

# 'Dog Days of Summer' in Newark

Joey Nicosia's parents owned Wayne Beer Distributing, and he grew up in that business. In the early 1980s, when they decided to sell, Joey, then 22, had a pivotal decision to make – remain in the wholesale beer trade, or strike out on his own.

As he was deliberating, the family found out the owner of the little store at Main and Pearl in the Erie Canal village of Newark where Joey and his father got their morning coffee was preparing to retire. With help from his parents, Joey bought the shop, and Joey's Northside Grocery opened in February 1983.

Joey recalls wondering that first day whether he had made the right choice. Thirty-seven years later, the answer is self-evident.

Under the management of Joey and his sister Mary Anne Nicosia-McCarthy, the hometown store has been a magnet for coffee hounds, cigar aficionados, beer lovers, grocery shoppers, lottery players, and seasonal produce seekers. It also gained a reputation for generously supporting sports teams, community institutions and special events.



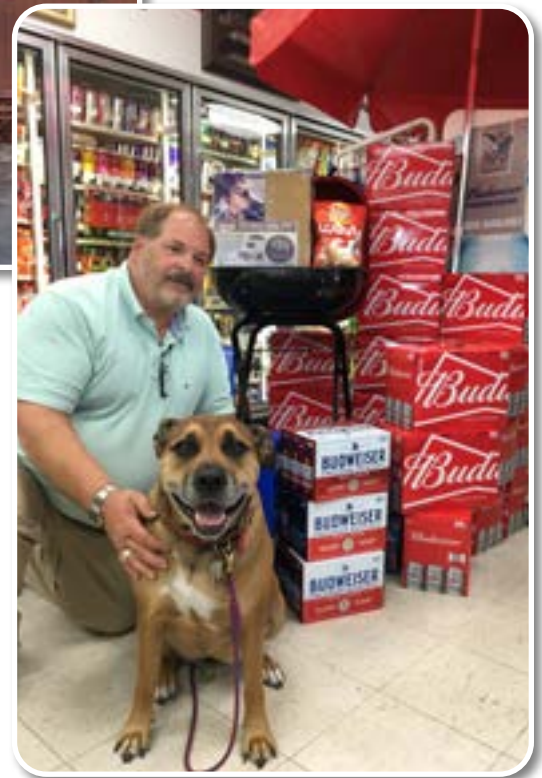
**Welcome to Joey's Northside Grocery**

**At right, Joey Nicosia and his pal Diesel show off some of the prizes being offered in the store's annual "Dog Days of Summer" raffle benefiting the Wayne County Humane Society, where Joey adopted Diesel.**

"We try to be your local neighborhood store, say hello to everybody, try to know them by name, know when they're having a good day and when they're not," says Joey. "I try to treat everybody the way I'd like to be treated."

Based on the observations of Newark Mayor Jonathan Taylor, they're succeeding. "Joey's is legendary in our community," he told NYACS. "It is more than just a convenience store. Everyone is always greeted with a warm welcome. It is a place where neighbors gather to have a cup of coffee, discuss current events, and get caught up on what's going on in the community."

Joseph and Rose Nicosia are forever in Joey's and Mary Anne's hearts, and always within view – photos of Dad in his favorite chair, and Mom and



Dad dining out with friends, adorn the wall. They share display space with other memorabilia – old posters, a beer bottle collection, even a guitar fashioned from a wooden Saint Luis Rey cigar box that Joey gave a customer whose musician son likes building peculiar instruments – that help give the place a warm feel.

Joey doesn't sell gasoline, but he has Diesel. That's the name of his boxer/lab mix, the store's beloved mascot. Currently, he's barking about their annual "Dog Days of Summer" raffle benefiting the Wayne County Humane Society, from which Diesel was adopted.



## Joey's Northside cont'd...

The store embraced the craft beer trend early on, becoming a mecca for beer enthusiasts. It currently offers nearly 300 different bottled and canned brews – ever heard of Bombshell hard cider or Breakfast with Churchill maple coffee stout? – as well as kegs, growlers, and, now, “Crowlers” which essentially are growlers in a can.

When he introduced the Crowler – a clutch-driven can seaming machine – he asked a graphic artist who is a regular customer to create a sign for the display. The result was a logo featuring a likeness of Diesel and the slogan “One Beer, One Bark, One Laugh.”

COVID-19, unfortunately, has disrupted the custom-pour takeout beer business by causing a shortage of aluminum cans and crimping the supply of craft beer from hard-hit small breweries. Today, only six of his 10 growler taps are open.

Actively involved in Ducks Unlimited, Joey previously served as statewide chairman and now a board member of DU Canada. For him, it's less about hunting and more about preserving wetland habitats like those in the sprawling Montezuma Wildlife Refuge nearby, where DU has undertaken major restoration projects, “to try to leave this Earth a little better than I found it.” In the Canadian prairies, he says, “there's



*Above, Joey and his sister Mary Anne behind the counter (and plexiglass shield). One of the plaques above the window is from NYACS, recognizing the Nicosias as one of New York's Foremost Convenience Store Families. At left, Joey's new Crowler machine, which enables the store to custom-can craft beer, fresh from the tap.*

just something about seeing that sky and the sunrise and how beautiful the Earth can be.”

Joey also serves as President of the Newark Library Board of Trustees, having been recruited 14 years ago to spearhead its conversion to a school district library, widening its service area and broadening its tax support. “Libraries play an intricate role in the community,” says Joey. “They provide a lot of good services. They're a lot more

than just books today.”

He also supports his industry. When he recently received the request from NYACS Chairman Steve Kuno to consider contributing to a special fund to help stabilize NYACS' finances after COVID-19 forced cancellation of the trade show and fall conference, Joey didn't hesitate.

“I figured it was a good cause, and they wouldn't ask for money if it wasn't needed,” he said matter-of-factly. A NYACS member since 1990, he was among the first five retail members to send in a contribution.