



JULY 28, 2017

161 MAIN ST., COLD SPRING, N.Y. | highlandscurrent.com

Incumbents, Minister Seek Town Seats

*Also, Garrison resident runs
for Putnam County sheriff*

By Chip Rowe

Pending a review of a nominating petition, Putnam County Donald Smith may have a Republican challenger in the primary election on Sept. 12 as he seeks his fifth term. The Democratic candidate in the general election on Nov. 7 will be Garrison resident Robert L. Langley Jr., a former sheriff's department investigator.

Smith's Republican challenger, Anthony DeStefano, a retired New York City police captain, also campaigned against the sheriff in 2009 but dropped out after allegations of forged nominating petitions. He pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor at the time but in January a state court overturned the conviction. In 2013 Smith easily won the Republican primary over Cold Spring resident Kevin McConville, former chief of the MTA Police, who this year has endorsed Smith. The sheriff ran unopposed in the 2013 general election.

In Philipstown, Richard Shea, running as a Democrat, will not have a Republican opponent as he pursues his fifth two-year term as supervisor. Meanwhile, at least three candidates will campaign for two open seats on the Town Board — incumbents Michael Leonard and John Van Tassel and the Rev. Tim Greco, the lead pastor of the Church on the Hill in Cold Spring,
(Continued on Page 8)



The Rev. Tim Greco with his wife, Beth
(Photo provided)



UP AND AWAY — A balloon ascends during the dawn launch on July 9 of the Hudson Valley Hot Air Balloon Festival at Poughquag, hosted by the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce. See more photos on page 19.
Photo by Ross Corsair

Woman Pleads Guilty in Kayak Case

*Admits playing a role in
fiancé's death*

By Chip Rowe

Angelika Graswald, accused of second-degree murder in the 2015 death of her fiancé while kayaking near Bannerman Island, pleaded guilty on July 24 to criminally negligent homicide, a lesser felony, and could be released from

jail by the end of the year.

The 37-year-old Poughkeepsie woman, known to many Philipstown residents because she had worked in a Cold Spring restaurant, faces up to four years in prison. She has already served 27 months awaiting trial. Her sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 1.

On April 19, 2015, Graswald and Vincent Viafore, 46, were kayaking near Bannerman when he disappeared into the Hudson. Graswald was arrested 10 days
(Continued on Page 2)



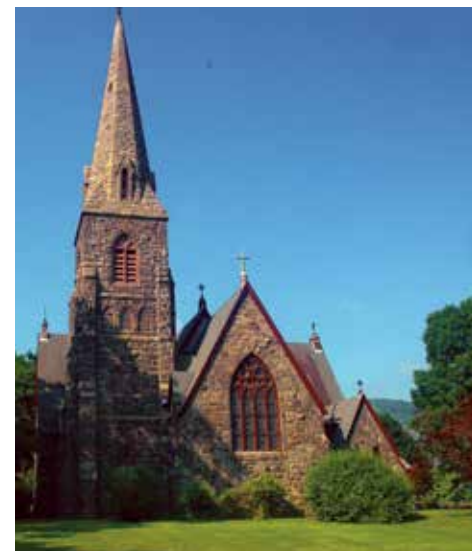
Angelika Graswald at a hearing on July 24 in Goshen during which she pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide
Photo by Allyse Pulliam/AP

St. Mary's Faces Another Crisis

*Endowment nearly gone,
says rector*

By Chip Rowe

The rector of St. Mary-in-the-Highlands, the iconic Episcopal church at the corner of Main and Chestnut streets in Cold Spring, says that after nearly a decade of financial struggles since the 2008 market crash, its endowment is nearly gone.



St. Mary's Church
File photo

On July 24, the Rev. Shane Scott-Hamblen launched an online campaign with a goal of raising \$1.5 million to replenish the endowment. He warned that, as he did four years ago, without emergency aid the church will have to close and sell the property.

Scott-Hamblen declined to discuss specifics. As of July 27 the campaign at gofundme.com/save-st-marys had raised \$9,750 from 42 people.

Scott-Hamblen made a similar plea in January 2013, saying the 1.5-acre lawn might soon be on the market because of a lack of money for maintenance. "The church is steadily going broke," he said at the time. The vestry (parish council) discussed leasing the lawn or selling a conservation easement. With an annual budget of \$170,000, it estimated it needed to add \$800,000 to the endowment.

In a statement emailed to *The Current* on July 25, Randy Florke, a Philipstown resident who is spearheading the campaign (and who was married at the church in 2014 to U.S. Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney), wrote:
(Continued on Page 6)

5 Five Questions: Ryon Odneal

By Alison Rooney

Ryon Odneal, 25, is the manager of Luxe Optique in Beacon. A wedding and fashion photographer, he commutes from Warwick to the store.

How did you end up in Beacon?

Laurie Riehle owned an eyewear store in Warwick for 30 years. She sold it and planned to retire but decided to open a store here. I was a former lab technician for her and Julia Martell was the receptionist, and she hired us both to work in Beacon. She liked the city because it was arts-oriented, boundaries-pushing, diverse — and it didn't have an optical store.

Why is a piece of glass and some bent metal so expensive?

The cost of lenses reflects the level of technology in a prescription. Each lens is built individually, with grinding and surfacing. It's important to get it right to avoid distortion, especially with progressive lenses.

People see a \$300 frame from certain designers and know it's the same as a \$70 generic made in China. We're aware of

which "designer names" have been bought out. Our frames are made from titanium, stainless or precious metals, rather than molded plastic.

How do you match an eyewear style to a person?

I say to people, "Give me one adjective, besides 'attractive,' that reflects how you would like to be perceived."

How do you navigate all the insurance plans?

We aren't part of an insurance network. If we were, the insurers would have control over our inventory and the lab we use. So we give customers who have insurance a discount and free eye exam, and we submit the claim for them.

Are specs the new shoes?

For some people, every time they walk in here, they get a new pair. Three pairs a year isn't unusual. It's more important than anything you're wearing, especially your shoes! There's nothing more prominent than your face.



Ryon Odneal

Photo by A. Rooney

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Woman Pleads Guilty in Kayak Case *(from Page 1)*

later after she allegedly told investigators that it "felt good knowing he was going to die." She was the beneficiary of two life insurance policies totaling \$250,000, prosecutors said.

"At the time she pleaded guilty, Graswald admitted she caused Vincent Viafore's drowning death by removing the plug from his kayak," Orange County District Attorney David Hoovler said in a statement on July 24. "She also admitted she knew that the locking clip to Vincent's kayak paddle was missing, that he was not wearing a life vest, or a wetsuit, and knowing that the waters in the Hudson River where they were kayaking were dangerously cold and rough at the time."

"Evidence shows that at the time of the incident Graswald was wearing a life jacket. Graswald admitted her actions consti-



Angelika Graswald and Vincent Viafore in an undated photo from Facebook

tuted a gross deviation from the standard of conduct that a reasonable person would have observed in the situation, and that her actions caused the death of Vincent Viafore."

Removing the plug, which prosecutors said was found in Graswald's car, would not cause the kayak to capsize, Hoovler said at a news conference, but "her actions undoubtedly put in motion a chain of events which caused the victim's death."

Graswald's attorney, Richard Portale, argued his client did not mean to kill Viafore. He said her confession was coerced and complicated by a language barrier because she is a native of Latvia. Although Graswald is a lawful, permanent U.S. resident, Hoovler said the felony conviction could lead her to be deported, which would be determined by a federal judge.

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Little Stony Point to Add Facilities for Visitors, Volunteers, Staff

Volunteers to build visitors' center; state will rehab house

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Little Stony Point will soon have two new facilities for visitors, state park staff and the volunteers who maintain the popular shoreline preserve just north of Cold Spring.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation plans to renovate a house that dates to about 1920 while the Little Stony Point Citizens Association (LSPCA) will build a cabin as a headquarters and to shelter visitors.

The 32-by-24-foot cabin will be funded by a \$50,000 grant from the state Parks and Trails Partnership Program and personal and corporate donations, said Fred Martin, president of the association. The total cost is estimated to be about \$80,500, he said. The LSPCA hopes to complete most of the construction this year and open the building next spring.

The LSPCA grant, announced in May, was the largest of 20 distributed by the Parks and Trails program for 2017, and more than some regions received. The association's annual Hoot on the Hudson fundraiser is scheduled for Sept. 10 (see littlestonypoint.org), and Martin said longtime parks supporter Dr. Lucy Waletzky has given a significant sum for the cabin.

Volunteer labor will save the organization about \$16,000 in costs, he noted, including help from two LSPCA board members, James Hartford of River Architects and John Zuvic of Long Nail Carpentry.

Shelter from the storm

The cabin will serve as LSPCA's home base, with space to hold meetings, store equipment and act as a base for its clean-up days, Maple Syrup Day and Hoot on the Hudson music festival as well as new programs such as oil painting and photography workshops, sing-alongs, potlucks and historical exhibits.

The building will also accommodate groups such as Cub Scout Pack 137, which the LSPCA sponsors, the Girl Scouts, the Haldane Environmental Club and school classes and Friends of Fahnestock and



Above, repairs and renovation will turn the old house at Little Stony Point into a state park office and visitor resource. At left are Evan Thompson and Fred Martin.

Photos by L.S. Armstrong



Hudson Highlands State Parks. The building is likewise expected to be the starting point for hikes for senior citizens, toddlers, bird-watchers and Spanish-speaking park visitors.

Outside, a covered porch will provide shelter from the elements and visitors will be able to pick up brochures. The organization likewise will install water-bottle refilling and cellphone recharging stations.

Martin said the cabin will help LSPCA



A view of the proposed LSPCA volunteer center and visitors' shelter Image provided

connect better with visitors, assist the state park staff and interact with locals, who can use Little Stony Point as "a place to get us out of the daily grind."

The group also hopes to engage first-time visitors "and encourage their sense of stewardship." Martin recalled a visitor

Money for History

The state Park and Trail Partnership Program, in its second year, distributed \$450,000 in grants earlier this year through the Environmental Protection Fund. The money was matched with \$200,000 in local and private funding to support projects by volunteer groups at state parks and historic sites. The Taconic region received \$107,085 for the Little Stony Point Citizens Association and three other groups:

- Friends of Philipse Manor Hall (Yonkers): \$14,875 to purchase audio-visual equipment and hire consultants for an oral history project.
- Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association (Millerton): \$29,710 for a part-time staff member to increase membership and volunteers in Columbia County.
- Walkway Over the Hudson (Poughkeepsie): \$12,500 to revise a 2009 trail map.

What's Up with the Parking Lot?

Across the road from Little Stony Point, where heavily-used trails in Hudson Highlands State Park wind up the mountainside to Bull Hill and Breakneck Ridge, the state parks department is overseeing construction of a parking lot at the trail entrance. Evan Thompson said on July 24 that all that remains to be done are curbs and paving. If the weather cooperates, he said, the lot should be ready by early August to help ease congestion along Route 9D.

from Paris who attended the 2016 Hoot on the Hudson and volunteered on the spot after the concert.

The old caretaker's house

The nearly century-old house at Little Stony Point, once a caretaker's residence, is being renovated to contain a park office, storage and a counter open on weekends for visitors to get maps and information, said Evan Thompson, park manager at Fahnestock State Park.

