Finding a Way North

I-87 pipeline latest plan to move petroleum along Hudson

By Brian PJ Cronin

For those worried about pipelines crisscrossing the country, the news has not been reassuring lately.

A pipeline operated by Spectra Energy began operating in January, carrying natural gas north along the Hudson River past the Indian Point nuclear power plant south of Peekskill. The Keystone XL pipeline from Canada to Nebraska has been given the go-ahead by the White House after being rejected by President Obama. And this week, oil began flowing through the contested Dakota Access Pipeline, another project halted by Obama but revived by President Donald Trump.

Closer to home, a $1 billion, double-barreled pipeline is planned for both sides of I-87 on the west side of the Hudson River, and activists are wasting no time in trying to block it. On Tuesday, April 4, at 7 p.m., the Beacon Democratic Committee will host a forum on the Pilgrim Pipeline project at the Howland Cultural Center, with representatives from environmental groups and the office of state Assemblyman Frank Skartados.

The proposed pipelines would be placed two to three feet underground for 170 miles from Linden, New Jersey, to Albany. According to Pilgrim Pipeline Holdings, one pipe would carry 200,000 barrels of Bakken shale oil south daily from Albany to New Jersey.

300-Plus Unit Development Proposed for Beacon Train Station Area

City planning board reviewing proposal

By Jeff Simms

A Beacon developer is moving forward with plans to construct more than 300 apartments at a site a half-mile from the Metro-North train station. If approved, the project, dubbed Edgewater, would be the largest apartment or condominium development in Beacon.

Plans submitted to the Planning Board earlier this year by Scenic Beacon Developments, which is managed by Rodney Weber, call for 307 studio, one-, two-and three-bedroom apartments to be spread across seven buildings on the 12-acre site at 22 Edgewater Place. The materials state that Scenic Beacon expects current and new city residents to live at Edgewater, with the availability of smaller spaces there designed to keep and attract "millennials."

Shared amenities, including co-working space, would also "encourage the growth of new companies, jobs and technology," according to the plans.

Two existing buildings at the site would be razed; in their place are 55 units in two buildings. The project is expected to be complete by 2020.

Merandy Wins Second Term

With absentee ballots counted, maintains Election Day margin

By Michael Turton

Cold Spring Mayor Dave Merandy won at the polls for the second time in a week, prevailing in the battle of absentee ballots on March 28 by a 21 to 20 margin, assuring his return as head of the village government.

The absentee-vote count, held at the Putnam County Board of Elections office in Carmel, gave Merandy a final total of 390 votes, or 52 percent. Challenger Alison Anthoine received 367 votes, a difference of 23 votes. They had been 22 votes apart on Election Day.

Sixty absentee ballots had been distributed, and 40 were returned before the polls opened. To be counted, any outstanding ballots had to be postmarked by March 20 and received by the board within seven days following the election. The board apparently received only one ballot after March 20.

To become mayor, Anthoine would have needed to win the absentee votes by a wide margin. Both candidates were at the Board of Elections office for the count.

After his victory was confirmed, Merandy said he had been "cautiously optimistic" about the March 28 count. "We thought we had the numbers," he said. "We had everything down pretty tight."

Asked how the close race might affect his second term, Merandy said, "I have to figure out why people..."
Roots and Shoots

Deer Resistant? Give Me a Break

By Pamela Doan

A fter trying to grow flowers and vegetables for years in a yard that’s surrounded by forest, I have learned a lot about the appetites of deer.

In Putnam County, there are as many as 100 deer per square mile in some places; the average is 40 to 60. Compare that to upstate areas where there are six to 10 deer per square mile and you can see the problem. As land has become more residential, there aren’t wolves or mountain lions to prey on the deer and their numbers keep increasing.

Like many forests, mine is barren of plants and tree seedlings except for the invasive plants deer won’t eat. Unless I put up a fence, that situation won’t change.

The ecosystem has shifted and habitat for other wildlife, insects and birds is lost, as well. I could fill this entire column with environmental and health issues but the point here is, what can you plant in these conditions?

Where I live, pretty much everything in the yard has been nibbled except for the awful Japanese barberry and the forsythia. I’ve learned that “deer resistance” is relative to how hungry the deer are. “All bets are off when they’re starving,” says Jennifer Stengle, an educator with the Cornell Cooperative Extension Resource Unit.

At a forum on March 26 hosted by the Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Stengle explained that deer are “adaptive generalists,” which means they can live almost anywhere and are not picky about their diet and shelter.

Plants that deer tend to leave alone have milky sap like milkweeds, hairy leaves like lamb’s ears and fragrant leaves like mints and lavender.

Some plants, shrubs and trees can withstand deer browsing better than others. Joe Pye weed, false indigo and bluestar are resilient and can recover.

Two kinds of spirea — meadow-sweet and steeple bush or hardhack — are generally left alone. Elderberries are a good example of a plant that evolved to protect itself from hungry wildlife. All parts of it are poisonous — the leaves, bark and buds — but when it produces fruit, the berries can be eaten. This strategy lets it produce new bushes because animals spread the seeds in their feces.

Deer have been found to browse pretty much all native evergreens and dogwoods, so these “need to be protected until they can get established” and become deer resistant, Stengle says.

All of these recommendations add value to the landscape beyond being deer tolerant. They feed pollinators or attract insects for birds or make shelter for other wildlife. We tend to rely on the same daffodils, forsythia and grasses that don’t have those qualities. By adding diversity and native plants, it’s possible to create a sustainable habitat that’s more than a pretty flowerbed.

I’ve heard of planting techniques to discourage deer that include surrounding deer favorites with deer-resistant plants. But Stengle says that doesn’t work. “The deer go right through to the plant they want,” she says.

The only defenses that research has shown to be effective are barriers and spray repellents based on putrescent egg solids known as “the stinky ones.” Stengle cautions against using herbal oil-based sprays because they can harm pollinators. “Oils don’t dry and they form a film over the insect,” she says. “If you spray plants that are blooming, you can kill the pollinators.” The stinky sprays haven’t been shown to do harm.

Want to grow vegetables? Spraying your tomatoes and lettuce with putrescent egg solids doesn’t improve the flavor, so you’ll need a fence. It needs to be about 6 feet high and buried 6 to 12 inches to keep out the woodchucks, rabbits and raccoons.

Merandy Wins Second Term (from Page 1)

wouldn’t vote for me. It seemed like we had gotten a lot accomplished.” He also said there was “a little bit of a mystery” to the slim margin, before adding, “I don’t think it helped that Mr. Guillaro sued at the last minute,” a reference to a $2.5 million suit filed in federal court against the village on March 15 by Butterfield developer Paul Guillaro that named Merandy.

“We’ll try our best and keep going,” the mayor said. “Hopefully our record will speak for itself. I might have to get out there a little more.”

His challenger took her loss in stride. “I’m disappointed but elated,” Anthoine said, referring to her near-victory as a first-time candidate. Asked if she might run for office again, she said, “I don’t know what I’ll do yet. I’ll figure out how I can have an effect.”

Anthoine, the former president of the Cold Spring Area Chamber of Commerce, said that during the campaign she received phone calls from residents who have never felt empowered to talk to the village government before, at least in this past go-round. There’s a chance here to still build bridges and make village politicians aware of things that people haven’t felt comfortable talking about.

Absentee ballots were not a factor in the race for two open village trustee seats, won by the incumbents. Fran Murphy received 34 absentee votes for a total of 503 and Marie Early got 22 for a count of 420. Challenger Peggy Schatzle received 21 for a total of 348.

Frank Haggerty, running for a second term as a write-in candidate, received 65 votes. Former trustee Bruce Campbell received two.

Thomas Costello, running unopposed for his fourth term as village justice, received 29 absentee votes for a total of 507. Jeff Silverstein, a partner with the marketing firm CLS, received three write-in votes.
The Rise of the Falls
Authorities study ways to cut crowds at Indian Brook site

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Shortly before storm Stella’s last blast of winter, thoughts in Philipstown Town Hall turned to summer — and the challenges it brings as crowds descend on Indian Brook Falls.

“It’s going to get abused again,” predicted Councilor John Van Tassel at a workshop on March 8 as he and other Town Board members brainstormed with residents and state and county officials on how to combat the congestion.

One of the scenic allures of Hudson Highlands State Park, Indian Brook Falls stands near Indian Brook Road, a narrow and historic dirt lane that veers off Route 9D, about a mile south of Cold Spring, and winds uphill through woodlands.

For centuries mostly a local treasure, the waterfall has become popular in the wider world, thanks to the Internet. In November neighbors asked the state to close access to the falls, at least temporarily, as a conservation measure.

Residents complained that boorish visitors drop trash, park haphazardly and quickly fill the eight parking spaces reserved for the Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary, downhill from the falls. Philipstown toughened parking restrictions but problems persist.

Moreover, despite bans on swimming, on hot days many visitors treat the falls as a backyard pool, as posts on social media attest.

