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New
Year!

DECEMBER 29, 2017

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

Philipstown and Beacon Taking Early Tax Payments

*New federal law will limit
local deduction to \$10,000*

By Chip Rowe

The Philipstown and Beacon tax collectors this week accepted early payments toward 2018 property tax bills following the passage of a federal law that will limit itemized deductions next year of local and state taxes to \$10,000 annually. Making a payment on the 2018 bill before Dec. 31 will allow taxpayers who itemize to claim it as a deduction on their 2017 filings, although it's not clear if the Internal Revenue Service will allow it.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued an executive order Dec. 22 calling on local authorities to issue tax warrants and deliver them to local tax collectors by midnight Dec. 28. With warrants in hand, tax collectors can accept early payments at their discretion. Philipstown was to send its 2018 bills this week, with a due date of Jan. 31; Beacon sends out its bills in late January with a March 2 deadline.

Both tax collectors were accepting par-



LOOKING BACK — A visitor at the June 28 opening of Magazzino Italian Art in Philipstown contemplates *Janua Coeli* by Marco Bagnoli, which reflects the gallery behind him. For a look back at the Highlands over the past year, see Page 16.

Photo by Ross Corsair

tial or full payments this week. Tina Merando, the tax collector and town clerk in Philipstown, also said she would delay the typical Friday noon closing today (Dec. 29) until 4 p.m. and add hours from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 30, to accept payments.

As of Wednesday evening (Dec. 27), Merando reported her office had re-

ceived more than 200 phone calls and accepted more than \$500,000 in early tax payments. Susan Tucker, the director of finance in Beacon, said her office had received at least as many calls and was "inundated with payments" but was short-staffed because of the holiday week.

In Westchester, County Executive Rob Astorino said on Dec. 26 that his administration would not be able to deliver a tax warrant by the end of the year. It is usually issued in March. "It is just not possible for the county to issue its 2018 tax warrants to localities within the next four days for a whole host of legal, operational and practical reasons," said Ned McCormack, a senior advisor to Astorino, in a statement. In (Continued on Page 5)

Fighting
Back the
opioid Crisis
a special report

Drug Court Graduation: A Second Chance

*After two years, felony
charges reduced or dismissed*

By Michael Turton

In many ways it was a typical pre-graduation scene. Prospective grads, their family and friends were in a celebratory mood. There were bouquets of flowers, gift bags and lighthearted conversation.

But this was no typical graduation. It was a special session of the Putnam County Treatment Court held Dec. 14 at Carmel's historic courthouse, with Judge James F. Reitz presiding.

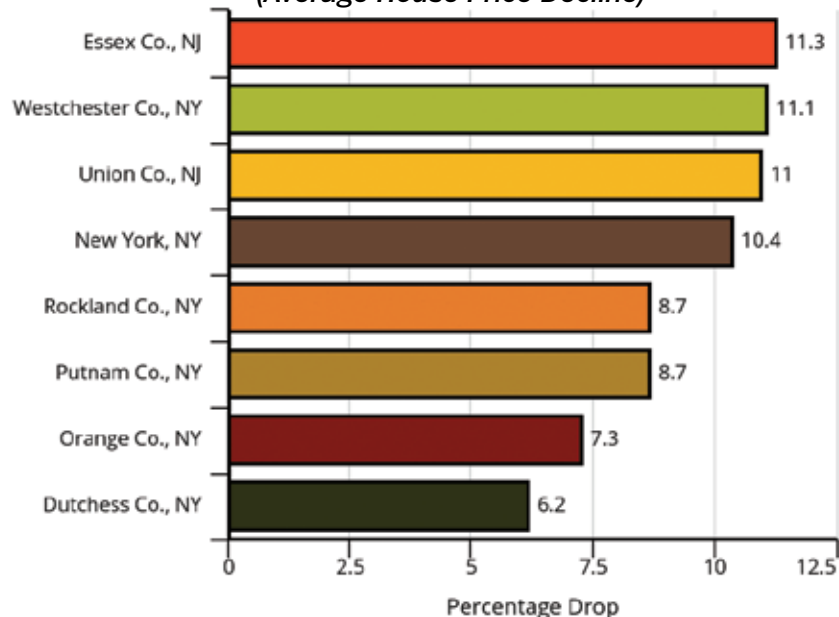
For the six graduates of the drug court — four men and two women in their 30s to 50s — the day marked the completion of a minimum two-year, court-supervised program aimed at helping them conquer their addiction to drugs or alcohol. It also earned them the chance to have felony charges dismissed or significantly reduced.