Thompson said park personnel have been monitoring the park entrance to deter visitors who arrive with coolers, picnic or barbecue equipment, or swimming gear, redirecting them to Canopus Lake at Fahnestock, a few miles to the east, where a wide, scenic beach offers swimming and nearby picnic spots.

Despite the monitoring, he said park personnel cannot easily thwart Little Stony Point visitors who arrive by boat, wade ashore and party. "We don't control the river," Thompson said.

Whether they come from a distance or live nearby, some Little Stony Point visitors leave havoc in their wake. This past spring, vandals destroyed the outdoor bathroom shed, which had been closed after malfunctioning, Thompson said. Installed several years ago, it had been repeatedly damaged.

But he emphasized that only a minority of visitors destroy park property. "We don't want to turn people away, just manage the impact better," he said. "And we want partnerships, with everybody."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Beacon ban

I hear builders and developers complain that a building moratorium means they may have to take their money and "go elsewhere" ("Beacon Residents Voice Opinions About Proposed Building Ban," July 21). Some real-estate agents appear to relish saying Beacon will "fall behind" other river towns and that we "have to keep up the momentum."

To which I say: "Go!" This isn't a race; Beacon is not like every other river town; its charming Main Street, its architectural icons, its accessible waterfront, its diverse population, its focus on the arts, plus all the talented people who have made their homes here — these are the things that are worth preserving and defending against those wishing to make a quick buck.

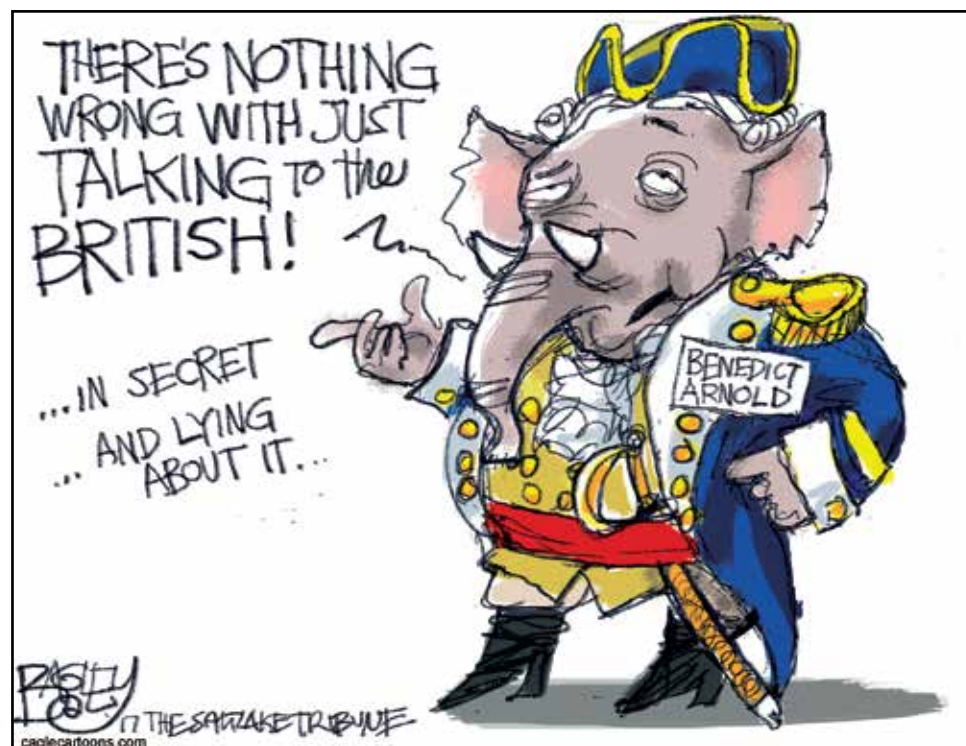
We don't need Beacon to become another Tarrytown, Ossining or Nyack. We

need to take our time and move carefully whenever the development card comes up. It would be all too easy to turn our fair city over to a group of urbanites who would spoil it in short order by overbuilding expensive residences that only commuters and retirees can afford.

Mary Fris, *Beacon*

I'm in favor of the moratorium. Besides water and sewage demands, Beacon already has parking and traffic issues that aren't being addressed. I live right off Main Street, and every weekday I watch people drive the wrong way up my street, presumably to bypass more congested areas. The tourist traffic on the weekends only adds to the hardship. Add the soon-to-be-overcrowded schools and accelerated growth would bring more problems than advantages.

Tammy Desmarais, *Beacon*



Taking it to the Street By Anita Peltonen

When did you move to the Highlands, and why?



"Four weeks ago! I moved from Bryson City, North Carolina, because I lived in the mountains and it was lonely. My kids and grandkids are here."
~ Maria Szoke, Cold Spring



"Eleven years ago, to help support my parents after my brother Ben died."
~ John Plummer, Cold Spring



"Six months ago. I went camping in Fahnestock five years ago and fell in love with the area."
~ Anna Stephens, with son Charlie, Cold Spring

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters to the editor, which can be emailed to editor@highlandscurrent.com or mailed to 161 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516. As with online comments, we ask that writers remain civil and avoid personal attacks. All letters are subject to editing for length, accuracy and clarity. The writer's full name, email and phone number must be included, although only the writer's name and village or city are published. We do not print anonymous letters or those written under pseudonyms.

Craig House sale

There must not be any variance to welcome overdevelopment ("Craig House Sale Pending," July 21)! The property should remain on the tax rolls. The loss would be significant. A spa, a school, a retreat center, a training center, an art-and-education program all seem to be solid options. The open space should be incorporated into the plan. No variances.

Lisa Gallina Alvarez, *Beacon*

A development group overpays for a property and asks the town for a variance to build single-family homes to bail them out. Residents of Beacon are asked to suffer over development so the "very experienced" developers can maintain their profit margin. If the variance is in line with the goals of the master plan, so be it. If not, I hope the Zoning Board of Appeals holds the line.

Donald MacDonald, *Cold Spring*
MacDonald is a former chair of the Cold Spring Zoning Board of Appeals.

We don't need any more single-family homes in Beacon, especially if it takes clear-cutting (Continued on next page)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (from previous page)

trees and open space to build. I hope the town doesn't buckle on this one.

Stacy Maldonado, *Beacon*

I have fond memories of Craig House from my adolescence, when my brothers and I lived in Beacon and my mother was a patient there. We would visit her after school and walk the grounds. We ate the concord grapes they grew, among other fresh fruits, and caught fish and frogs at the pond by the Fishkill Creek.

Beacon was a great place to grow up; we were never bored. It would be a shame to see the beautiful main house and property lost. If I had the money, I would have preserved this iconic place.

John Theroux,
West Warwick, Rhode Island

Hiking the Highlands

As Metro-North is responsible for bringing way too many hikers to Breakneck, it should be providing an etiquette guide to hiking ("Man Dies in Fall at Breakneck," July 21). Far too many of their passengers are clueless as to the sheer terrain of Breakneck.

Leonora Burton, *Cold Spring*

I live at the base of Mount Beacon. I deal with lost and ill-prepared hikers almost daily. Could we please communicate to our visitors that there is no water up there, it is not a park, you are outside any local jurisdiction for fire, police and ambulance? Do not hike alone. When I assist a lost visitor (I'm a former EMS), I'm responsible for them and too often their pets, until they rendezvous with their party. Our visitors deserve more information.

John Murnane, *Beacon*

Ticketed and towed

It doesn't matter if a visitor spends \$15,000 in our community, let alone \$150 ("Ticketed and Towed at Little Stony Point," July 27). Being parked partially on Route 9D and putting lives at risk doesn't get negated because money was spent at local businesses. Where's that logic?

Lisa Scicluna, *Cold Spring*

I am sorry it was an expensive lesson for this family, but the law is the law and safety is safety. There are a lot of moving parts to the Breakneck problem and a lot

of partial fixes and other proposals in the works, but the safety concerns are fixable now with more enforcement.

What about our friends to the north who have jurisdiction after the tunnel? Will Dutchess and Fishkill wake up to the fact that they also have an obligation to patrol, ticket and tow?

Tom Campanile, *Cold Spring*

It's erroneous to assert that there is no parking near the Breakneck Trails. There is safe parking, just not enough. However, if enough parking were to be built, all we'd have along the lovely 9D corridor would be parking lots.

What we have is a failure to manage the crowds. That is the purview of the state, which owns and manages the preserve. The Philipstown board worked tirelessly to get the state Department of Transportation to build additional parking across from Little Stony Point, but it's still not paved due to DOT delays, not foot-dragging or neglect by local officials.

It's unfair to expect the 800 or so Village of Cold Spring taxpayers to pony up the money to solve problems that aren't even in their jurisdiction. Additionally, these taxpayers should not bear the sole burden of the impacts of ever-increasing tourism within the village. Putnam County reaps huge financial rewards from the sales-tax revenue that Cold Spring tourism generates but shares none of it with those of us who must deal with the problems tourism brings. The state and Putnam Legislature need to start doing their part to address these issues for good and all.

I'm glad the sheriff's deputies are beginning to patrol the area more, as well as ticket and tow vehicles that impede the flow of traffic. I hope they become a more consistent presence during busy weekends. It would be a good thing if they directed people away from Breakneck to other trails when parking areas are full. There are certainly plenty of other beautiful trails to hike around here.

Thank you, too, to the NYNJTC trail stewards for the guidance they offer to hikers. I hope they stay past Labor Day and into the even heavier-trafficked "leaf peeping" season.

Lynn Miller, *Cold Spring*
Miller is a Village of Cold Spring trustee.



Weekend parking is at a premium near Little Stony Point Park. Police allege at least two cars on July 15 parked over the white line.

File photo by M. Turton

Photo OF THE WEEK



By Karen Kapoor.

High-resolution submissions welcome. Email photos@highlandscurrent.com.

The state parks department needs to buckle down and take responsibility to provide adequate parking in addition to the lot under construction. They had a similar problem on Routes 44 and 55 near the Shawangunk Mountains, and the Mohonk Preserve went to great lengths to provide off-street parking.

Dave Reid, *Highland*

They need to charge visitors to park and hike. The Gunks had the same erosion, litter and parking problems and they implemented fees.

Michael Jones, *Cold Spring*

Maybe it's time we take a time-out with all the "I Love NY" nonsense until the state can get its act together. It might help if the park police enforced the bans on swimming and littering at Little Stony Point.

Shawn Beresford, *Pleasant Valley*

Nobody knew these trails existed until all the publicity and advertising about Cold Spring's beauty. Parking is a real problem and always has been. I haven't been to the area for many years, but please don't tell me there is litter. That breaks my heart and adds insult to injury.

Dana D'Amico, *Hopewell Junction*

What money do hikers spend in local businesses? They buy water and protein bars and leave garbage behind. Hurray for the sheriff department.

Luis Galarza, *Beacon*

Ticket every one of them. I went through on Sunday, July 16, and cars were backed in with their front ends in the roadway. Two cars couldn't pass side-by-side. Someone is going to get killed.

Frank Ludwig, *Pleasant Valley*

Leave the hikers alone. It's part of living here. I take different routes.

