

BMTS Article Digest March – April 2024

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed from the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page at <http://bmtsonline.com/about/committees>.



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REPAIRS COMPLETED UNDER BINGHAMTON BRIDGE DAMAGED BY ARSON FIRE



Bob Joseph | Published: March 21, 2024

Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News

A Broome County bridge that sustained structural damage in a blaze set in a homeless encampment has been repaired.

The fire under the VFW Memorial Bridge on Bevier Street on Binghamton's North Side occurred on December 13.



FLASHBACK: Debris littered an area under the Bevier Street bridge after an arson fire on December 13, 2024. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

A man who was having a "mental health crisis" reportedly was taken into custody at Otsiningo Park shortly after the blaze was reported. He was not charged in what Binghamton fire department

investigators said was a case of arson.

The intense fire burned clothing, blankets, cooking utensils and other items where people had been living under the bridge that crosses the Chenango River.

The Bevier Street bridge on February 29, 2024.
(Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The bridge was closed to traffic for a short time after the incident while engineers assessed the structure for potential safety issues.

The inspection revealed the fire had caused some melting and warping of the steel on the east end of the bridge.



Initial estimates indicated the needed repairs could cost between \$30,000 and \$35,000.



A view of the fire-damaged section of the Bevier Street bridge on February 29, 2024. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

According to the Broome County executive's office, the total cost of the needed work actually was \$9,500.

Most of the repairs were completed in early March, but a defective product that was received for the job delayed the project. The repairs

were finished after a replacement part was delivered.

The repair work was performed by ZMK Construction of Apalachin.

CNU

PUBLIC SQUARE

A CNU Journal



Transforming a vacant lot into a community garden in Houston. Source: Margaret Brown, webinar screenshot

INCREMENTAL AND LEAN

Guerilla Urbanism asks forgiveness, not permission

From toilet plungers for bike lanes to community gardens on vacant lots to locally sourced incremental development, citizens are finding creative ways to make urban space while bypassing traditional bureaucratic systems.

ROBERT STEUTEVILLE MAR. 19, 2024

Guerilla Urbanism is a grassroots movement that allows ordinary citizens to reclaim and reshape urban spaces, explains Fernando Pages Ruiz, a homebuilder, developer, and author based in Houston, Texas.

It harnesses Tactical Urbanism but differs in that it more directly challenges the power structure to ask forgiveness rather than permission.

Ruiz moderated a CNU [On the Park Bench webinar](#) last week that included small developer Jason Hyman and planner Margaret Brown, who recently led Houston's planning department to report on Guerilla Urbanism.

Brown gave some examples from around the US. In Houston, neighborhood residents were tired of seeing a vacant lot that became an eyesore. “The community came together and planted things, which provide fresh vegetables to residents,” Brown says. “It's easily removable if the property owner requires it.”

Brown presented a creative application of Guerilla Urbanism in Wichita, Kansas, where a bike lane was painted on a busy street with no protection. Somebody glued toilet plungers to the street in the night, which provided a sense of protection to cyclists and put drivers on notice to be careful. The city eventually came and installed more standard protection for the lanes.

Toilet-plunger-defined bike lanes in Wichita.

Crosswalk Collective in Los Angeles is an example of organized Guerilla Urbanism. The group got its start when a pedestrian was killed at an intersection, and after years of lobbying for a crosswalk,

somebody painted it themselves. Now the group has a [website](#) where they take suggestions for crosswalk locations and then proceed to paint them. Sometimes the city removes them, but the group keeps trying. They use a lot of yellow and white paint, Brown says.





Crosswalk painted by Crosswalk Collective.

Hyman presented his work in the Third Ward of Texas, where a group of small developers is having an impact on a gentrifying part of the city. The group, The Third Ward Real Estate Council, bypasses traditional systems and helps each other to get projects going and gain financing. They rally around the symbol “Dt3M,” which stands for [Do The Things That Matter](#).

See the whole webinar:

The image shows a YouTube video player interface. On the left, a blue overlay contains the following text: 'CNU Building Smart People Live', 'Guerilla Urbanism', 'On the Park Bench: A Public Square Conversation', 'Guerilla Urbanism', 'Tuesday, March 12, 2024 12 - 1pm ET', and the names 'Jason Hyman', 'Margaret Brown', and 'Fernando Pages Ruiz'. At the bottom left of the overlay is a 'Watch on YouTube' button. On the right, a video thumbnail shows a park bench with people sitting on it, with a 'Watch later' and 'Share' button above it. The CNU logo and 'Congress for the New Urbanism' are visible in the bottom right corner of the video frame.