At the workshop, Evan Thompson, assistant park manager for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, said he hopes new signage will lure swimmers and picnickers a few miles east to Fahnestock State Park, which offers picnic venues and Canopus Beach for swimming.

Thompson noted the relatively low staffing levels for Fahnestock (the site of his headquarters) and Hudson Highlands parks. He advised the residents and Town Board to write Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey to plead for more resources. “If you go to the top, that’s where you get results,” he said.

Thompson also suggested the state might provide a parking lot close enough to the falls for convenience but sufficiently distant to protect it. “That’s the best solution,” he said.

Sgt. William Quick of the Putnam County Sheriff’s Department said he and fellow officers will continue to ticket cars parked illegally on Indian Brook Road and have them towed. “We’re going to help you as much as we can,” he said. “That road is a highway and there should be no parking there.” He blamed many of the parking problems on “citiots.”

Complicating matters, he said, are the private drones that have started to swarm over the waterfall and Audubon sanctuary. He foresees trouble, he said, “if one of these things drops out of the sky and hits someone.”

Unfortunately, Quick acknowledged, sheriff’s deputies cannot spend endless hours patrolling Indian Brook Road.

“I don’t think it’s a good solution to be tying you up, keeping you away from the rest of town,” agreed Councilor Michael Leonard. He suggested that cars parked illegally could be “booted,” immobilizing them until the driver pays the ticket.

Quick replied that while that strategy might work in Manhattan, there are no ATMs near the falls for drivers to get cash to pay their fines. Nor would deputies ferry drivers — often wearing only swimsuits — to Cold Spring, he said. “I can’t be riding around with 18-year-old girls in bikinis in the back of my car.”

Councilor Nancy Montgomery recommended greater collaboration between Philipstown, county and state officials, including lobbying in Albany. “Nobody’s ever gone up there to talk to the governor,” she said.

“Everything you do” helps, Quick said. “Throw everything at it.”

As an immediate deterrent, Van Tassel proposed using boulders to line spots along Indian Brook Road that might be attractive for illegal parking.

In the weeks after the workshop, mounds of snow came, followed by runoff, mud and heavy rains. Van Tassel told The Current on a drizzly March 28 that when the weather cleared he and Highway Superintendent Carl Friisenda intended to scout out the best locations for the rocks.
Seeking sanctuary

Claudio Vele was one of the first people we met when we arrived in Garrison 11 years ago. He worked for a local stonemason. He was undocumented. Claudio lived in Peekskill in a small apartment, where he also worked as a tailor on inclement days and during the worst of the winter. Claudio was Ecuadorian. He had come to the U.S. to earn money for his family 10 years before we met him. His goal was to ensure that his children were educated to the highest level they could achieve. During the time we knew Claudio, all of them went to university, completing advanced degrees in engineering and software development.

When we met Claudio he spoke little English, but my wife and I spoke Spanish, so we engaged in a daily dialogue with him as he built the walls and patios we had contracted through his employer. He quickly became more of a friend than an employee. Convinced that he could make more money as an independent contractor, we suggested he strike out on his own and made calls to our friends, encouraging them to use his outstanding masonry skills to rebuild their century-old stone walls. One client led to the next and before long his hourly rate rose from $10 an hour to $25 and, for many of his clients, lunch was a part of the bargain. There are few streets in Garrison that have not been touched by the hand of this craftsman.

As the years passed, Claudio went from being a friend to a part of the family, joining us for Thanksgiving or Christmas celebrations. He would arrive at our house in a newly tailored suit and would show us pictures of his family and the house that his wife was building with his hard-earned money. It was during these moments that we began to encourage him to return to his family in Ecuador. Each year he would respond “Si, el ano que viene” (next year), but that year would come and go and he would stay.

In retrospect, I realize that he was afraid to go home: he had become more American than Ecuadorian, his English honed from daily use. His life was here along the Hudson; he was not only geographically but culturally distant from the city of his birth after almost 20 years away.

Finally, Claudio relented. He obtained an Ecuadorian passport, packed his bag and returned to Cuenca, a small city high in the Andes. When he arrived “home” he quickly discovered that his family had moved on during those years, depending on him for money but not love. His wife rejected him and his children had learned to live without him. He called us pleading to find a way for him to return. We contacted a lawyer who convinced us of the possibility of this given his history as an undocumented citizen.

Over time, Claudio accepted his plight and retreated to a small farm outside the city, living alone. Two years after his return, he died of pneumonia at age 58 and was not found for many days.

Sanctuary is not a city or a state. It is a place in the heart. We must decide if our hearts are open or shuttered. Are we willing to see each person before us, without regard to the things that make us different, with generosity and compassion? Abraham Lincoln’s call to “the better angels of our nature” on the eve of civil war resonates here and now with equal provocation and urgency.

Eric Stark, Garrison

We are all in this country because our ancestors came from somewhere. Some came as stowaways, some came with first-class tickets. Some came in chains, some of their own volition. Virtually everyone in this country, however, has roots somewhere else.

At its best, America has been a beacon of liberty, a refuge for people seeking freedom; at our worst, we have been ourselves a source of oppression.

In this season, heading toward the holidays of Easter and Passover, it is time for us to recommit ourselves to the better angels of our nature. (Continued on next page)

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Taking it to the Street

Have you ever been part of an April Fool’s prank?

“When I was little, my family hid my three dogs and said they ran away. I was so confident they’d come back, my family then tried to convince me my face was bleeding.”

- Tyler Cruz, Hopewell

“My friends and I tell each other crazy lies.” - Saleh Shoua, Cold Spring, with granddaughter Zohar

“My history professor announced that our three-hour class would only be an hour. After an hour, he said, ‘April Fool’s, suckers! You’re staying here.’ ”

- Nicole Bento, Putnam Valley
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  (from previous page)

It is time that we, as a community and as a nation, recommit ourselves to being a sanctuary for those who come to America seeking better lives.

A sanctuary is a powerful, concrete symbol of God’s constant presence among people. God dwells with people, whoever they are, whatever they have done. Divine love is unconditional. No matter who you are and what you have done, God does not abandon you, and neither should those of us who consider ourselves to be servants of the Holy.

Our sacred writings tell us again and again that we are to care for those in need. The Book of Matthew (25:35) teaches in the name of Jesus, “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

In the Book of Leviticus (19:33) we are taught, “If a stranger sojourns with thee in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourns with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt and I am the Lord your God.”

Informed by the teachings of our traditions and our own moral consciousness, we call upon the Beacon City Council to pass a robust sanctuary city resolution.

As people of faith and conscience, we pledge to resist any federal policies to target and deport millions of undocumented immigrants and discriminate against marginalized communities. We will work to open up our communities as sanctuary spaces for those targeted by hate, and work alongside our friends, families and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people.

We call on all people of conscience—whether our families have been here long enough that we are reckoned as insiders, or whether we just arrived—to welcome those seeking refuge because we, too, were strangers in the land of Egypt, and this promised land, these United States, let us in.

Pastor Edward Benson, New Vision Church of Deliverance, Fishkill
Pastor Ben Larson-Wolbrink, First Presbyterian Church of Beacon
Pastor Ricardo Pacheco, Tabernacle of Christ, Beacon
Rev. Lieta Singleton, St. James AME Zion Church, Beacon
Rabbi Brent Chaim Spodek, Beacon Hebrew Alliance

Putnam tourism

As you reported (“Who Do You Work For?” March 24), I was a member (and treasurer) of the Putnam County Visitors’ Bureau board of directors, but only for a short time. I decided to quit because I wanted to take a more active role at the bureau and applied to be its executive director, so it would have been a conflict of interest for me to remain on the board. I was of course disappointed when the board didn’t choose me for the position, although I didn’t expect it, and I knew the direction the rest of the board wanted to take.

I wish the board members the best and hope they will have the support of the county Legislature. It seems to me that some legislators are not playing fairly and certainly not helping the situation. The way the miniscule, stupid and totally unrelated injection of the board chairman, Barney Molloy, who serves fairly and honestly, for no stipend, was brought up at the March 16 Economic Development Committee meeting demonstrated the legislators care more about appearance than substance. And the treatment by the legislators of interim Executive Director Frank Smith, who has tried to clean up the mess that the legislature made without any real help, demonstrates their ignorance and lack of discretion.

Tourism in Putnam County will never increase until the legislators show some progressive planning and initiative and look for ways for the county to make money rather than rely only on property taxes. They are supposed to be leaders.

Phil Tolmach, Carmel

Filmmaker says thanks

I would like to thank the residents and businesses of Cold Spring for welcoming Emilie Jackson and I these last few weeks as we documented the village elections. As a journalist and filmmaker, I’d been looking since the November election for a project that would explore and promote civic engagement. So you can imagine my surprise when my mom, Alison Anthoine, came back from the Women’s March in Washington, D.C., determined to run for mayor. Inspired in so many ways, I knew I had to document it. I look forward to speaking with as many residents and patrons of the Village of Cold Spring as I can.