Gail Miller, *Newburgh*

Help is coming in the form of additional parking, a dedicated trail and a new train platform at the Breakneck Ridge stop. Until then, we need to do everything we can to keep the area safe for motorists, bikers and hikers. That includes removing cars that create hazards.

Michael Justice, *Beacon*

Sister Loretta

Thank you for the well-done interview with our Sister Loretta about her 75 years as a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement ("A Habit of Goodness," July 21). All the Sisters have been reading *The Highlands Current* and are so pleased. You presented a great article about Sister and brought joy to many, especially Sister Loretta and her family. Bless you.

Sister Denise Robillard,
Graymoor, Garrison

Adopt a highway

I have received many calls and emails from constituents about the amount of litter on our highways.

In order to combat this problem, the state would like to expand its Adopt-a-Highway program, which allows individuals and organizations to adopt a segment of highway and take the responsibility of keeping it clean. For information about taking part in Philipstown (and Beacon), call Rock DeNigro of the state Department of Transportation at 845-878-6363. There are also scheduled clean-up days throughout the year in which anyone can participate.

Of course, the best way to deal with this problem is to dispose of waste properly.

Sandy Galef, *Albany*

Galef represents Philipstown in the state Assembly.

St. Mary's Faces Another Crisis *(from Page 1)*



The Great Lawn at St. Mary's

Photo provided

"St. Mary's Church will communicate a strategic plan and timeline to preserve the current landscape of its buildings and grounds at press events currently slated for late September or early October.

"In an effort to organize this plan and make current the financial health of the church, a local supporter asked that the committee show evidence of a grassroots campaign to raise funds. Our reassurance to this donor is multi-layered but began with a stop-gap GoFundMe page which went live just this week."

Mark Forlow, the senior warden on the church's 11-member vestry, was traveling

and not available for comment.

As in 2013, Scott-Hamblen's online plea focuses on St. Mary's history and position at the crossroads of the village. The church building dates to 1868.

"With a Christ-like orientation, St. Mary's practices radical hospitality across all divides of race, politics, sexual orientation, faith backgrounds and life situations," Scott-Hamblen wrote. "This means that there is a much wider community we serve outside of our Sunday worshippers."

Calling the church and its lawn "the heart of the Cold Spring community," he noted the corner property is prime real es

Christians in Cold Spring



Built in 1826, the Union Church was the first in Cold Spring.

1814: The author of a report on religion in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties finds only two churches in Philipstown and describes the moral state of area residents generally as being "deplorable."

1826: The first church is built in Cold Spring at the riverfront, for use by Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists and Episcopalians.

1831: The Baptists dedicate their own church (now The Church on a Hill).

1834: Led in part by a priest with congregations in Newburgh and Highlands Falls, area Catholics build and dedicate a sanctuary (now Chapel Restoration).

1840: The St. Mary's parish is formed with 11 members. By tradition, it was named for Mary Parrott, the wife of Robert Parrott, who may have provided funds to build a church on Main Street near the present village hall.

1867: Construction begins on the present St. Mary's church on land donated by the Parrotts. It cost \$70,000 (about \$1.3 million today). The old church stands empty until 1882, when it is sold for \$50 and demolished.

1895: After years of deficits, St. Mary's found itself in debt for \$2,775 (about \$76,000 today). Julia Butterfield pledged \$1,000, other parishioners raised the rest, and the church, for the moment, was debt-free.

Source: *St. Mary's Church in the Highlands: A History*, by Elbert Floyd-Jones (1920)

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Arnold and André: The Birth of the Romantic Lecture with Vernon Benjamin Saturday, August 5 at 5pm

Join PHM for a presentation by regional historian Vernon Benjamin about his play, *Arnold and André: The Birth of the Romantic* on Saturday, August 5 at 5pm. It is based on Benedict Arnold and John André's meeting on a wooded hillside overlooking Haverstraw Bay in September of 1780. Come meet Vernon Benjamin to learn more!



To guarantee your seat, please register through our lecture Eventbrite at www.putnamhistorymuseum.org. Admission is \$5 for the general public and is free for members. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel at 845-265-4010.

Join us after the lecture for some light refreshments! You will also get a chance to explore PHM's new exhibit, *Treason! Benedict Arnold in the Hudson Highlands*. The exhibition will tell the story of Benedict Arnold, his command of West Point, and his acts of treason.

The Putnam History Museum is located at
63 Chestnut Street in Cold Spring.
www.putnamhistorymuseum.org

tate that would be attractive for development. It is zoned single-family residential and has an assessed full-market value of \$2.96 million. The lawn alone is valued at \$275,000 by the assessor.

In 2011, a report prepared by the Village of Cold Spring recommended that the great lawn be preserved through a conservation easement or rezoning.

St. Mary's is far from alone in its ongoing fiscal challenges; across the country, Christian congregations are steadily growing older and smaller. (The exceptions are historically black churches and

evangelicals.)

At St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Garrison, the vestry cut salaries by 10 percent in 2011 after the church ran a deficit of nearly \$80,000, said its treasurer, Charles Dupree. The church has an annual budget of about \$350,000, and its endowment totals about \$1 million.

Other churches have closed or merged operations. In 2015, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York City shuttered nearly 40 churches. In the Highlands, the Cold Spring United Methodist Church, the South Highland United Methodist Church in Garrison and Grace United Methodist Church in Putnam Valley formed a cooperative called the Open Doors Community Parish and share a pastor, the Rev. Jessica Anschutz. They also share an administrator with Yorktown Methodist Church.

Nationally, a Pew Research Center survey found that the number of Americans who identify as Christians dropped to 70 percent from 78 percent between 2007 and 2014, driven largely by a decline among Catholics and mainline Protestants, which includes Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

At the same time, the number of people who say they have no religious affiliation ("nones") has grown to 56 million, Pew found, making them more numerous than either mainline Protestants or Catholics.

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Maloney 'Office Hours' Turns into Town Hall

Representative hit with questions on healthcare, voting rights, climate

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Although billed as “neighborhood office hours” — generally an hour-long session designed for constituents to meet with Sean Patrick Maloney and his staff for help with bureaucratic red tape — the U.S. House member and Philipstown resident spent nearly two hours at Haldane school auditorium in Cold Spring on July 23 answering policy questions and at times engaging in spirited debate.

Healthcare

The forum, which drew about 70 people, occurred two days before the U.S. Senate began voting on legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act, or “Obamacare,” the national health insurance program. Acknowledging that the ACA needs improvements, Maloney recommended that “we win this fight now” to save it before fixing it.

If the ACA disappears, he said, “55,000 people in the Hudson Valley will lose their healthcare right off the bat,” while funding for opioid addiction treatment and nursing home services would stop. But, he added, “people are really waking up” to what a repeal means.

One Republican measure, sponsored by Rep. John Faso, who represents the 19th District, would force New York State, instead of its counties, to pay many Medicaid costs. (Under the ACA, state-level Medicaid expansions provide healthcare to many people previously lacking it.)

Faso’s proposal has prompted worries about how the state could cover Medicaid costs without vastly increasing taxes. Maloney said the federal government should “give back \$2 billion of the \$30 billion you send to Washington,” much of which subsidizes services in other states such as Kentucky, home to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Ultimately, as the Republicans attack the ACA, “the result may be the single-payer” plan, with the federal government creating a program akin to Medicare (which only serves those age 65 and older), Maloney said. “They’re fueling Medicare for all.”

Climate change

Opponents of a natural-gas plant in Orange County strenuously criticized Maloney for not trying to shut it down.

He argued that it’s been under development for years and that the effort should be to ensure it operates safely, not to pre-

vent it from opening.

“I’m living in a world where I think this is going to be part of the energy grid in the Hudson Valley and I want to make it safe,” he said.

He also backed so-called “carbon taxes” to discourage use of fossil fuels as the nation adapts to non-polluting energy sources. “This is a bipartisan opportunity here” to make progress, he said. Nonetheless, he stressed the burden of change must be equitably shared, not borne unfairly by working- and middle-class taxpayers.

“I want to get there,” he said. “But I want to bring the country with us. Otherwise, we’re just talking to ourselves.”

Foreign aid

Audience members questioned President Donald Trump’s plans to cut the State Department budget by 30 percent or more and reduce aid programs.

“It’s a terrible idea,” Maloney responded, noting that Trump’s plans do not automatically become federal policy; Congress must agree. “I understand the concerns about balancing the budget” but international aid comprises only a small fraction of the expenditures, he said.

Cell towers

Philipstown residents Roger and Cali Gorevic and Nelsonville resident Frances O’Neill asked for Maloney’s help in opposing the construction of two cell phone towers, one on Vineyard Road near the intersection of Routes 9 and 301 and close to the Gorevic home, and the second on a site bordering the Cold Spring Cemetery in Nelsonville.

Cali Gorevic said that the Federal Communications Commission can preempt local authority over cell tower installation, which “is just so wrong.”

O’Neill, the wife of Nelsonville mayor Bill O’Neill and, coincidentally, Maloney’s neighbor, noted that the Nelsonville tower would be near their driveways.

Maloney admitted unfamiliarity with either proposal but promised to look into them. “I don’t get this at every town hall meeting — issues that affect my driveway,” he said. Moreover, he said, “I already have good service,” with existing towers.

Elections

Audience members asked about allegations of Russian tampering in the 2016 presidential election; Trump’s establishment of a national commission to investigate voter fraud; and gerrymandering, or configuring electoral districts to favor one party.

Maloney said Americans must “stop gerrymandering” and “have competitive elections.” Of 435 House districts, only 40, including Maloney’s 18th, which includes



Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney answers questions at his July 23 town hall forum in Cold Spring.

Photo by L.S. Armstrong

Philipstown and Beacon, offer consistently competitive races; the others allow either an entrenched Republican or die-hard Democrat to win easily and repeatedly.

“It’s hard for me to fight for my [political] life every two years, but it’s good for you” that a choice exists, he said. Gerrymandering “is not a partisan,” Democrat-versus-Republican issue, he said. “It’s really a scourge on our country.”

When Margaret Yonco-Haines, a Philipstown Democratic activist, criticized what she called voter-suppression efforts that “do the Russians’ work for them,” Maloney criticized both forms of interference.

He called Trump’s commission to investigate voter fraud a “sham” and expressed pride in New York for refusing to participate. “There’s not voting fraud in any meaningful way,” he said. “Never has been.”

Likewise, “the Russian government should not be monkeying around in our elections,” Maloney said. He warned of potential cyberattacks not just on elections but on dams, the electrical grid and other infrastructure. Five thousand hackers in a Moscow suburb are more menacing than a sophisticated warplane, he asserted. But he noted with satisfaction that Congress is digging deeper into the Russian role (confirmed by U.S. intelligence agencies) in the 2016 race.

Village Water Supply Passes Test

No herbicides used by Putnam County detected

By Michael Turton

An analysis of water samples from Foundry Brook found no trace of herbicides used by the Putnam County Highway Department to kill weeds along Fishkill Road, according to Cold Spring’s water superintendent. The brook provides drinking water to Cold Spring and Nelsonville.