The path to graduation is not easy. Once accepted into the program, participants come to court weekly and are required to keep in close touch with two coordinators. A multi-disciplinary team reviews their case prior to each appearance. They also meet with a probation officer and submit to scheduled and random drug or alcohol testing.

There is also participation in court-prescribed treatment and support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, often several times a (Continued on Page 6)

Where Tax Law May Hurt the Most

(Average House Price Decline)



Percentage drop in select counties of average house values versus what they would be in the summer of 2019 without the new federal tax law, according to Moody's Analytics. The firm attributed much of the decrease to limits on deductions of local and state taxes. Nationally, homes are expected to suffer a 3 percent to 4 percent hit.



Judge James Reitz, with his back to camera, speaks during a Drug Treatment Court session in 2014.

NBC News

5 Five Questions: LINDY LABRIOLA

By Alison Rooney

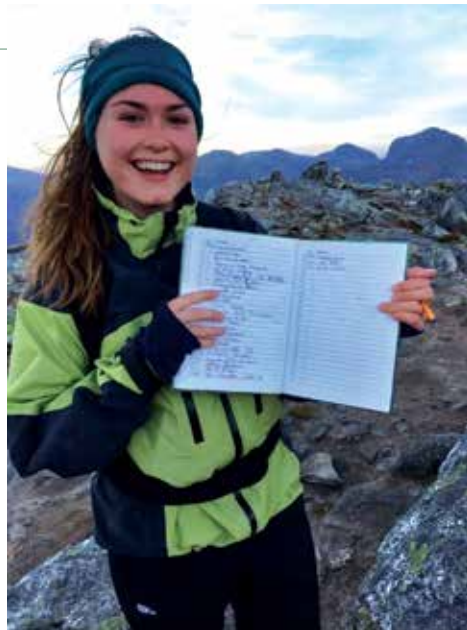
Lindy Labriola, 22, of Garrison, who graduated from Haldane in 2013 and Amherst in 2017, is a Fulbright Scholar studying the effects of climate change in Bodø, Norway, inside the Arctic Circle.

You studied English and geology at Amherst. Why geology?

It caught me by surprise, like shifting tectonic plates or swift Atlantic boundary currents. [Laughs.] My freshman advisor was a hydrochemist. She suggested I take oceanography, which was my first glimpse into the physical, chemical and biological connectedness of the Earth and its inhabitants. I meandered through the major's offerings such as mineralogy, stratigraphy, paleontology and hydrogeology but eventually focused on climatology.

At this time of the year, it's mostly dark in Bodø. Have you adjusted?

I take vitamin D to supplement for the lack of sunlight. I also use a light therapy lamp, because I noticed my hormones and natural processes — hunger, energy, emotion — began to flatline once the days shortened to fewer than three hours. Usually when I tell people I live in the Arctic, they respond, "That must be cold." But Bodø butts up against the Gulf Stream, so



Lindy Labriola during a hike up a famous Bodø mountain, Heggmotind Photo provided

the average winter temperature is about 30 degrees.

You've studied the effects of climate change on reindeer herding. What did you find?

The indigenous population, the Sámi, is the only community here allowed to herd reindeer. Each year, they drive their reindeer across northern Scandinavia.



A sunrise in Bodø

Photo by Lindy Labriola

Typically, the reindeer are able to break through the snow to reach the underbrush. But with climate change, there are mid-winter thaws and increased precipitation. So the snow melts and refreezes into layers that are difficult for the reindeer to penetrate. In addition, southern plant species are migrating north, so certain shrubs crowd out the reindeer's food.

You will be in Norway for 10 months. What are your plans beyond that?

I'd like to pursue a PhD in climatology and bridge the divide between the social and natural sciences. Clearly there is a need to recognize the psychology and sociology behind climate-related behavioral

change. What motivates communities to move away from vulnerable areas or to act more sustainably? It is imperative we grasp how to adapt, mitigate or transform our societies. I also want to continue work on a charity I co-founded, Inourhands.love. We put solar panels and other sustainable energy into disadvantaged communities.

Do Norwegians like ugly holiday sweaters?