<https://youtu.be/EbQ2NFOFaEg>

Child on Tricycle Killed after Being Struck by Vehicle

By [Matthew Benninger](#)

Published: Mar. 27, 2024 at 10:18 AM EDT

BARTON (WBNG) -- New York State Police said a child on a tricycle was killed after being struck by a vehicle in the Town of Barton.

State Police identified the victim as Joanna F. VanOstrand, 4, of Barton.

Police said on March 26, around 5 p.m., troopers responded to Old Barton Road in the town for a report of a vehicle striking a pedestrian.

An investigation revealed that VanOstrand was riding the tricycle on her driveway but entered the road and into the path of an oncoming vehicle. The driver of the vehicle, a 77-year-old, was unable to avoid VanOstrand and struck her, police said. She died at the scene.

State Police told 12 News this occurred while the child was under the supervision of an adult.

Troopers did not announce any charges against the driver of the vehicle as of Wednesday morning.

This is an ongoing investigation. Stay with 12 News for additional details.

[HEALTH](#)

8 trails in Broome County to check out on National Walking Day

by: [Samantha Rich](#)

Posted: Apr 1, 2024 / 11:59 AM EDT / Updated: Apr 1, 2024 / 02:16 PM EDT

BROOME COUNTY, N.Y. (WIVT/WBGH) – Whether you're an experienced walker or just starting out, Broome County is home to several trails worth checking out on National Walking Day.

The American Heart Association is encouraging everyone to get up and move their bodies on **April 3**. Since 2007, the organization has observed the event on the first Wednesday of every April in order to promote the benefits of physical activity.

Individuals are encouraged to participate whenever and wherever they can. If you're looking for a place to walk, NewsChannel 34 has got you covered. We've compiled a list of a few trails across Broome County for walkers of any skill level.

8 Trails in Broome County to check out on National Walking Day

Lace up your sneakers and let's go!

Binghamton University Nature Preserve: Binghamton University is home to one of the most diverse trails in Broome County. Featuring 14 different trail options, guests will be able to hike through the woods and alongside hills, ponds and wetlands. The BU Nature Preserve features both flat and steep hiking options. For more information, click [here](#).

The Vestal Rail Trail: The Vestal Rail Trail is perfect for walkers of all abilities. The flat trail runs for nearly four miles through the Town of Vestal. It is located alongside an abandoned right-of-way once used by the Delaware–Lackawanna and Western Railroad. For more information, click [here](#).

Aqua Terra Wilderness Area: Featuring a six-acre pond, the Aqua Terra Wilderness Area is a unique experience for all who attend. The park, which was the former site of the Innsbrook Ski Area, offers walking options for various skill levels. The south side is a more challenging hike as walkers will be going up a hill while the north side offers an easier flatter hike near the pond. For more information, click [here](#).

IBM Glen: Formerly part of the IBM Country Club, this site features both flat and steep walking trails. Along their walk, guests can still see many of the club’s remaining features like stone steps, fireplaces, and picnic tables. There is also a waterfall that can be viewed from a special stone arch bridge. Additionally, the trail is said to be home to some of the oldest trees in Broome County. For more information, click [here](#).

Chenango Valley State Park: Chenango Valley State Park is a great destination for beginner walkers who want a scenic view. The park features two kettle lakes formed during the last ice age. The trail is primarily flat. For more information, click [here](#).

Otsiningo Park: Otsiningo Park is another great option for beginner walkers as it features a mostly flat paved trail. For more information, click [here](#).

Binghamton River Trail: The Binghamton River Trail connects the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers. It is a mostly flat 1.5-mile trail that passes through Confluence and Cheri Lindsey parks. For more information, click [here](#).

Jones Park: Jones Park is a unique site, suitable for walkers of any skill level due it to its variety of trails. The trails range from easy, flat loops to difficult, steep climbs. Guests will also be able to travel around and through a creek. For more information, click [here](#).

