What’s Causing Local Thyroid Cancer Rates to Soar?  
New study explores possible link to nuclear plant

By Brian PJ Cronin

It was four years ago that Joanne DeVito, who spent 14 years living in and raising her children in Rockland County, received a call from her eldest daughter with surprising news. “She said to me, ‘Mom, they found a lump in my throat,’ ” recalled DeVito. Her doctor suspected thyroid cancer, but DeVito was skeptical. “I told her ‘We don’t have any thyroid cancer in our family.’ ”

Three days later, the diagnosis was confirmed. Over the next month, DeVito’s two other grown daughters called to say they also had thyroid cancer. So DeVito called her own doctor.

“I said, ‘You’re not going to believe this,’ ” said DeVito. “She said, ‘You better come in. I live an extremely high-risk lifestyle.’ ”

The doctor confirmed the diagnosis and ordered a thyroidectomy. DeVito has since lived to see her two younger children graduate from high school and begin college careers. “I’m happy to report that I’m healthy and back to my normal schedule,” said DeVito.

DeVito is not alone in her experience. A new study examining thyroid cancer rates in New York state found a sharp increase in cases among women between the ages of 15 and 64 in recent years. The study, published in the journal Cancer, found that thyroid cancer rates in New York state increased by 5.8% per year from 2000 to 2012, with the highest rates in New York City and the Hudson Valley.

The study also found that women were more likely to develop thyroid cancer than men, with a peak incidence at age 50. The researchers speculate that the increase in thyroid cancer cases may be linked to changes in medical practices, such as the use of ultrasound imaging to screen for thyroid nodules, which may have led to an earlier diagnosis and increased detection of small, non-cancerous nodules.

DeVito said she was initially skeptical of the connection between thyroid cancer and nuclear power. “I thought it was just a coincidence,” she said. “But now I’m not so sure.”

The study authors noted that further research is needed to understand the link between nuclear power and thyroid cancer. However, they suggested that more research is needed to understand the potential risks associated with nuclear power plants.

DeVito is now a vocal advocate for nuclear power plant safety. “I think we need to be more aware of the potential risks associated with nuclear power,” she said. “We can’t just assume that it’s safe.”

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Rae Wynn-Grant studies black bears at the American Museum of Natural History’s Center for Biodiversity and Conservation. She’ll speak at the Cary Institute in Millbrook on Dec. 8.

What drew you to black bears?
I had been studying conflicts between humans and lions in Tanzania, but it’s hard to study an endangered species for a long time. Although there aren’t a ton of black bears in North America, in many places they are rebounding.

What is the biggest misconception about the bears?
That they are ferocious. Black bear attacks are rare and rarely lethal. Black bears are much more likely to retreat.

What should a hiker do if he or she encounters a black bear?
Retreating is the best idea. But if you feel threatened, make yourself big. If you have a jacket on, hold it above your head to look tall. Back away slowly and speak in a low and resonant voice. What we usually say when we encounter a bear is, “Get out of here, bear!” It sounds ridiculous, but that’s what we say. At the same time, don’t make eye contact. Predators always make eye contact with prey.

You took 60 high school students from New York City to camp at Black Rock Forest for a week. What was that like?
It was profound. I’m also a city kid and wasn’t introduced to the outdoors until I was an adult. I enjoyed watching students transform from fearful to having a great time. By the time we finished, the students had handled turtles, snakes, millipedes and birds. They’d taken night walks without flashlights and seen amazing views of the Hudson Valley. It’s powerful for me to see these kids who are a lot like me go through this experience.

What could be done to get more people of color into conservation science?
There’s a lack of awareness that it can be a career path. That’s what I went through. I knew the environment existed, and I thought it was cool, but I didn’t know of any examples of people like me who did science in nature. I thought science was done in a lab. Conservation is a mission-driven field. We’re trying to save the environment, and it’s not going so hot right now. But there are reasons to believe that a diverse group of people working on environmental problems, with diverse backgrounds, perspectives and ideas, will be more likely to solve problems than a homogeneous one.

Beacon Development Roundup

Edgewater, 226 Main on Planning Board docket

By Jeff Simms

The Beacon Planning Board is expected to decide on Dec. 12 whether a proposal for a housing development near the Hudson River should be delayed because of its impact on the city’s school system, or if the board should proceed in its review. If the Edgewater project, which will include seven buildings and 307 apartments, is found to have an adverse impact on the schools, the builder, Scenic Beacon Developments, will have to show it can mitigate the effects. If the project passes environmental review, the Zoning Board of Appeals must rule on three requested variances for the number of stories allowed in each building, units per building and the distance between buildings.

The environmental review of the project, which began in May, has been at a standstill as consultants for the development and Beacon City School District officials have clashed over the students Edgewater would add, and the cost of educating them. Both sides rely on their own metrics in what City Attorney Jennifer Gray admitted during last month’s meeting would come down to a judgment call.

Edgewater’s consultant, Patrick Cleary, says that the Rutgers University Demographic Multiplier is the most accepted, and conservative, model for projecting student population growth. Based on the higher rents anticipated for most of the Edgewater units, Cleary suggested the development will add fewer than 50 children to the district.

Factoring in per-student cost data from the instructional portion of the school system’s budget and the assessed value of the Edgewater property — which is used to project tax revenue — he said the district would realize a modest benefit.

The school district argues there is more to the cost of education than just the instructional portion of its budget. Additional costs, such as staff for special education students, BOCES services and publication of educational materials, can be found throughout the budget, said Judith Mayle, an attorney who represents the district.

“What’s being proposed now to calculate the cost to educate a student isn’t recognized by the State of New York and is not used by anyone to calculate the cost of municipal services, whether it’s fire, police or education,” Mayle said last month.

The grassroots Beacon People’s Committee on Development this week launched a petition at Change.org urging the Planning Board to vote down the project. By Dec. 7, 573 people had signed.

226 Main

The Planning Board will also continue a public hearing for the project at 226 Main St. The Zoning Board of Appeals last month granted variances allowing the developer to have a 10-foot (rather than 25) rear-yard setback and waiving its on-street parking requirement.

Parking for the four-story retail/residential building will be located at the rear of a county-owned lot across the street, which is being widened to create 15 additional spaces, and in a nearby municipal lot, which is being re-striped as well.

(Continued on next page)
Beacon Development Roundup (from previous page)

“IT'S VERY CLEAR THAT EVERYONE IN HERE LOVES BEACON. I JUST HOPE THAT YOU ALL REALL Y CONSIDER WHAT WE'RE ALL SAYING. I DON'T WANT TO MOVE. I WANT TO LIVE HERE AND RAISE MY SON HERE, SAFELY.”

Beacon council

Following another lengthy public hearing before the City Council on Dec. 4 over proposed changes for the Main Street and Fishkill Creek development zones, Councilperson Ali Muhammad conceded that the issue is unlikely to be resolved soon.

“This same conversation has been spoken about since the campaign and before the campaign,” said Muhammad, who lost in the primary and will not return to the council. “As much as I'd like to go for it on fourth down I think we might need to punt this one to the next council.”

The rest of the council (although two of its six members were out sick) seemed to agree.

“This council has worked very hard and has been digging into this for quite a long time,” said George Mansfield, but “we need to give it as much time as is necessary and make sure we get it finally right.”

