



Butterfield Developer Wants \$2.5 Million from Village

Asserts Cold Spring mayor, former trustee and others intentionally delayed project

By Michael Turton

Developer Paul Guillaro has filed notice with the New York State Court of Claims that he intends to sue the Village of Cold Spring for \$2.5 million in damages, claiming Mayor Dave Merandy, former Trustee Stephanie Hawkins and other unnamed village officials intentionally delayed his Butterfield redevelopment project.

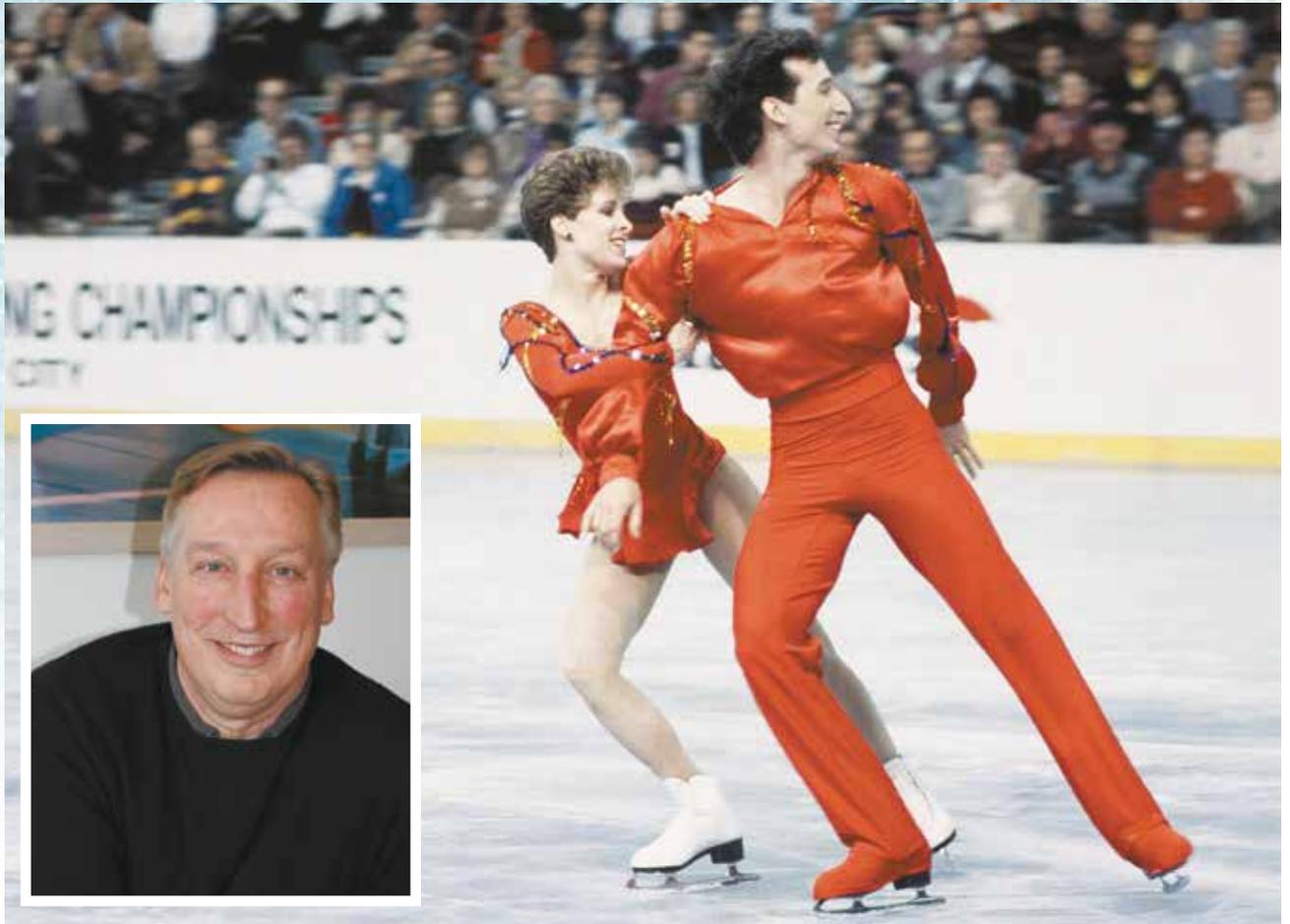
“The village’s continual demand to involve engineers, attorneys and other professionals in what had previously been handled in the village administratively by the building inspector and other village officials has delayed progress by over a year and caused an explosion of inappropriate expenses,” reads the complaint, which was filed Dec. 5.

The claim also asserts that Merandy “unlawfully assumed jurisdiction and interfered with the details of all aspects of the project ... for the purpose of stopping, destroying, interfering with and/or harming the project without justification and for personal reasons.”

Merandy declined to comment, saying only that the notice is under review by the village attorney. Hawkins, who is his wife, said she had not yet read the notice and also declined to comment.

New York State requires that notice be made before suing a local government. Guillaro is redeveloping the former Butterfield Hospital site on Route 9D into a multiuse parcel that includes homes, apartments, retail buildings, a post office and a county senior center.

This is the latest twist in what has been a long list of conflicts during the planning process. The path to the notice began in February when Guillaro proposed moving the senior center from its site-plan approved location on the second floor of the proposed Building No. 2 to the existing Lahey Pavilion. The *(Continued on Page 5)*



Inset, Michael Seibert (Photo by A. Rooney); above, Judy Blumberg and Seibert at the U.S. National Championships in 1984 (Photo by Christie Jenkins)

Frozen Glory

Real-estate agent came within one lukewarm score of Olympic medal

by Alison Rooney

Michael Seibert grew up on the ice. A talented figure skater who became an ice dancer, he advanced from regional competitions to nationals, and on to the Olympic Games. He and partner Judy Blumberg won the U.S. national championships five consecutive years beginning in 1981, took home bronze at the world championships three times starting in 1983, placed seventh in 1980 at the Lake Placid games and then fourth — the spot that’s almost worse than fifth — at Sarajevo in 1984.

More than 30 years later, Seibert, 56, who lives in Beacon, has left the ice to work with other surfaces — he’s an interior designer (michaelseibertdesign.com) and also a real-estate agent for Houlihan Lawrence in Cold Spring.

Like any other athletic pursuit, Seibert’s career had its triumphs and disappointments. Growing up, he practiced for more than five hours a day, six days a week, moving around the country to work with various coaches. He and Blumberg did not expect *(Continued on Page 10)*

For video of Seibert and Blumberg skating at the 1984 Olympics, visit highlandscurrent.com.

Putnam Visitors’ Bureau Lost Money in 2015

Turmoil at agency led legislators to put limits on 2017 spending

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

The Putnam County Visitors’ Bureau lost more than \$26,000 in 2015, according to newly released documents — one of two shortfalls totaling nearly \$100,000 since 2013 that prompted the Putnam County Legislature to keep most of its

2017 appropriation under tight rein.

According to forms filed with the Internal Revenue Service, the nonprofit bureau last year raised \$268,154 and spent \$294,232. The agency occupies space in the county government office building in Carmel and is accountable to the legislature but operates as a separate, nonprofit corporation.

The Putnam legislature has released only \$41,996 of the \$141,996 it budgeted to provide the Visitors’ Bureau in 2017, enough to keep it running for the first

quarter, while maintaining the rest under legislative control. Lawmakers cited lingering concerns about the bureau’s finances and management following the resignation in March of Executive Director Libby Pataki after questions arose about a separate tourism nonprofit she established that apparently had no functioning board and prompted an ongoing investigation by the state attorney general.

Restricting the Visitors’ Bureau money ensures “a little more oversight going forward,” explained Ginny Nacerino, who

chairs the legislature. “As soon as the issues are cleared up and resolved, we’ll release the money.”

The Pataki years

As an investigation by the *Journal News* revealed, Pataki, a Garrison resident, created a second, largely unknown nonprofit called Putnam Tourism Corp., for which she solicited tax-deductible donations and which paid her a separate salary from that provided by the Visitors’ Bureau. Now defunct, the Tourism Corp. also ran a deficit *(Continued on Page 13)*

Cook On: 1 part chaos, 2 parts calm

Companion Crops

By Mary Ann Ebner

When savoring good company — with friends, family or even pets — we all benefit. The same goes for favorable food match-ups, from eggs with bacon to soup and salad. Even though a fine panini capably stands alone, a marriage comes together when a sandwich joins a side dish. Burgers with golden fries may not make the wisest nutritional coupling, but there's a little love trying to breathe through all that cholesterol.

When a serving of noodles looks deserted on a plate or halibut needs a partner-

ship, consider winter's survival foods: an array of root crops. As plate companions, they turn a solo helping into a harmonious meal. Mashed, baked, roasted or even pickled, these seasonal staples keep us going when temperatures dip. With December's first measurable snowfall recorded, winter offers a generous choice of main course and side vegetables.