Greg Phillips, the village superintendent of water and waste water, ordered the analysis because one of the herbicides, DuPont Oust XP, carries a warning that it should not be applied near surface water. (See “Village Raises Concerns About Herbicides,” June 30.)

Phillips said on July 27 that samples collected on June 30 were analyzed for glyphosate, the active ingredient in Oust XP, as well as 93 other compounds. “All sample results, for all parameters, fell below the laboratories’ detectable limits,” he wrote in an email.

Putnam County Highway Commissioner Fred Pena and Deputy Commissioner John Tully did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

Trump self-pardon

Asked if Trump could pardon himself for illegal activity, Maloney responded, “I can’t imagine” he could. “There has to be some limit on the presidential pardon power,” he said. “You’re going to hear a loud explosion on Capitol Hill if he tries to do that.”

No. 1 task

An audience member wanted Maloney’s recommendation on the “No. 1” task for citizens concerned about the current political climate.

“Don’t lose faith,” Maloney replied. “Nothing that has happened in the last six months is greater than the U.S. Constitution.” Beyond that, he said, “we can all start talking to people who don’t really agree with us.” Social media goad Americans into only reading, watching, listening to or contacting those with the same views, he said, which breeds insularity and narrow-mindedness. “It’s really pernicious,” he said.



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Incumbents, Minister Seek Town Seats *(from Page 1)*

director of media for the Walter Hoving Home in Garrison and a former reporter for the *Putnam County News & Recorder*. Independent candidates have until mid-August to file nominating petitions. Philipstown board members, except the supervisor, serve four-year terms. Leonard is in his first term and Van Tassel in his second. Shea was elected as supervisor in 2009 after eight years as a member of the board. Leonard and Van Tassel will appear on the Democratic line on the ballot and Greco on the Republican line. Greco's petition for the Independence Party line was invalidated by the Putnam County Board of Elections because he had not received authorization from the party to be its candidate, according to the board. Greco said he was surprised to see an Independence petition had been submitted as he had not

sought the party's nomination. In June, after Sheriff Smith apologized to former Putnam County District Attorney Adam Levy for making false statements about him and agreed to pay \$25,000 of a \$150,000 settlement (the county picked up the rest), DeStefano called for him to resign or drop out of the race. But the Putnam Republican Committee earlier expressed its confidence in the incumbent, endorsing him on May 15 by a wide margin over DeStefano. The Democratic challenger, Langley, who retired from the Putnam County Sheriff's Department in 2007 and now runs a private security firm, in a statement on July 24 thanked the 1,800 voters who signed his nominating petitions and the volunteers who circulated them for three weeks. "You have my promise to return integ-



Robert L. Langley Jr. Campaign photo

rity, experience and respect to the office of sheriff," he wrote. James W. Borkowski and Patrick W. Perry objected to specific signatures on DeStefano's petitions, which the two Putnam County election commissioners (one Democrat, one Republican) will review. DeStefano and/or Robert W. Ferguson filed general objections to Smith's petitions for the Republican and three other lines on July 14 but did not follow through with specifics by the deadline. No objections were filed against petitions submitted by Philipstown candidates.

Sheriff Smith Hospitalized

On Saturday, July 22, while attending a fundraiser for the family of late senior investigator Mark Gilmore and for Deputy Sheriff Michael Schmidt, who is battling cancer, Sheriff Don Smith did not feel well and went to the emergency room at Putnam Hospital Center, where he was admitted, according to a statement by the Sheriff's Department. On July 23, doctors sent Smith to Yale-New Haven Hospital by ambulance, where he was placed in the cardiac intensive-care unit. He remained in the hospital as of July 26. The sheriff's office said Smith was in good spirits and grateful to the doctors, nurses and staff at Putnam Hospital Center.



Don Smith Photo provided

2017 Party Candidates

Putnam County Sheriff (4-year term)
Donald B. Smith (R) – Carmel*
Andrew DeStefano (R) – Patterson
Robert L. Langley (D) – Garrison

Putnam County Legislature (3-year term)
District 2
Anthony Williams (D) – Lake Peekskill
William Gouldman (R) – Putnam Valley*

District 3
Philip Tolmach (D) – Carmel
Toni Addonizio (R) – Carmel*

District 4
Dini Lobue (R) – Mahopac*
Amy Sayegh (R) – Mahopac

Philipstown Town Supervisor (2-year term)
Richard Shea (D)*

Philipstown Town Board (Two seats; 4-year term)
Michael Leonard (D)*
John VanTassel (D)*
Timothy Greco (R)

*Incumbent

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Marisa Merz
Giulio Paolini
Pino Pascali

Giuseppe Penone
Michelangelo Pistoletto
Remo Salvadori
Gilberto Zorio

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The Calendar

Flight Risk

Benedict Arnold returns for the summer

By Alison Rooney

The story of Benedict Arnold and his betrayal has been told so many times, and interpreted in so many ways, that John Duncan faced a daunting task when assigned to assemble an exhibit for the Putnam History Museum on the general's time in the Highlands. The collection associate decided the best source would be an original one — the journal of Maj. John André, the British Army officer who was caught near Tarrytown with Arnold's instructions for taking West Point hidden in his boot.

"It's meticulous," Duncan says of André's account, which he recorded before being executed for spying. In comparing it with some visual depictions of the events, Duncan found "large discrepancies between what actually happened and what people think happened or remembered happening. Things start to become a little twisted, and you can see widely varied accounts which don't match up with each other," he says.

The items he chose for the exhibit, *Treason! Benedict Arnold in the Hudson Highlands*, which opened July 23, provide a geographic and personal backdrop for the story.

Anchored by a map dating from about 1783 that details what occurred between Newburgh, Garrison and Tarrytown, the exhibit includes documents, photographs, journal entries, etchings and weaponry related to the key players.

Duncan says he was not surprised by the inconsistencies in the accounts of Arnold's betrayal and André's capture. Many of the paintings and engravings, he notes, were created in the mid-19th century, decades after the events took place and during the period before the U.S. Civil War.

"There was definitely an aspect of developing an early nationalism at that time, because America was fracturing again and this 'story' served to unify," he says. "The artists were able to look back at this moment in history and use it for their own purposes, which we can see in some of this material. When this happened, with André caught and Arnold IDed as a huge turncoat, public opinion swayed and people became more behind the rebellion; it was a galvanizing moment. Politicians have long memories about what things are best used to unite people, so they invoke them."

He pointed to two etchings from the 1850s that depict André's capture by three men north of Tarrytown. "There are all sorts of different histories" about the men's identities, Duncan explains. They "were" (Continued on Page 12)



Chris Thorn as Benedict Arnold in *The General from America*, by Richard Nelson, which will be performed at Boscobel beginning Aug. 4

Photo by Travis Magee



A piano waits to be played at the Beacon Farmers' Market on July 9.

Photo provided

Keys to the City

Pianos to invade Beacon to benefit arts education

By Alison Rooney

The pianos are coming.

Starting this fall, as many as 20 pianos will appear in public locations around Beacon as part of a community project called Keys to the City. Any passerby will be welcome to play the instruments, which will be decorated by local artists.

Sculptor Ed Benavente, who had heard about similar projects elsewhere, spearheaded the campaign, which is being organized by BeaconArts and a committee of volunteers that includes Jesse Stacken, Ian Murdock, Akiko Sasaki, Rick Rogers and Linda Pratt Kimmel.

Already the pianos are rolling in. Ten have been donated, with one unveiled at the kick-off party for Beacon Open

Studios in May at the Oak Vino Wine Bar. "People were curious, immediately," Pratt Kimmel says of the piano, which has since been placed at the Beacon Visitors' Center on Route 9D. "Lots of people played it." A piano was also brought to the Beacon Farmers' Market on July 9 to promote the project.

The pianos are being stored at various community spaces, where those that are playable will be painted and accessorized by artists and groups such as the Beacon Green Teens and campers from Beacon's summer program. (Those that aren't playable will be broken down for parts.) The plan is to have the instruments in place by Second Saturday on Sept. 9 through at least Second Saturday on Oct. 14.

The pianos will be positioned mostly along Main Street, each in some way protected from the elements, with one at the University (Continued on Page 14)

FRIDAY, JULY 28

International Film Series: *The House of Sand (Brazil)*
7 p.m. Howland Library
313 Main St., Beacon
845-831-1134 | beaconlibrary.org

On the Town (Teen Players)
7 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
10 Garrison's Landing, Garrison
845-424-3900 | philipstowndepottheatre.org

Peekskill Film Festival
7 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1008 Brown St., Peekskill
peekskillfilmfestival.org

Where to Invade Next (Documentary)
7 p.m. First Presbyterian Church
50 Liberty St., Beacon
moviesthatmatterbeacon.org

HVSF: *Book of Will*
7:30 p.m. Boscobel | 1601 Route 9D, Garrison
845-265-9575 | hvshakespeare.org

Dweezil Zappa: 50 Years of Frank
8 p.m. Bardavon
35 Market St., Poughkeepsie
845-473-2072 | bardavon.org

Joe Lovano's Trio Fascination (Jazz)
8 p.m. Atlas Studios
11 Spring St., Newburgh
845-391-8855 | atlasnewburgh.com

SATURDAY, JULY 29

46th Annual Putnam County Fair
10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Veterans Memorial Park
201 Gipsy Trail Road, Carmel
845-278-6738 | putnam.cce.cornell.edu

Calendar Highlights

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

Peekskill Film Festival
Noon – 9 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
See details under Friday.

Master Class with Chef Agnes Deveraux
1:30 p.m. Glynwood Farm
362 Glynwood Road, Cold Spring
845-265-3338 | glynwood.org

On the Town (Teen Players)
2 & 7 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
See details under Friday.

African-American Head-Wrapping Workshop
3 p.m. Mid-Hudson Heritage Center
317 Main St., Poughkeepsie
845-454-3222 | artsmidhudson.org

Firefly Feast
4 – 9 p.m. Memorial Park, Beacon | fireflyfeast.com

The Mount Beacon Eight (Talk)
5 p.m. Putnam History Museum
63 Chestnut St., Cold Spring
845-265-4010 | putnamhistorymuseum.org

Bannerman Island Visitors' Center (Opening)
3:30 & 4:30 p.m. Boats leave Beacon dock
800-979-3370 | bannermancastle.org

A Midsummer Masquerade
7 p.m. Beacon Elks Lodge
900 Wolcott Ave., Beacon | beaonelks1493.com

HVSF: *Pride and Prejudice* with Talkback
7:30 p.m. Boscobel | See details under Friday.

Not an Ending at All (Dance)
7:30 p.m. Atlas Studios | See details under Friday.

Out to Lunch (Music)
7:30 p.m. Tompkins Corner Cultural Center
729 Peekskill Hollow Road, Putnam Valley
845-528-7280 | tompkinscorners.org

SUNDAY, JULY 30

46th Annual Putnam County Fair
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Veterans Memorial Park
See details under Saturday.

Peekskill Film Festival
Noon – 4 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
See details under Friday.

H.V. Renegades vs. Staten Island
7:05 p.m. Dutchess Stadium
1500 Route 9D, Wappingers Falls
845-838-0094 | hvrenegades.com

HVSF: *Twelfth Night*
7:30 p.m. Boscobel | See details under Friday.