The next City Council will be seated in January, when newcomers Amber Grant, Jodi McCredo, Terry Nelson and John Rembert will join incumbents Mansfield and Lee Kyriacou.

The Dec. 4 hearing featured mostly negative feedback, either from residents who weren't seeing the changes they wanted or appeared fed up with the ongoing discussion.

Kyriacou said after the meeting that the proposals have veered away from what the public wants. Extending the Central Main Street zone to cover all of Main, for instance, would hurt the historic districts that have thrived on the east and west ends of the street, he said. As drafted, the proposals are “encouraging more development than many people want on either end of Main Street,” he said.

During the public hearing, several speakers said the city appears to be haphazardly approving projects. Others suggested that Beacon is falling prey to developers only interested in maximizing profits.

“It’s very clear that everyone in here loves Beacon,” one of the final speakers, Christine Seymour, said to the council. “I just hope that you all really consider what we’re all saying. I don’t want to move, I want to live here and raise my son here, safely.”

The hearing will continue on Dec. 18, although the council could address the zoning proposals at a workshop before then.

Beacon Voters Approve School Plan

Beacon City School District voters on Dec. 5 approved a nearly $9 million capital improvements plan, 480 to 98. It includes construction of a multi-sport artificial turf field behind Beacon High School, air conditioning in parts of Rombout Middle School and safety and technological upgrades throughout the district.

School officials said the projects, which should begin in 2019 and two-thirds of which will be funded through state aid, would not require a property tax increase beyond what the district would normally propose next spring.

For 10 years I’ve worked to better understand and publicize the finances of the Garrison Volunteer Fire Co.

Two years ago, the Town Board established a Garrison Fire Protection District and appointed five commissioners. Your commissioners have the power to levy taxes and approve Fire Co. budgets. (Please note that the first budget they approved increased 27%.)

On December 12th, from 5 to 9 p.m., an election for the critical fifth spot on the Commission will be held at the Rt. 9 firehouse.

I urge you to make the effort to come out on December 12th and vote for me, Joe Regele, for this open spot on the Commission.

Over the past 10 years, I’ve come to fully appreciate the importance of our volunteers in providing emergency services in Philipstown. Moving forward, it is imperative that the operations of the District Commission be open, transparent, and committed to fiscal responsibility, so that our volunteers have the community support they will need to thrive.

PLEASE SHOW UP AND VOTE!
**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Fire District Voting**

**Garrison**
Tuesday, Dec. 12, 5 – 9 p.m.
Garrison Firehouse
1616 Route 9, Garrison
Candidates: Dave Brower, Joe Regele
1 open seat, 5-year term

**North Highlands**
Tuesday, Dec. 12, 6 – 9 p.m.
North Highlands Firehouse
504 Fishkill Road, Philipstown
Candidates: Amy Loctez, Vincent Tagliamonte
1 open seat, 5-year term

try to become as close to one entity as possible, working together and assisting each other.

I ran last year for a seat on the board to take a close look at the budget process and to ensure transparency for taxpayers. I was on the budget committee and the 2018 budget was developed by going line-by-line and building from actual expenditures and anticipated necessary expenses, with reserves for the unexpected, all built from the bottom up. I do not spend my own money frivolously, and I would never spend taxpayer money without justification.

You may have heard that we were able to save quite a bit of money this year by reviewing insurance and legal costs. That money was needed for unexpected repairs. We should expect the unexpected and go forward, budget accordingly.

There are reserves in the budget in anticipation of the long-term needs, just as you would have a savings account for home improvements or repairs. You also may have heard about an insurance payment for a fire company boat that was swamped and sank while attached to a buoy. The fire company owned the boat and our lawyer and insurance company informed us the recovery check belongs to the company. The district was reimbursed the amount it had invested in the boat and we will also receive annual checks from the fire company to cover the costs of the boat and other equipment it owns.

The fire company has fully opened their doors to the Garrison Fire District and community. All its paperwork is current and it has presented the district with a full accounting. This transparency is what we have been hoping for. After spending a year on the “inside,” I continue to be amazed at the dedication of our volunteer firefighters. The thought and time they spend making sure Garrison residents are safe is truly astonishing. They are proud of their commitment, and we residents are lucky to have them covering our backs.

Linda Lomonaco, Garrison

Joe Regele and I, a few years ago, were at the Garrison train station campaigning against and for (respectively) the New York State Service Award program. All volunteer fire companies have this retirement program, but Joe was against it for Garrison. When I asked, “But why?” he responded, “I want to see if I can defeat it.” At that time, he did.

So began Joe’s sport: find financial fault with local organizations. After a stint with the Philipstown Recreation Department and a brief foray into the Garrison School reserve funds, Joe concentrated relentlessly on the Garrison Volunteer Fire Co. With nothing constructive to offer, he argued, demanded, disbelieved and accused with a tenacity that accomplished nothing.

Joe’s letter in the Dec. 1 issue about his candidacy for fire district commissioner was classic Regele-speak: innuendo, information without context, hyperbolic guarantees of future disclosures. It’s a pathetic waste of skill and energy. The Garrison Volunteer Fire Co. has a long history of community service. I commend their determination to continue despite these destructive efforts.

David Brower is also running for commissioner. He has been an active firefighter for many years, in many roles. He also was a member of the Philipstown Town Board. I hope you will vote for a person who is honest, sensible, loyal to our community and conservatively aware of the fire company’s needs.

Betsy Calhoun, Garrison

**Lloyd Regele** wrote: “Carl Sandburg said: ‘If the facts are against you, argue the law. If the law is against you, argue the facts. If the law and the facts are against you, pound the table and yell like hell.’ It is an unfortunate byproduct of local politics that issues become personal. Ms. Calhoun’s letter is a perfect example. Our purported conversation on the train platform never happened. I would like to point out that there is a world of difference between asking questions and finding fault (and add that her reprise of my resume omitted six seasons of coaching the Philipstown Dragons). Attacking me does not change the facts – it just degrades the dialog and muddies the water. Blaming the messenger and pounding the table will not change the facts.”

**Garrison Fire District**

The five commissioners of the Garrison Fire District are responsible for the protection of residents’ lives and property. We do this through the Garrison Volunteer Fire Co. and mutual aid from other emergency services in Philipstown.

As commissioners, we oversee the day-to-day operations. It is our responsibility to maintain two firehouses, trucks and all other equipment necessary for the performance of the firefighters’ duties. Records of training and physicals are kept to ensure the health and safety of the men and women who put themselves in harm’s way.

This was the first year the district started to work on important repairs and projects that had been neglected because of several years of underfunding. A backup generator was installed at Station 1 so the doors can be opened when the electricity is out. Station 2 had a leaking diesel fuel tank replaced, new fire hoses were purchased and unexpected truck repairs had to be made.

The 2018 budget is $6,000 less than in 2017. It was adopted 4 to 1, with Commissioner Stan Freilich voting no. This budget will allow us to continue the work that was started last year. There is still a lot of work to be done.

It has been my honor to serve as a commissioner for the last two years. I have worked hard and will continue to do so if re-elected in the fire district election Dec. 12. The volunteers of the Garrison Fire Department deserve your respect and gratitude, and they have mine.

