencer Tullis / Finger Lakes Times

A beginner's watercolor workshop was held Saturday at the Pat Rini-Rohrer Gallery in Canandaigua. Leading the session was artist Nancy Lane. Working on their pieces are Deb DeRoo of Sodus (foreground) and Betty Freese of Gorham.

Seneca Meadows helps Habitat clean up Seneca Falls property

By DAVID L. SHAW
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SENECA FALLS — Habitat for Humanity of Seneca County recently acquired a vacant, deteriorated house at 31 Miller St. from Seneca County for \$1.

Habitat officials plan to rehabilitate the property to remove a neighborhood blight and provide housing for a needy family.

But construction manager Lou Ferrara Jr. faced a daunting task when it came time to clean out the house.

Ferrara said he called his friends at Seneca Meadows Landfill and told them about the property, which has been an eyesore to the entire neighborhood.

Eli Young from Seneca Meadows met Ferrara at the property July 29.

"We were both overwhelmed at the amount of debris and overgrown vegetation around the house," Ferrara said.

Young said he would take up the task for Habitat. On July 31, he called Ferrara and said the job was done. The landfill provided all the manpower, equipment and labor for free.

"I stopped by and couldn't believe it," Ferrara said. "It was all picked up and all vegetation cut and removed. They really helped above and beyond what I expected."

Habitat President Menzo Case said work to rehabilitate the Miller Street property will begin immediately, even as work continues on the new Habitat house being built at 2 Jay St.

Ferrara said many volunteers will be needed from now on as work moves ahead on both projects. The Jay Street house is scheduled to have drywall installed, prepared and painted.

Interested volunteers don't need to call in advance but can just show up at the site from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturdays and 4 to 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.



Submitted photos

At top, the property at 31 Miller St. in Seneca Falls is shown as it appeared before volunteers from Seneca Meadows cleaned it up recently. Above is the site after the cleanup. The property will be rehabilitated by Habitat for Humanity.

POLICE BEAT

Presumed innocent until proven guilty

ONTARIO COUNTY

HOPEWELL — Heather M. Fox, 30, of Crabapple Drive, was charged Sunday by sheriff's deputies with first-degree promoting

prison contraband.

Deputies said Fox, an inmate at the county jail, was illegally in possession of a prescription drug. She will answer the charge in Hopewell Town Court.

GENEVA — Maria L. Leach, 39, of Castle Street, Geneva, was charged Wednesday by city police with second-degree criminal trespass.

GENEVA — Derrick L. Henry, 41, of Liberty Street, Penn Yan, was charged Wednesday by Geneva police with criminal possession of a weapon and second-degree menacing.

GENEVA — Ulysee S. Thompson III, 52, of Fall Street, Seneca Falls, was charged Tuesday by Geneva police with failure to register and verify as a sex offender.

were taken to Strong Memorial Hospital following a one-car crash about 3 a.m. Sunday on Tyre Road.

Deputies said Robert Crocker, 22, of Savannah, lost control of his vehicle and hit a tree. His wife, 22-year-old Cierra Crocker, was ejected and taken by ambulance to Strong for injuries that weren't considered life threatening.

Robert Crocker was trapped inside the vehicle and extricated by firefighters. He was taken by a LifeNet helicopter to Strong with injuries that weren't considered life threatening.

The investigation into the crash continues. Deputies believe speed and alcohol were factors.

YATES COUNTY

JERUSALEM — A Steuben County man who fled from police Sunday

afternoon was arrested after a long search.

Alexander M. Bates, 23, of Pulteney, was charged with second-degree escape, obstruction of governmental administration, resisting arrest, trespass, second-degree aggravated unlicensed operation, reckless driving and failure to keep right.

Deputies said they arrested Bates on vehicle and traffic charges, and upon leaving Jerusalem Town Court after arraignment he fled into a nearby vineyard ravine to avoid capture. Deputies searched the area for several hours and later found him hiding in a vehicle on Acorn Drive in the town.

Deputies added that Bates, who was handcuffed, locked himself in the car and would not unlock it for police. The homeowner ended up unlocking the

vehicle.

Bates, who was on parole at the time, was taken to the county jail.

DWI ARRESTS

The following were charged with driving while intoxicated:

• Kendra A. Trammel, 25, of Fort Hill Road, Phelps, by Seneca Falls police about 12:30 a.m. Thursday after a traffic stop on Routes 5&20; ticketed with an equipment violation.

• Frank H. Burke, 28, of East Main Street, Victor, by Seneca Falls police about 2 a.m. Sunday after a traffic stop on Bridge Street. The charge is a felony because of a previous DWI conviction and aggravated because police said his blood-alcohol content was at least .18 percent.

Burke, who also charged with first-degree aggravated unlicensed operation,

driving without an ignition interlock device and no signal, was taken in Seneca Falls Town Court and taken to the county jail on \$2,000 bail or \$4,000 bond.

• James I. Fremouw, 52, of Birdsey Road, Junius, by Ontario County deputies about 2:30 a.m. Sunday on Routes 5&20 in Canandaigua. Deputies said Fremouw was passed out inside his vehicle, which was partially blocking a turning lane.

Fremouw was released with an appearance ticket for Canandaigua Town Court.

• Denny J. Pooler, 44, of County Road 42, Victor, by Ontario County deputies about 10 p.m. Sunday after a traffic stop on Strong Road in Victor; ticketed with several traffic violations.

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