Mimi Goese and Ben Neill
8 p.m. Quinn's | 330 Main St., Beacon
845-831-8065 | quinnbeacon.com

MONDAY, JULY 31

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

Conversation with Beacon Schools Superintendent Matt Landahl
7 p.m. Beacon Recreation Center
23 West Center St., Beacon | 845-224-5146

TUESDAY, AUG. 1

History of Women's Suffragist Song (Talk)
6 p.m. Howland Library
See details under Friday.

Creative Completion Workshop
6 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave., Cold Spring
845-265-3040 | butterfieldlibrary.org

Putnam County Legislature
7 p.m. Historic Courthouse
44 Gleneida Ave., Carmel
845-208-7800 | putnamcountyny.com

H.V. Renegades vs. Staten Island
7:05 p.m. Dutchess Stadium
See details under Sunday.

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

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 2

Adult Summer Reading Program Finale Party
Noon. Howland Public Library
See details under Friday.

HVSF2: *Kind, by Jen Silverman*
7:30 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
10 Garrison's Landing, Garrison
845-265-9575 | hvshakespeare.org

Summer Movie Series: *Blind Side*
8 p.m. Beacon Visitors' Center | South and Main, Beacon
beaconchamberofcommerce.com

THURSDAY, AUG. 3

Philipstown Seniors' Club
10:30 a.m. Chestnut Ridge
62 Chestnut St., Cold Spring | 845-809-5924

City Winds Trio: Building a Better Song (PreK-6)
2 p.m. Howland Library | See details under Friday.

Philipstown Town Board
7:30 p.m. Town Hall | 238 Main St., Cold Spring
845-265-5200 | philipstown.com

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4

The Big Latch-On
9:30 a.m. Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art | 1701 Main St. Peekskill
914-734-3557 | biglatchon.org

Community Blood Drive
2 – 8 p.m. North Highlands Firehouse
504 Fishkill Road, Cold Spring
800-933-2566 | nybloodcenter.org

Irv Suss: *in Two Worlds* (Opening)
6 – 9 p.m. Gallery 66 NY | 66 Main St., Cold Spring
845-809-5838 | gallery66ny.com

Group Show (Opening)
6 – 8 p.m. Buster Levi Gallery
121 Main St., Cold Spring
845-809-5145 | busterlevigallery.com

American Idol Finalist Alison Peratikos
7 p.m. Beacon Elks Lodge
See details under Saturday.

HVSF Community Bakeoff with Short Plays
7:30 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
See details under July 28.

HVSF: *The General from America* (Preview)
7:30 p.m. Boscobel | See details under July 28.

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Latch-On to Promote Breastfeeding

Events scheduled for Peekskill and Beacon

By Alison Rooney

Next weekend, nursing women and their families around the world will take part in The Big Latch-On, an annual event to promote breastfeeding. Gatherings will take place on Friday, Aug. 4, at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (HVCCA) in Peekskill and on Saturday, Aug. 5, at Waddle n Swaddle in Beacon.

Sabrina Nitkowski-Keever, the director of maternal health at NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital in Cortlandt, which is co-sponsoring the Peekskill event, says between 85 and 95 percent of women who give birth at the hospital attempt to breastfeed, with a success rate of about 80 percent.

"There are reasons some women can't, ranging from medical issues to personal preferences," she says. "In some cases the mom wants to but can't, exclusively, so she'll do both. Sometimes premies require extra nutrition, so until the mom can produce enough, she'll do both."

Linda LeMon, a Cold Spring resident who is one of the hospital's two lactation specialists, says she's seen

not only parents support the decision to breastfeed but other adult family members. The hospital has a class for new grandparents, she says, and "a good portion of the class deals with breastfeeding and how to support their daughters and daughters-in-law."

Last year, the hospital helped organize a Latch-On at the Carmel firehouse but hoped to get more Peekskill moms involved and so turned to HVCCA, which has a piece of art related to breastfeeding on display. Last year in Carmel about 50 women showed up with their children to latch on together at an appointed time.

In Peekskill, there will be speakers, arts and crafts, raffles and prizes and story time for older siblings. The doors open at 9:30 a.m. on Aug. 4 and the latch-on begins at 10:30 a.m. In Beacon, the doors open at 9:30 a.m. on Aug. 5 at Waddle n Swaddle with the latch-on at 10 a.m.

Walk-ins are welcome, or you can register at biglatchon.org. HVCCA is located at 1701 Main St. in Peekskill. Call 914-734-3557. (For information on the hospital's pre- and post-natal services, call 914-734-3257.) Waddle n Swaddle is at 484 Main St. in Beacon. Call 845-831-5952.

The total number of women and babies who latch on for at least a minute will be added online to a global count. Last year 17,852 women latched 17,992 babies at 758 locations in 28 countries.



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NY Botanical Gardens Chihuly Bus Trip

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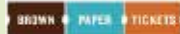
Tickets: Members: \$65. Non-Members: \$70.

Ticket includes: Air-conditioned motor coach w/lavatory, admission to the NY Botanical Gardens, and driver's gratuity. It does not include lunch....which is available in several dining areas.

Bus leaves Beacon promptly at 9:00 AM and returns approximately at 5:30 to 6:00 PM

The bus will meet us at the parking lot immediately behind the Yankee Clipper Diner on Henry Street. Ample parking is also available with no parking restrictions. We leave and return from this parking lot location.

To Purchase Tickets go to WWW.BrownPaperTickets.Com



For further information please call the Howland Cultural Center at (845) 831-4988 or 831-4614

Upcoming Events:

August: Saturday, Aug. 5 24 artists in the ArtEast Exhibition Opening reception: 3:00 - 6:00 pm
Saturday, Aug. 5 "Come to the Cabaret" with Hayden Wayne and Terrence Chiesa 8:00 pm
Saturday, Aug. 19 Rafael Figueroa and Special Musical Guests 8:00 pm

The Howland Cultural Center

Visit www.howlandculturalcenter.org for more information about our upcoming events.



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FRI 7:30, SAT 2:30 7:30

SUN 2:30 5:15, TUE & WED 7:30
THU 2:00 7:30

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& MHA of Orange County

MON 7:30 (free admission)

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www.monroecinema.com

Dunkirk (PG13)

FRI 2:45 6:00 9:15, SAT 1:45 5:00
8:15, SUN 12:45 4:00 7:15
MON 4:00, TUE-THU 4:00 7:15

The Emoji Movie (PG)

FRI 2:30 5:45 9:00, SAT 1:30 4:45
8:00, SUN 12:30 3:45 7:00
MON 3:45, TUE-THU 3:45 7:00

War for the Planet of the Apes (PG13)

FRI 2:15 5:30 8:45, SAT 1:15 4:30
7:45, SUN 12:15 3:30 6:45
MON 3:30, TUE-THU 3:30 6:45

The Beatniks (NR, 1960)

TUE (8/1) 2:00

LEGAL NOTICE

Philipstown Planning Board will do a site visit August 6, 2017

The Philipstown Planning Board will meet on
Sunday, August 6, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.
for the following site visit:

-1657, LLC (Christopher Buck)
1657 Route 9D, Garrison



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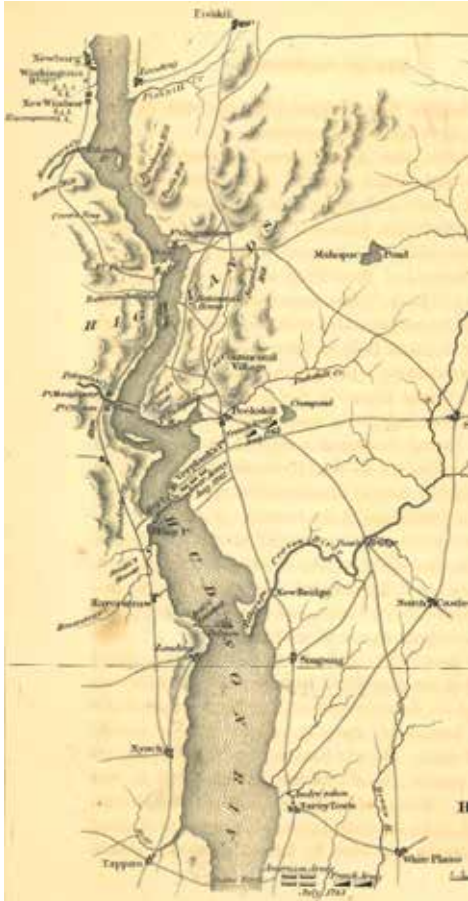
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Flight Risk (from Page 9)

possibly a Continental Army-backed militia, but more likely just a group of ruffians known as ‘freelancers,’ ” he says. In one of the etchings, they are depicted wearing uniforms. “There is disagree-



An antique map showing key locations of Arnold's time in the Highlands.

ment over what André was wearing, as he was convicted of ‘traveling out of uniform,’ ” a requirement to put him on trial as a spy, Duncan says.

One part of the exhibit focuses on Beverley Robinson, who lived along what is now Route 9D south of the Garrison School in a home that became Arnold's headquarters. The house burned in 1892 but photos survive, and three — an exterior, an interior and one post-fire, with its three chimneys remaining — are shown.

Robinson, from Virginia, married Susanna Philipse, of the family that gave the area the name Philipstown, and became a major landowner. A Loyalist, he didn't want to fight but was persuaded to join the British Army, given the rank of colonel and raised his own regiments. When Robinson joined the British Army, his land was seized and Arnold occupied the house. It was from there that Arnold fled to the British ship *Vulture* upon hearing of André's capture.

Several residents loaned items for the exhibit, including a copy of André's journal, a set of Revolutionary War-era bayonets from Cold Spring historian Mark Forlow and an etching from Christopher Radko.

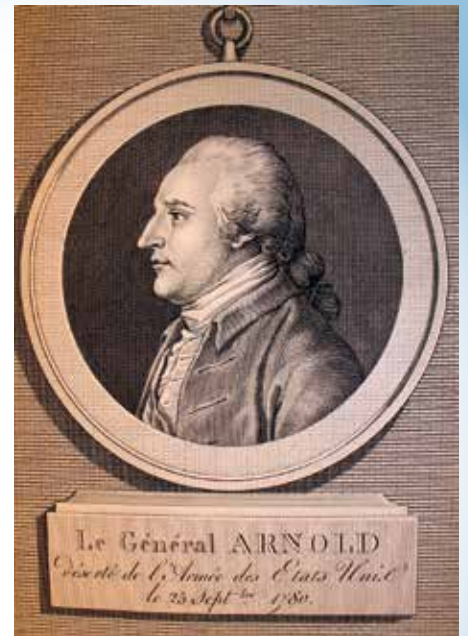
The Putnam History Museum, at 63 Chestnut St. in Cold Spring, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Members are admitted free; otherwise it's \$5 for adults and \$2 for seniors and students. See putnamhistory-museum.org or call 845-265-4010.

Benedict Arnold Was Here

The Putnam History Museum exhibit is part of a larger Benedict Arnold summer in the Highlands. On Friday, Aug. 4, the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival will stage the first of 10 performances of Richard Nelson's *The General from America*, which runs at Boscobel through Labor Day weekend. See hvshakespeare.org.