Norwegians love Christmas markets but I have yet to see any ugly holiday sweaters. I have met people, mostly other Fulbright Scholars, who have hired Norwegian grandmothers to knit them sweaters, usually with traditional symmetrical designs in Norwegian national colors.

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Beacon Adopts Creekside Zoning Changes

Council will tackle Main Street in 2018; budget approved

By Jeff Simms

The Beacon City Council on Dec. 18 adopted changes to the Fishkill Creek development zone that could limit residential building while encouraging commercial use in the corridor.

The major changes in the zone — which includes eight parcels, five of which have significant capacity — are:

- The City Council must approve concept plans for proposed developments, after which the Planning Board will review site plans;
- The council will consider scenic viewsheds as part of its review;
- The maximum building height will be three stories of no more than 40 feet total height;
- New developments must include at least 25 percent commercial uses;
- A parcel's allowable density will be calculated based on buildable, rather than gross, acreage.

The zoning also includes specific design standards for new construction, much of it based on historic and industrial features that have traditionally been used in the corridor. It retains the 25-foot minimum setback from Fishkill Creek for buildings.

Perhaps most significant is a clause in the law that does not “grandfather” in projects that have received Planning Board approval if they have not “substantially” begun construction. In the creek-side zone, that ruling would apply to the 100-unit 248 Tioronda project, which received a special-use permit in 2014 but has yet to begin construction.

Any project that has not received “vested” rights — meaning the developer has already made significant improvements to the site — would have to comply with the zoning that exists at the time they apply for building permits, said City Attorney Nick Ward-Willis.

“When any municipality considers rezoning it always impacts projects that have received approval but have not yet proceeded,” he said. “Those new zoning laws get applied unless you provide grandfathering. It's really a public policy decision that is left to the discretion of the council.”

The City Council will take up the discussion of zoning changes on and around Main Street after the New Year, when four of the six council seats will be held by newcomers Amber Grant, Jodi McCredo, Terry Nelson and John Rembert, who will be sworn in at 3 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 1. The council plans to hold an organizational meeting at 7 p.m. on Jan. 2.

City budget

The council also on Dec. 11 adopted the city's 2018 budget, which includes a tax rate decrease for the second year in a row. Mayor Randy Casale cautioned, however, that residents' bills may still increase as many of Beacon's properties are worth more than they were a year ago.

With the assessed value of homes and commercial properties in Beacon both rising more than 5 percent, the budget includes a 2.01 percent tax rate decrease for homes and a 3.98 percent rate decrease on commercial properties.

The tax rate decrease applies to Beacon property taxes, not school district taxes, which voters are asked to approve each May.

The \$20 million budget also includes the addition of a police officer, bringing the number of Beacon police on patrol to 29, while staying within the state-mandated tax cap.

Perhaps most significant is a clause in the law that does not “grandfather” in projects that have received Planning Board approval if they have not “substantially” begun construction.

Instituted in 2012, the tax cap requires school districts and local governments to raise the property tax levy (the total amount of money collected) each year by no more than 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. The 2018 allowable increase is 1.84 percent.

Other budget highlights include:

- A 10 percent increase in sewer rates, which is part of a five-year plan to upgrade infrastructure, with residential water costs unchanged;
- Continuation of the city's Afterschool Program, Camp @ the Camp and South Avenue Park Days program;
- Continued weekly recycling;
- Usage of \$148,317 from city savings, down nearly \$15,000 from 2017 and nearly \$100,000 from 2016.

The 2018 Dutchess County budget was adopted on Dec. 7 and includes a reduction in the county's property tax levy for the fourth year in a row and a property tax rate cut for the third straight year.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The ZBA met on Dec. 19 to discuss the three variances requested for the Edgewater development near the Beacon train station.

As proposed, the 307-unit residential project would be spread among seven buildings and would encompass approximately 35 percent of a 12-acre parcel about a half-mile from the train station. It would also feature a 1-acre park and walking path to the station.

The variances requested for the project are:

- For the number of stories allowed per building (three of the seven buildings would be five stories instead of the normally allowed 4.5);
- For the number of units per building (36 units are allowed; in some buildings with smaller units Edgewater is proposing up to 59);
- For the space between buildings (30 feet between buildings is allowed; Edgewater's buildings would be an average 25 feet apart).

Edgewater officials say they have requested the variances to maximize open space in the development. The project could proceed with a nine-building layout that would not require variances but would have a larger construction footprint.