David Brower, Garrison

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Langley win

What's missing from your coverage of Robert L. Langley Jr.'s victory over Putnam County Sheriff Don Smith is how slim Smith's margins were in the districts he did carry (“An Even Split,” Dec. 1). Langley's victory isn't a simple "Philippstown turned out" story. Langley and his team worked very hard in every town, every district, and earned the confidence and support of voters in every party — Republicans, unaffiliated voters, Working Families, Greens.

Voters across party lines spoke. It was time for a deeply flawed sheriff, whose problems were of his own making, to be sent packing. Now the real work begins. And we start from a cooperative base to do it together. I'm grateful to Langley for stepping forward to lead all of Putnam.

Kathleen Foley, Cold Spring

Foley was Langley's campaign manager.

As a write-in candidate in the Putnam County sheriff's race, I spent a lot of time campaigning on the western side of the county, including heavy door-to-door, and I had many stimulating conversations with people. My campaign was well worth it, whatever the many stimulating conversations with people. Ty, including heavy door-to-door, and I had rated voters, Working Families, Greens. I earned the confidence and support of voters in every party — Republicans, unaffiliated voters, Working Families, Greens.

The workers work for the county and we are included. Many construction workers work far from home to put bread on the table and they are no different. We deserve our center and it’s been a long time coming with many seniors out there fighting for this center for years, including me, for the past 16 years. Since the first drawing of the center until now, a lot has been taken away. I understand the money part, but enough has been taken.

The bids that came in for the project were outrageous. For heaven's sake, the building is there and all that's needed is the interior finished. Let's get this project moving in the right direction.

Donna Anderson, Cold Spring

Veggie take-out

Some people have asked why we opened Veggie Go-Go in Wappingers Falls (“Vegetarian Take-Out,” Nov. 24). We tried to find a spot in Philippstown but could not find the right combo of space, rent, location etc., to make any of them work.

Since we're located near popular destinations for Put-towners (Adams Fairacre Farms and Viscount Wines & Liquor), we hope folks will swing by for a bite.

Lynn Miller, Cold Spring

Miller is co-owner of Go-Go Pops in Cold Spring.

Indian Point

Indian Point is the safest nuclear plant on earth, with the most and best-trained group of men and women anywhere (“Leaving Waste High and Dry,” Nov. 24). Most are military veterans and know how to serve and protect in whatever task is assigned. I feel sorry for any outside enemy — or inside, for that matter — who wants to do any type of harm.

Thomas Nastasi Sr., Cold Spring

Putnam sues drugmakers

While it is certainly good that the pharmaceutical industry is being called to task on this regrettable issue of opioid addiction (and more than a day late), I feel doctors should be called out in not sharing responsibility for overprescribing (“Putnam Votes to Sue Drug Companies,” Dec. 1). They know their clientele and they know what road they will likely travel.

What about the line in the Hippocratic oath, “I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure”? Doctors should step up to the plate and adopt a broader view of their treatments and consequences.

Kelly House, Cold Spring

Senior center delayed

I was stunned to read that John Tully, the deputy commissioner of Putnam County Highways & Facilities, thinks that sending Putnam County workers to Cold Spring to work on the planned senior center may add costs because “it’s a little remote over there” (“Senior Center Bids Higher Than Expected,” Dec. 1).

We are Putnam County taxpayers whose citizens and businesses generate money for the county government. We are entitled to the same services as any area of the county. This project is for our seniors, who have paid into the system for the longest time and have been waiting many years for this center, first promised with a subsidy from former Fox News chief Roger Ailes, which the Putnam County Legislature was all for until he was accused of sexual misconduct and the details of the “deal” were uncovered. I suggest Mr. Tully send them over and get to work.

Kathleen Kourie, Southeast

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Putnam County Commission considers county养老中心

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Donna Anderson, Cold Spring
No Chestnut Ridge Rent Increase — For Now

Owner seeks change in financing

By Michael Turton

Cold Spring Mayor Dave Merandy is asking the federal government to ensure that the company that owns Chestnut Ridge, which provides subsidized housing for seniors, is not allowed to convert the complex to market-rate apartments.

Residents in the 64-unit complex were alarmed last month when they received a letter from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provides low-interest loans to developers to create rural housing for the elderly, disabled and poor, that the owner of the property wanted to convert it to market-rate apartments.

The letter, dated Nov. 15, said Harmony Management wanted to pay off its USDA loan and convert the apartments. The agency said that if it granted the request, rents could rise and the agency would no longer be able to provide subsidies to tenants. (The USDA holds the mortgage on the property.)

However, soon after, a “corrected” letter arrived from the USDA, identical to the first except for a new, bolded paragraph that read, “Based on USDA’s communications with the owner so far, the owner plans to continue to operate the apartments as affordable rental housing.”

CPA John Costilow said his firm had found no issues with the village’s finances.

At its Dec. 5 meeting, the Village Board approved a letter from Merandy to the USDA urging the agency to ensure that Chestnut Ridge remains subsidized housing. The letter notes that Chestnut Ridge is the only affordable housing in western Putnam County.

“Without these subsidized apartments the low-income and mostly elderly tenants will be forced to move into an unfamiliar environment,” he wrote.

On Dec. 6, Dan Dunning of Harmony Management, which has owned Chestnut Ridge since it opened in 1981, told The Current that the company wants to transfer its loan from the USDA to a private lender but said the proposed agreement with the agency would keep Chestnut Ridge as subsidized housing for another 10 years. “We’ll probably keep it subsidized longer than that, but that is all USDA requested,” he said.

Christopher Stewart, a special projects coordinator with the USDA, wrote in an email that the current 50-year loan matures around 2030.

In other business...

• Trustees approved Joule Assets to administer the village’s participation in the Community Choice Aggregation program, which allows municipalities to collectively purchase electricity at reduced rates. The towns of Philipstown and Fishkill and City of Beacon are part of the local CCA, an initiative developed by Renewable Highlands and the Ecological Citizen’s Project, two Philipstown-based nonprofits. A public hearing will be held before the village adopts its energy-purchasing plan.

• Village Clerk Jeff Vidakovich will continue to handle building department applications and inquiries from Cold Spring residents. Trustees approved the six-month, $1,250 stipend he receives for those duties. The village and Philipstown merged building departments earlier this year, with Greg Wunner serving as building inspector for both municipalities.

• Deputy Mayor Marie Early noted that 2018 marks the bicentennial of the opening of the West Point Foundry. “It put Cold Spring on the map,” she said, pointing out that President Abraham Lincoln visited the foundry at the height of the Civil War. Trustee Fran Murphy and Early will work on plans to commemorate the anniversary. Mayor Merandy suggested possibly combining events at the foundry with Independence Day celebrations.

• Merandy reported that he toured Metro-North’s Cold Spring property with Neal Zuckerman, Putnam County’s representative on the MTA board, to identify areas for improved maintenance.

• The mayor will meet with a group of eighth-grade Haldane students who are interested in painting the pedestrian tunnel at the foot of Upper Main Street. The students would also like to see a skate park constructed at Mayor’s Park.

• Merandy said the village would leave one of the two restrooms next to the Chamber of Commerce information booth open despite vandalism. A week earlier, he had said the restrooms would be locked for the winter.

• At the board’s Nov. 28 meeting, John Costilow, a CPA with the Albany office of the EFPR Group, said his firm found “no issues” with the village’s finances after an audit for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2017.

Digital Frontier (from Page 1)

than $175,000 has been raised, with another $10,000 to go and a matching grant in place through Dec. 31.