Along with a host of other farmers at the Cold Spring Farmers' Market, Cheryl Rogowski of Rogowski Farm grows a range of crops to carry the community through springtime's arrival. Since 1955, her family has grown heirloom vegetables on Pine Island in the black-dirt region of Orange County. The area consists of thousands of acres of fertile organic soil, turning out cool weather vegetables like sweet potatoes, turnips, carrots and parsnips.

As Rogowski arranged baskets of vegetables flecked with that rich black dirt, she helped a shopper select a pound of bright orange carrots. Like many of her customers, she relies on root vegetables for family meals in cold weather. "I love roasting root vegetables," she said.

And what this farmer serves at home, she offers at the market. "We'll have carrots all winter long," she said. "We'll also have turnips through winter and we'll have parsnips probably through February."

Carrots stay in play throughout the year, but other root crops like rutabagas and turnips are sometimes overlooked during their peak season.

As for parsnips, they add a dash of spice. "I call them the elegant carrot," Rogowski said.



Pickle turnips to transform them into *lifit*, a Middle Eastern favorite.



Roasted carrots, parsnips and turnips make perfect companions to quinoa.

Photos by M.A. Ebner

"They also make an insane parsnip cake, and I just substitute them for carrots."

Parsnips, which resemble carrots in shape, have tan-colored skin and creamy flesh. They boast a woody texture and taste spicy while producing a honeyed aroma when roasted.

When selecting parsnips, look for firm choices with no cracks or blemishes. Rogowski recommends roasting them as you would prepare baby potatoes (425 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes), tossed with a generous amount of oil and seasoned.

"I let the vegetables do the work," she said. "With potatoes, I'll add some rosemary, but with the others, they just need a bit of olive oil and sea salt and I finish them with fresh parsley. Come January and February, you need that burst of green."

Root crops call for little else save a

toss or two during roasting. If properly scrubbed, carrots and parsnips don't necessarily need peeling, though peeling away a thin outer layer encourages a crisper charred finish.

Turnips roast nicely but also serve as constant companions as a ubiquitous pickled side on Middle Eastern menus. I can't bring turnips home without pickling a few to produce *lifit*. While my husband lived in Syria during his doctoral studies in 2010, he ate *lifit* nearly every day alongside a serving of stewed beans. Around our home, the bold pink slices serve as a faithful companion to beans, rice or grilled lamb but lately as a reminder of life itself and the fragile world in which we live.

As 2016 nears its end, may you enjoy roasted, mashed or pickled root vegetables and share a plate with those you cherish most.

Quick Lifit (Pickled Turnips)

1½ to 2 pounds turnips (peeled and sliced)	½ cup water
1 small beet	½ cup red wine vinegar
1 mild pepper pod	½ cup white vinegar
1 teaspoon salt	

Boil beet in small saucepan of water until tender. Cool, peel and quarter. Mix water and vinegar and set aside. Place turnips in sterilized quart jar. Add beets, pepper pod and teaspoon of salt. Pour vinegar mixture into jar to completely cover vegetables. Seal jar, label with date and refrigerate seven days, agitating jar for a minute every other day. *Lifit* will turn bright fuchsia, thanks to the beet.

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Obituary

Catherine Portman-Laux

Catherine Portman-Laux, 89, a longtime resident of Garrison, died Dec. 20, 2016.

She was raised in Springfield, Massachusetts, on the Connecticut River, the daughter of William Henri and Theresa Walsh. During World War II, her father, who was editor of *The Springfield Republican*, took a job in Washington, D.C., as part of the war effort, working in press censorship. Her family relocated to New York state after the war, and she later became a journalist herself, covering Hoboken and six North Hudson communities for *The Jersey Journal* in Jersey City. She returned to New York state after her second marriage to Burton Laux, who survives her.



Catherine Portman-Laux and her husband, Burton Laux, in 2014 on the porch of their Garrison home overlooking the Hudson

Photo by Michael Nelson

Until last year she wrote the "Challenging Careers" column for the *Westchester County Business Journal*. She also developed a line of cat greeting cards called Kitty Kables.

She had written prose and poems since she was young, recalling that in high school she once was disciplined when her French teacher intercepted an anti-Roosevelt poem and made her translate its 26 verses into French.

A former church organist, in 2011 she wrote a song with Laux about the Hudson River, which the couple saw every day as it wound past their Victorian home, known as Windfield, on Upper Station Road in Garrison. ("I fell in love with the house and grounds when I first saw them and made a vow to God if he would allow us to own this house, we would use it to make people happy," Portman-Laux once said.)

She said her song, "The River's Journey," which was recorded by friends who called themselves The River Rovers, was written partly in response to "My Dirty Stream," a song by Pete Seeger. "Now he is deceased, so I shouldn't be speaking ill of the dead, but with all the beautiful things about that river I wanted to say something nice." She collaborated with her husband. "He wrote the chorus," she said. "It's very, very happy. My part is more haunting."

Portman-Laux also delved into politics. In 1994 she ran as an independent for a seat in the U.S. Congress representing the 19th District, which included Philipstown. (The Democratic contender was Hamilton Fish Jr., also of Garrison.) Portman-Laux told *The New York Times* she wanted a federal government limited to "constitutional activities" and that government should "get out of the arts" and let the states handle health care and public education. She also called for tougher law enforcement but not to the extent of "hassling gun owners." She finished fourth, with 1 percent of the vote.

There will be no wake or funeral, and Portman-Laux will be buried in the Sarasota National Cemetery in Florida, according to Clinton Funeral Home in Cold Spring, which is handling arrangements. Memorial donations may be made to St. Christopher's Inn at Graymoor (stchristophersinn-graymoor.org).

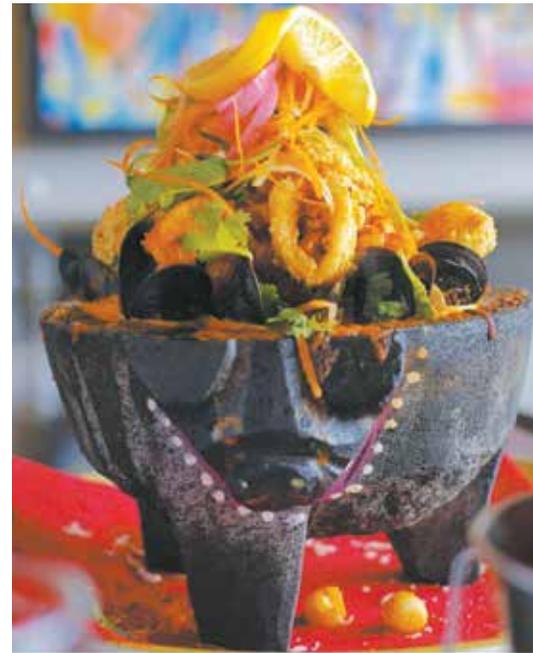
Holiday Closings

The Village of Cold Spring Highway Department will continue to pick up garbage and recycling on its regular schedule over the holidays. Recycling will be picked up Friday, Dec. 30, and garbage pick-up will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 27, and Tuesday, Jan. 3. The village offices will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26.

In Beacon, city offices will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26, and Monday, Jan. 2. The City Council will meet at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 3.

In Philipstown, town offices will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26 and Monday, Jan. 2, and close at noon on Friday, Dec. 30.

In Garrison, the Garrison Art Center galleries will be closed from Christmas Day through Monday, Jan. 2. However, they will be open on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Beacon crèche

In a letter to *The Current* that appeared in the Dec. 9 issue, Erik Hoover expressed his displeasure with the crèche that rests on Beacon city property with a "Keep Christ in Christmas" sign. While I agree that civil apparatus should not be used to promote a particular religious ideology, there is also a menorah on the same property.

The crèche is provided by the Knights of Columbus, of which I am a member. The organization was founded as a fraternal benefit society of Catholic faith on the founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity. The charity by the Knights of Columbus is not limited to those of Catholic faith.

If you do not believe in Christ, keep in mind that the celebration of Christmas without Christ is not free of religion. Should we also not have a Christmas tree on city property because of its association with the pagan god Tammuz? Keeping Christ in Christmas to me means to re-

spect Jesus' lessons of love, tolerance, forgiveness and charity and so all religious expressions are to be welcomed. The message of Christmas to me is that we should love thy neighbor as thyself.

Antony Tseng, *Beacon*

This display would be deeply offensive at any time, but is all the more so in the current atmosphere in which a wave of white Christian nationalism is sweeping the country and violence against visible non-Christians is rising.

Eli Naeh, *Newburgh*

As long as the crèche is on a common area (e.g., the town commons and not the town hall), and it is paid for by a group and not the local government, and the common area is open to other religions to display icons, it is legal. That was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court years ago.

And as long as people accept that Satanists could set up a display, and Muslims and Hindus, and other religions, we are fine. If you get to post yours and ex-

pect it to be respected, but you cannot respect another religion or belief system following the same rules, you lose the right to display yours.