The ZBA did not vote on the variances but each member indicated that they were inclined to approve the requests. The board is scheduled to meet Jan. 17.

Miscellaneous

- Beacon is in a Stage 2 drought emergency with its reservoirs at 40 percent capacity. The city's code — even though it's winter — restricts residents from maintaining swimming pools, watering lawns and shrubs, and washing sidewalks or cars while the drought emergency is in effect.
- Dec. 22 was the last day on duty for Police Chief Doug Solomon, who is leaving Beacon to take the same position in Newburgh. Capt. Kevin Junjulas will lead the Beacon department as acting chief.

What Beacon Spends

Below are line items in the 2018 budget; the spending totals \$20 million. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Tourism \$4K
Animal Control \$10K
Zoning Board \$12K
Street Cleaning \$13K
Engineering \$38K
Settlement Camp \$40K
Swimming Pool \$50K
Mayor's Office \$74K
Assessor's Office \$75K
Planning Board \$84K*
Street Lights \$86K
Technology \$108K
City Council \$115K
City Clerk \$117K
Parks \$189K
Recycling \$192K
Building \$225K

Worker's Compensation \$247K
City Administrator \$271K
Public Buildings \$277K
Employee Retirement System \$306K
Snow Removal \$314K
Law Department \$385K
Finance Department \$422K
Recreation \$442K
Contingency Funds \$444K
Insurance \$449K
Sanitation \$967K
Highway \$1.5 million
Fire \$1.8 million
Bonds and Notes \$2.6 million
Health Insurance \$2.8 million
Police \$5.3 million

*includes consultant \$70K



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PUBLISHER

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291 Main St., Beacon NY 12508

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**Institute for
Nonprofit News**

The Highlands Current is a 501c3 nonprofit funded by grants, advertising and the generous support of our readers. Thank you.

THE HIGHLANDS CURRENT,
Vol. 6, Issue 53 (ISSN 2475-3785)
is published weekly by
Highlands Current Inc.,
161 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516-
2818. Nonprofit postage paid at
Newburgh, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Highlands Current, 161 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516-2818. Mail delivery \$20 per year. highlandscurrent.com/delivery delivery@highlandscurrent.com

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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.

The wonders of Beacon

Beacon is lucky to have many creative and wonderful citizens. And we are very lucky to have a mayor and City Council that recognize the beating heart of any successful community is the people who reach out and use their unique gifts to make their town welcoming and fun for all.

Ed Benavente, who created the Bicycle Tree and Bicycle Menorah, and his wife, Betsy, are two such people ("5 Questions: Ed Benavente," Dec. 22). With the help of city leadership and BeaconArts, Beacon continues to amaze and delight all who visit us. With luck that will be Beacon's legacy for years to come.

Holly Bogdanffy, *Beacon*

Grateful for St. Christopher's

We will miss Father Bill Drobach, who is leaving as CEO/president of the St. Christopher's Inn treatment center at Graymoor ("Changes at St. Christopher's," Dec. 22). St. Christopher's is a great facility. My son spent 90 days there from June through September. God is on that mountain and saved my son!

Thank you for all you do to everyone there, from the security guards to the facilities personnel, the counselors and Ryan in insurance to the strong men who go there for the help. God bless you all. And safe travels for Father Bill. I'm a grateful mom!

Mina Zanzarella, *Fishkill*

Looking for volunteer

Your report on the shortage of volunteer firefighters was an excellent article ("Wanted: Firefighters," Dec. 22). As a new Garrison resident and member of the volunteer fire company, I can confirm that the need is real.

The training is a commitment and be-

ing available for calls when you commute to/from New York City can be difficult, but the members of the company are extremely supportive and some of the best all-around people I have ever met.

I hope this story continues to be told and that any of my neighbors who have ever considered volunteering follow through.

Adam Kerzner, *Garrison*

Philipstown Square

Although your article is accurate in all facets of the issue at Philipstown Square ("Catastrophe Waiting to Happen" at Philipstown Square," Dec. 22), my comment at the meeting about looking into the issue was not in reference to the ridiculous three-sided traffic light but to the transition from Fishkill Road, a county road, onto Route 9, a state road. The height differential is too great.

The solution is simple and could be accomplished by extending the transition area farther back onto Fishkill Road. I will continue to work with County Highway Superintendent Fred Pena and urge residents to write to him to address this problem. There is nothing that motivates public officials more than participation by residents.