On Saturday, Aug. 5, at 5 p.m., historian Vernon Benjamin will speak at the museum about his play, *Arnold and André: The Birth of the Romantic*, which is based on a meeting between Arnold and the British officer in September 1780 on a hillside overlooking Haverstraw Bay. Admission is free for museum members or \$5 otherwise.

Later in the month, beginning Sunday, Aug. 27, HVSF will host seven days of events it has dubbed the Week of Revolution. It includes a Community Day, on Aug. 28, with the Greater Newburgh Symphony Orchestra; a hike sponsored by the Hudson Highlands Land Trust with storyteller Jonathan Kruk along Arnold's escape route; trivia nights about the American Revolution on Aug. 30 for teens and Sept. 1 for adults; and talks at the museum and Boscobel.



An engraved portrait of Arnold by Pierre Eugene du Simitiere, thought to have been drawn from life around 1780

The week will conclude at the museum on Sunday, Sept. 3, with a panel of West Point scholars discussing Arnold's role in the war, followed by a boat ride on the Hudson to Constitution Island.



Treason of Arnold, a steel engraving by C.F. Blauvelt, for Johnson, Fry & Co., circa 1857. The accompanying text reads "Arnold persuades André to Conceal the Papers in His Boot."

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Art Labriola - Free

Sun., 8/6 7:30 p.m.
Heather Pierson Trio

Sun., 7/30 7:30 p.m.
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Zlotnick, Tom Heany

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Was Benedict Arnold Misunderstood?

A panel of experts finally settle the matter

■ **Col. James M. Johnson**, military historian, Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

Benedict Arnold committed "treason of the blackest dye," to quote Gen. George Washington, as a result of a character flaw. He was not misunderstood, but he clearly felt unappreciated.

■ **Christopher DiPasquale**, author of *An Object of Great Importance: The Hudson River During the American War for Independence*

He was not misunderstood. He was a traitor. While many in the officer corps felt underappreciated and lost property and wealth, they did not attempt to sell their country down the river. There were other traitors, but Arnold was a hero with the cause from early on.

He is remembered for trying to sell the plans of West Point, but he also returned to fight against America. He burned New London and was part of the attack on Virginia, where he almost captured Thomas Jefferson. His goal was to hand the British what he called the "palladium of liberty" — West Point.

That said, what would be left for Arnold had the patriots lost? He was a disabled (from his war wounds), middle-aged man with a young wife. He hedged his bets. His bet was spoiled only by the three men along a road near Tarrytown who happened to encounter Maj. John André.

■ **Allison Pataki**, author of *The Traitor's Wife: A Novel*

While conducting research for *The Traitor's Wife*, I found myself wrestling with a surprising reaction. I kept thinking: Poor Benedict Arnold. He was an ardent patriot. If not for his prowess at the Battle of Saratoga, the British might have won the war in 1777.

A certain amount of Arnold's bitterness toward his colleagues was justified. Washington often mediated for Arnold (and took his side) when Arnold was treated unfairly by the Continental Congress and the army. His name has become synonymous with *traitor*, but history, as always, is filled with nuance.

■ **James Kirby Martin**, visiting professor of history, West Point, and author of *Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered*

Arnold gave his all (short of life itself) to the patriot cause until 1778. Twice wounded in combat, he was a critical player in inflicting one of the worst defeats the British experienced during the war, at Saratoga, because the victory led to invaluable French assistance.

Why did Arnold return his allegiance to the British? Was it just his beguiling wife, Peggy Shippen, money and the devil (an early explanation), or was he disillusioned by the lack of even basic recogni-



When Robinson joined the British Army, his home (shown here in the 1880s, before it burned) was seized and later used by Gen. Benedict Arnold. Arnold fled from the house to the British ship *Vulture* upon hearing of John André's capture. Photo courtesy of PHM

tion? Writers who condemn him outright, without analyzing his actions, both worthy and unworthy, tend to ignore or his contributions.

■ **John Duncan**, curator of *Treason! Benedict Arnold in the Hudson Highlands*, Putnam History Museum

One of the most overlooked aspects of his story is that Congress was broke, the army was on the brink of collapse and public opinion about the war was fractured. By this telling, Arnold provided a common enemy that united the American people.

Was he a traitor, or a patriot – or both?

That's the version of Arnold that has persisted, and that's why his story re-emerged during the Civil War to remind Americans of our shared past. That version of Arnold's story continues to be invoked, and I think the resurgence of interest in him reflects the state of political discourse more than anything else.

■ **Penny Metropulos**, director of *The General from America*

Many people who have committed a wrong were misunderstood in some way. I believe he did love his country. He sacrificed his well-being, as well as his leg, and if he had died at Saratoga, he probably would have been considered a hero.

Richard Nelson's play depicts a

passionate man who is warm, arrogant, humorous, loving, courageous and fallible. He seems to have had the sin of pride. He felt he deserved more recognition and money. At a crucial moment in the war, he thought his country, as well as his personal well-being, could be better served by the British. Many American Loyalists felt the same way, the difference being the injudicious way in which he acted upon his beliefs. Unlike Washington, he had little patience.

■ **Jonathan Kruk**, storyteller, author of *Legends and Lore of Sleepy Hollow and the Hudson Valley*

Misunderstood. Who captured and accounted for the cannons used to defeat the British at Bunker (Breed's) Hill? Who came close to conquering Canadians loyal to King George? Who saved the newly United States Northern Army while commanding the first American Naval battle at Valcour Island in upstate New York? Who lead the militia roused by Sybil Ludington at the Battle of Ridgefield? Who was the man to inspire skittish American troops to the most important fight at Saratoga?

After being discredited for that Saratoga victory, passed over for promotion for more politically important officers, reprimanded by Washington for using soldiers to haul personal goods, Benedict had reason to become a turncoat. But his accomplishments on the battlefield outweighed his treachery.



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Keys to the City *(from Page 9)*

Settlement campus during the Beacon Independent Film Festival.

There will be some scheduled concerts, says Pratt Kimmel, but the committee is aiming for spontaneous performances. The goal, she says, is to raise awareness and money through BeaconArts for music education and

access to the arts.

The committee is soliciting tax-deductible donations for expenses. Those who donate \$200 or more can have their own or business name placed on a piano. At the end of the installation, most of the pianos will be scrapped. One or two that are kept indoors during the project, if they survive two months of public play,

will be donated to groups that make a request. "The more playable, the more protected," Pratt Kimmel explains.

For more details, see [facebook.com/](https://facebook.com/keystobeacon)

keystobeacon. To donate a piano or funds, or to decorate an instrument, email KTCBeacon@outlook.com.



The first Keys to the City piano appeared at a May kick-off party celebrating Beacon Open Studios, seen here through the hanging cork at Oak Vino.

Photo by Jon Slackman



Two volunteers paint the piano used at the Open Studios kick-off party when Keys to the City was announced.

Photo by Ed Benavente

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Roots and Shoots

From Mess to Mounds

By Pamela Doan

After taking down multiple mature trees to open my landscape to more sunlight, I have made a big mess of my yard. It's going to take years to recover. The deep ruts left by equipment are being colonized by Japanese stiltgrass at an alarming rate and one area is completely bare from the fire that started when a branch brushed what turned out to be a live electrical wire crossing my yard.

Mountains of wood chips hulk beside the garage and piled logs tower nearby and might become firewood — someday. The rainy weather has given the invasive weeds a boost and before long the barberry, mugwort, garlic mustard and multiflora rose will dominate if quick action isn't taken.

I could make it easier. I could hire people with machines to clean up. I could ask a lawn service to give me lush, weed-free grass. I could have all the wood hauled away. I could pay a landscape designer to decide what plants to install.

However, I won't be doing that, because I love figuring it all out. I don't love mak-

ing mistakes, e.g., wrong plant, wrong place, but part of the joy of gardening is learning about plants. Even after doing the research to understand their needs, characteristics and habits, looking at photos and making choices, it's never the same as the experience of observing them in a landscape. Something gets too big, too bushy, not big enough, or after a few years doesn't play well with its neighbors. And yes, sometimes, a plant dies because I don't take care of it correctly or the wild-life find it too tempting.

My way to atone for taking down mature trees is to make use of each part of them to give back to the landscape. We used six- to 10-foot sections of trunks to create planting beds and privacy barriers along the road front. These will be enhanced with some of the wood chips and

other organic materials topped with soil. As it breaks down, the wood will nourish the plants with nitrogen. The rich material will have good drainage

and be a vessel to retain water; the log is a basically a mulch container.

The practice is called *hugelkultur*, a permaculture approach, and while I was familiar with it, I'd never tried it. Bryan

My way to atone for taking down mature trees is to make use of each part of them to give back to the landscape.



Moving the logs into place for the planting bed was quite a chore.

Photo by P. Doan

Quinn from OneNature in Beacon, the landscape designer we consulted with about where to site our many projects and which trees to remove, suggested it.

Briefly, the practice is about using woody materials and other organic matter to create mounds. Instead of discarding branches, logs, woodchips and leaves, use them as resources. I have maple, a hardwood, as my structure and it will last for years as it breaks down.

The arborists left logs behind that are too big for us to move far, so I've decided to make them into a planting bed. The shape isn't quite a circle and isn't quite a triangle, but it will do. I'll fill the bed with the same layering method I use for my vegetable raised beds. The bottom layer will be newspaper to smother the weeds.

I'll add a couple inches of wood chips and some smaller branches. The rest of the layers will be compost and shredded leaves, two materials that I have on hand.

I'll be able to fill in with plants around the outside of the bed and have a 10- by 8-foot area to fill in. My costs will be plant seed and transplants. It's getting late enough in the season that I can find a lot of perennials on sale. This feature is at the end of my driveway and will be a focal point for first views of the house but it's also visible from my front windows. For me, gardening is as much about the process as it is about the result.

Visit highlandscurrent.com for news updates and latest information.

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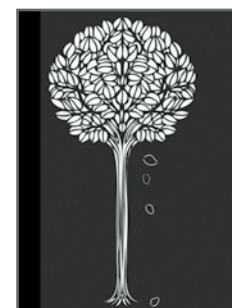
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Where did you spend the best moments of your summer vacation? *The Highlands Current* is collecting high-resolution color photos from local photographers of scenes and themes from the summer. We prefer photos taken this year. The best of these (in our opinion) will be featured in *The Current* and online. Please title photo file with your name and photo location (for example: [JaneDoe-JerseyShore.jpg](#)). Email photos by Aug. 21 to photofest@highlandscurrent.com.



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

The Mount Beacon Eight

Author to discuss crashes

David Rocco, an expert on the eight Navy men who lost their lives in two crashes on Mount Beacon in 1935 and 1945, will speak at the Putnam History Museum at 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 29.

Rocco, a project manager for the Mount Beacon Fire Tower restoration, is co-author of *The Indestructible Man*, a biography of Cmdr. Dixie Kiefer, one of the men who died. The lecture is free for museum members and \$5 otherwise.

Chapel Restoration Closed Until Aug. 31

Air conditioning being installed

The Chapel Restoration in Cold Spring will be closed through Aug. 31 for the installation of air conditioning and electrical system updates. It will reopen in September for weddings and performances, including five Sunday Music Series concerts.