Marc Lamothe

It doesn't snow online

The challenges merchants face are not just from the internet ("The Internet vs. Main Street," Dec. 16). The biggest problem we have is one that we are powerless to do anything about, namely, the weather!

I am sitting at home on a Saturday one week before Christmas Eve, looking outside at a veritable blizzard that will pretty much end the holiday shopping season for Main Street stores. No way are people going to get in their cars and drive to Cold Spring or Beacon and slog around in the snow and slush. Not when it's so easy to just hop online in the comfort of their home and pajamas and have their pick of millions of items from all over the world, much of it coming from China at ridiculously low prices. Whether it's Etsy, eBay or Amazon, there are a lot of sellers, some unscrupulous, who offer cheap goods and free shipping courtesy of the U.S. Postal Service, which charges Chinese sellers almost nothing to send a small package that would cost me at least \$10 to ship overseas.

The stores on Main Street that are the biggest success stories have something in common in addition to great merchandise, and that is a strong online presence. Look at Burkelman, Hudson Beach Glass, Cold Spring Apothecary, etc. They probably sell as much or more online as they do in their stores. This is the new model that must be embraced by small-business owners; we can no longer survive with whatever foot traffic we generate in Cold Spring and Beacon. We have to drive traffic to our sites and our shops if we are going to survive in this cutthroat economy.

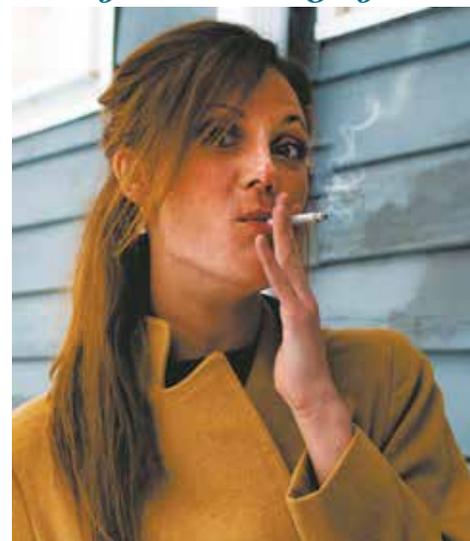
Patty Villanova, *Putnam Valley*
Villanova owns the *Side Effects/NY*
boutique in Cold Spring.
(Continued on next page)



Taking it to the Street

By Anita Peltonen

Have you been naughty or nice?



"Naughty. I smoke."
~ Kate Stickle, Queens



"I've been naughty, and I've been nice. I'm not saying anything else ... I'm at a wedding here."
~ Andrew Bee, Yonkers



"Nice. I'm a nurse. I'm a healer."
~ Natalie Smith, Peekskill

Butterfield Developer Wants \$2.5 Million from Village *(from Page 1)*

medical offices in Lahey would then move to Building No. 2.

Before that change, Lahey had not been included in the redevelopment plans. Guillaro and his legal team argued that the switch was minor and did not warrant review by the Cold Spring Planning Board. The Planning Board, headed by Matt Francisco, disagreed, citing changes in traffic flow and parking requirements. The new plan also placed the long-awaited U.S. Post Office inside Lahey.

The disagreement, which was often heated, was seemingly resolved on June 28 when the Planning Board agreed to a 20 percent reduction in the number of parking spaces required and the developer agreed to add four spaces not included in the original site plan. Signage and other improvements related to traffic flow were also hammered out.

Two weeks earlier, Guillaro and his attorney had threatened legal action if a compromise could not be reached. Ironi-

cally, when the June 28 deal was approved, Francisco said, "What we're trying to do here is apply the [village] code and not get sued."

The notice also claimed the permit for Building No. 3 was unnecessarily delayed by the Village for more than a year, and that the Village has been improperly charging Butterfield Realty since April 2015 for its site reviews when those fees should be considered part of the application fees.

It also alleged that the Village withheld documents, despite Freedom of Information Law requests, that will "demonstrate the full extent of the illegality of the actions taken by the Village" and that it violated the Open Meetings Law by taking actions during executive sessions.

The notice was submitted for Butterfield Realty by Salvatore Ferlazzo of the Albany-based firm Girvin and Ferlazzo, who said he could not comment on its contents. He noted that under state law a municipality has the right to a deposition to explore the claim and to have an opportunity to resolve the issue. Based on that, he said, it would be premature to comment on a possible lawsuit.



Stephanie Hawkins, Dave Merandy *File photos*



Paul Guillaro and attorney Steven Barshov are shown at a Cold Spring Planning Board meeting in June when a compromise was reached about relocating the senior center to the Lahey Pavilion. *File photo by M. Turton*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *(from previous page)*

Made by hand

Your article, "Is Cursive a Dying Art?" (Dec.16), notes that critics of the continued teaching of cursive in schools believe that "handwriting is beneficial, but it doesn't have to be cursive." Agreed. So why does the handwriting offered have to be manuscript? Until the 1920s, it was not taught; students learned cursive from the beginning. There is evidence that a joined form of writing is beneficial. In fact, adults who print when handwriting is required usually make up their own joins. Why not teach a simplified form of cursive to begin with? It doesn't have to be "loopy."

Mary Knapp, *New York City*

The PCNR's other history

How you could have recounted the history of *The Putnam County News & Recorder* and not mentioned the long tenure of Jack LaDue and the linotype machines on which he printed the paper locally ("The PCNR: An Abbreviated History," Dec. 16). He lived above the paper on Main Street, just across from present-day Cathryn's Tuscan Grill. We know the reason for *The Current's* birth in 2010 as *Philipstown.info* was because of the litany you mentioned, but Joe Lindsley, Stephanie Hawkins and Dave Merandy are only minor sidelights of the paper's long history and importance to this community.

Anthony Merante, *Cold Spring*

I often miss Jack LaDue and my subscription to his newspaper. I hope Douglas Cunningham will not slant the news. Discourse is healthy. Opinionated reporting is dishonest and disruptive. Philipstown people are smart, they know how to think and make their own decisions on an issue when given the facts.

Teri Waivada, *Cold Spring*

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Notes From the Cold Spring Village Board

Highlights from meetings of Dec. 6 and Dec. 13

By Michael Turton

Only two elements of the Cold Spring Main Street Project are yet to be completed, Deputy Mayor Marie Early reported at the Dec. 6 meeting of the Village Board: planting trees in the spring and lighting improvements that remain unresolved.

The lighting upgrades were delayed when Central Hudson declined to install "area lighting," which is mounted low on poles and designed to illuminate sidewalks, after residents and businesses in other communities complained that it was too bright.

The utility is developing a less-harsh LED light that may be used to replace existing lights on Main Street and be added to unlit polls. Early said that a prototype could be installed as early as January.

In other business ...

- The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation confirmed it will provide funding for the Market Street and Fair Street sewer rehabilitation projects. Bids for the \$875,000 project can be submitted until 2 p.m. on Feb. 3 at the Village Hall.
- The trustees held an executive session to discuss the lease between the village

and Cold Spring Boat Club. No information has been made public regarding the negotiations, but Mayor Dave Merandy said the club may begin to pay rent for use of the property it has occupied since 1955.

From Dec. 13 ...

Samantha Lutzer, owner of The Pantry in Philipstown, and Stacey Dugliss-Wesselman, owner of Cold Spring Apothecary, asked trustees about the fee for a parking waiver for 12 spaces for 75 Main Street, where they share the ground floor. The fee for the waiver is \$3,000, which the owners said came as a surprise. (Business owners who cannot meet Village code requirements to provide sufficient parking pay a fee of \$250 per space.) Lutzer and Dugliss-Wesselman contended that based on their interactions with Building Inspector Bill Bujarski, including information he provided two years ago, the fee should be much less.

When Merandy suggested tabling the issue, a visibly frustrated Lutzer asked to pay the waiver on the spot to move the process forward. The board approved the waiver but Merandy said that he would review the fee with Bujarski.

In other business ...

- Village resident Kathleen Foley expressed concern that Putnam County



Illustration by Dana Wigdor

legislator Barbara Scuccimarra, who represents Cold Spring, has made only one local presentation, at the American Legion, regarding plans for the proposed senior citizens center at Butterfield. Foley said that she and other residents have written to Scuccimarra asking for sessions at the Philipstown Recreation Center and at Chestnut Ridge. She said Scuccimarra has not responded. Trustee Steve Voloto added that he has contacted Scuccimarra twice with a similar request and that the legislator has not replied. Merandy said the board would follow up.

- Greg Philips, the superintendent of water and wastewater, reported that instal-

lation of new water meters in homes and businesses in Cold Spring and Nelsonville began Nov. 29 and that 140 of 900 meters are in place.

- Trustees approved the appointment of Elizabeth Bengal and Bonny Carmicino to the Code Update Committee.

- The board voted to support the Little Stony Point Citizens Association's application for a grant from New York State Parks for the construction of a volunteer building and shed at the park.