Walking is known to be one of the best ways to manage stress and improve heart health. According to the American Heart Association, 1 in 4 U.S. adults are sedentary for more than eight hours each day, causing negative consequences on both physical and mental health.

The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate, 75 minutes of vigorous activity, or a combination of those per week.

To learn more, visit heart.org.



The long-awaited massive makeover of Endicott's central business district is about to get underway.

Work on the Washington Avenue improvement project is scheduled to start April 15.

Mayor Nick Burlingame said construction crews will begin with the water infrastructure along "The Avenue."



A view of Washington Avenue looking south toward Union-Endicott High School on April 4, 2024. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The project includes rebuilding the roadway and sidewalks from North Street to East Main Street. New street lights and trash cans will be installed.

Speaking on WNBF Radio's *Binghamton Now* program, Burlingame said

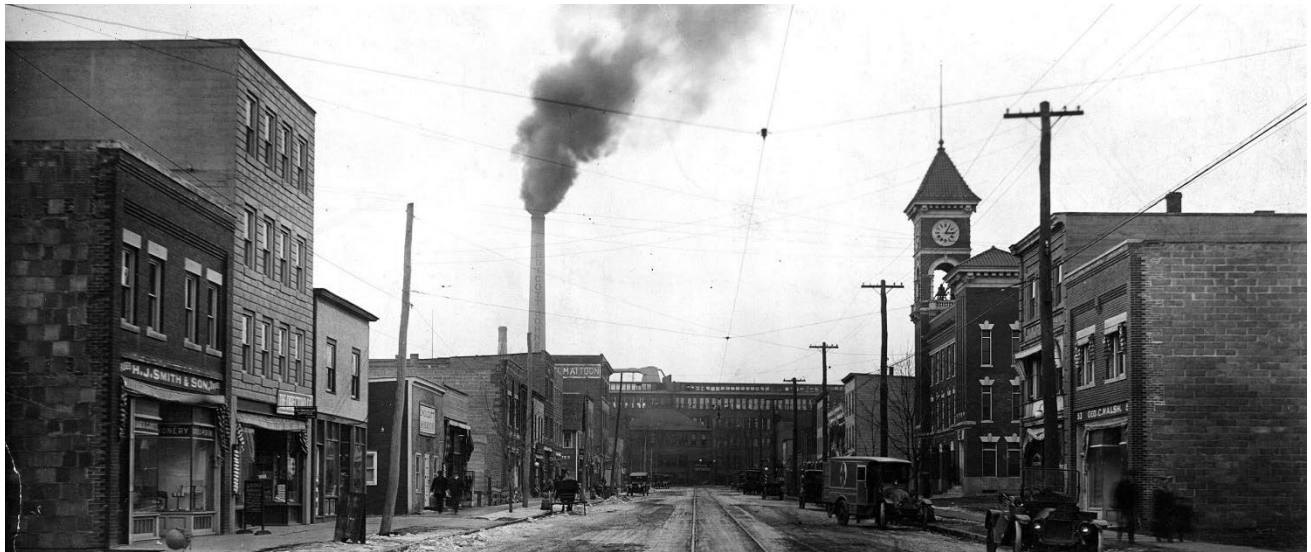
Washington Avenue "should be looking beautiful by the end of the year."

The mayor said steps will be taken to minimize the inconvenience caused to business operators.