Biracree envisions the space serving not just Garrison but the region, with the goal of making digital and cultural literacy more than “a privilege for people who can afford to be a part of it,” he says. “There’ll be all sorts of instruction, from how to use those new devices you got during the holidays to password management, along with weekly meetings for adults to introduce technology — everything from Snapchat to learning what exactly Russian hackers are. We’ll also have a weekly work-from-home coffee house.

“It’s a space that’s for the community, so the community can have a lot of say in what’s offered,” he says.

Project Code Spring will continue and, if there’s a demand, a session specifically for girls will be offered, he says.

Biracree sees the Innovation and Learning Center compelling children and teenagers to interact with not just machines but each other.

“Space like this won’t leave kids enslaved to social media or video games,” he says. “Most people will be working on projects and opening ways of thinking that they never had before. We’ll take a toy apart, do circuit-bending and work with kits.

“Kids now are using video games to make things and explore new worlds. They’re not always fighting zombies — they’re building simple machines and they’re networking, working together. It can look like fiddling around but it’s actually designing, building and problem-solving.”

Biracree, who lives in Beacon with his wife and their 2-year-old daughter, is a graduate of Bennington College, where he double majored in poetry and computer music. “There was a lot of production work involved,” he says of the latter. “We built a big machine out of old toys soldered together and used mathematics to create music.”

Before attending Sarah Lawrence to earn a master’s in poetry, Biracree was employed at the American Academy of Po-
What’s Causing Local Thyroid Cancer Rates to Soar?

(From Page 1)

healthy lifestyle. I’m a yoga teacher and an organic gardener. But sure enough, I had it.”

DeVito’s doctors couldn’t explain why thyroid cancer suddenly befall her family. But a peer-reviewed study by Joseph Mangano and Janette Sherman of the Radiation and Public Health Project published this week in the Journal of Environmental Protection, suggests that researchers look 8 miles upriver from DeVito’s home, at the Indian Point nuclear power plant.

“It’s going up everywhere. But it’s going up much, much faster here.”

Thyroid cancer is the fastest-growing cancer in the U.S., with national rates tripling since the early 1970s. More accurate diagnoses account for some of the rise, but researchers believe there may be other factors. The disease affects women at a higher rate than men, for reasons that are unclear. Certain genetic mutations could be a factor. The only widely accepted root cause is exposure to ionizing radiation, though there is some debate about how much ionized radiation is released.

High rates of thyroid cancer, as did survivors of the 1986 accident at Chernobyl. A 1999 study by the National Cancer Institute suggested as many as 212,000 Americans may have developed thyroid cancer as a result of the above-ground nuclear testing in Nevada in the 1950s. Mangano and Sherman’s study examines the hypothesis that low-level doses of iodized radiation from both planned and unplanned releases of radioactive steam when the Indian Point reactors shut down for refueling or emergency measures play a role.

Using data from the New York State Cancer Registry, the study examined the rates of thyroid cancer in Putnam, Rockland, Orange and Westchester counties. From 1976 to 1991, the rates were 22 percent below the national average. As of 2014, the rate has increased to 53 percent over the national average.

“It’s going up everywhere,” said Mangano. “But it’s going up much, much faster here.”

Although this is the 37th study that Mangano has written or co-written, some of his work has been criticized as “junk science,” notably by Entergy, which owns Indian Point, and Popular Mechanics, which in 2014 documented flaws in two papers, including one that suggested that fallout from the 2011 nuclear accident at Fukushima led to 14,000 deaths in the U.S.

However, the thyroid cancer study is quick to point out possible flaws in its own hypothesis. For one, it’s possible there are other, unknown causes besides radiation that could be responsible for the local increases. The study also acknowledges that because Indian Point does not measure the amount of waste products emitted during ventings, it’s difficult to know exactly how much ionized radiation is released.

Mangano hopes that the study will lead to better data being collected, and for researchers to conduct similar studies near other nuclear plants for comparison. While the cause of the local increase in thyroid cancer is the subject of debate, the increase is not. Susan Shapiro, an environmental attorney who serves on the board of the nonprofit Radiation and Public Health Project, suggested that residents ask to be checked for thyroid cancer annually by their doctor or dentist. She also suggested keeping a supply of potassium iodide pills on hand, which can be taken during a radiation emergency to protect the gland.

If detected early, the 5-year survival rate for thyroid cancer is over 98 percent. But it leaves the immune system compromised, as DeVito and her daughters have learned. “They say it’s a good cancer,” she said. “I’m not finding it so good.”

Has Your KI Expired?

The federal government has recommended since 2001 that residents who live within a 10-mile radius of the Indian Point Energy Center (the “Emergency Planning Zone”) keep a supply of potassium iodide tablets, known as KI, on hand.

Should there be a major leak at the nuclear plant, each tablet prevents the thyroid gland from absorbing radiation for 24 hours. It does not protect other organs. The tablets are not recommended for adults over the age of 40 as that group has the lowest risk of thyroid cancer. Fetuses and infants are the most at risk.

The Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services distributes the pills. (If you have a supply, it should be replaced if expired. The old tablets can be safely discarded in the trash.) Tablets are available from the Putnam County Clerk at 238 Main St. in Cold Spring on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 845-265-3329.

Join us for the Cold Spring Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Holiday Dinner December 14th, 6 p.m. Cathryn’s Tuscan Grill

RSVP:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/csacc-annual-holiday-dinner-tickets-39407484848
OR
info@explorecoldspringny.com

Symptoms of Thyroid Cancer

- A lump in the neck, sometimes growing quickly
- Swelling in the neck
- Pain in the front of the neck, sometimes up to the ears
- Hoarseness or other voice changes that do not go away
- Trouble swallowing
- Trouble breathing
- A constant cough that is not due to a cold

Source: American Cancer Society

The thyroid gland, depicted above right, is located at the front of the neck just below the larynx (voice box). Shaped like a butterfly, it has lobes on either side of the windpipe. The gland produces hormones that regulate the rate at which the body uses energy, as well as functions of the heart, digestive tract, muscles, brain and bones.
Tax Proposal Would Be Tough on New York (from Page 1)

- Changes that would make it more difficult to use municipal bonds to fund major infrastructure projects.
- To compensate for the revenue lost with the revisions, automatic cuts to Medicare and other programs aiding the elderly and/or poor.

Critics of the legislation, including the Putnam County Legislature, Nelsonville Village Board and New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), said eliminating the deduction for state and local taxes amounts to double taxation because, in the words of a resolution passed on Sept. 18 by the Nelsonville Village Board, residents “would be forced to pay federal income taxes on the taxes they pay to state and local governments.” (The all-Republican Putnam County Legislature adopted a similar resolution on Nov. 8.)

Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell, a Republican who also serves as NYSAC president, said Wednesday (Dec. 6) that while the tax system needs reform, eliminating or limiting the state-local tax and mortgage-interest deductions would be “a hard hit” for New York.

“There’s still not a lot of room for individuals and families” to benefit “and that’s a big concern,” she said. “There’s a whole lot of points that have to be addressed.”

In its resolution, the Putnam County Legislature noted that New York is a federal “donor” state, sending far more to Washington than it gets back in federal projects and spending. According to NYSAC, the toll for New York is $48 billion and eliminating the state-local exemption “would only increase that discrepancy.”