- Highway foreman Chris Hyatt submitted reports for the months of October and November, during which crews collected 108.7 tons of garbage and 29.7 tons of recyclable materials and decorated Main Street for the holidays.

- Officer-in-Charge George Kane reported that in November the Cold Spring Police Department responded to 63 calls. Two arrests were made, both for criminal contempt. Officers also issued 63 parking tickets. Kane reminded residents to call 845-747-SNOW (7669) to determine if street parking is prohibited due to snowfall or predictions of a winter storm.

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The Calendar

Juanita's Kitchen: *Muy Sabroso* (Delicious)

A former "city girl" from Mexico shows off her culinary skill

By Alison Rooney

Soon after Juanita Rincon got married in 1976, her mother-in-law took her aside. "That is not a meal," she said. "I need to teach you how to cook."

Rincon had grown up in Mexico City with a grandmother who did all the cooking. "I knew how to do the other chores but not cooking," recalls Rincon, who says she was a "city girl" while her in-laws lived on a farm.

She remembers her first cooking lesson well: her mother-in-law showed her how to cook rice seasoned with garlic, onion and tomatoes. "Molé and tamales were her specialties but everything was delicious," Rincon says.

Much of what Rincon learned, she learned by doing, and decades later she is sharing her own culinary skills at Juanita's Kitchen, which opened in November in what was formerly the Nelsonville Deli (and, before that,

Pali's) on Main Street in Nelsonville.

Juanita's Kitchen focuses on take-out orders for appetizers, main dishes, soups, sides and (soon) desserts, but there are several tables for dining. The menu changes weekly.

Before Rincon and her family, which grew to include five children, came to the U.S. from Mexico decades ago, she cooked not only for them but for friends who seemed to stop by ever more frequently for weekend visits. Cooking became "sort of a therapy," she says. "I went to college after having kids, and had to study at night or very early in the

morning. I chopped while I studied. I made sure my children always got my baby food — I never bought prepared foods for them. I even made the juices using carrots and oranges."

She spent the first 25 years in the U.S. working as a babysitter for a family on Long Island. Soon after the job ended, one of her daughters, Julisa Rincon-Tomizawa, a special-education consultant who lives in Cold Spring, asked her mother if she could help care for her young children. Rincon began dividing her time between her home in Queens and the Highlands. Meanwhile, Julisa was talking up her mother's culinary talents.

"She told them 'My mom will cook for you'



Juanita Rincon, surrounded by her grandchildren, Bella and Kiyoshi Tomizawa

Photo by A. Rooney



Juanita's Kitchen's chicken quesadillas

(Photo provided)

and that's what started all this," Rincon recalls.

After being certified by the health department to serve food, Rincon launched an online business, offering a few meals each week on a schedule. Soon she had clients in Philipstown, Connecticut and Westchester County. She also began preparing twice-weekly lunches for the Manitou School in Cold Spring and catered parties, which will continue.

With encouragement from her family, Rincon opened Juanita's Kitchen. Renovations included adding more prep space, installing displays of Mexican handicrafts and posters of Diego Rivera paintings and applying coats of blue and yellow paint.

Rincon uses meats from (Continued on Page 9)



Tami Adams makes house calls from northern Westchester to Connecticut.

Photo by M. Turton

Dog House Calls

A Philipstown pet groomer who comes to you

By Michael Turton

The milkman and bread man may be nearly extinct but a mobile pet grooming service is coming into its own. Tami Adams and her Bark Avenue Mobile Spa for Pets, based in Philipstown, make house calls the old-fashioned way. Lassie and Toto don't even leave the yard.

Adams hit the ground running at an early age. As a teenager she had a house-cleaning business, booked and promoted bands and even put together a concert at The Paramount in Peekskill. Grooming began at home with the family Yorkshire terrier. At 19, after a training program at the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), pet grooming became her profession. She has owned her own salon for 16 years.

Three years ago she drove to Granger, Indiana, near South Bend, where Wag'n Tails Mobile Conversions outfitted her 2011 Mercedes Benz Sprinter with a generator, inverter, electric table, stainless steel tub with hydro-surge system, 55-gallon fresh water tank and a grey-water tank, among other equipment.

The van's interior is a miniature but roomy spa that allows her to offer on-the-spot services such as nail clipping, baths, (Continued on Page 9)



Calendar Highlights

For upcoming events visit highlandscurrent.com. Send event listings to calendar@highlandscurrent.com

FRIDAY, DEC. 23

The Brasiles Ensemble (Caroling)

4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Main Street, Cold Spring

Andy Stack's American Soup (Holiday Edition)

7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St., Beacon
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

Caroling

8 p.m. Redoubt Wine Bar
1135 Route 9D, Garrison
845-424-3463 | redoubtwinebar.com

SATURDAY, DEC. 24

Christmas Eve

First Day of Hanukkah

Local libraries closed

Cold Spring Farmers' Market

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Parish Hall
1 Chestnut St., Cold Spring | csfarmmarket.org

Philipstown Services

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

3:30 & 10:30 p.m. | 1 Chestnut St., Cold Spring
845-265-2539 | stmaryscoldspring.org

Our Lady of Loretto

4 & 8 p.m. | 24 Fair St., Cold Spring
845-265-3718 | ladyofloretto.org

St. Philip's Episcopal Church

5 & 11 p.m. | 1101 Route 9D, Garrison
845-424-3571 | stphilipshighlands.org

First Presbyterian Church

5:30 p.m. | 10 Academy St., Cold Spring
845-265-3220 | presbychurchcoldspring.org

St. Joseph's Chapel

6 p.m. | 74 Upper Station Road, Garrison
845-265-3718 | ladyofloretto.org

Church on the Hill

7 p.m. | 245 Main St., Cold Spring | 845-265-2022

United Methodist Church

South Highland Methodist Church
7 p.m. | 216 Main St., Cold Spring
845-526-3788 | opendoorscommunity.org

St. Basil's Chapel (Greek Orthodox)

7:30 p.m. | Route 9D, Garrison
845-424-3500 | saintbasilacademy.org

Graymoor Spiritual Life Center

9:30 p.m. | 1350 Route 9, Garrison
845-424-2111 | graymoorcenter.org

Beacon Services

Caroling at the Crèche

4 p.m. Polhill Park
Main Street at Route 9D, Beacon | beaconarts.org

St. John the Evangelist

4:30 & 6 p.m. (Spanish) | 35 Willow St., Beacon
845-838-0915 | stjoachim-stjohn.org

Church of St. Joachim

4:30 p.m. & Midnight | 51 Leonard St., Beacon
845-838-0915 | stjoachim-stjohn.org

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

7 p.m. | 15 South Ave., Beacon
845-831-1369 | standrewsbeaconny.org

Reformed Church of Beacon

7:15 p.m. | 1113 Wolcott Ave., Beacon
845-831-8153 | rcbeacon.org

First Presbyterian Church

8 p.m. | 50 Liberty St., Beacon
845-831-5322 | beaconpresbychurch.com

Salem Tabernacle

10 p.m. | 7 Delavan Ave., Beacon
845-831-0114 | salemstabernacle.com

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

11 p.m. | 850 Wolcott Ave., Beacon
845-831-2643 | stlukesbeacon.org

Putnam Valley Services

Grace United Methodist Church

5 & 11 p.m. | 337 Peekskill Hollow Road, Putnam Valley | 845-526-3788 | opendoorscommunity.org

Fourth Unitarian Society

6 p.m. | 1698 Strawberry Road, Mohegan Lake
914-528-7131 | fourthuu.org

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

7 & 9:30 p.m. | 65 Oscawana Lake Road, Putnam Valley | 845-528-8858 | stlukesputnamvalley.org

Hanukkah Services

Bicycle Menorah Lighting

5 p.m. Polhill Park | Main Street at Route 9D, Beacon | beaconhebrewalliance.org

SUNDAY, DEC. 25

Christmas Day

Second Day of Hanukkah

Philipstown Services

Our Lady of Loretto

10 a.m. See details under Saturday.

St. Philip's Episcopal

10 a.m. See details under Saturday.

St. Mary's Episcopal

10:30 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Church on the Hill

10:30 a.m. See details under Saturday.

First Presbyterian

10:30 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Graymoor Spiritual Life Center

11 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Beacon Services

St. John the Evangelist

7:30 & 10:30 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Church of St. Joachim

9 a.m. & Noon. See details under Saturday.

Faith Temple Church of God in Christ

9 a.m. 22 N. Cedar St., Beacon | 845-831-8257
facebook.com/faithtemplebeacon

First Presbyterian

10 a.m. See details under Saturday.

St. Luke's Episcopal

10 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Reformed Church of Beacon

10:30 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Salem Tabernacle

11 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Putnam Valley Services

St. Luke's Lutheran

9:30 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Grace United Methodist

11 a.m. See details under Saturday.

Hanukkah Services

Bicycle Menorah Lighting

5 p.m. See details under Saturday.