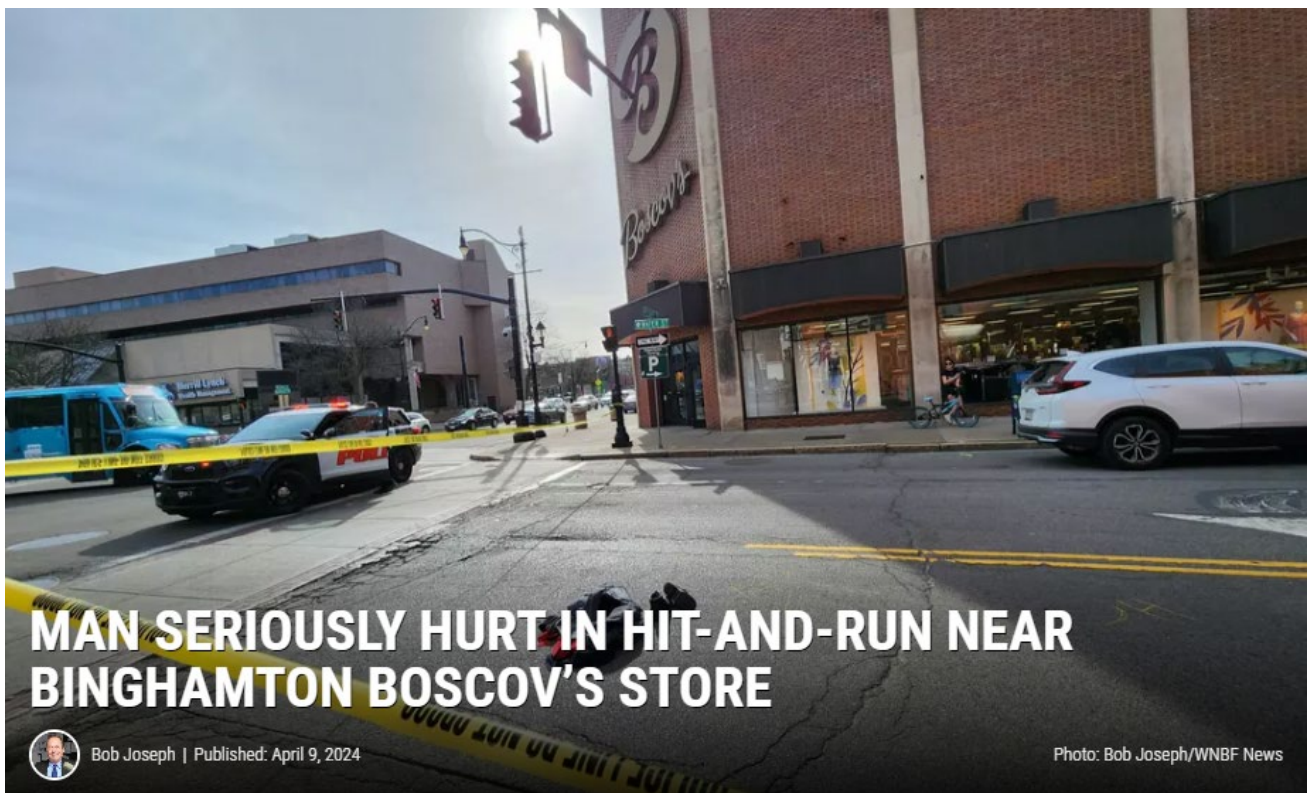
Village engineers are working with the project's contractor to finalize the logistics of the upcoming construction.

Burlingame is encouraging area residents not to ignore Washington Avenue while the work is in progress. He noted many businesses have back entrances.

The total cost of the improvement project is expected to be around \$11 million. The work is scheduled to be completed by November 14.



A 1916 view of Washington Avenue with the village hall on the right and an Endicott Johnson factory smokestack in the background. (Photo: Broome County Historical Society)



Binghamton police have arrested a suspect after a vehicle struck a man who was crossing the street near the downtown Boscov's store.

The 45-year-old Binghamton man who was hit sustained serious injuries. He was reported in critical condition at Wilson Medical Center in Johnson City.

The hit-and-run incident happened around 4:20 p.m. Tuesday at Court and Water streets.



Water Street was closed after a man was struck by an SUV that left the scene on April 9, 2024. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The pedestrian was crossing Water Street when he was struck by a Ford Escape sport utility vehicle that had been eastbound on Court Street. The SUV was making a left turn onto Water Street when it hit the man.

Witnesses who saw the pedestrian being struck said the vehicle "hit him hard." The driver stopped the SUV "for a couple of

seconds" before speeding away from the scene.

A Binghamton police officer photographed the scene outside Boscov's on April 9, 2024. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Police investigators tracked down the suspect vehicle and driver at a location on Conklin Avenue on Binghamton's South Side.

Authorities said the driver was a 17-year-old Johnson City resident. He was charged with leaving the scene of a serious injury accident, a felony. He was issued an appearance ticket to be arraigned at a future date.



The investigation into the hit-and-run incident is continuing. People with information may contact the city police detective division at (607) 772-7080.

17-year-old charged in hit-and-run that severely injured man

By [Matthew Benninger](#)

Published: Apr. 10, 2024 at 9:03 AM EDT | Updated: 38 minutes ago

BINGHAMTON (WBNG) -- The Binghamton Police Department arrested a 17-year-old man for leaving the scene of a pedestrian hit-and-run Tuesday afternoon.