An analysis by the Tax Foundation, New York ranks ninth in the nation for combined state and average local tax rate, at 8.49 percent. New York ranks second for the total amount residents deduct for state and local taxes, about $68 billion annually. In Putnam County, the average deduction taken for local, sales and real estate taxes in 2015 was $18,161, according to the National Association of Counties; in Dutchess, it’s $15,146. In New York City, it’s $27,192.

In Cold Spring, Village Board Trustee Lynn Miller, who co-owns Go-Go Pops on Main Street, said the legislation will “have a huge impact on small businesses and make operating them extremely difficult. The number of deductions we will no longer be allowed to take is incredible.”

Deputy Mayor Marie Early said that “many ‘trickle-down’ effects haven’t yet been recognized or thought through,” including the legislation’s implications for nonprofits.

Nelsonville Mayor Bill O’Neill said that “eliminating or capping the federal deductions for local taxes unfairly penalizes people like the citizens of Nelsonville who reside in a state and local community where taxes are very high,” even though their own village “strives to manage its budget and keep its taxes in check.” If the federal legislation is enacted, “the impact on our citizens will be painful,” he said.

Philipstown Supervisor Richard Shea, a Democrat, said that, for local municipalities, “hampering the ability to bond for infrastructure when coupled with the New York State tax cap will essentially cripple our ability to undertake timely repairs to roads, bridges and buildings. It also hampers recovery efforts from storm-related damage.”

Furthermore, he said, “elimination of the property-tax deduction will hurt working-class families and slow the construction sector of the economy. It makes no sense.”

Democratic leaders at the state and federal level were equally critical. For their comments and additional details, see highlandscurrent.com.
The Coolest Tavern in Newburgh

Fine dining in a fascinating historic setting

By Michael Turton

Newburgh’s North Plank Road Tavern throws a party every Dec. 5. And, given the theme, the setting could not be more authentic.

This year’s gathering on Tuesday evening toasted the 84th anniversary of the end of Prohibition in 1933. The ratification of the 21st Amendment turned the last page on a chapter in the historic life of a restaurant that drivers pass each time they head to the Newburgh riverfront.

Its unassuming exterior is deceiving. Inside, in addition to cuisine and cocktails served from a hand-carved bar, guests are surrounded by unusual artifacts and tales of mobsters, gamblers and illegal booze.

Built in 1801, the hotel and tavern thrived at the east end of the Newburgh Shaugn gunk Plank Road, a private thoroughfare that led travelers from western New York and Pennsylvania to the Hudson River. A music shop just down from the present-day restaurant served as the tollhouse where a 2-cent fee was collected.

By the mid-1800s railroads had put toll roads out of business and the hotel’s upper floors were converted into a rooming house. The ground floor remained a tavern.

Tom Costa, who bought the property more than 40 years ago at age 28 and still operates the bar and restaurant, says he’s always been a history buff. When Prohibition began in 1920, he says, a woman named Augusta Sauer was the proprietor. “I’ve had old-timers come in who used to drink here then,” he says. “Mrs. Sauer ran a mom-and-pop speakeasy here. During Prohibition she just kept serving alcohol” until she got in trouble.

Those same old-timers told Costa that Mrs. Sauer’s boyfriend once insulted her in front of her adult son, Frederick, who in turn punched the boyfriend, knocking him backward into an open trap door, breaking his neck.

The Best Thing That Ever Happened to Beacon Art

Nonprofit celebrates 15 years with exhibit

By Alison Rooney

BeaconArts, the nonprofit created to champion the city as a center for arts and culture, is celebrating its 15th year with an exhibit at the Beacon Institute on Main Street that highlights the many projects and events it has supported.

“We’ve always been this ad hoc marketing and tourism entity, focused on the arts and on business,” says Kelly Ellenwood, who in January will step down as president of the group, which has 116 artist and 90 business members. “Now we’ve become more like a council, focused on more than just the arts.”

Curated by Kalene Rivers with help from Ellenwood, the exhibit continues at 199 Main St. through Second Saturday in March, with the exception of Jan. 8 to 25, when the space will be closed for Beacon Institute activities. A central feature is an extensive timeline that fills one wall of the space. The rest of the room has photos, scrapbook archives and objects.

Ellenwood says, for her, browsing (Continued on Page 14)
THE PAPER COVERS LOCAL CULTURE AND THE ARTS. REMEMBER THE WORD "CIVILIZED" WAS MENTIONED EARLIER?

What inspires you?

At 3:00 every afternoon, there's a shadow that falls on my worktable. I've sketched it over and over again. The design of this necklace comes from these sketches.

REPORTERS TEAM UP TO TAKE ON STORIES TOO BIG FOR ANY ONE PERSON, MANY INTERVIEWS, MANY ANGLES, MANY ARTICLES.

I think everyone in this community knows someone who has been touched by the opioid epidemic.

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Is it too late to squeeze in another ad?

...PROOF-READ AND FACT-CHECKED...

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Hey, Mike, how about a Bridal issue?

WHILE YOU'RE READING THIS WEEK'S NEWS, NEXT WEEK'S PAPER IS SHAPING UP.

HURRY, THE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SECTION IS ALMOST FULL.

Hmmm... I think the world needs to hear my point of view on this.

If you like what we're doing, please help keep our nonprofit paper free to the community.

Donate online at: highlandscurrent.com/support

Or send a check to:
161 Main Street, Cold Spring, NY 10516
Thank you!
FRIDAY, DEC. 8
Parents' Night Out (grades K-5)  
5:30 – 8 p.m. Haldane High School  
RSVP to haldaneclassevents2018@gmail.com.

Beacon vs. Lakeland (Girls' Basketball)  
6:15 p.m. Beacon High School  
101 Matteawan Road, Beacon  

Holiday Party (grades 6-8)  
6:30 – 8 p.m. Butterfield Library  
10 Morris Ave., Cold Spring  
845-265-3040 | butterfieldlibrary.org.

Elf the Musical Jr.  
7 p.m. Beacon High School  
101 Matteawan Road, Beacon  
774-249-9433 | beaconperformingartscenter.com.

Blood, Sweat and Tears  
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley  
1008 Brown St., Peekskill  
914-739-0039 | paramounthudsonvalley.com.

Steel Magnolias  
8 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre  
10 Garrison's Landing, Garrison  
845-424-3900 | phillipstowndepottheatre.org.

SATURDAY, DEC. 9
Bring the Kids (ages 4+)  
9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Boscobel  
1601 Route 9D, Garrison  
845-265-3638 | boscobel.org.

Winter Weekend  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Storm King Art Center  
1 Museum Road, New Windsor  
845-534-3115 | stormking.org.

Holiday Flash Mob Rehearsal  
11 a.m. Center for Creative Education  
464 Main St., Beacon | cce4me.org.

Holiday Party with Santa  
11:30 a.m. Butterfield Library  
See details under Friday.

Howland Cultural Center  
1 – 5 p.m. Fine Arts and Crafts Fair  
7:30 p.m. Kofi and Sankofa (Music)  
477 Main St., Beacon  
845-831-4988 | howlandculturalcenter.org.

Elf the Musical Jr.  
2 & 7 p.m. Beacon High School  
See details under Friday.

It's A Wonderful Life (1946)  
3 p.m. Putnam History Museum  
63 Crescent St., Cold Spring  
845-265-4010 | putnamhistorymuseum.org.