Richard Shea, *Philipstown*
Shea is the Philipstown supervisor.

Praise or Protest

Village of Cold Spring

Mayor Dave Merandy
mayor@coldspringny.gov

Village of Nelsonville

Mayor Bill O'Neill
mayor2017@optonline.net

Town of Philipstown

Supervisor Richard Shea
supervisor@philipstown.com

City of Beacon

Mayor Randy Casale
mayor@cityofbeacon.org

Putnam County

Legislator Barbara Scuccimarra
putcoleg@putnamcountyny.com

New York Assembly

Sandy Galef (D) (Philipstown)
nyassembly.gov/mem/Sandy-Galef

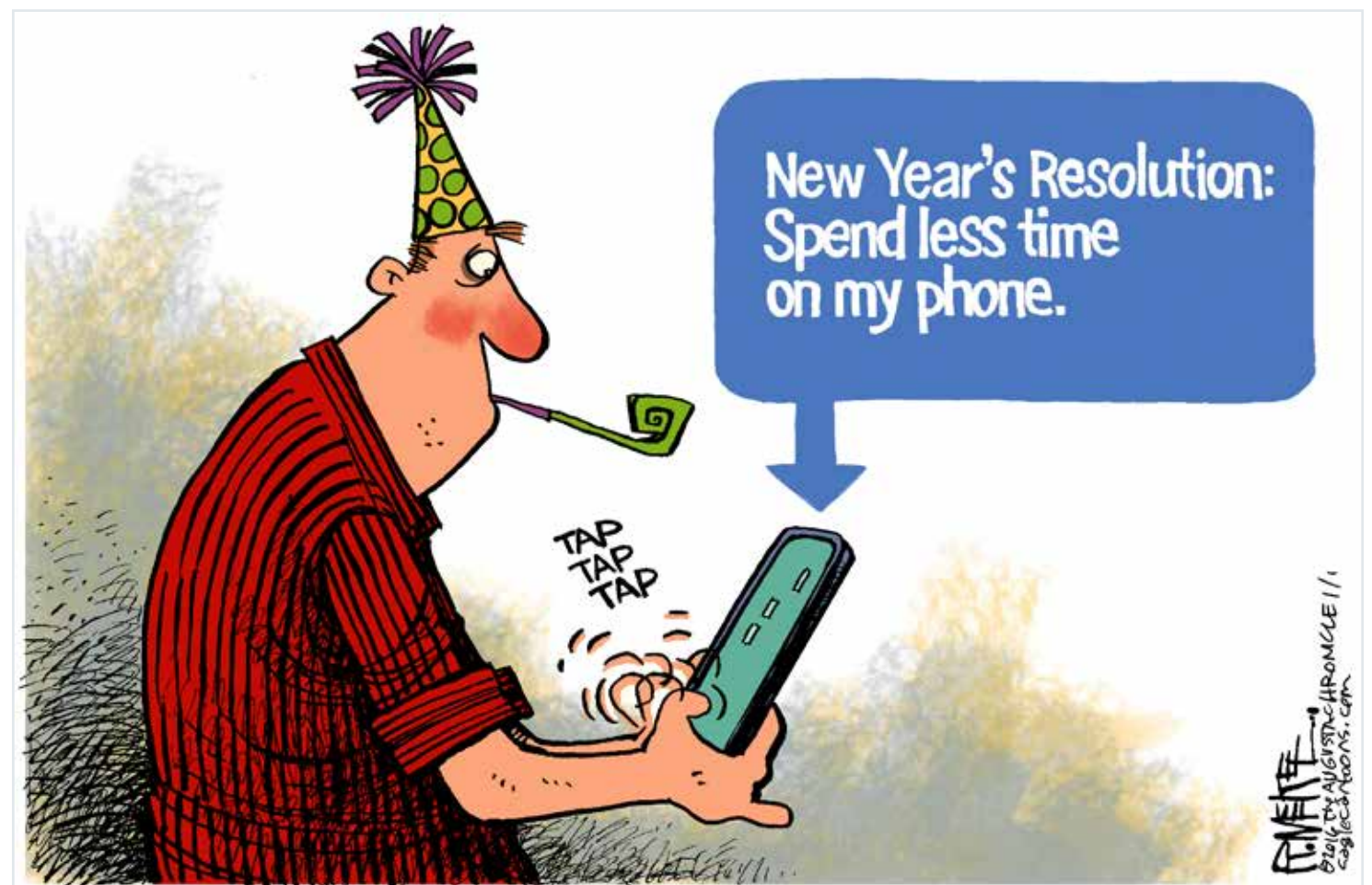
Frank Skartados (D) (Beacon)
nyassembly.gov/mem/Frank-Skartados