The project includes the burial of overhead electrical lines from the street to the chapel and moving outdoor circuit breaker boxes indoors. The 40-year-old electrical wiring will be replaced and the lighting upgraded to low-voltage LED.

Donations are welcome; see chapelrestoration.org or write P.O. Box 43, Cold Spring, NY 10516.

Stargazing at Boscobel

Portable planetarium coming Aug. 5

A portable planetarium that allows for daytime starwatching will be set up at Boscobel in Garrison on Saturday, Aug. 5. Sessions are at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., and 11 a.m. and registration is encouraged since space is limited.

The Starlab is designed for children ages 4 and older; any visitors under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets are \$10 (\$9 for members). See boscobel.org.

Philipstown Boy Scouts Attend Jamboree

10-day event takes place every four years

Seven Boy Scouts from Troop 437 Philipstown traveled by bus to attend the 10-day National Scout Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia from



From left, Max Hadden, Leo Reis-Larson, Alek Maasik, Ethan Gunther, Guy Cervone, Dylan Gunther and Everett Campanile

Photo provided

July 19 to 28. More than 40,000 people attend the jamboree, which takes place every four years and includes rock climbing, watersports, white-water rafting, mountain biking and zip lining, as well as a day of service in a West Virginia community.

Iona Marsh by Canoe

Nature museum to lead tour

The Hudson Highlands Nature Museum will lead a canoe tour for adults and children ages 12 and older on Tuesday, Aug. 8, through Iona Marsh adjacent to Bear Mountain State Park. Equipment is provided. The fee is \$10 to \$20 per person, and registration is required. See hhn.org.

Get to Know Hudson River Fish

Clearwater creates website

Hudson River Sloop Clearwater has launched an interactive website with information to help identify common river fish and learn more about their history, ecology and management. It also includes quizzes, consumption advice and information about invasive species. See clearwater.org/fishkey.

Mess Fest

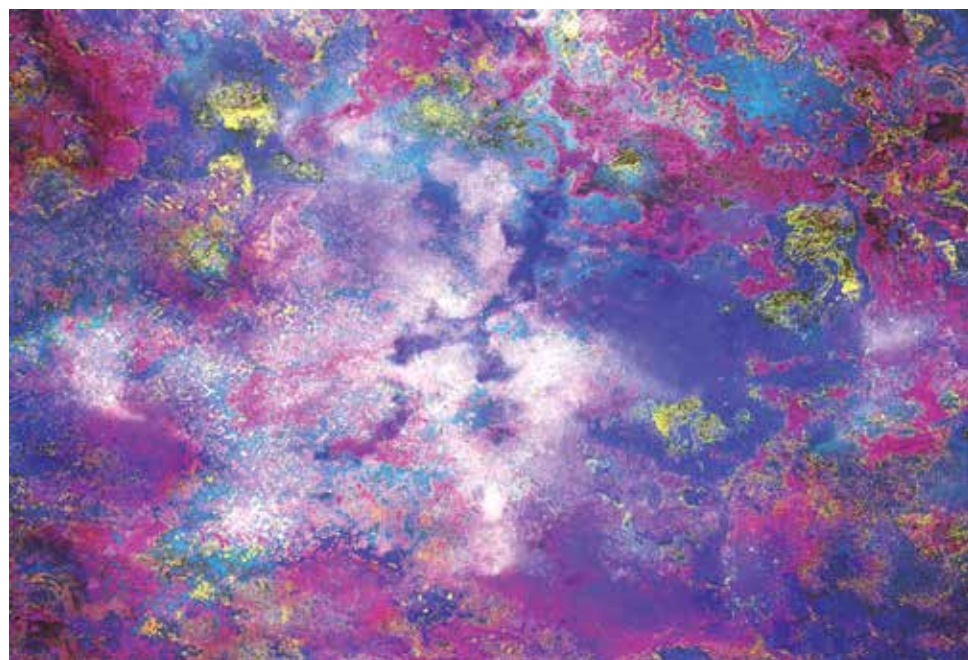
Get muddy for cancer research

The Muddy Puddles Project returns to the Kiwi Country Day Camp in Mahopac for the fifth annual Mess Fest on Saturday, Aug. 5, to raise money for pediatric cancer research. The event, which takes place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., includes messy activities such as a visit from Peppa Pig, a mud pit, zip lines, food fights and splatter paint. Tickets are \$35. See mudypuddlesproject.org.



The Mess Fest in Mahopac on Aug. 5 will raise money for pediatric cancer research.

Photo provided



Colors in the Wind, by Irv Suss, whose work will be on exhibit at Gallery 66 NY in Cold Spring starting Aug. 4

Image provided

Irv Suss at Gallery 66 NY

Landscapes and surreal abstractions

A retrospective of the work of Irv Suss will be on exhibit at Gallery 66 NY in Cold Spring starting with a reception on Friday, Aug. 4, from 6 to 9 p.m. One gallery will exhibit his landscape photographs and the other his more recent abstract images reimagined from his photos. The show continues through Aug. 27. See gallery66ny.com.

Philipstown Blood Drive

Set for Aug. 4 at North Highlands

The New York Blood Center will hold a blood drive from 2 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 4, at the North Highlands Firehouse in Philipstown. Walk-ins are welcome, or to schedule an appointment, visit ny-bloodcenter.org.

Sheriff's Department Dedicates Motorcycle

Honors late investigator Mark Gilmore

The Putnam County Sheriff's Department dedicated a new patrol motor-

cycle to the memory of Mark Gilmore, a senior investigator in charge of the Narcotics Enforcement Unit who died in March at age 54 after suffering a heart attack while off-duty. Gilmore also served as a motorcycle officer during his 28-year career with the sheriff's office.

The 2017 Harley Davidson Police FL-HTP Electra Glide has "RIP Sr. Inv. Mark Gilmore" on its sides and "92," his badge number, on its back. It will be used for patrols, motorcade escorts and parades.

It was unveiled on July 22 at a fundraising barbeque held to benefit Gilmore's widow, Amy, and his daughter, Mattingly, as well as Deputy Sheriff Michael Schmidt, who is battling cancer.

Veterans' Services Hours Restored

State had closed Putnam office

After county officials and U.S. Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney appealed to the governor's office, the state Division of Veterans' Affairs agreed to re-open its Putnam County branch in Carmel, which it had closed in May because of budget cuts. The office is open Monday and Friday by appointment. Call 888-838-7697.



Deputies William Verrastro and Anthony Tolve are shown with a motorcycle dedicated to the memory of Senior Investigator Mark Gilmore.

Photo provided

COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Macchia Forest, by Dale Chihuly, on display at the New York Botanical Garden Image provided

Beacon

Botanical Garden Trip

Howland organizes bus tour

The Howland Cultural Center will lead a bus trip to see a display of glass sculptures by Dale Chihuly at the New York Botanical Garden on Tuesday, Aug. 8. The bus will leave the municipal parking lot on Henry Street at 9 a.m. and return at about 6 p.m. Tickets, which include transportation and admission to the garden, are \$65 for Howland members and \$70 otherwise. Registration is required. Call 845-831-4614.

For Goodness Bake

Sale to benefit afterschool programs

For Goodness Bake, a fundraiser for the Beacon Recreation Department's Afterschool Program Tuition Fund, will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 5, at the Catalyst Gallery in Beacon. About 175 children from three elementary schools participated last year in the program, which takes place after school until 6 p.m. See forgoodnessbake.org.

'Foster Grandparents' Needed

County program looking for tutors, mentors

Low-income residents of Dutchess County who are at least 55 years old can receive a stipend for serving 15 to 35 hours each week as "foster grandparents" who tutor and mentor children and teenagers. Tutors receive paid vacation, holidays, sick leave and mileage reimbursement. For information, contact the Westchester Community Opportunity Program at 914-592-5600, ext. 114.

Visit highlandscurrent.com for news updates and latest information.

The Art of Healing

Works by the children with HIV

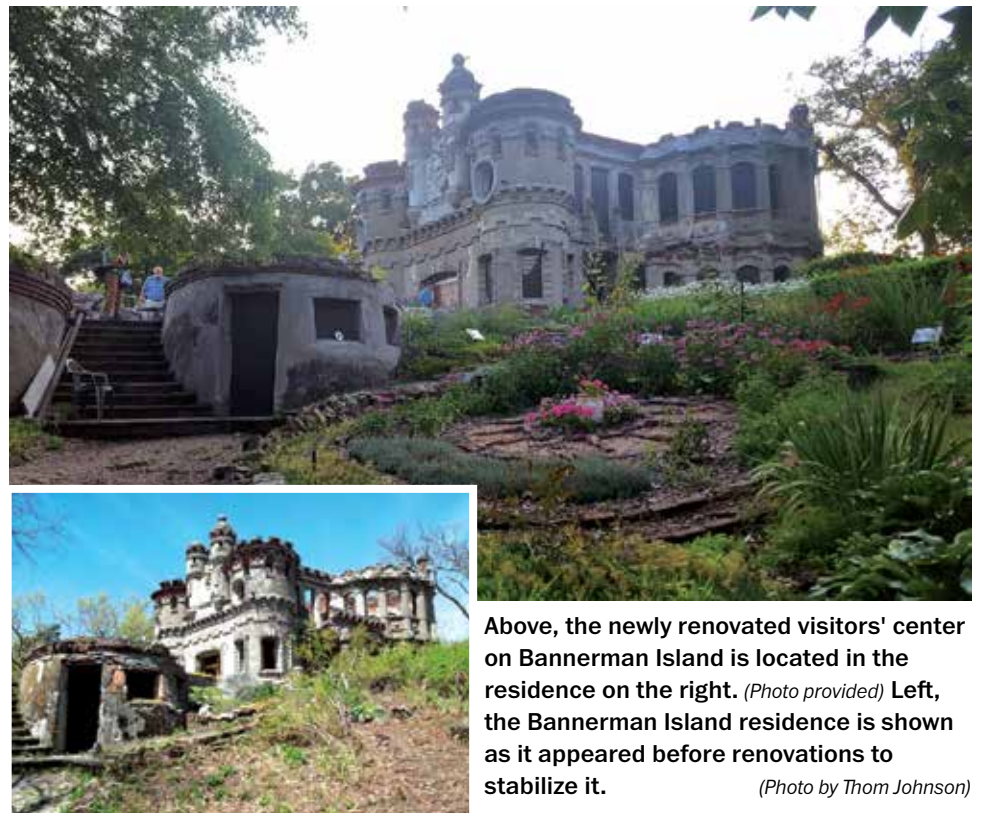
The Catalyst Gallery in Beacon will host an exhibition, *The Art of Healing*, on Sunday, Aug. 6, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Monday, Aug. 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., of artwork by children with HIV who live in a home in Nairobi.

Proceeds from sale of the artwork will benefit Nyumbani, which runs the home. "I'm hoping to validate the kids' work, and to encourage them to pursue their art, to foster their creativity," says curator Susan Jelcich. Art can be their "their strength, their nourishment."