Bicycle Tree Lighting  
4 p.m. Holiday Flash Mob  
4:30 p.m. Beacon High School Choir  
4:50 p.m. Santa arrives.  
5 p.m. Tree lighting  
Pohill Park, Beacon | beaconarts.org.

A Little Advent Music  
5 p.m. St. Andrew's Church  
15 South Ave., Beacon  
845-831-1369 | standrewsbeaconny.org.

Steven Edson: Road Point (Opening)  
Group Show: PHOTOncritic 2017 (Opening)  
5 – 7 p.m. Garrison Art Center  
23 Garrison's Landing, Garrison  
845-424-3960 | garrisonartcenter.org.

Middle School Movie Night: Star Wars VII  
7 p.m. Philipstown Recreation Center  
107 Glen street, Garrison  

Jessica Lynn's Country Christmas Spectacular  
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley  
See details under Friday.

Steel Magnolias  
2 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre  
See details under Friday.

Pints and Prayers  
3 p.m. Dogwood  
47 E. Main St., Beacon.

Newburgh Symphonic Chorale: Ceremony of Carols  
4 p.m. St. George's Church  
105 Grand St., Newburgh  
845-534-2864 | newburghchoral.org.

Cirque Dreams Holidaze  
5 p.m. Eisenhower Hall Theatre  
655 Ruger Road, West Point  

Get Lit Beacon: A Literary Salon  
5 p.m. Oak Vino Wine Bar  
389 Main St., Beacon | beaconarts.org.

St. Philip's Choir: Bach's Magnificat  
5 p.m. St. Philip's Church  
1101 Route 9D, Beacon  
845-424-3571 | stphilipshighlands.org.

Living Nativity  
6 p.m. Church on the Hill  
245 Main St., Cold Spring  
845-265-9254 | northhighlandsny.org.

Horizon: Open House  
4 – 6 p.m. Open House  
15 Craigside Drive, Cold Spring  
845-204-3844 | garrisonartcenter.org.

Bicycle Menorah Lighting: Celebrating Educators  
5:30 p.m. 427 Main St., Beacon | beaconarts.org.

Beacon Chamber Holiday Gathering  
5:30 p.m. Chili Wine Bar  
173 Main St., Beacon | beaconchamberofcommerce.com.

Garrison School Board  
7 p.m. Garrison School  
1100 Route 9D, Garrison  
845-424-3689 | gchsd.org.

THURSDAY, DEC. 14
Bicycle Menorah Lighting: Celebrating First Responders  
5:30 p.m. 427 Main St., Beacon | beaconarts.org.

Cold Spring Chamber Holiday Party  
6 p.m. Cathyryn's Tuscan Grill  
91 Main St., Cold Spring | expolrecoldspiring.com.

Beacon vs. Sleepy Hollow (Girls' Basketball)  
6:15 p.m. Beacon High School  
See details under Friday.

Into the Woods  
7 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley  
1008 Brown St., Peekskill  
914-739-0039 | paramounthudsonvalley.com.

FRIDAY, DEC. 15
Zine Club  
3:30 p.m. Howland Public Library  
See details under Wednesday.

Beacon Historical Society  
4 – 6 p.m. Open House  
6 – 8 p.m. Members' Holiday Party  
17 South Ave., Beacon  
845-831-0514 | beaconhistorical.org.

Bicycle Menorah Lighting: Celebrating Children  
4:45 p.m. 427 Main St., Beacon | beaconarts.org.

The Brasiles Ensemble  
7 – 9 p.m. Magazzino  
2700 Route 9, Cold Spring  
magazzino.art/events/magazzino-holiday-festivities  
reservations required. I

Into the Woods  
7 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley  
See details under Thursday.

Open Mic Night  
7:30 p.m. Howland Cultural Center  
477 Main St., Beacon  
845-765-3012 | howlandculturalcenter.org.

STEEL MAGNOLIAS  
8 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre  
See details under Dec. 8.
They buried him back behind the barn,” Costa said. Years later, Costa would dismantle the barn, using the materials to build the house he lives in on the site.

Prohibition

According to Costa, the tavern’s most fascinating period came after 1928, when Mrs. Sauer sold the property to Mitch Nixon. “He worked for the Legs Diamond organization,” Costa said of Nixon, referring to Jack “Legs” Diamond, aka “Gentleman Jack,” a gangster who plied his trade in New York City and Philadelphia. He met his demise when he was murdered in an Albany rooming house in December 1931 after being acquitted of the kidnapping and torture of a truck driver transporting 26 barrels of hard cider without his permission.

In Newburgh, Nixon closed the rooming house to make room for slot machines on half of the second floor and a still on half of the third that produced “genuine” Gordon’s Dry London Gin. On the other halves of the two floors, accessible only by separate stairway, was a brothel.

Counterfeit Gordon’s labels, found by Costa when he dismantled the intact still in the 1970s, are on display in the restaurant, along with one of Nixon’s business cards illustrated with a sketch of a naked woman.

Fascinating finds

Costa has had some fascinating finds over the years. In a gutter above the rear of the building he found a Colt Lightning, the company’s first double-action revolver. In the barn he discovered a long-barreled Stevens 410 shot pistol. He also rescued at least one slot machine from the second floor.

There were liquid treasures, as well. Under the trap door of what was once Mrs. Sauer’s kitchen he found jugs of homemade booze that Costa believes she made but which he says were unfit for consumption. In the barn, however, he found several gallons of “applejack,” a distilled apple liquor.

“Nixon made really good applejack out in the barn; it’s delicious,” Costa said. “I still have about 2 gallons” of the now 90-year-old brandy.

The tavern’s beautiful mahogany bar was originally housed in Manhattan, according to Costa’s old-timers. Around the end of the Civil War it was brought up to Newburgh and installed in the United States Hotel on the riverfront. When the hotel was remodeled around 1895, the bar was brought to North Plank Road. “They had to cut it down to make it fit,” Costa said.

Costa operates the tavern with his wife, Denise, and son, Zach. Its two dining rooms are painted in the Trompe-l’œil technique — French for “deceive the eye” — the walls are painted to mimic wood, stone and brick. One features a painted doorway, while another has a signed fresco of the Hudson River, painted when the carved bar was brought in.

The cuisine

When Costa took over in the 1970s he served French cuisine, although “it’s more of a modern American menu now,” he says. The tavern’s “greatest hits” are an amalgam of offerings from chefs who have worked there over the years, including Kevin Reilly (later executive chef at the Water Club in Manhattan) and Costa’s first wife, Lucy.

“You’re not going to find our pan-seared jalapeno cheddar bread slab anywhere else,” Costa boasts. He also recommends the spicy crab bisque, salmon sur planche and Campanelli Farms crispy skin chicken.

North Plank Road Tavern, at 30 Plank Road, opens at 3 p.m. and serves until 9 or 10 p.m. It is closed on Mondays. See northplankroadtavern.com or call 845-562-5031 for reservations.
The Best Thing That Ever Happened to
Beacon Art
(from Page 9)

the exhibit induces “huge flashbacks and great memories. It’s all documented now; it’s archived and it’s important that it is.”

While BeaconArts was created before the arrival of Dia:Beacon, it was Dia that “made Beacon a place to come to,” she says. “Also, our Main Street is unique. It’s very long, for a Main Street, because contemporary Beacon was created out of two villages, each with their own center, coming together. So many people know each other, and Main Street is a spine which keeps us connected.”