Elizabeth Wolff, New York

Remember When?

This issue marks one year since we changed our name to The Highlands Current from Philipstown.info and The Paper to better reflect our expanding coverage of the region. See highlandscurrent.com for a video by Gregory Gunder of the printing on April 1, 2016 of the first issue of The Current.

The board of directors, reporters and staff thank you for your continuing support of our nonprofit enterprise, which depends on readers and advertisers for its existence. We hope you will continue to support founder Gordon Stewart’s vision of a community-supported news source not only financially but in other ways, such as commenting on stories, ordering mail delivery, following us on social media and telling merchants you saw their ad in The Current.

SITE VISIT - APRIL 9, 2017

The Philipstown Planning Board will meet on Sunday April 9, 2017 at 8 a.m. to inspect the site of the Hudson Highland Reserve, located at Route 9 and Horton Road. The Board will meet at the cul-de-sac at the end of Horton Road. In case of inclement weather the site visit could be postponed, with notice given to Board members through a telephone chain previously established.

PHILIPSTOWN PLANNING BOARD

The Philipstown Planning Board will be doing two site visits April 9, 2017

The Philipstown Planning Board will meet on Sunday, April 9, 2017 for the following site visits:

- **Index Industrial Design** – 1602 Route 9, Garrison, at 9:30 a.m.
- **Rockman - Berquist** – 67 Old West Point Road, Garrison, at 10:30 a.m.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING CHANGE

The Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals has changed the date of its regular monthly meeting to April 24, 2017.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main Street, Cold Spring, NY.
In Drug Epidemic, Looking for Answers
Forum considers ‘gateway’ drugs, Narcan, national security

By Liz Scheltenk Armstrong

Putnam County’s top law-enforcement officials joined rehab experts, educators and an audience of about 50 people on March 28 at the Garrison School to discuss the parameters of a drug crisis that claimed three Garrison graduates over 18 months in 2014 and 2015 and a fourth more recently. There have been more than 40 unintentional overdose deaths in Putnam County since 2014.

The forum, organized by the Garrison school board, concluded with comments from the floor. These included impassioned remarks by Nancy Montgomery, a Philips town Town Board member who lost her nephew to heroin two years ago, who called for more county treatment facilities.

Another attendee, Heidi Snyder, the owner of Drug World, promised that its stores of Narcan, an opioid antidote. "Our tiny school perhaps more in as concentrated a fashion as we have," said School Board President Raymond O’Rourke. "Our tiny school perhaps more than any other in the state has counted the cost of the epidemic in the lives of recent graduates. This meeting grew out of our collective shock and sadness over these losses."

Those graduates include Anthony Yannitelli, who died of an overdose at age 23 in 2015 and whose mother, Mary Ellen Yannitelli, Montgomery’s sister, told the group: "My son is one of the statistics referred to tonight."

A local national dilemma
Calling opioid abuse “the issue of our time,” Putnam County Sheriff Donald Smith linked local drug problems to the defense of the nation. The drug trade involves organized crime and is “a matter of national security,” he said. "I’m concerned about international terrorism and international cartels. They’re destroying America from within and bringing this poison into our communities.”

Michael Piazza, Putnam County commissioner of mental health, social services and the Youth Bureau, and Garrison guidance counselor Michael Williams both noted that addiction defies stereotypes so that children who’ve been mistreated may shun drugs, while some who seemingly have everything going for them become addicts. “No one can tell how things are going to turn out,” Piazza said.

The panelists attributed the opioid crisis in large part to the proliferation, starting in the late 1990s, of prescription pain-killers. Children typically steal pills from family medicine cabinets and share them with friends.

“The pills are the gateway drug that leads to addiction,” Gerber said. Williams noted that even grade-school students “know where to get them and who’s doing it.”

Gerber also argued that medicating children to boost attentiveness or for similar reasons can teach them “at a very early age that drugs take care of stuff; that drugs work.”

He said the controversial idea that marijuana is a gateway drug that can lead to opiate addiction overlooks the larger concern, which is “just how dangerous marijuana is all by itself.” In the 1960s, marijuana had a level of THC, which accounts for the high, of 5 percent; today marijuana has THC levels of 90 percent, and is mostly scentless and easier to conceal, even at school, he said.

Michelle Stringham, director of outreach at the Walter Hoving Home in Garrison, which assists women, said she believed marijuana led to her own past addiction.

Law enforcement
Asked what police might do to catch more drug dealers, Putnam County District Attorney Robert Tendy cited the limitations of law enforcement. “I don’t think arrests are going to enable us to get our arms around this problem,” he said. “We’re doing so much, trying so hard, doing so well (with arrests and convictions), and the problem is getting worse.”

He noted that Putnam is 18th among New York’s 62 counties in per-capita opioid overdose deaths. More than 300,000 Americans died from overdoses in the last seven years, he said. “That’s insane; insane. I don’t have the answer. I really don’t.”

He added: “When a kid gets high, it’s a relief from something, it’s gratification, it’s a mental stimulus, and they’re going to do it again.” He urged adults to help “fill their minds with something other than booze and drugs. If we don’t do that, this is just another one of a million meetings that’s gone on for the last 20 years.”

Smith said tools are available, including his department’s anonymous phone line to report suspected drug activity — “every one of those calls is followed up” — and prescription drug disposal boxes such as one installed in Philipstown Town Hall.

An antidote
The panelists agreed that Narcan, an opioid antidote that can be administered to revive someone who has overdosed, is a crucial tool that saves lives.

Yet, the drug “is a double-edged sword,” Gerber said. He cited instances of addicts being revived twice in the same day and reports of “Narcan parties,” in which addicts purposefully overdose, knowing they can be saved.

Tendy said some abusers boast of multiple Narcan rescues. “When you get that screwed up, it’s almost a sick game you’re playing,” he said.

Audience perspectives
Snyder, of Drug World, said she wants her stores to offer Narcan for customers who have addicts in their families to keep on hand. “We are your neighbors,” she said. “I wanted to give you some solutions and not just more problems.” New York allows pharmacists to request permission from the state to provide Narcan, also known as naloxone, without a prescription.

After Smith highlighted efforts by County Executive MaryEllen Odell to battle addiction among young people, Town Board member Montgomery objected.

Montgomery criticized the county for downplaying federal initiatives that offer funding to combat high-intensity drug-traffic areas. (The Putnam County Democratic Committee has likewise accused Odell, a Republican, of having “minimized federal assistance received from Democratic lawmakers for combating the heroin crisis.”) Montgomery called for more drug-treatment facilities with beds for overnight stays for adolescents, an approach adopted by Dutchess County.

“We’re here because our kids are in the ground and we want to know what you’re going to do next,” she told the county officials.
Haldane Plans Athletic Hall of Fame

Plus, other highlights from March 21 meeting

By Lily Gordon

Haldane High School would like to institute an athletic hall of fame on the wall of the gymnasium alongside banners that honor basketball players who have scored at least 1,000 points in their careers and cross-country record holders, pending board approval. The hall of fame would recognize students who graduated at least five years prior to induction, as well as coaches and teams, said Athletic Director Chris Salumn. Salumn told the board he envisions a nine-person committee comprised of three Haldane coaches, a school administrator, a community member, the president of the Blue Devil Booster Club, two alumni and one retired employee. Salumn will oversee the group. The bylaws and details on nomination will be published by early May and inductees will be celebrated annually at a homecoming ceremony.

While the 1,000-point club is a traditional way to recognize basketball players, a hall of fame would recognize athletes from all sports, bring alumni back to visit and highlight improvements to the athletic program, he said.

In other business...
• Morgan Hotaling, a senior at Haldane High School, was honored as a Student of Distinction by Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES. Hotaling, who will attend Orange County Community College next year, plans to pursue a career as a physical therapist.
• Haldane freshmen saw Phantom of the Opera on Broadway on March 30; sophomores visited Washington, D.C., from March 29 to 31; and the senior class left for a Habitat for Humanity service trip in New Orleans on March 28.
• The gymnasium was filled to capacity for all three performances of Into the Woods on March 17, 18, and 19.
• The board projected there will be two kindergarten classes next year (there are 39 students enrolled), three first-grade classes and likely four second-grade classes (up from three).

Garrison School Finalizes $10.5M Budget

Plus, other highlights from March 22 meeting

By Lily Gordon

The Garrison School Board will vote on a proposed $10.48 million budget on April 5, followed by a public meeting on May 3 and a vote by the public on May 16. The projected budget reflects an increase in spending of $188,849 from 2016-17.

Byline: “It’s a pretty restricted budget,” said trustee David Gelber at the board’s March 22 workshop. “The difference is basically for contract-mandated increases in teacher salaries.” He asked Superintendent Laura Mitchell: “Do you feel as though you’re foregoing things that we need to keep it at this level?”