MONDAY, DEC. 26

Third Day of Hanukkah

Village of Cold Spring offices closed

Philipstown libraries closed

Vacation Camp (ages 5-12)

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. All Sport | 17 Old Main St., Fishkill
845-896-5678 | allsporthealthandfitness.com

Winter Break Camp (ages 6-11)

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Mid-Hudson Civic Center
14 Civic Center Plaza, Poughkeepsie
845-454-5800 | midhudsonciviccenter.org

Beacon City Council Workshop

7 p.m. City Hall (Courtroom) | 1 Municipal Plaza, Beacon | 845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org

Hanukkah Services

Bicycle Menorah Lighting

5 p.m. See details under Saturday.

TUESDAY, DEC. 27

Fourth Day of Hanukkah

Village of Cold Spring offices closed

Vacation Camp (ages 5-12)

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. All Sport | Details under Monday.

School Break Mini-Camp (ages 6-9)

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Outdoor Discovery Center
100 Muser Drive, Cornwall
845-534-5506 | hnhnaturemuseum.org

Winter Break Camp

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Mid-Hudson Civic Center
See details under Monday.

Cold Spring Board of Trustees

7:30 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St., Cold Spring
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov

Hanukkah Services

Bicycle Menorah Lighting

5 p.m. See details under Saturday.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 28

Fifth Day of Hanukkah

Ulster/Dutchess Christmas Bird Count

845-339-1277 | forsythnature@aol.com

Vacation Camp (ages 5-12)

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. All Sport | Details under Monday.

School Break Mini-Camp (ages 6-9)

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Outdoor Discovery Center
See details under Tuesday.

Winter Break Kids Camp (ages 6-11)

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Mid-Hudson Civic Center
See details under Monday.

Jonathan Kruk: A Christmas Carol

7 p.m. Tompkins Corners Cultural Center
729 Peekskill Hollow Road, Putnam Valley
845-528-7280 | tompkinscorners.org

Hanukkah Services

Bicycle Menorah Lighting

5 p.m. See details under Saturday.

Community Menorah Lighting

6 p.m. Depot Square, Cold Spring
putnamchabad.org

THURSDAY, DEC. 29

Sixth Day of Hanukkah

Vacation Camp (ages 5-12)

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. All Sport | Details under Monday.

School Break Mini-Camp (ages 6-9)

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Outdoor Discovery Center
See details under Tuesday.

Winter Break Camp (ages 6-11)

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Mid-Hudson Civic Center
See details under Monday.

Children's Holiday Tea

Noon – 2 p.m. Mount Gulian | 145 Sterling St., Beacon | 845-831-8172 | mountgulian.org

Hanukkah Services

Bicycle Menorah Lighting

5 p.m. See details under Saturday.

Dedication of Hanukkah Menorah

6 p.m. Memorial Park
156 Oscawana Lake Road, Putnam Valley
845-528-4774 | rtpv.org

FRIDAY, DEC. 30

Sixth Day of Hanukkah

Putnam County Christmas Bird Count

845-270-2979 | chasrob@optonline.net

Vacation Camp (ages 5-12)

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. All Sport | Details under Monday.

School Break Mini-Camp (ages 6-9)

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Outdoor Discovery Center
See details under Tuesday.

Winter Break Camp (ages 6-11)

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Mid-Hudson Civic Center
See details under Monday.

Hanukkah Services

Bicycle Menorah Lighting

4 p.m. See details under Saturday.

Juanita's Kitchen: *Muy Sabroso* (Delicious) (from Page 7)

Marbled Meats and Glynwood Farm. Recent menu items included appetizers such as *molletes*, which is baked bread topped with creamy panela cheese, refried beans and salsa or *pico de gallo* with a ground pork chorizo option. The soup of the day has ranged from *posole* (hominy corn in chicken) to Veracruz-style lentil.

Each weekday a different entrée is offered; one Tuesday choice was pernil, with chunks of slow-roasted pork, seasoned with Mexican spices, while Wednesday brought *costillas en salsa verde con calabacitas*: pan-seared pork ribs and pork shoulder, cooked in a green salsa, topped with zucchini and fresh cilantro.

A tofu option is available for vegans; though people don't typically associate Mexican food with vegetables, she says, "we use a lot of string beans, cauliflower, broccoli, even cactus."

Future options will include less familiar dishes such as *tlacoyos*, which is made from ground beans mashed with

fresh masa and baked or grilled in a tortilla. "It's healthy and hearty, a real farmers' meal," she says.

Appetizers range from \$4 to \$6.50, the soups are \$5 and most entrées cost \$12.50. Extra sides of beans, rice, tortillas, salsas and fresh cactus salad are available. Desserts will be introduced soon, including rice pudding, corn pudding, and churros filled with Mexican chocolate. The holiday season will also bring *ponche*, or punch, filled with fruits like guava and hibiscus nectar.

Juanita's Kitchen is located at 289 Main St. in Nelsonville and can be reached by calling 845-666-7171. It is open weekdays from 11 a.m. until 8 p.m. Take-out can be ordered early in the day for pick-up after 2 p.m. Visit juanitaskitchen.com for menus and to order online. Rincon also offers catering.



Top left, Juanita's Kitchen *molletes*; above, cheery yellow walls and a display of Mexican handicrafts at Juanita's Kitchen

(Photos by A. Rooney)

Dog House Calls (from Page 7)

hot-oil treatments and hair cuts, mostly to dogs, who outnumber cats among her clients by a ratio of 10 to 1. She claims she doesn't have a favorite breed. "It's an individual animal that is perhaps more enjoyable than another," she says. "You become friends."

She has groomed a miniature horse, a guinea pig, a hamster and several rabbits. Requests can be on the zany side. "I've been asked to do all kinds of wacky

hair cuts, but one customer asked me to make her dog look like Suzanne Somers from *Three's Company*. That was funny!"

Other requests can be sad. "I've groomed many animals just hours before they were euthanized," she says. "Sometimes I've known the dog since it was a pup."

Adams is convinced that animals do better in a van than at a salon. "The stress level on the dog and the groomer is much lower," she says. "There are no competing sounds, no interference from

other people or animals. And the pet can look out the window and know they are still in their home territory." Traveling to a salon also can cause an animal to act erratically.

Often it's better if the pet owner is not present while Adams is working. "Some dogs get very anxious if the owner is right there," she says. "But I never dissuade people. I just ask them to sit quietly." Some owners come with books, photos,

folders or detailed notes, she says. "Others just say 'You know what you're doing — make him look nice,'" she says. "Guess which approach I prefer and guess who is usually most pleased with the result?"

Adams sets her fees, which start at \$50, based on the animal's size, condition and behavior and range of services rendered. Appointments can be made for between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays by calling 914-314-4314 or texting 518-986-1592.



The inside of Adams' van is a miniature but roomy spa.

Photo by M. Turton

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Frozen Glory (from Page 1)

to win gold in 1984 — this was era of the dominating British skaters Torvill and Dean — but knew bronze was within their reach. And they would have been on the podium except for a single judge who gave them a 5.5 for interpretation because she didn't like the music they chose. The piece, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, "didn't conform to the rules of dance," insisted the judge, Cia Bordogna of Italy. "The music must also be able to be danced to on Earth. Technically, they were at a very high level. Their skating was really almost perfect."

Says Seibert now: "It hits you like a ton of bricks. It takes a long time to recover from it There's a giant realization that you've done all this for five minutes that were beyond your control."

Ironically, the first Americans to win Olympic gold in ice dancing, Meryl Davis and Charlie White in 2014, skated to *Scheherazade*. "We were just 30 years ahead of our time!" says Seibert with a smile.

After the 1984 Olympics, Seibert competed for another year or two, then skated in ice show tours before shifting to choreography and directing, mostly for the show Stars on Ice, founded in 1986 to showcase gold medalist Scott Hamilton. Describing that period as the "golden age" of skating, Seibert was part of the creative team that in 2003 won a Primetime Emmy Award for choreography.

Seibert also worked for several years on a live ice-dancing show for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation called "Battle of the Blades" that paired professional hockey players with figure skaters.

As a child growing up in the Pittsburgh area, Seibert wasn't considered for training as a competitive skater until he was 13 and by then was too old to perform solo, with its emphasis on jumping. But his coach at the time specialized in ice dancing, so that's where he gravitated. Today Seibert occasionally coaches recreational skaters; he has students at rinks in Katonah and Newburgh. "I like to teach adults with a focus on health and exercise — it's so much fun," he says. "Other coaches think I'm out of my mind, but I love skating in a different way, not in a competition mode."

While working on Stars on Ice, Seibert lived for about six months in a Manhattan loft, which he decorated. The results, featured in *Metropolitan Home* and *Elle Décor*, led to other commissions and got him thinking about a new career. He honed his skills after a move to Palm Springs, California (his work there was featured in *Interior Design*), and came to realize that his experience working on ice shows translated well.