Rivers says her goal putting the exhibit together was “to represent a little snippet of what it might have felt like to actually be at one of these past events. Luckily a lot of great photographers were there. “We also looked for projects that could be represented by artwork,” she says, such as guitars from RiverFest, sculptures from Beacon 3D, a concept design sketchbook and maquette study from the River Beacons mural, a piano from Keys to the City, sculptures created at the HEFeSTUS iron pour, an owl mural from Electric Windows and totems from Two Row Wampum.

There’s also a listening station for Freedom and Truth, a musical composition commissioned by BeaconArts for the dedication of a marker in 2016 honoring American journalist and women’s rights advocate Margaret Fuller (1810-1850).

Finally, on Second Saturday in December, February and March, BeaconArts will screen documentaries about its projects and artists. On Dec. 9, at 7 p.m., the selection will be Electric Projected by Cary Janks and Dan Weise.

Over the years, BeaconArts provided funding for a variety of projects, including Second Saturday, Beacon Open Studios, the Beacon Independent Film Festival, Beacon 3D, the Bicycle Christmas Tree and Menorah, Windows on Main Street and, most recently, the Bus Shelter artwork project. The group also has a website at beaconarts.org to promote events and prints a map of Beacon distributed through its members four times a year.
Roots and Shoots

Gardener Gift Guide
By Pamela Doan

I n the Oct. 27 issue I wrote about visiting the High Line in New York City and how my experience was enhanced by having read Gardens of the High Line: Elevating the Nature of Modern Landscapes, by Piet Oudolf and Rick Darke. For anyone who wants to emulate and understand what is happening in those natural perspectives, check out Planting: A New Perspective, which Oudolf co-authored with Noel Kinsbury.

The book is a useful guide for gardeners who want to understand the sustainable approach taken by an innovative landscape designer. It is both a resource with plant lists and a tool of knowledge about what goes on in the landscape.

The Living Forest: A Visual Journey into the Heart of the Woods, by Robert Llewellyn and Joan Maloof, is another rich experience with nature. The natural world is changing rapidly in response to many pressures: development, climate change, invasive species, major storms. (Both of these titles are available at timberpress.com.) Pair it with The Hidden Life of Trees, by Peter Wohlleben.

For design-based gardeners, The Pollinator Garden seed set, Garden, Cut Flower Garden or go for the Collection Bundle. As a bonus, you get to support a small business dedicated to preserving and propagating heirloom and open-pollinated varieties through sustainable, organic growing. I find growing from seed to be the most satisfying and remarkable process. See hudsonvalleyseed.com.

On the subject of open-pollinated seeds, help the vegetable gardener in your life go to the next level with Carol Deppe’s Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties: The Gardener’s and Farmer’s Guide to Plant Breeding and Seed Saving. If you’ve ever grown a tomato, squash or pepper that truly worked in your growing conditions and had a flavor you loved, use this resource to learn how to save seeds from it and adapt it to be even better. It’s also a way to recover some of the control that we’ve lost to agribusiness. See chelseagreen.com.

All work and no play makes for a grouchy gardener. Give the gift of beauty and leisure with a membership to a garden. Stonecrop Gardens near Cold Spring (stonecrop.org), Innisfree Garden in Millbrook (innisfreegarden.org) and the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx (nybg.org) are prime viewing spots and memberships offer other perks. If you’re lucky, your recipient will take you along and you’ll get the pleasure of his or her perspective.

The seed collection gift boxes from Hudson Valley Seed Co. are beautifully packaged, and each pack has distinctive art. Choose from the Pollinator Garden, Herb Garden, Gourmet Greens, Vegetable Garden, or Garlic Garden. The Gardener’s and Farmer’s Guide to Plant Breeding and Seed Saving, by Carol Deppe, helps you to Plant Breeding and Seed Saving.

The Highlands Current
COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Santa at Butterfield
St. Nick to visit library
Children of all ages are invited to meet St. Claus at the Butterfield Library in Cold Spring at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9. The library will provide crafts and refreshments and each child will receive a gently used book.

Tree and Wreath Sale
Boy Scouts will be at NHFD
Philipstown Troop 437 will hold its annual fundraiser from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9, and Sunday, Dec. 10. The Boy Scouts will be selling wreaths, trees and holiday decorations at the North Highlands Fire Department on Fishkill Road near Route 9 in Philipstown. To reserve a tree, email John Maasik at jmaasik@gmail.com.

Merry, Beary Christmas
Bears get their presents Dec. 16
Watch the bears open their holiday gift boxes filled with treats on Saturday, Dec. 16, at the Trailside Zoo at Bear Mountain State Park. Arrive at 10:30 a.m. to make the snacks and watch as the bears enjoy the results at 11 a.m. The ice rink, merry-go-round and hiking trails will be open. See trailsidezoo.org.

Health Care Job Fair
Scheduled in Carmel on Dec. 13
The Carmel Career Center is hosting a job fair with five health care businesses from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 13, at the Putnam County Training and Operations Building Auditorium, 112 Old Route 6. Able Healthcare, A & J Homecare Services, Putnam Ridge, Sunshine Homecare Services and Vision Healthcare will meet applicants. No appointment is needed but organizers ask participants to dress as the applicants. No appointment is needed.

What Does Voting Mean?
Students invited to enter MLK Jr. contest
Students in elementary, middle and high school are invited to enter a contest sponsored by the Desmond-Fish Library in Garrison in connection with its annual celebration in January of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Students can submit an essay, short story, poem, poster or short video inspired by interviews with five people about why they vote (or don’t). Email dflprograms@gmail.com. Entries must be submitted by Jan. 1 at either the Desmond-Fish or Butterfield libraries.

Dickens with a Cast of One
One-man show at St. Mary’s
A one-man adaptation of Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol will be performed at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Cold Spring at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 16, as a fundraiser for the church. The classic story was adapted by Christine Bokhour and Greg Miller and first performed in 2014. Tickets are $25 each, or $15 for students and seniors. See brownpapertickets.com/event/3192001.

First Noel
Orchestra to perform classics
The Greater Newburgh Symphony Orchestra will perform its first holiday concert at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 16, at Aquinas Hall on the Mount Saint Mary College campus in Newburgh.

Under the direction of Russell Ger, the program includes Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite and other seasonal classics. The soloists are Erica Spyres (soprano), Patrice Eaton (mezzo soprano), John Kawa (tenor) and Adrian Rosas (bass). Tickets are $22 to $45 each at newburghsymphony.org.

Sculpture Honors Clearwater
Installed at riverfront in Peekskill
A ceremony was held at Charles Point in Peekskill on Dec. 2 to dedicate a sculpture honoring Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, the vessel that launched an environmental movement led by folk singer Pete Seeger. The 24-foot North Star, a sculpture by Al Landzberg, was made by Al Landzberg of Yorktown Heights with a sailboat mast salvaged by his son-in-law, Chuck Newman, from a discarded boat at the Peekskill Yacht Club. Initially installed in Yonkers, the piece was moved to Charles Point in May and donated to the city.

Menorah Lighting
Set for Dec. 17 in Cold Spring
A menorah lighting ceremony to celebrate the start of Hanukkah will take place at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 17, near the Cold Spring Depot Restaurant on Main Street. See putnamchabad.org.