The suspect, who is from Johnson City, was charged with leaving the scene of a serious physical injury accident, a class E felony, for the crime.

Around 4:30 p.m., officers responded to Court and Water streets, just outside of Boscov's, for a report of a person who was crossing the road being struck by a vehicle. They found a 45-year-old Binghamton man who was hit by the vehicle. He was transported by EMS to the hospital where he remains in critical condition as of Wednesday morning.

Detectives found the suspect and their vehicle later at a Conklin Avenue address, where he was arrested. He was released on an appearance ticket.

Binghamton officers were also at the scene of [stabbing and slashing](#) earlier Tuesday. In that incident, a woman, 26, was hurt but suffered non-life-threatening injuries.

Binghamton Police are still investigating both incidents. Anyone with information about them is asked to contact detectives at 607-772-7080.



ALUMNA PROVIDES INNOVATIVE THERAPY MODEL

By Katelyn Pothakul



(Jennifer Udler '94) By defying the four walls of her clinical office space to bring her sessions outside, therapist and social worker Jennifer Udler '94 has witnessed the empowering impact her new treatment model has on hundreds of clients. As she continues her practice in Maryland, Udler remains a local resource for both clinicians and people exploring movement-based psychotherapy — literally going the extra mile to help.

Udler majored in anthropology at Harpur College, where she enjoyed learning about different cultures, people and practices while looking at situations objectively, a skill that would eventually translate into her career as she continues to actively observe and evaluate patients today. Through classes such as Humans and Ecological Environment with Richard Andrus — whom she describes as “ahead of his time” by founding Binghamton’s environmental studies program — and frequent trips to the campus Nature Preserve, Udler’s deep-rooted interest in the outdoors flourished.

After graduating from Binghamton and earning her master’s in social work from the University of Pennsylvania, Udler began working as a talk therapist in 2000. However, training for her first-ever Marine Corps Marathon in Washington with a local running group in 2012 reshaped Udler’s professional approach.

“When I started running and training for the marathon, I became aware of people’s interest and comfort level in talking while moving,” Udler said. “That’s sort of when I got the idea to move my practice outside, because I noticed that people were really less inhibited when they were running. People are just so comfortable opening up and talking while we’re out there, then maybe this could work for therapy if it helps people let their guard down a bit.”

Inspired by the parallels between interacting with her fellow runners and therapy clients, Udler opened her own practice Positive Strides Therapy in 2013. For the past 10 years, Udler has implemented an innovative therapeutic approach commonly referred to as walk and talk therapy, in which she meets with clients outdoors at local park paths and nature trails rather than a traditional office setting, using a combination of physical movement and the power of nature to stimulate deeper connections.

“When you start walking and moving your body, it opens up the feel-good hormones and endorphins get released, so you do feel better,” Udler said. “In some cases, people just have an easier time relaxing and then talking about whatever is going on for them.”

Udler’s methods gained traction during the pandemic when the limitations of traditional therapy became increasingly apparent, with appointments being administered over virtual platforms like Zoom, Doxy and other online services. In response, Udler shared her expertise by teaching other professionals how to ethically and thoughtfully develop their own version of outdoor therapy.

“It’s important that we keep up with the latest theories, models, ethics and anything that’s changing so we can do our best work.”

To further guide clinicians interested in incorporating outdoor, movement-based techniques into their work, Udler wrote her first book, *Walk and Talk Therapy: A Clinician’s Guide to Incorporating Movement and Nature into Your Practice* (PESI Publishing, 2023).

Udler emphasizes that her book’s accessible, non-clinical language allows all kinds of readers to learn about the benefits of walk and talk therapy. While many may feel reluctant to meet with a therapist because of “discomfort in other people’s space,” Udler hopes her book will level the playing field and encourage readers to consider a new opportunity to engage in therapy.

“When I’m walking with a client outside, I’m more creative helping them with problem solving or pointing things out that are useful to them. Sometimes, it’s like a metaphor; they may say something and I’ll see something in nature that connects to their experience. It’s memorable [and] something they can take with them, understand and kind of imagine as they go throughout their week about how maybe that piece of nature is comforting and makes them feel calmer or accepted.”