Mitchell said she was confident the school had the experts it needed, and that the restructuring of staff will address concerns about literacy and math instruction. “We wanted to look at how we could redesign and restructure so we don’t impact the budget so harshly,” she said. “We’re meeting programmatic needs with our own staff. These adjustments are saving us money, but we’re still addressing our needs. We have the personnel.”

Garrison’s “fiscal-stress level” is expected to increase to 17.8 percent from 13.3 percent in 2016. The monitoring system, a tool of the state comptroller’s office, is designed to be an early warning system for fiscal problems. A level of 25 percent or more triggers concern.

In other business...
• Garrison teachers participated in a professional development learning day on March 17. They spent the morning in accelerated reader and math training with a consultant from the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center. Teachers also met with a consultant from Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES on classroom team-building and positive approaches to discipline.
• After being contacted by several families about sending Garrison graduates to public high schools other than Haldane in Cold Spring and James O’Neill in Highlands Falls, Mitchell said she has started gathering data on non-resident tuition and transportation costs.
• The board adopted the 2017-18 calendar. The first day of school will be Tuesday, Sept. 5.

Taking the Test ... or Not

Like all school districts in the state, those in the Highlands administered the Common Core English language arts tests to students in grades 3 to 8 on March 28-30, as and occurred last year, a significant percentage of parents opted out to have their children take the exam. (The state math exams will be given May 2-4.)

In 2014 about 5 percent of New York students did not take the test, but that number has since grown to about 20 percent statewide. In parts of Long Island, opt-out rates have been drawn between advocacy groups such as the NYS Allies for Public Education ("You can refuse the test") and High Achievement New York ("Say yes to the test").

Parents may hold their children out of the tests (they are given something else to do) because they oppose them in principle, because their child has a learning disability, or because the child does not read English well. According to data compiled by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), the percentage of students who don’t take the test because of learning disabilities has ranged from zero in Haldane last year to 40 percent in Garrison in 2015. Few of the children who don’t take the test in the Highlands cite language challenges (0 to 3 percent).

Common Core test results will not be tied to teacher evaluations in New York until at least the 2020-21 school year.

Opt-out Rates on ELA Test (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Haldane</th>
<th>Beacon</th>
<th>Lakeland</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>2016-17</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>2017-18</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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1 Haldane: 3.4 percent opted out in grades 3 to 5 and 14.4 percent in grades 6 to 8.
2 Elementary numbers in Beacon ranged from 16 percent at Glenham to 27 percent at Forrestal. At Rombout Middle School, it was 45 percent.
3 Elementary numbers in Lakeland ranged from 3.1 percent at Putnam Valley to 3.5 percent at Putnam Baldwinsville.

Sources: NYSED “District Level Test Refusal” for ELA, 2015, 2016; school districts

COLD SPRING

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Ideally located on a cul de sac, minutes to RR, school, & Cold Spring Village.

Refreshed 4 BR, 3 full Bth, Split Level

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300-Plus Unit Development Proposed for Beacon Train Station Area (from Page 1)

be demolished. The rest of the area, which sits diagonally between the Tompkins Terrace development and the train station, is wooded, and plans call for the creation of an over one-acre park in the middle of the development.

On March 22, architect Aryeh Siegel told the Planning Board that Scenic Beacon is asking for three variances, the most notable of which is an exception to the city's limit on units per building for the site's zoning district. Calling the proposed development a “more modern take on a large planning project,” Siegel said that project designs call for as many as 59 units in some buildings to maximize capacity but reduce the construction footprint.

The project is still early in the Planning Board’s review process. The board must next determine if the development meets environmental safety requirements. If it does, the city’s Zoning Board of Appeals could then vote on the variances and the Planning Board could schedule a public hearing on the project.

Feedback was lukewarm at the March 22 meeting. Planning Board member Jill Reynolds noted that she’s not “crazy about the overall approach” of the project, saying it will “look like any suburban apartment development.”

Board Chairman Jay Sheers said he’s concerned about added traffic the development will bring, and suggested that the developer could scale the project back slightly.

In addition to moving toward the environmental review process, the Planning Board voted to hire an engineer to review a traffic study on the project, and to have its architectural review subcommittee review building plans.

Concerns that the project will ‘look like any suburban apartment development.”

A view of the site at 22 Edgewater Place in Beacon

Beacon Committee Suggests Charter Changes

Voters would decide on longer terms, health insurance
By Jeff Simms

A citizen committee has recommended that the terms for the Beacon City Council’s two at-large members be extended from two to four years and that all six members and the mayor lose the option of paid health insurance — earning an increased stipend instead.

The recommendations by the nine-member committee, appointed last year by Mayor Randy Casale, would require changing the city charter. The committee also suggested a number of changes to the language of the charter, but the term extensions and health-care changes would need voter approval.

Beacon has four wards, each of which is represented by a council member, plus the at-large members. All members are elected to two-year terms, and each seat is contested at the same time. The mayor serves four years.

Four-year terms for the at-large members would encourage longer-term planning, the committee wrote, while the ward-based seats would continue to be contested more frequently, allowing the council to remain closely attuned to neighborhood concerns. Any changes to the at-large terms would go into effect after the 2019 election.

The city has offered health insurance to council members, who work part-time, since at least 1988, but the provision was only added to the charter last year.

According to Gerald Benjamin, associate vice president for regional engagement of the SUNY-New Paltz Benjamin Center, who advised the committee, the city pays $47,000 annually to insure the three council members who opt for coverage. The increased stipends — $2,000 for each council member, as well as a $5,000 raise for the mayor (who now earns $25,000) — would cost the city $17,000.

Council members currently earn $9,000 annually. If the health coverage provision is removed from the charter, they (and the mayor) would be permitted to buy insurance through the city plan. While many municipalities offer insurance to elected officials, Benjamin said he knew of no other in New York that includes the provision as part of its charter.

The majority of the committee members believe that the city should not provide such benefits to part-time elected officials, Benjamin said, adding that doing so has “created some skepticism among members of the community.”

“The value of these benefits exceeds the salary for council members,” the committee wrote. “Members who accept these benefits are therefore effectively compensated at a much higher rate than any colleagues who do not, creating an inequity.”

Because of rising costs, paying for health insurance for elected officials is a concern across the state, Benjamin said.

CHICKEN BEFORE THE EGG DECORATING pARTy
Sat., April 8, 2 - 5:30 p.m.
GARRISON ART CENTER

See the chickies and roosters, then decorate silly to sophisticated eggs!
Light fare of chili & cornbread, cupcakes and such. Sign up now!
www.garrisonartcenter.org or call 845.424.3960 for details. Limited seating.

Tai Chi and Qigong

Depot Folk
The Mammals
Saturday, April 8
4 p.m. Vocal Workshop / 7 p.m. Concert

Dialogues with Drama presents:
The Good Person of Szechuan
by Bertolt Brecht
April 12, 7:30 p.m.

phlipstowndepottheatre.org • Tickets: www.brownpapertickets.com
Garrison Landing, Garrison, NY (Theatre is adjacent to train station.)

23 West Center Street, Beacon

Wednesdays
Beginners: 7-8:30pm
Advanced: 8:30-10:00pm

Sundays
Beginners: 9-10:30am
Advanced: 10:30-Noon

Beginners: $10/class (4-week sessions $25)
Advanced: $20/class (10-class card $150)

MarcSabin.com 212.960.3238 Facebook.com/HVTaiChi
Second Time Around

Beacon shop specializes in refinishing paints

By Alison Rooney

When Jessica Cole and her husband decided to move closer to his family in the Hudson Valley, the cost of shipping their furniture from Las Vegas was so expensive they sold it instead.

The plan was to buy new furniture in New York, but of course that was also expensive and quickly depleted their budget. Undaunted, Jessica hit flea markets and yard sales. She found plenty of furniture, but most needed refinishing.

By Alison Rooney

How hard could that be? After doing research online, she soon was collecting "ooohs" and "ahhs" from friends, family and neighbors. A side business — perfect for the mother of two young children — was born.

That sideline has since turned into a Beacon storefront, Knot Too Shabby, where customers can purchase paints and other finishes for refinishing as well as take workshops to learn how to do it. Having learned about Chalk Paint, a brand from the British company Annie Sloan, Cole adopted its no sanding, priming or stripping techniques. Scouring yard sales, she learned by doing, and started "flipping" refinished furniture for a reasonable profit on Craigslist and Facebook.

The first piece she refinished sold within hours for $350. "One piece turned into five, and it snowballed from there," she recalls. "I was selling pieces and taking refinish requests, sometimes up to 10 per week."

People began asking, "Do you have a store?" and where to find Chalk Paint, which can't be purchased online. Her husband, who is a police officer in Westchester County, convinced her to think about a retail space. She contacted Annie Sloan about becoming a dealer, or "stockist," for its products. After a long phone interview in which she described her vision for the store, she was sent by train for a visit to the company's headquarters in Louisiana.