Magazzino Holiday
Brasiles Ensemble will perform
Magazzino Italian Art will host a reception on Friday, Dec. 15, at its space on Route 9 in Philipstown with a performance by the Brasiles Ensemble accompanied by fine lute and piano. Italian holiday treats will be offered beginning at 5 p.m., with the concert at 6 p.m. The repertoire will include Italian arias, madrigals and Gregorian Latin masterpieces.

Due to Magazzino’s limited parking, guests are encouraged to take shuttles from and to the Cold Spring train station beginning at 4 p.m., with service until 7:30 p.m. Reservations for the event are required. See magazzino.art/events/coming.

Revue Returns to Crier
Beacon show on Dec. 10
The Breakneck Ridge Revue will perform at the Towne Crier on Sunday, Dec. 10, at 7:30 p.m. with songwriter and poet Jake Holmes (who wrote and performed Dazed and Confused two years before Led Zeppelin did), keyboardist Chris Brown and folk master David Bernz and the Trouble Sisters.

Visit highlandscurrent.com for news updates and latest information.
COMMUNITY BRIEFS (from previous page)

Bless This Beer
Pints and prayers at Dogwood

Dogwood in Beacon will host Pints and Prayers with the First Presbyterian Church on Sunday, Dec. 30, at 3 p.m. at 47 East Main St. Sing carols, wear an ugly Christmas sweater and enjoy the worship band. Donations will be collected for hurricane damage relief.

Jazz Duo at Record Store
Concert at Hudson Valley Vinyl

Joe McPhee and Billy Stein will perform at Hudson Valley Vinyl in Beacon on Saturday, Dec. 16, from 7 to 9 p.m. Stein is a guitarist and McPhee plays multiple instruments. The store is located at 267 Main St.

Music for Advent
Free concert at St. Andrew’s

Brother Josép Martinez-Cubero (tenor) and the Rev. John Williams (baritone) will be accompanied by pianist Maximilian Esmus in a free concert at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9, at St. Andrew’s Church in Beacon. The performance, called A Little Advent Music, will include music by Benjamin Britten, Ravel and Saint Saens. The church is located at 17 South Ave.

Visit highlandscurrent.com for news updates and latest information.

Art and Poetry

Thomas Huber, whose work is on display at the Matteawan Gallery in Beacon through Dec. 17, will talk at the gallery about his work at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9. There will also be a poetry reading by Edwin Torres.

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Ideas to Action

Philipstown residents push projects
By Michael Turton

The Philipstown Community Congress moved from “wish list” to “let’s make it happen” at a Dec. 3 forum at the Haldane school as residents gathered to push for the projects that received the most votes in a survey.

More than 750 people voted for about 40 proposed projects and plans presented at three public meetings. The top three vote-getters were the creation of biking and walking paths, ensuring clean water and establishing a teen center.

Hiking trails
Philipstown has many hiking trails but the discussion group wanted to take a fresh look at the subject. They floated ideas such as closing one or more roads to cars on some weekend days to allow people to bike safely, said Marianne Sullivan, noting that similar closures have been successful in New York City and Seattle. The group also wants to identify carriage roads and trails that could be linked.

Clean water
The group would like to see a study that identifies “the most important parcels of land for conservation and land-use actions to protect the water supply,” said Michelle Smith, executive director of the Hudson Highlands Land Trust. She said other goals include establishing a clean water coalition and water quality monitoring. “We are excited that this activity coincides with the update to the Philipstown comprehensive plan,” she said.

Teen center
An effort to open a teen center has quickly gathered momentum. “We have more than 100 people who signed up to help,” said Sandy McKelvey, suggesting the American Legion on Cedar Street as a potential location after the senior center moves to the Butterfield site in the spring.

McKelvey said that when she met with Haldane’s Teen Mentors group, its members were “overwhelmingly in favor of a space for high school kids to go after school.” They were also unanimous on one other point. “If you call it a teen center, no one will go,” she said. A survey of teens will be conducted to find a creative name. The center will be operated by a group of teens and adults.

Several other initiatives from the Community Congress survey were discussed, including school district consolidation, local efforts to fight climate change, sales tax redistribution, improvements to the Philipstown Recreation Center, bringing essential health care services to the Butterfield development, improved road maintenance and banning plastic bags and Styrofoam.

Jason Angell, the executive director of the Ecological Citizen’s Project, the group that organized the congress, wrote in an email that he envisions the congress having a less active role as the working groups take ownership of the projects.

“Our role will be to help distribute update reports and calls for volunteers, and to help organize a collective meeting once there is significant progress to report,” he said. The Ecological Citizen’s Project plans to launch a Community Congress in Peekskill in the spring, he said.

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Girls’ Basketball Preview

By Leigh Alan Klein

Haldane

Coach Tyrone Searight’s program has set the bar high, winning four straight Section 1 Class C titles. The Blue Devils will be tested this year. Haldane's starting backcourt graduated last June after an 18-win campaign that reached the regional final in the state tournament.

Haldane would like to play fast. When the Blue Devils are at their best they are moving the ball quickly up the court before the defense can set up and getting the ball inside to senior Allison Chiera. Defensively, Haldane likes to extend to full-court pressure.

In its first game of the season, on Dec. 5 at Bronxville, Haldane was successful in the first half with its game plan, storming to a 28-14 lead. But in the second half, the Blue Devils couldn’t find their rhythm. Early-season fatigue set in and Haldane lost the momentum that its defense and rebounding provided in the first half.

Bronxville handled the basketball much better after the break and Haldane didn’t get the same open looks from the perimeter. Bronxville gutted out a 38-36 win by attacking the Haldane zone and holding the Blue Devils to only eight second-half points. Still, Bronxville needed to block a late Haldane shot and force a turnover to seal the victory.

Chiera, who after last season was named a third team All-State selection, is the focal point of the offense. Gone is Hannah Monteleone, but in are her two sisters, Livy and Bela, as starters. Livy, who is active on the glass, is a good interior passer and had seven points in the first half. Bela logged her first varsity minutes and will look to build upon them.

Olivia McDermott and Abbey Stowell lead the defense. A sophomore, McDermott, is a lights-out three-point shooter, most comfortable on the catch-and-shoot. She led Haldane with nine points at the half. A standout in the pentathlon, Stowell has many duties on the basketball team, as well, as the primary playmaker.

The Blue Devils hosted Irvington on Dec. 7 and play in a tournament in Croton next week.

Beacon

The Bulldogs opened their season on Dec. 5 at Walter Panas High School with a 41-24 loss.

Last season, led by senior Lauren Schetter, Beacon advanced to the sectional quarterfinals, upsetting Hendrick Hudson before being ousted by Tappan Zee.

This season the Bulldogs will be led by senior Brianna Dembo, who scored 15 of the team’s 24 points at Panas.

“Bri is a strong returner, she’s our leader,” said Coach Christine Dahl, who is in her 16th season at Beacon.

The sophomores who had varsity minutes last season will need to step up, Dahl said. “They are learning as they go,” she said. “They will get better.”

Sophomore Skyler Kurtz will play an important role as a playmaker, ballhandler and defensive stopper. Sarah Evans provided a spark for Beacon with strong interior play at Panas, scoring six points in her first varsity minutes.

Beacon hosts Lakeland tonight (Friday, Dec. 8) at 6:15 p.m. The Bulldogs visit Haldane on Jan. 24.