"I had never set a tile or guided a backhoe or many of the other things being done, but I didn't have to," he says. "What's important is knowing the sequence, the order, the needs. I didn't know how to program lights [for the

"We were just 30 years ahead of our time!"

Catching Up with Judy Blumberg

Blumberg, who grew up in Tarzana, California, first skated with Seibert in 1979. "You know when you move similar to someone, when your knees work with someone," she has said. While ice dancers typically used ballroom music, the pair became known for using songs preferred by figure skaters, including selections by Elvis Presley and Patsy Cline.

They parted ways in 1992. Blumberg wanted to continue skating but Seibert was ready to come off the ice to choreograph and direct.

Blumberg skated for another three-and-a-half years with a new partner, Jim Yorke, and later became a commentator for CBS Sports and ensemble director for the Ice Theatre of New York. Today she lives in Sun Valley, Idaho, where she teaches and coaches.



Blumberg and Seibert at SuperSkates in 1984

Photo by Christie Jenkins

ice show], but I knew how much time you needed to do it right. And from years of having hard openings with set dates because an audience would be in their seats and the show had to be ready, I gained skills I could apply" to renovating houses. "In devising the plan, you have to have flow. Ice shows use space and it's all about flow."

Returning to the East Coast with only a few suitcases and his skates to work on "Battle of the Blades," Seibert was introduced to the Hudson Valley while staying as a long-term guest at a friend's place in Red Hook. Commuting to the city, he cast his eye on the Peekskill to Beacon area, thinking it seemed removed enough from

the city to feel rural but close enough to reach his design jobs. Driving into Beacon on a snowy January day, he was charmed. "Driving along Main, west to east, looking at the mountains, it reminded me of Lake Placid and it felt right," he recalls.

Seibert, who along with Blumberg was inducted in 1996 into the U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame, says he no longer skates. "When you train six days a week for all those hours, your skills are fine-tuned," he says. "When you don't put in those times, the skills go away, and it's disappointing. It's been a wackadoodle life. But it's OK — I'm a very happy has-been!"

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Willie's Brother

Whistling Willie's American Grill now has a twin, although he's not identical. The DiFrancesco family, who operate the restaurant and bar at the corner of Main Street and Morris Avenue in Cold Spring, has opened a

second establishment under the same name in Fishkill Plaza on Route 9 north of Route 52. The new location is larger, with 150 seats, 70 more than in Cold Spring, but the menus are similar and both have happy hour from 4 to 7 p.m.



Ray DiFrancesco III taps into one of 24 draught brews at the new Whistling Willie's.

Photos by M. Turton



The newest Whistling Willie's is located in Fishkill Plaza.



Whistling Willie's in Fishkill is nearly double the size of its Cold Spring counterpart.

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FRI 2:00 5:00 8:15, SAT 11:45 2:45 5:45, SUN Closed, MON 1:30 7:15
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Passengers (PG13)
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THU 1:00 7:30

Polar Express (G)
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Employed But Still Struggling?

Two new reports investigate cost of living in Hudson Valley

By Jeff Simms

A pair of reports issued by regional nonprofits that track jobs and housing are the latest to examine aspects of a now-familiar refrain: many residents can no longer afford to live in the Hudson Valley.

Studies by Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress and the United Way both found affordability to be a major challenge throughout the region, including in Beacon, where housing prices have jumped 33 percent in the last four years.

"There's a large portion of our population that lives above the poverty level but still can't afford basic necessities of life," said Kimberly Kochem, vice president of community impact for the United Way of Dutchess and Orange counties. "This is really a survival budget and it's not feasible."

The subjects of its report are referred to as ALICE, for "asset-limited, income-constrained and employed," or people who are working but don't make enough to pay essential bills and have little savings.

In its study, Hudson Valley Pattern examined regional gentrification and how it can both benefit and burden communities. Its research includes detailed looks into housing costs and other effects of growth in Newburgh, Hudson, Kingston and Beacon.

While the word gentrification often carries a negative connotation, it actually refers to upward economic growth, to a point, explained Ken Kearney, a developer building an affordable housing complex in Beacon who took part in a Pattern-sponsored forum Dec. 15. "Before you have gentrification, stabilization must occur," he said. "In the early 1990s, Beacon needed stabilization first. You don't go from zero to 100."

After stabilization, he said, "gentrification occurs when people who have lived there are not able to stay."

According to Pattern, nearly half of the renters in Beacon and a third of homeowners are in unaffordable or severely burdened housing situations. The organization considers a home unaffordable when it costs more than 30 percent of a house-

hold's monthly income. A cost of more than 50 percent is considered severely burdened.

Pattern's statistics, which are based on U.S. census data, show that the median monthly rent in Beacon in 2015 was \$1,082, a more-than 64 percent increase from 15 years earlier. The median value of a home in Beacon rose 75 percent to \$240,300, from \$166,000, adjusted for inflation.

The Pattern report calls Beacon a great example of a city that, after experiencing economic decline, "has witnessed a reversal, reinvestment and in-migration of a relatively well-off middle and upper-middle class population." However, it warns that with those successes can also come the negative impacts of gentrification, namely the "pricing out" of longtime residents.

While gentrification often brings an influx of increased amenities — shopping, entertainment and dining — it's the residents who work in those establishments that often feel the crunch.

"I know many people who are working, but they have to work in the service or retail industries and they have trouble making ends meet," said Beacon Councilperson Ali Muhammad. "We need more skilled positions in Beacon that are going to be more secure. We have a tourist economy that relies on the service industry, but there's no security in that industry."

The United Way report found that 46 percent of Beacon residents earn less than the average income a household needs to afford basic necessities such as housing, child care, food, transportation, health care and taxes.

While the decades-old definition of "poverty-level" income has not been adjusted to account for cost-of-living increases, the United Way says its ALICE threshold provides a clearer picture of which residents are struggling. In Beacon, 13 percent of residents live in poverty, while an additional 33 percent meet the criteria of being "asset-limited, income-constrained and employed." In Putnam County, 5 percent of residents are in poverty and another 28 percent meet the ALICE criteria, for a total of 33 percent.

The United Way calculated the "house-

The Rent Shortfall

County	2BR Rent	Annual Wage Needed	Hourly Wage Needed	Renter Wage Rate	Rent Affordable	Gap
Dutchess	\$1,269	\$50,840	\$24.44	\$10.19	\$530	-\$420
Putnam	\$1,637	\$62,840	\$30.21	\$8.67	\$451	-\$1,186

Source: Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress



The wooded area on the far side of the Beacon City Hall is being developed as affordable housing.

Photo: Google Maps

hold survival budget" for a family of four with two young children to be \$73,212 in Dutchess County and \$77,724 in Putnam. That's far too much to receive government assistance (the federal poverty level for a family of four is \$23,850) but only just enough to cover the basic costs of living, according to the report.

"These are not just retail industry employees," Kochem said. "They're teachers and auto mechanics. This is the fabric of our community that we rely heavily on."

A handful of initiatives are underway to address cost-of-living issues in Beacon. In October, the city sold 3.14 acres adjacent to City Hall to Kearney, a Carmel-based developer who plans to build a 72-unit affordable housing complex on the site.

Rents for the 22 middle-income units and 50 artists lofts will be tied to the area's median income, which Dutchess County says is \$87,100 annually for a family of four. The lofts would be priced for renters earning up to 60 percent of the median income and the middle-income units for those making between 70 and 120 percent, Kearney said.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as that which requires a household to pay less than 30 percent of its gross income on housing costs, which include rent and utilities or a mortgage payment, utilities, insurance and taxes. Therefore,

households earning within those ranges would be able to rent Kearney's units at a cost not exceeding 30 percent of their income.

Kearney said he submitted an application earlier this month to the state's highly competitive Middle Income Housing Program, which has funded similar projects he's done in Peekskill and Poughkeepsie. If the project is funded and then approved by the Beacon Planning Board, construction could begin next fall, he said.

During the Pattern for Progress forum, Beacon Mayor Randy Casale said he also expects the City Council in 2017 to revisit legislation that would increase the number of affordable units that must be included as part of new developments. Those units would be an example of the "inclusionary" zoning that the Pattern for Progress report recommends to mitigate resident displacement due to gentrification.

Beacon currently requires developments of 20 or more units to include at least 10 percent "affordable" housing. Discussions earlier this year proposed upping the number to 10 percent of developments of 10 or more units.

The council could also consider parking meters on Main Street, which would increase revenue while promoting walking and mass transit. "We're trying to use every tool we have to keep this city affordable," Casale said.



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Putnam Visitors' Bureau Lost Money in 2015 *(from Page 1)*

of about \$14,000 in 2015, according to its IRS filing.

This past summer, the Visitors' Bureau established a new board of directors, which picked Cold Spring resident Barney Molloy as chair. Frank Smith, who had served as an intern and deputy director in recent years (although not named as an employee in the bureau's 2014 or 2015 filings), became acting director, while the search for a permanent director continues.