She did not go into the venture cold. After growing up as a "military brat" in the south and southwest, Cole landed in Las Vegas, where she worked in design and construction and in the engineering department at MGM Resorts before moving east.

Cole says she enjoys leading workshops at the store, which are three hours long and held outside store hours. "My passion is teaching people how to do it."

(Continued on Page 11)

Write On!

Author meets with students to foster ideas

By Alison Rooney

"OK, this is kind of complicated: As long as you have the orb nobody will wake up. They have to combine their orbs to make the sun rise."

With that vivid introduction to her plot, sixth-grader Maya Gelber grabbed the attention of the other young writers at the table, all eager to share their work as part of the Aspiring Writers Experience Club for Tweens and Teens (A.W.E.) led by young-adult author Kimberly Sabatini. The group, launched in August, meets on the first Thursday of each month at the Desmond-Fish Library for an hour of talking and writing.

A recent meeting began with an exchange of ideas, with writers offering explanations of their starting points or talking shop. "I had a dream and got a lot of ideas from it," said Kate Parker, another middle-schooler. "You get invited to this place; there are kids with special powers which are mined from sapphires. They enchant them and make an army of jewel soldiers."

Sabatini, who lives in Garrison, encouraged the students while also peppering them with questions. "This is vivid," she said, "but I want to get a mental picture. Is this a current setting, medieval? What about the buildings — are they like castles, Hogwarts, or futuristic, maybe? Do you have a main character?"

After this exchange, Sabatini brought out a worksheet designed to get each writer thinking about her work (all are regulars are girls; at this session they were joined by Sabatini's sixth-grade son, Aidan). Titled "Seven Major Structure Steps," the sheet elicited responses to challenges such as the protagonist's weakness, problems, moral flaw, desire and what plan the protagonist would use to defeat their opponent and reach their goal.

"This is a great way to start the process," Sabatini explained. "You have a wonderful hook but you still need to come up with your main character and a desire. This is a rough draft that you're not so emotionally attached to that you can't alter it. Even a picture book should have all these points."

A discussion of the word opponent followed, with Sabatini noting an opponent in a story doesn't always equate to "bad guy." In fact, it is smart to give the opponent some qualities that a reader can relate to. She drew a comparison to a mother not giving permission to her child doing a risky activity. This opened a window for another writer, Noula O'Reilly, who asked "Can my opponent not be a person?" ("Yes"), and another, Lorelei McCarthy, who had a lightbulb moment, exclaiming "I just figured it out!"

After discussing "battles which illuminate" (Continued on Page 12)
Calendar Highlights
For upcoming events visit highlandscurrent.com. Send event listings to calendar@highlandscurrent.com

TROUT WEEKEND

FRIDAY, MARCH 31
Party Like an April Fool (grades 6-8) 6:30 – 8 p.m. Butterfield Library 10 Morris Ave., Cold Spring 845-265-3040 | butterfieldlibrary.org
The Who's Tommy (Musical) 7 p.m. Beacon High School 101 Matteawan Road, Beacon beaconplayers.com
Strange Fruit (Documentary) with Q&A 7 p.m. First Presbyterian Church 50 Liberty St., Beacon moviesatthematterbeacon.org

SATURDAY, APRIL 1
Annual White Elephant Sale 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. 1601 Route 9D, Cold Spring 845-225-7777 | puthumane.org 1515 Route 22, Brewster
Wine and Chocolate Festival Benefits Putnam Humane Society 7 p.m. O'Neill High School 477 Main St., Beacon 845-855-1300 | townecrier.com 10 Garrison's Landing, Garrison
Depot Docs: Best of Enemies with Q&A 7:30 p.m. Philpstown Depot Theatre 10 Garrison's Landing, Garrison 845-424-3900 | philpstowndepottheatre.org
Judy Collins 8:30 p.m. Towne Crier Café 379 Main St., Beacon 845-655-1300 | townecrier.com
BMF Lollapalooza Show 10 p.m. Dogwood 47 E. Main St., Beacon 845-202-7500 | dogwoodbar.com

SUNDAY, APRIL 2
Beacon Flea Market Opens for Season 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. 6 Henry St., Beacon 845-202-0094 | beaconflea.com
Wine and Chocolate Festival 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Patterson Rec Center See details under Saturday.
Trout Weekend Noon – 4 p.m. Wildlife Education Center 25 Boulevard, Cornwall 845-534-5506 | hhnm.org 1 & 2:30 p.m. Meet the Trout 1:30 & 3 p.m. Brook trout feeding
Center for Creative Education 12:30 p.m. Creative Strings Orchestra (First Session) 1:30 p.m. Drumming (ages 3-10) (First Session) 464 Main St., Beacon
Peter and the Wolf Classics for Kids: Peter and the Wolf 3 p.m. Howland Cultural Center 477 Main St., Beacon 845-765-3012 | howlandmusic.org
The Who's Tommy (Musical) 7 p.m. Beacon High School See details under Friday.
The Drowsy Chaperone 7 p.m. O'Neill High School See details under Friday.

MONDAY, APRIL 3
Beacon City Council 7 p.m. City Hall (Courtroom) 1 Municipal Plaza, Beacon 845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org
Book Club: Hamilton 7 p.m. Butterfield Library See details under Friday.

TUESDAY, APRIL 4
Putnam County Legislature 7 p.m. Historic Courthouse 44 Glenbea Ave., Carmel 845-208-7800 | putnamcountyny.com
Haldane School Board 7 p.m. Haldane School (Music Room) 15 Craigside Drive, Cold Spring 845-265-9254 | haldaneschool.org
Pilgrim Pipeline Forum 7 p.m. Howland Cultural Center 477 Main St., Beacon beacondemocrats.org

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5
Storm King Opens for Season 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. 1 Museum Road, New Windsor 845-534-3115 | stormking.org
Hudson Valley Food & Wine Experience 6 – 9 p.m. Villa Borone Hilltop Manor 466 Route 6, Mahopac 845-628-9284 | pnwec.org
Garrison School Board 7 p.m. Garrison School 1100 Route 9D, Garrison 845-424-3689 | gfs.org

THURSDAY, APRIL 6
100th Anniversary of America’s Entry Into WWI 11 a.m. National Purple Heart Hall of Honor 74 Temple Hill Road, New Windsor 845-561-1765 | theneverpurpleheart.org
Good Food: What to Eat and Where to Shop 6 p.m. Howland Library 313 Main St., Beacon 845-831-1134 | beaconlibrary.org
Writing Club for Tweens and Teens 6:30 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library See details under Saturday.
Marketing Strategies (SBA Workshop) 6:30 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library See details under Friday.
Henry Knox & His Train of Artillery (Talk) 7 p.m. Fort Montgomery Historic Site 690 Route 9W, Fort Montgomery 845-446-2134 | nysparks.com
Philpstown Town Board 7:30 p.m. Town Hall 238 Main St., Cold Spring 845-265-5200 | philpstown.com
Peter Frampton 8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley See details under Saturday.

FRIDAY, APRIL 7
Passover Seder 6 p.m. Reform Temple of Putnam Valley 362 Church Road, Putnam Valley 845-528-4774 | rtpv.org
Sam Bartman: It's About Time (Opening) 11 a.m. 845-528-4774 | rtpv.org
Sundays Alone: A Matter of Fact (Opening) 6 – 8 p.m. Butler Library 121 Main St., Cold Spring 845-809-5145 | busterlevigallery.com

Putnam County Legislature 7 p.m. Historic Courthouse 44 Glenbea Ave., Carmel 845-208-7800 | putnamcountyny.com
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Second Time Around  (from Page 9)

themselves,” she says. Chalk Paint 101 teaches participants how to use four basic finishes, while 102 delves into specialized techniques like gold leaf, decoupage and stenciling. Cole is planning workshops on kitchen cabinets and plans to open a garden behind the shop for crafting parties and outdoor workshops.

Although the distressed farmhouse look is popular, Cole says “it’s not all rustic.” The water-based paints come in 35 colors and are odor-free, dry quickly and adhere to metal, glass, plastic and lamp bases, as well as wood, she says. Cole estimates that 85 percent of her customers come specifically for the paint. “Most know I’m here; they come from Connecticut, lots of Westchester, across the river and even from the city for the workshops,” she says. Knot Too Shabby also stocks greeting cards, handmade signs, pillows, totes and jewelry, and there are additional furniture pieces stored offsite that are shared on Facebook.

Knot Too Shabby is located at 155 Main St. Call 845-440-8001 or visit knottooshabbyny.com.

Saltwash is a popular product at Knot Too Shabby.