Artwork from an exhibit by African children with HIV will be on display at the Catalyst Gallery in Beacon. Image provided

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Above, the newly renovated visitors' center on Bannerman Island is located in the residence on the right. (Photo provided) Left, the Bannerman Island residence is shown as it appeared before renovations to stabilize it. (Photo by Thom Johnson)

Bannerman Visitor Center Opens July 29

Reception will unveil renovations

The newly renovated Bannerman Island Residence Visitor Center will open on Saturday, July 29, allowing visitors to step inside the home for an exhibition of rare photographs, artifacts and new display panels. A reception will begin at 5 p.m. with refreshments, hors d'oeuvres and music performed by Rich Kelly.

Tickets are \$50 per person, which includes round-trip cruise transport and guided walking tours. The boat departs the Beacon Institute dock at 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., with return trips at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. See bannermancastle.org.

Volleyball Tournament Raises \$12K

25th annual event helped homeless shelter

The 25th annual Rooftime Volleyball Tournament, held July 8 and 9 at Memorial Park in Beacon, raised more than \$12,000 for the Webster House Emergency Shelter in Poughkeepsie. More than 240 players competed at the tournament, some traveling from as far away as Florida and Texas. For a list of winners, see highlandscurrent.com.

Webster House can accommodate as many as 60 adults. In 2016 the shelter, which is operated by Hudson River Housing, also provided more than 39,000 meals.

Goese and Neill to Perform

Concert at Quinn's on July 30

Vocalist Mimi Goese and composer and trumpeter Ben Neill will perform at Quinn's in Beacon at 8 p.m. on Sunday,

July 30. Neill will begin the show with an instrumental set from his solo albums, followed by a set with Goese. Both will incorporate video controlled by Neill's self-designed "mutantrumet," a hybrid electro-acoustic instrument.

Group Raising Funds for Stewart Victims

July 10 crash claimed nine Marines from Stewart

The Wingman Foundation, a nonprofit based in New York City, has launched a fundraising campaign to assist the families of 15 Marines and one Navy corpsman who died in a plane crash in Mississippi on July 10. Nine of the Marines were members of a Reserve unit based at the Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh. See wingmanfoundation.org/yankees.



TAKING A BREATHER — Capri, a Cardigan Corgi from Vermont, showed herself off at the AKC Putnam County Kennel Club dog show on July 22 at Veterans' Memorial Park in Carmel.

Photo by Alison Rooney

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Putnam Lauded for Financial Oversight

*Auditor says county finances
in great shape*

By Holly Crocco

A review of Putnam County's finances found its books to be in great shape.

"The administration and finance [department] have done a great job," said Neal Sullivan (R-Carmel) during the legislature's July 24 Audit Committee meeting. "Revenues are higher than they budgeted for and our expenditures are lower than they budgeted for."

"In the business world, any time you make more money than you plan and you spend less money than you budget, your profits are that much higher and you're very happy," he said. "That's the financial picture here at the county."

Putnam County used less money in 2016 from its fund balance than antici-

pated, Nick DeSantis, a partner at PKF O'Connor and Davies, which the county hired to complete the audit, told the committee. In 2015 the county allocated \$7.7 million from the fund balance to balance the 2016 budget but never ended up using the money. In addition, thanks to adjustments made at the state level, Putnam saw a \$5 million increase in sales tax.

The county also only used a portion of its potential "taxing authority," according to DeSantis. In 2016, the county under state law could raise as much as \$201 million, based on real estate valuations. However, it only levied \$40 million.

"It speaks to the overall good financial condition of the county, and that should be reflected with the rating agencies when

you go for a bond rating," said DeSantis. He said some municipalities in New York and across the country run into problems in which they don't have enough taxing power to provide services.

Putnam was recognized for complying with the rules and regulations set forth by the Government of Accounting Standings Board. "It's something you should feel very proud of because only a few municipalities in the state of New York get this award,"

said DeSantis.

To view the report, see putnamcountyny.com/finance/2016-cafr.

"It speaks to the overall good financial condition of the county, and that should be reflected with the rating agencies when you go for a bond rating."

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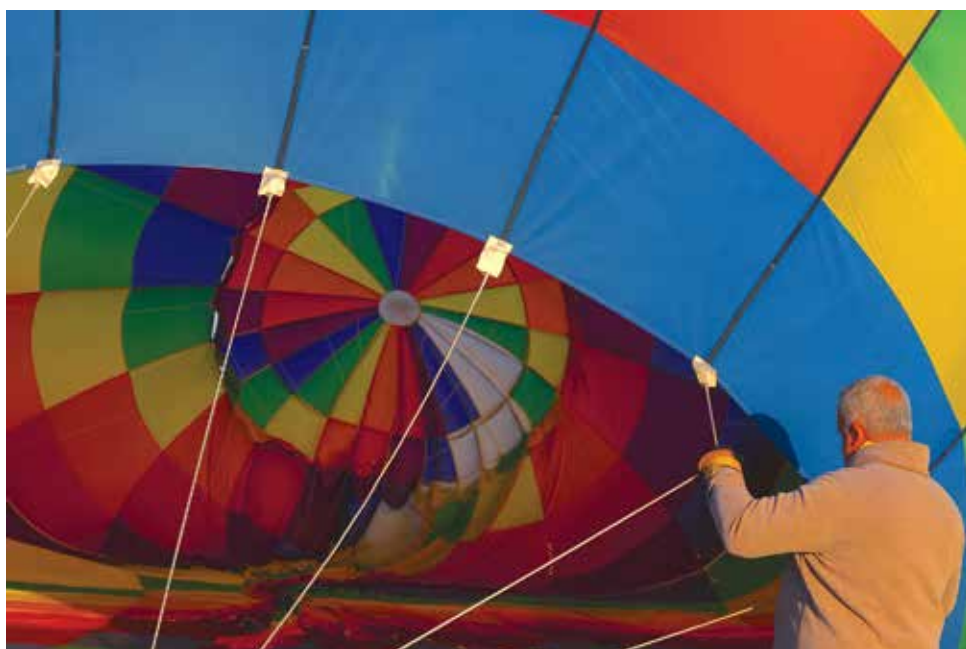
Finally ... An Uplifting Story

Photos by Ross Corsair

The annual Hudson Valley Hot Air Balloon Festival, sponsored by the Dutchess Regional Chamber of Commerce, took place over the second weekend in July at Barton Orchards in Poughquag.

Like boats, balloons have whimsical names; those participating included Mystical Breeze, Rainbow with a View, Cumulus Rompus II, Limelite, A Rising Star, Sir Prize and Roamin' Candle.

Balloon pilots typically take off at 6 a.m. or 6 p.m. to avoid the daytime heat. At the festival, visitors could ride in a tethered balloon or, for \$225 (morning) or \$250 (afternoon), take a free-range flight. The balloons follow the wind and so do not return to the launch. Instead, a chase crew follows in a vehicle, then ferries the passengers back to their cars.



Sports

Cold Spring Racers Do Battle

Student goes wheel-to-wheel with mentor

By Michael Turton

It was a pedal-to-the-metal, student-versus-teacher shootout. On Saturday, July 22, Stevan McAleer and Aurora Straus, both professional drivers from Cold Spring, faced off at an International Motor Sports Association race at Lime Rock Park near Lakeville, Connecticut. McAleer, 32, a native of Scotland, has been Straus's coach since she was 13. Now 18, she began racing professionally even before she had her driver's license. She graduated from the Hackley School in Tarrytown in June and will attend Harvard in the fall to study mechanical engineering and English literature. (When *The Current* last wrote about McAleer and Straus in 2015, Straus was 16 and racing for the Battery Tender Mazda MX-5 Cup. Her father, Ari Straus, is CEO and managing partner at the Monticello Motor Club.) Straus would have savored teaching McAleer a thing or two at the Northeast Grand Prix on Lime Rock's tough 1.5-mile course, but her instructor is a tough challenger. In the Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge, two drivers share the driving over two hours, with each lap taking about a minute. Both drive Street Turner (ST) class cars, which include sedans, hatchbacks, coupes and convertibles.



Stevan McAleer

Photo by Monticello Motor Club

McAleer and his co-driver, Chad McUmbee, had the fastest time in qualifying and, after taking the pole position in their No. 25 Mazda MX5, won the race for the third straight year. Driving a Porsche Cayman, Straus and her co-driver, Connor Bloum, finished 11th. McAleer and McUmbee won the season championship two years ago and almost repeated in 2016, foiled only by a blown engine while leading with minutes left in the final race. The win at Lime Rock put them back into contention this year, pushing them to seventh in the standings — a point behind Straus and Bloum — with four races remaining. The July 22 race was McAleer's 50th in the Continental Tire Series. McUmbee handed him the lead at the halfway mark, and McAleer cruised, although another Mazda momentarily narrowed his lead to half a second. But with 10 minutes to go the challenger was bumped off the track. "Lime Rock is a hard course to pass on, so track position is everything," McAleer said after celebrating the victory with the traditional champagne spray. "There was definitely some pressure at the end but ex-



Straus inside her Porsche Cayman
Photo provided

perience got us a win today." Straus had not driven the course since a mid-week practice session. Early in the first leg of the race, she was forced off the track and lost several seconds, which put her No. 18 Porsche in a hole. "We got taken out early so Connor and I



Aurora Straus
Photo by Michael Levitt/ LAT Photo USA

Continental Tire Sportscar Challenge (ST) Standings

	Daytona	Sebring	Cota	Watkins Glen	CTMP	Lime Rock	Season Total
6. Straus/Bloum	28	27	18	23	23	20	139
7. McAleer/McUmbee	25	15	28	20	14	36	138

salvaged what we could," she said. "Doing well in the Continental Series is often just surviving, moving up spot by spot." With a Lime Rock race under her belt, Straus said she understands why many drivers call it one of the toughest circuits in the country. "It's easy to learn, but hard to master," she explained. McAleer and Straus say they like Lime Rock because it's close to home, about 90 minutes from the Highlands, which means many local fans make the trip. "It's nice to see familiar faces from Cold Spring," Straus said. McAleer praised Straus' progress this season, her first in the Continental Tire Series. "Every time on the track her times are getting better and better," he said. "Her racing has been wheel-to-wheel with drivers who are much more experienced. She won't give it up; if she knows she's in the right position, she'll make the move." McAleer hopes to help his student find "a little more speed. Then she's going to be a real threat."

Straus said she found competing against her coach to be a bit odd. "We've had moments of intense competition and moments of cooperation," she said. "Stevan is family to me. He's the reason I've gotten this far." Although they are competitors, both teams are sponsored by ModSpace Motor Sports. And the racers do look out for each other. After Straus' car ran out of gas 700 feet from the checkered flag at Sebring International Raceway in Florida, McAleer pushed her across the finish line. "We finished in fifth place," she said. "So I have to find a way to pay him back." Asked about the Lime Rock race, both agreed that the course's short straightaways and tight turns favored the Mazda over the Porsche. But the tables will turn starting Thursday, Aug. 3, in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, at the 4-mile-long Road America track. "Our car will be strongest there," Straus said. "Road America is the perfect combination of long straights but sweeping corners. I'm looking forward to a track where we'll have the advantage." McAleer doesn't dispute her assessment. "If they put on a good show, it will be tough to beat that car," he said. "Last year we finished fourth and it was all about survival. It's a track that abuses the equipment."