On a form filed with New York state that is required of all charities, the Visitors' Bureau stated that in 2015 its revenue included a \$146,996 grant from Putnam County and \$53,911 from the state's Empire State Development Corp., which the county matched with another \$53,911.

Visitors' Bureau expenses included salaries for Pataki and Katie DeMarco, who lives in Philipstown. Pataki earned \$43,087 for working full-time as director, far less than the \$70,000 she received in 2014. However, she spent part of 2015 on leave when her husband, former New York Gov. George Pataki, campaigned for the Republican nomination for president. DeMarco earned \$36,600 for working 20 hours a week.

At the same time, Pataki's Putnam Tourism Corp. paid DeMarco \$50,000 for working 24 hours a week as its vice chair. (The previous year, 2014, DeMarco earned \$24,000 for 20 hours per week in the same position.) Pataki received no salary in 2015 from the corporation, which was dissolved this year in the wake of the attorney general's investigation. The nonprofit took in \$72,580 in donations in 2015, spent \$1,268 on promotions and gave grants of \$21,597, according to its IRS filing.

Meanwhile, the Visitors' Bureau provided grants in 2015 to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (\$2,000), the Cold Spring Merchants Association (\$700), the Putnam County Joint Veterans Council Row of Honor Flags (\$100) and Beatrice Copeland, daughter of then-board member Carolyn Copeland, for a film project (\$500).

Its expenses in 2015 included about \$95,000 for tourism advertising, \$7,000 for events, \$4,000 for public relations and \$14,000 for its website and mobile app.

Federal filings show that in 2014 the

Visitors' Bureau ended the year with a positive balance of \$25,767 in revenue over expenses; in 2012 with a positive balance of \$2,872; and in 2013 with a \$70,930 deficit.

County oversight

At an Oct. 20 meeting, Legislator Dini LoBue referred to the 2013 and 2015 shortfalls and asked Smith for the agency's 2016 records, including bank statements. Smith replied that while he signed Visitors' Bureau checks, he did not have bank statements. He likewise declined to discuss files that Pataki may have left, saying he would have to review them individually before sharing them with legislators.

Nonetheless, Smith assured legislators that he was "doing my absolute best" to straighten everything out. "I apologize if there is anything from the past," he added. "But I don't know how I can answer for that."

Several legislators commended Smith for his efforts. With LoBue the sole dissenter, the legislature voted 8 to 1 to release all of the bureau's 2017 funding.

A week later, it changed its mind.



As Putnam County Visitors' Bureau director in 2012, Libby Pataki answered a question from then-Mayor Seth Gallagher of Cold Spring during a Village Board discussion of tourism.

File photo by L.S. Armstrong

During the Oct. 27 meeting, LoBue urged her fellow legislators to retain tight control over the entire \$141,996 appropriation. Citing the investigation by the Attorney General's Office, she maintained that "we have to keep a close watch on this agency." She said Smith earned \$50,000 for "a part-time position" and that between state and county funding, the bu-

reau receives about \$400,000 annually.

"That is a lot of money for the acting director to not know where the bank statements are, to say he signed checks but now he's not familiar with what's in the bank," LoBue argued.

The legislators voted 7 to 2 to approve a compromise: Holding back \$100,000 but releasing \$41,996 for bureau expenses during the first quarter of 2017.

Legislator Barbara Scuccimarra, who represents Philipstown and served as treasurer of the previous Visitors' Bureau board, voted no, protesting that her colleagues were "tying their hands" at the agency. She said the finances had been inherited by the new board, and "they've given every indication they will address the issues. I don't think it's fair to put any money away." (Legislator Carl Albano also voted no.)

After the vote, LoBue continued her quest for Visitors' Bureau financial data. On Nov. 17, she asked Smith for "detailed costs" of spending for a promotion for "Fireball Run," a car race-cum-scavenger-hunt that stopped in Mahopac on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1.

On Dec. 13, she told *The Current* that "even after countless letters," Smith remained "unresponsive to requests to submit financial documents so that I can fulfill my oversight duties as a legislator. Considering the legal problems encountered by the previous bureau administration, I would think that Mr. Smith would make every effort to respond to any and all inquiries promptly and completely in order to regain the confidence that had been lost," she said.

Smith did not reply to requests for comment on the legislature's retention of \$100,000. However, he said Dec. 12 that the bureau has been "working with New York State and our attorney to revise and update policies." It also plans new "funding guidelines so that they are consistent and fair to all of our potential partners" and expects to announce its choice of a permanent director after the first of the year.

Board Chair Barney Molloy declined comment, saying in an email on Dec. 21 that he was unavailable until after Christmas. The Attorney General's Office also did not respond to requests for an update on its inquiry.

Top Secret: Putnam County Tourism

By Chip Rowe

While preparing a story on the newly appointed board of the Putnam County Visitors' Bureau and each member's background experience ("Meet Your Tourism Board," Sept. 30), *The Current* filed Freedom of Information Law requests to receive copies of the applications the agency received for the volunteer positions, meeting minutes, a copy of the bylaws and any emails between Acting Director Frank Smith and board members.

Smith, who acts as the Visitor Bureau's records officer, replied that the minutes had been posted online (they have since been removed) and that the emails are exempt from public disclosure laws. He noted that an appeal could be filed with ... the Visitors' Bureau board.

The bureau did honor the request for the applications, provided with "personal and contact information removed." Samples appear below.



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

State Opens Small Business Office

Putnam satellite located in Mahopac

The New York State Small Business Development Center has opened a Putnam County satellite office in the Tompkins Community Center in Mahopac, adjacent to the Greater Mahopac-Carmel Chamber of Commerce.

The agency can assist small-business owners with confidential advice, services, training and workshops on financial planning, infrastructure, energy efficiency and disaster recovery, among other topics. For more information or to make an appointment, call 845-628-5553.

Cold Spring Chamber Selects Board

Will appoint new officers in January

The Cold Spring Area Chamber of Commerce announced its 2017 board of directors at its annual holiday party held at Dutchess Manor on Dec. 15.

The board is Martin Barth of Meyers Associates, LP; Jack Goldstein of JLG Antiques; Yuriy Herhel of the Fred Astaire Dance Studio; Katie Liberman of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival; Barney Molloy, chair of Putnam County Tourism and Raul Olave of Auspicious Business Solutions.

A new president and other officers will be

appointed in January after President Alison Anthoine and Vice President Jillian Bono-Kelly step down on Dec. 31. Jack Goldstein is the lone new addition to the board.

Birders Wanted

Annual Christmas count set for Dec. 30

The annual Putnam County Christmas Bird Count takes place on Friday, Dec. 30. Teams will be assigned areas to roam and census all the birds they see during a set time. This is the 117th year of the Audubon Society's count, making it the longest-running citizen-science project in the country. Putnam County birders have been participating for 63 years. Volunteers with or without bird identification experience are welcome. Call Charlie Roberto at 845-270-2978 or email chasrob@optonline.net.

Phil's List

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Getting a Leg Up



Cross-Legged Brooch, by Margaux Lange, at the Small Works Show at Catalyst Gallery, 127 Main St., in Beacon. The exhibit, which includes 140 pieces, continues through Jan. 8.

Photo by Anita Peltonen

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12 SILLY DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Can you find all the things in this silly scene listed at right? Read carefully and look closely – it's tricky!

- This year for Christmas, Kid Scoop gave to me:
- 12 skating snowmen
 - 11 penguin painters
 - 10 running reindeer
 - 9 shopping salmon
 - 8 freezing frogs
 - 7 bags of popcorn
 - 6 rubber duckies
 - 5 ice cream cones
 - 4 polar bears
 - 3 crayons
 - 2 candy canes
 - And Santa hiding somewhere on this page!



Standards Link: Visual Discrimination: Find similarities and differences in common objects.

Extra! Extra!
Holiday Hunt
 Look through the newspaper to find:
 • 5 holiday pictures
 • 5 holiday words
 • a Christmas tradition
 • something sweet
 • a nice gift

Standards Link: Classify objects according to common attributes.

Speedy Search
 Race a friend and see who can find the most:
 • apples • carrots • rabbits • sports equipment

Look Again!
 Did you spot a cactus, a boat, a lollipop and a hot dog?

Kid Scoop Puzzler
 Can you find the two identical ornaments?

Standards Link: Visual Discrimination: Find similarities and differences in common objects.

Double Double Word Search
 Find the words in the puzzle. Then look for each word in this week's Kid Scoop stories and activities.

S	N	O	K	S	B	E	A	R	T
A	J	S	V	A	W	T	E	O	N
M	P	C	G	H	B	E	P	L	E
T	O	S	O	R	D	S	E	G	M
S	P	S	W	N	W	O	S	T	P
I	C	E	I	B	E	Y	G	F	I
R	O	E	A	T	W	S	O	F	U
H	R	A	B	B	I	T	S	E	Q
C	N	I	U	G	N	E	P	J	E

CHRISTMAS EQUIPMENT
 REINDEER
 POPCORN
 PENGUIN
 CONES
 RABBITS
 SPOT
 WHO
 SWEET
 DOG
 ICE
 SEE
 BEAR
 BAGS

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

Funny Filler

Have a friend give you **NOUNS**, **ADJECTIVES** and **VERBS**. Then read the silly story aloud. Prepare for big laughs!