Photos by A. Rooney

NEW CICADA TRIO
IVA BITTOVÁ
violin, voice
TIMOTHY HILL
overtone singing, guitar
DAVID ROSENBERG
clarinet, cicadas
Friday April 7 2017 8 PM
at the door
THE HOWLAND CULTURAL CENTER
477 Main Street
Beacon, NY 12508
845.831.4988

https://www.facebook.com/equinoxseries/
“I absolutely wanted to be a writer as a kid but I realized that if people read my words, they would know what I was thinking. I didn’t feel brave enough to defend my thoughts.”

“I didn’t care if you write or not, I care that you like to write,” Sabatini said of her teaching style. “I always format a small exercise they can incorporate into their writing, and a lot of this is sharing, talking to each other.”

Sabatini grew up in Beacon and attended Beacon High School, where she said she wasn’t open about her writing. “I absolutely wanted to be a writer as a kid, but I realized that if people read my words, they would know what I was thinking. I didn’t feel brave enough to defend my thoughts.

“Instead of being so vulnerable and honest, I switched to writing things that didn’t have much emotional depth. Not surprisingly, it didn’t feel good. I’ve always considered writers to be amazing and talented people and I just didn’t see myself that way.”

Sabatini, whose young-adult novel, Touching The Surface, was published in 2011, does many school visits, including in Newburgh, where she found an attentive audience. “I was the first kid in my family to go away to college,” she told the students. “I was in the guidance office every day for a year and a half, looking for scholarships and opportunities. At that time no one ever told me about the possible job options open to writers. I was unaware that I could use writing as a path to working for a publishing house, becoming an editor or working in library science. So I became a teacher.”

Sabatini worked as a special-education teacher for years, returning to writing when her father passed away in 2005 as a way to “make sense of that experience.” She submitted her first novel to 32 agents before one took her as a client and sold the book to a division of Simon & Schuster.

When talking to students, Sabatini uses this as an example of perseverance and the necessity of editing and re-editing. She has said her favorite part of writing is when she realizes “unintended threads” have “woven themselves throughout the story…. My subconscious seems to know more about me than I can ever imagine.”

Students are welcome to join A.W.E. at any time. It next meets at the library at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 6.

What: Writing class for tweens and teens
Where: Desmond-Fish Library, Garrison
When: Thursday, April 6, at 6:30 p.m.

Visit highlandscurrent.com for news updates and latest information.
Notes from the Cold Spring Village Board

Budget hearing set for April 11

By Michael Turton

A public hearing to consider the 2017-18 Cold Spring budget will be held at Village Hall, 85 Main St., at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 11. It calls for general fund spending of just under $2.1 million, with about $1.6 million raised through property taxes, an amount that falls within the state-imposed tax cap.

State law requires that the annual budget be adopted by May 1. The tentative plan is available at coldspringny.gov and copies will be made available at the hearing.

In other business …

• The village plans to write state Assemblywoman Sandy Galef and state Senator Sue Serino to urge them to reject Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s proposal to mandate that all county executives develop a municipal consolidation plan for voters to consider.

• Seven property owners along Peekskill Road and Route 9D said they will hire a consultant to recommend possible improvements to their privately owned water line. Greg Phillips, the superintendent of water and wastewater, said his department carried out emergency repairs to the line in December after it developed a 100,000 gallon-per-day leak, and residents were billed for time and materials. Phillips said the line was also repaired about 18 years ago.

• Phillips reported that work on the Fair Street sewer line should begin around May 1.

• Anne Impellizzeri was appointed to the Code Update Committee, filling a vacancy created by the resignation of Donald MacDonald.

• The Altice Group and Cablevision of Wappingers Falls said it will seek renewal of its cable-television franchise with the village, which is set to expire in 2020. Last year the village received $44,000 from the agreement.

• The Planning Board has submitted a new application form for board review. Planning Board Chair Matt Francisco said the new form can be filled out electronically, includes more user-friendly language and should expedite the applications process.

• Trustees approved the Planning Board’s request to grant a parking waiver for 124 Main St. as part of the conversion of the second floor above the Silver Spoon Restaurant to a five-room hotel.

From March 16

• Phillips reported that nearly 90 percent of the new cellular water meters have been installed in Cold Spring and Nelsonville. He said the village should consider penalties for the 100 or so accounts for which owners have not arranged for the free installation. Once the installation contract expires residents will have to pay the cost of installing the meter.

• Phillips also reported that a draft report from Tectonic Engineering on design alternatives for repairs to the upper reservoir dam is expected by the end of March. He said he also is exploring ways to reduce noise from the new wastewater treatment plant building on Fair Street after complaints from neighbors. The Tree Advisory Board is selecting trees and shrubs to screen views of the plant.
Boscobel, prepares to open its doors for Steve Miller, executive director of children age 4 and older, the series start of its Bring the Kids series at 9:30 a.m. behind-the-scenes tours and the tour, games and a craft. through December with hands-on chores, a stage at the Garrison School.

Site will host kids’ series and talks

First Friday in Cold Spring

Galleries to host opening receptions

On Friday, April 7, Gallery 66 NY in Cold Spring will host a reception to open a retrospective of 60 years of paintings by 95-year-old artist Sam Bartman of Greenwich, Connecticut. It’s About Time includes landscapes, abstractions, fantasy imagery and patterns that the self-taught artist created on repurposed World War II Army surplus reflective plastic sheets. It is his first solo show. The reception will be held at the gallery at 66 Main St. from 6 to 9 p.m., and the exhibit continues through April 30.

Easter Fun

Bunny and eggs are coming

Cat Rock Farm and the Garrison Art Center will hold a farm visit and art event on Saturday, April 8. At 2 p.m. Cat Rock Farm will host an hour-long open house to meet the chickens and roosters. At 3 p.m. the Garrison Art Center will organize egg decorating for young artists. Tickets are $38 for adults and $28 for children ages 12 and younger and includes chili, cornbread, coffee and cupcakes as well as eggs and supplies. See garrisonart-center.org.

County to Hold Passport Day in Philipstown

Putnam clerk will be at Town Hall on April 8

The Putnam County Clerk’s Office will hold its first Passport Saturday in Philipstown from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on April 8 at Town Hall, 238 Main St., in Cold Spring to provide information and accept applications. Call 845-808-1142, ext. 49301 with questions.

Committee Offers College Scholarships

Deadline April 14 for Putnam residents

The Putnam County Children’s Committee is accepting applications for scholarships of at least $500 awarded each year to high school seniors in the county. The deadline is April 14.

Three New Eagle Scouts

And one more on deck

Max Hadden and Andrew Platt of Cold Spring and Ethan Penner of Garrison are the latest Eagle Scouts from Philipstown Boy Scout Troop 437. Hadden, a sophomore at Poughkeepsie Day, built landscape stairs and replaced a fence at the Randolph School in Wappingers Falls for his Eagle Scout project; Platt, a senior at Haldane High School, made picnic tables and refurbished outdoor furniture for the Putnam History Museum; and Penner, a senior at O’Neill High School, built and set up four bat houses for the Desmond-Fish Library.

A fourth Scout, Colin Waldron of Garrison, will soon go before the Eagle Board of Review to discuss his project, an outdoor stage at the Garrison School.

Boscobel Opens for Season

Site will host kids’ series and talks

Boscobel opens for the season April 1 with a calendar of events that include regular behind-the-scenes tours and the start of its Bring the Kids series at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 8. Designed for children age 4 and older, the series continues on the second Saturday of each month through December with hands-on chores, a tour, games and a craft.

The site will also host two design lectures in April. On Friday, April 14, curator Jennifer Carlquist will discuss how the Federal-era Boscobel mansion was relocated to Garrison from Montrose after being sold to a wrecker. On April 28, Edwina von Gal will speak on toxic-free land management practices. Both talks begin at 6:30 p.m. See boscobel.org.

The Baster Levi Gallery at 121 Main St. will open Paintings: A Matter of Fact by Ursula Schneider with a reception from 6 to 8 p.m. The exhibit includes artwork from three series, including some from Schneider’s Hudson River paintings, inspired by the view from her window. Other paintings use abstract shapes to capture the power of plants and apple trees. The show continues through April 30.

Easter Egg hunts are on the horizon.

YOUTH BOOK FESTIVAL

Garrison library to host authors

The Desmond-Fish Library in Garrison has invited authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults for two hours of activities and readings at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 8. Participants include Lori Adams (Timeless Triops: A Prehistoric Creature), Regina Gelfer (The Kiss Box), Gary Golio (Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday and the Power of a Protest Song), Jean Marzollo (I Spy series), Irene O’Garden (Forest, What Would You Like?).

Also scheduled to appear are illustrator Pat Schories, Susanna Reich (Stand Up and Sing!: Pete Seeger, Folk Music and the Path to Justice), Kimberly Sabatini (Touching the Surface) and Pete Salaman (Project Puffin).

First Friday in Cold Spring

Galleries to host opening receptions

On Friday, April 7, Gallery 66 NY in Cold Spring will host a reception to open a retrospective of 60 years of paintings by 95-year-old artist Sam Bartman of Greenwich, Connecticut. It’s About Time includes landscapes, abstracts, fantasy imagery and patterns that the self-taught artist created on repurposed World War II Army surplus reflective plastic sheets. It is his first solo show. The reception will be held at the gallery at 66 Main St. from 6 to 9 p.m., and the exhibit continues through April 30.

Easter Fun

Bunny and eggs are coming

Cat Rock Farm and the Garrison Art Center will hold a farm visit and art event on Saturday, April 8. At 2 p.m. Cat Rock Farm will host an hour-long open house to meet the chickens and roosters. At 3 p.m. the Garrison Art Center will organize egg decorating for young artists. Tickets are $38 for adults and $28 for children ages 12 and younger and includes chili, cornbread, coffee and cupcakes as well as eggs and supplies. See garrisonart-center.org.

Also on April 8, the Knights of Columbus, Loretto Council No. 536, will hold its annual egg hunt at McConville Park. The event, which begins at 11 a.m., is open to children ages 7 and younger. Bring a basket or bag. In the event of rain, the hunt will be held on April 15.

On Sunday, April 9, Fishkill Farms will host its annual Egg-Stravaganza from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event includes a visit from the Easter Bunny, an egg hunt in the orchard, hayrides and planting sunflowers. Tickets are $15, and food will be available for purchase. See fishkillfarms.com.

In Beacon, Alps Sweet Shop and the city Recreation Department have an Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Fling planned for Memorial Park on Saturday, April 15, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for children ages 1 to 12. Along with a visit from the Easter Bunny, there will be an egg hunt, petting zoo, crafts and music, and food available for purchase. See cityofbeacon.org.

Celebrating Passover

Seder meals for women and families

The Rosh Hodesh group at the Beacon Hebrew Alliance will host its fourth annual Women’s Passover Seder at the Beacon Community Center, 23 W. Center St., from 3 to 6 p.m. on Sunday, April 2. This is an opportunity for teenagers and women to celebrate Passover with music, prayers, readings, dancing and vegetarian holiday dishes. RSVP to Laura Liebeck at liebeck@aol.com.

On Friday, April 7, the Reform Temple of Putnam Valley will host a family friendly Seder at 6 p.m. with homemade Passover dishes, a search for the Aftikman, songs and conversation. The cost is $10 for adults and $5 for children younger than 12. RSVP to lisakeogh@optonline.net.

Garrison Resident Wins Spirit Award

Honored by Support Connection

Gary Wawrzycki of Garrison will be honored April 7 with a Spirit Award from Support Connection. Wawrzycki became involved with the organization in 2012 and spread the word about its free support services for people affected by breast and ovarian cancer. Because of his efforts, Gary’s employer, Wells Fargo, became a sponsor and has provided nearly $20,000 in grants.

The presentation will take place during the center’s Spring Benefit in Mahopac. See supportconnection.org/spring-benefit.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Putnam clerk will be at Town Hall on April 8

The Putnam County Clerk’s Office will hold its first Passport Saturday in Philipstown from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on April 8 at Town Hall, 238 Main St., in Cold Spring to provide information and accept applications. Call 845-808-1142, ext. 49301 with questions.

Committee Offers College Scholarships

Deadline April 14 for Putnam residents

The Putnam County Children’s Committee is accepting applications for scholarships of at least $500 awarded each year to high school seniors in the county. The deadline is April 14.

To apply, send a letter stating your desire to be considered, financial need and plans for your education, including information about siblings; a transcript; two letters of recommendation and a letter from (Continued on next page)
Learn to Fish

Annual 4-H clinic set for June 10

Registration is open for the annual 4-H Fishing Clinic for Putnam County residents ages 7 to 14 who have not participated before. The clinic will be held on Saturday, June 10, rain or shine, at Memorial Park in Carmel.

Each of the 150 participants will receive a rod, reel, tackle kit, fishing directory and hat.

Registration is required at reg.cce.cornell.edu. The event is sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Youth Development program and the Oasis Sportsmen’s Club with support from the Jack Stewart Jr. Memorial Fund.

No Brush Burning

State ban continues to May 14

The state Department of Environmental Conservation says its annual ban on residential brush burning, which continues this year through May 14, has decreased wildfires by 35 percent since the restrictions were enacted in 2009. Open burning of debris is the largest single cause of spring wildfires in the state.

The regulations allow residential brush fires in towns with fewer than 20,000 residents during most of the year but prohibit burning in the spring. Campfires using charcoal or untreated wood are allowed, but people should never leave fires unattended. Burning garbage or leaves is always prohibited.

Beacon NAACP to Discuss Civil Rights

Official will speak at monthly meeting

The Beacon NAACP is hosting a monthly meeting to discuss civil rights. The meeting will feature a guest speaker who will discuss the history and importance of civil rights in the United States.

Spring Break in the Park

Scenic Hudson hosting family events

Scenic Hudson will host two hours of crafts and activities for children and teenagers daily from April 11 to 14 at the River Center in Long Dock Park.

The events, which take place from 3 to 5 p.m., are appropriate for elementary and middle-school students. Parents or caregivers are asked to attend. RSVP to scnashkam@scenic Hudson.org or 845-473-4440, ext. 265.
No Charges in Probe of Democratic Fundraising in 2014

Questions raised over contributions sent to Putnam County

By Chip Rowe

The Manhattan District Attorney's office says it found no criminal wrongdoing after investigating accusations of improper campaign fundraising in 2014 by the mayor of New York City that benefited, among others, two state Senate candidates in Putnam County. But it also concluded the actions amounted to an improper “end run” around campaign finance laws.

“The transactions appear contrary to the intent and spirit of the laws,” wrote D.A. Cyrus Vance Jr. in a 10-page letter detailing the findings. He said his office could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a crime had occurred, both because the mayor and his aides had relied on the advice of their attorneys and because the election laws are open to interpretation.

The investigation focused on two races in 2014 that included parts of Putnam County. In October of that year the Putnam County Democratic Committee distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars, raised largely in New York City by aides and associates of Mayor Bill de Blasio, to the campaigns of incumbent Terry Gipson, who represented District 41, which includes Philipstown and Beacon, and Justin Wagner, who was running for the District 40 seat, which includes eastern Putnam County. The mayor made clear that year he wanted to obtain a Democratic majority in the Senate to further the city’s agenda.

The district attorney’s probe began after the state Board of Elections concluded de Blasio’s team had engaged in a coordinated effort to raise the money and distribute it through county committees to circumvent campaign contribution limits and disguise the names of contributors. At the time, Board of Elections Chief of Enforcement Risa Sugerman wrote that the violations appeared to be “willful and flagrant.”

State law limits the amount of money that individuals or groups can contribute to a legislative race; in 2014 it was $10,300 per general election cycle (now $11,000, after adjustments for inflation). County committees, however, in 2014 could receive contributions up to $102,300 from a single source (now $109,600). They also are not limited in how much they can contribute to a candidate but are not permitted to accept donations earmarked for a particular candidate.

According to the report by the Manhattan D.A., the Putnam County Democratic Committee received contributions totaling $671,329.79 in 2014, after having never raised more than $38,652 in a year. The Putnam Democrats transferred $273,750 to Gipson’s campaign and $307,000 to Wagner’s campaign, both of which “almost immediately” spent the funds on political consultants. Gipson lost his seat to Republican Sue Serino (he challenged her in 2016 but lost again), while Wagner was defeated by Republican Terrence Murphy.

Similarly, the Ulster County Democratic Committee received contributions totaling $364,000, having previously raised no more than $50,438. In October 2014, nearly all of the funds were transferred to the campaign of Cecilia Thacyzk, the Democratic incumbent for the 46th District, which extends from Amsterdam to Kingston. Thacyzk won her seat in 2012 by 18 votes over George Amedore but lost in a rematch in 2014 by 11,000 votes.

In a statement, Terrence Murphy, who was re-elected in 2016, called the decision not to prosecute “incredibly disappoint-
The Search Goes On
Beacon Council hears three new options for central fire station

By Jeff Simms

After its proposal to build a central fire station near Sargent Elementary School was rejected by the Board of Education, Beacon fire officials have identified three new possible sites.

Several studies have concluded that the city’s three aging fire stations should be consolidated into one facility. But with little developable land within Beacon’s five square miles, finding a suitable location has been challenging.

The department’s first choice now is an expansion of the 106-year-old Mase Hook and Ladder station at 425 Main St. The second and third choices are the dog-run area at Memorial Park and a portion of the Elks Lodge property on Route 9D.

An eight-member site selection committee presented the new choices to the City Council on March 27. The three-story building at Memorial Park, lying areas within six minutes.

While any of the three sites would work, “the whole thing is about response time,” he said. “When you draw a circle on the city, it’s pretty easy to determine that Mase is in the center of it.” He said firefighters could reach much of the city within four minutes from Mase, and outlying areas within six minutes.