Santa Secrets

Everyone knows that Santa slides down chimneys to deliver presents to children on Christmas Eve. But what happens when a home has no

_____?
NOUN

Santa has a magic _____ that can open any lock in the world. So he can quietly _____ through a door and to leave _____ in stockings or under the _____.

Santa also has many helpers. This way, if he is running behind schedule, the helpers _____ to the rescue and deliver the _____.

Some people like to leave fresh _____ for Santa's reindeer. This gives them energy and helps them _____ through the chilly winter air.

Back at the North Pole, Santa rests for several days after his _____ journey. But plans for the following Christmas begin right away, as the elves begin making _____ and _____ in the workshop. They _____ long hours throughout the year. In addition to bikes and dolls, they make a

surprising amount of _____ which are very popular gifts.

Standards Link: Language Arts: Use nouns, adjectives and verbs correctly.

Write On!

Alliterations

Write a sentence in which all (or nearly all) of the words start with the same letter.
 Example: Wendy walks with wonder when the weather warms.

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Sports

Track Athletes Prepare for Long Run

Haldane and Beacon fine-tune for spring

By Leigh Alan Klein

The indoor track season is often used by high school athletes to fine-tune for the outdoor season in the spring, and the Haldane and Beacon programs have raced out of the gates.

Haldane Blue Devils

The Haldane team includes 19 athletes from Haldane and 11 from Putnam Valley High School. Coach AJ McConville says he is optimistic about the group and expects to be competitive at the league, Northern County and Class C state championships.

"We will have a couple individual and relay champions at these meets," McConville predicted. "Both the boys' and girls' teams could finish in the top three in the league and the top three or four at the Class C championships."

Specifically, he said:

- **Kiki Cruz** could be a top indoor hurdlers in Section 1.
- **Nick Farrell** could be a top 1600- and 3200-meter runner in Section 1.
- **Heather Winne** looks to build on a breakout 2016 outdoor track season.
- The boys' and girls' 4 x 800-meter relays could be strong in Section 1.
- The girls' 4 x 200-meter and 4 x 400-meter relays could also be strong.

Among the key meets coming up before the state championships begin on Feb. 4 with the Section 1 tournament are the Hispanic Games on Jan. 7, the league championship on Jan. 15, the New Balance Games on Jan. 21 and the Northern County championship on Jan. 28.

Top Haldane boys

With events and personal records

Nick Farrell (junior), Haldane
800m (1:59.7), 1000m (2:42.15), mile (4:31.77), 1600m, 3200m, 4 x 400m, 4 x 800m

Adam Silhavy (sophomore), Haldane
800m (2:02.51), 1000m (2:47.10), 1600m (4:42.47), 3200m, 4 x 400, 4 x 800

Jonas Petkus (junior), Haldane
Captain (injured): 600m, 800m (2:01.16), 1000m, 4 x 400, 4 x 800

Conor Van Riper (junior), Putnam Valley
1000m, 1600m (4:37.40), 3200m, 4 x 800. Finished 19th in Class C cross country championship

Joe Abate (junior), Putnam Valley
Long distance

Michael Tompkins (freshman), Putnam Valley
Middle distance

Varsity Scoreboard

Boys' Basketball

Hawthorne Cedar Knolls 68, Haldane 66
Schechter 51, Haldane 30
Hastings 59, Haldane 28
Blaine Fitzgerald (17 points)
Beacon 62, Ramapo 53
Jemond Galloway (20), Alex Benson (12)
Beacon 70, North Rockland 63
Benson (30), Zamere McKenzie (19)
New Rochelle 78, Beacon 54

Girls' Basketball

Haldane 47, Croton-Harmon 43
Haldane 49, Putnam Valley 37
Haldane 55, Westlake 50
Allison Cheira (26), Olivia Monteleone (8)
Nyack 41, Beacon 26

Boys' Bowling

Beacon 7, Arlington 0

Girls' Bowling

Arlington 7, Beacon 0

Boys' Swimming

Beacon 92, Harrison 83

First-place finishers:

Diving: Michael Rutkoske (243.05)
50 Freestyle: Sean Landers (24.27)
100 Freestyle: Landers (55.22)
500 Freestyle: James Patino (6:12.19)
200 Freestyle Relay: O'Blaney, Patino, Welsh, Landers (1:42.63)
400 Freestyle Relay: O'Blaney, Camilo, Patino, Landers (3:44.26)



Olivia McDermott, Ashley Haines, Heather Winne and Alii Sharpley

Photo provided

Jose Mendoza (senior), Putnam Valley
Long jump, triple jump.

Top Haldane girls

Ruby McEwen (senior), Haldane
Captain (injured): 800m, 1500m, 3000m, 4 x 400, 4 x 800. Holds school record in 1500m (5:04.27) and as member of relay teams.

Heather Winne (junior), Haldane
55m hurdle, 600m, 800m, 1000m, 1500m, 4 x 400, 4 x 800. Holds school record in 55 Hurdle (10.80) and 800m (2:25.10) as well as member of relay teams.

Ashley Haines (sophomore), Haldane
55m hurdle, 300m (45.34), 600m, 800m (2:29.17), 4 x 400, 4 x 800. PRs 300m 45.34, and member of 4 x 800 school-record relay.

Catherine Parr (senior), Haldane
Captain: Shot put (27-7.5)

Teresa Figueiras (senior), Haldane
Captain: Shot put, short sprints

Bridget Goldberg (freshman), Haldane
55m hurdles, 300m, sprint relays

Angel Zhang (senior), Putnam Valley
600m, 1000m, 4 x 400, 4 x 800

Claire Cassidy (senior), Putnam Valley
1500m, 3000m, 4 x 800

Kiki Cruz (senior), Putnam Valley
55m hurdle, sprint relays

Brittany Gona (junior), Putnam Valley
Long jump, 300m, sprint relays

Beacon Bulldogs

The Beacon track program has 55 athletes, with both the boys' and girls' teams poised for league titles, which would be five in a row for the boys. The girls have not won the league since 2012, but an influx of soccer talent has strengthened the team in the mid-distance and distance events.

"Our strongest competition appears to be Hendrick Hudson," said coach Jim Henry. "Our boys team graduated a good deal of talent last year but maintain a competitive core."

Beacon has been fueled by standout performances that included senior **Alex Laird** finishing second in one meet in the 55-meter sprint at 6.99 seconds, the sixth-fastest time in school history and junior **Xavier Collins** posting 7.30, the 10th-fastest mark.

The team captain, senior Richard Kish, is one of the best competitors in Class C in the triple and long jumps and his versatility in other events makes him invaluable. "I would not hesitate to use him at anything from a 4 x 400 meter relay to a two-mile run," Henry said.

Ethan Burgos, a junior, has been strong on the 55-meter hurdles, as well, finishing fourth in a recent meet at 8.67 seconds, second-best in school history.



Athlete of the Week Richard Kish

Photo provided

Highlands Current Athlete of the Week

Richard Kish, Beacon High School

Kish started his senior season with a bang, setting personal records in the long jump (19-1.5) and triple jump (39-7) at the Jim Mitchell Invitational at the Armory in New York City. He finished in the top five in both events.

"Richard is one of only a handful of Section 1 jumpers who has triple-jumped over 40 feet," noted Jim Henry, a Beacon track and field coach.

The qualification mark for the New York state championships is 43 feet, six inches, which Henry said is within Kish's reach. The team captain finished in the top 10 in the long and triple jumps on Dec. 16 at the Tim St. Lawrence Invitational, also held at the Armory.

"Richard first got involved in track on the recommendation of a family friend," said his father, Richard G. Kish. "The feeling was that it would be a good way to build his foundation. Track has helped him in so many ways, building his character, sportsmanship and being a part of a team."

Burgos is also a part of the 4 x 200 relay that has posted a time of 1:39:31.

That relay team includes Laird, junior **Vincent Compagnone** and a promising freshman, **Kaleb Istvan**, who finished second in the 600-meter finals at the Section 1 freshman/sophomore meet with a time of 1:35. Sophomore **Jayen Lare's** 4:47.87 in the mile was second-best in school history.

The Beacon girls' track team is also loaded with talent. Sophomore **Anna Mamente** has pole vaulted seven feet, second-best in school history. Sophomore **Eliza Erickson** set a school record in the mile. **Victoria Banks**, also a sophomore, has had strong showings in the 1000 and 600 meters with the third-best school times in both events. **Jummie Akinwunmi**, a junior, won the high jump at the Section 1 Kickoff meet with a 5'0" leap. She and her sister, **Ennie Akinwunmi**, a sophomore, are poised to rewrite the Beacon books.