None of the three sites are without challenges. Building at Memorial Park, for instance, could prove tricky due to the loss of open space. The city would probably need to acquire additional private property for parking at the Elks Lodge, and the Mase site would be the costliest to expand.

“No one site was perfect,” Van Voorhis said, adding that the committee, formed in 2015, has considered at least 17 locations.

Expanding the fire station at Mase would likely require razing the building next door, formerly City Hall, for parking, as well as demolishing the rear portion of the city-maintained Memorial Building at 413 Main St. The offices in the front of the building would be preserved and renovated for the veterans groups that use the facility.

A new station at the site could be built higher rather than broader with additional space for municipal offices, said developer Rodney Weber, a member of the site-selection committee.

Although the committee has created renderings, the city has not discussed acquisition of any of the properties. It will now be up to the City Council to decide how to proceed.
Finding a Way North (from Page 1)

While the other would transport 200,000 barrels of refined products such as gasoline, diesel, heating oil and jet fuel from the New York harbor to points north.

The company says its preliminary plans for the project, which it says will cost up to $1 billion, call for pipes no larger than 24 inches in diameter. Two single pipelines would branch off from the pipeline transportation, as there is no air pressure or jostling that occurs inside a pipeline — the necessary factors for an explosion to take place.

Friedrichsen said that while the pipeline might be seen as a better alternative to move oil along the Hudson than trains or tankers, “it’s not an either/or proposition. It’s different companies, and different industries, pushing for these different proposals. There’s some connection in that they’re proposing to move the same products, and I think each one has their own financial interest.”

“This product is going to come down the Hudson Valley every which way this industry can find,” said Friedrichsen.

Since Pilgrim first proposed the pipelines in 2015, the company has not sought permits for the project except from the New York Thruway Authority, which oversees the freeway and its right of way.

Cherson and Friedrichsen said the delay may be to the relatively low price of oil, which removes some of the economic incentive for the project. Kissam said she’s heard from landowners in Orange County who say they have been approached by Pilgrim about land rights. She also warned that just because the company isn’t pushing ahead with permits doesn’t mean it plans to abandon the project.

“We have a number of examples where pipeline companies have ignored the fact that they don’t have all their permits and just moved forward,” said Kissam. “The Spectra pipeline, near Indian Point, was pushed forward before they had all their permits. These guys are not nice guys. We should not be wide-eyed and innocent and think they’re going to do everything according to the rules.”

A map prepared by the Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipeline shows the general route of the proposed pipeline near the Highlands. Municipalities outlined in green have passed resolutions opposing the project. Two lateral pipes would carry petroleum to the waterfront.

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Dee Carbone, Dave Mucci and Marge Mercier are residents of Newburgh and members of Orange County RAPP.

Photo By Amanda Means
Lawmakers Target Hudson Anchorage Proposal

Bill would strengthen state oversight of river

By Brian PJ Cronin

The U.S. Coast Guard’s controversial proposal to establish 10 anchorage zones for barges traveling along the Hudson River faces new opposition after state Senator Sue Serino, who represents Philipstown and Beacon, and Didi Barrett, a member of the Assembly whose district includes northern Dutchess County, introduced a bill to strengthen New York’s control of the river.

Since unveiling the proposal last year at the request of the Tug & Barge Committee of the Port of New York and New Jersey, the Coast Guard’s plan has drawn almost universal condemnation from lawmakers as well as environmental groups, business owners and riverfront municipalities. A chief concern of critics is that the anchorage zones would increase the volume of crude oil transported on the river and allow tankers to park to facilitate the expected increase in crude oil supplies as well as safety issues.

Lawmakers remain skeptical. “Our communities have worked far too hard for far too long on revitalizing our waterfront to risk compromising the Hudson River,” Serino said.

The bill was written with the assistance of Scenic Hudson. According to Andy Bicking, the nonprofit’s director of public policy, the bill would update regulations put in place in the wake of the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. The laws helped establish the state’s authority over navigation on the Hudson, he said.

In the decades since, New York has developed policies to protect riverbed habitats, water intakes and the economic health of waterfront communities that depend on the Hudson. The bill would require the state to take those into account before establishing tanker avoidance zones.

“Essentially, it gives state and local governments another tool to manage the riverfront the way they see fit,” Bicking said. “It’s a contrast to a bill introduced in Congress by Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, who represents the 18th District, which includes Philipstown and Beacon, that would outlaw the creation of anchorage grounds within five miles of a Superfund site or nuclear power plant, national historic site or critical habitat of an endangered species. Since the majority of the Hudson is a Superfund site due to PCB contamination, that alone would shield nearly the entire river.

Although Bicking said Scenic Hudson supports Maloney’s bill, the legislation faces an uphill battle given the political climate in Washington. This makes the state’s bill all the more important, he said. “You don’t need to look any further than some of the executive orders coming out of the White House that are talking about removing federal review and permitting processes for high-priority oil and gas infrastructure projects to realize how important this is,” he said. “You can imagine the scenario if someone in the oil industry said, ‘We need all those new anchorages berths.’ Because of that, the state needs to act quickly to guide the conversation.”
Opening Day, 1865
Highlands baseball thrived in a bygone era

By Michael Turton

Baseball fans will celebrate Opening Day on Monday, April 3, a tradition that for the Yankees began in 1913 and for the Mets in 1962. But in the Highlands, opening day dates to the mid-19th century, when the game was moving up the Hudson River from New York City.

“The game of base ball has now beyond question become the leading feature of the outdoor sports of the United States,” wrote Charles Peverelly in his 1866 Book of American Pastimes. “It is a game peculiarly suited to the American temperament and disposition.”

Cold Spring in the 1860s and 1870s had at least three amateur teams: the Kelloggs, the Undercliff and the Putnams. The Undercliff, established on Aug. 10, 1865, wore a uniform of a white cap, white shirt and blue pants and took its name from the Cold Spring estate of poet and journalist George Pope Morris. The Kelloggs were named for Clara Louise Kellogg, an opera singer whose home was across from present-day Boscobel. Both teams practiced at their namesakes’ estates. Games typically began at 4 or 5 p.m.

The teams were male social clubs as much as they were about sports, with elected officers and members — in 1866 the Undercliff had about 50. The sport was far less costly than yachting or rowing, since the only expense was the uniform.

By the 1880s the village had a number of teams, including the West Point Foundry, Klondykes, Pastimes, Hardly Ables and Never Sweats, according to Bob Mayer, a longtime member of the Society of American Baseball Research who lives in Putnam Valley. Games were played at Vinegar Hill, near Fair Lawn, the home of artist Thomas Rossiter off Route 9D south of Vinegar Hill. The home team prevented the visitors from scoring in seven of the nine innings and won, 14-3. On the following Monday, July 6, a large crowd gathered at Vinegar Hill. The home team prevented the Undercliffs from scoring in seven of the nine innings and won, 14-3. On the following Monday, July 6, a large crowd gathered at Vinegar Hill. The home team prevented the visitors from scoring in seven of the nine innings and won, 14-3. On the following Monday, July 6, a large crowd gathered at Vinegar Hill.

The Recorder includes accounts of a number of games, such as on Aug. 23, 1873, when it reported that the Kelloggs had lost on Wednesday, Aug. 6, at Vinegar Hill to the Newburgh Active, 25-17. Two weeks later, the team traveled to Newburgh for a rematch. “The Active went to the bat and brought in two tallies, while the Kelloggs were white-washed [Unable to score] three times in succession, the Active in the meantime scoring six, and having got the lead maintained it to the end,” the paper reported.

Although it was an away game, the Kelloggs supplied the umpire, named Lloyd, who the Active players and fans concluded had been “the best and most impartial umpire that ever came to the city with an outside club.”

After the game, the Kelloggs were fed supper and escorted down Water Street by the Newburgh players to the ferry, “where after bidding adieu to them went on board the boat amid cheer after cheer, which was returned with great enthusiasm.”

The following Saturday, the Undercliff, wearing new uniforms of blue knee breeches, white shirts and striped stockings, played at Poughkeepsie, where they lost 18-15 after giving up four runs in the bottom of the ninth. The Recorder noted that “the grounds were miserable, there being two circus rings in the center of the field” and that the Juniors had used several professional players. The Poughkeepsie team also did not speak as kindly of umpire Lloyd’s calls.

The next summer, on July 11, 1874, The Recorder reported on a July 4 game in which Undercliff hosted the Magnolia Club of Newburgh at Vinegar Hill. The home team prevented the visitors from scoring in seven of the nine innings and won, 14-3. On the following Monday, July 6, a large crowd gathered at Vinegar Hill to watch the Undercliff take on its inter-village rivals, the Kelloggs. “A great deal of heavy batting was done by the Kelloggs,” The Recorder reported. “The Undercliffs became demoralized and the score ran up very high,” with the Kelloggs winning, 50-15. The outcome, the paper said, had not been unexpected.

Garrison historian James Kelly contributed research.