New York Senate

Sue Serino (R)
nysenate.gov/senators/sue-serino

U.S. House of Representatives

Sean Patrick Maloney (D)
seanmaloney.house.gov



Philipstown and Beacon Taking Early Tax Payments *(from Page 1)*

response, many Westchester towns are issuing their own warrants.

The Village of Cold Spring, which issues its tax bills on June 1, is not accepting early payments because it does not have a warrant from the mayor, which is typically not issued until the end of April after the adoption of the budget, said Village Clerk Jeff Vidakovich. “For all practical purposes, the governor’s order only impacts municipalities with a fiscal year beginning Jan. 1,” he said. The Village of Nelsonville, which is on the same fiscal year, also is not accepting early payments, said Village Clerk Pauline Minners.

School tax bills are usually sent in September; finance officials with the Garrison and Beacon school districts said they had no authority or method to take payments on 2018-19 bills until the school boards issue tax warrants in August. Officials at the Haldane district could not immediately be reached.

The Philipstown Town Board met in a special session Dec. 26 and voted 3-0 (with two members absent) to authorize Merando to accept early payments on 2018 bills.

The Internal Revenue Service specifically disallows deducting state income and sales taxes except in the year owed but has not ruled on property taxes. While Cuomo insisted that early property tax payments are deductible in the year they are made, the New York State Association of Counties and the Office of the State



Comptroller both cautioned the IRS could ultimately disallow early payments.

Payments do not need to be made in person. They may be mailed as long as they are postmarked by Dec. 31. The Beacon post office is open on Saturday, Dec. 30, until 1 p.m., and the Cold Spring and Garrison post offices are open until noon.

Online payments with a credit card can be made to Philipstown through midnight Dec. 31, although a 2.5 percent fee is added. Beacon does not accept online payments.

The governor’s Dec. 22 executive order was in response to a federal tax bill signed

into law the same day by President Donald Trump. The limit on the deduction of local and state taxes will have a greater impact on California and states in the Northeast, including New York, where local and property taxes are higher.

According to an analysis by the Tax Foundation, the three counties with the highest median annual property tax bills

are Nassau (Long Island), Rockland and Westchester, all of which are \$10,000. The median in Putnam County, based on 2015 figures, is \$8,631 and in Dutchess, \$5,826. (By comparison, the median in large swaths of the country is \$2,000 or less.)

The federal tax code revisions passed both the U.S. House and Senate largely along party lines, with no Democratic support. (Five House members from New York were among the 12 Republicans who voted against the bill.) Cuomo said that the property tax limit would raise federal taxes on New York residents by more than \$14 billion.

Town of Philipstown

238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516
Tuesday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon
philipstown.municipaltaxpayments.com

City of Beacon

Finance Dept., 1 Municipal Plaza,
Beacon, NY 12508
Tuesday to Thursday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Friday, 8 to 11:30 a.m.

PHILIPSTOWN PLANNING BOARD SITE VISIT

January 7, 2018

The Philipstown Planning Board will meet on Sunday, January 7, 2018, at 9:30 a.m., to inspect the following site:

Surprise Lake Camp
382 Lake Surprise Road, Cold Spring, NY



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PUBLIC HEARING ~ ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held by the Zoning Board of Appeals of the Town of Philipstown:

Monday, January 8, 2018, 7:30 p.m.
Philipstown Recreation Department
107 Glenclyffe Drive, Garrison New York,

to hear the following request for interpretation and appeal:

Essex Green, Inc., Douglas Lane, Cold Spring, New York, Tax Map # 49.6-2-14. The applicant seeks to obtain a Code Interpretation of the meaning of the words “taken for a public purpose” as used in the 1957 Code for the purposes of determining if the property is a legal nonconforming lot. The applicant also seeks area variances for front and rear yard setbacks and impervious surface coverage due to the failure to comply with the Dimensional Table of Chapter 175 of the Town Code. Moreover, the applicant alternatively seeks a variance for lot area, front yard setback, rear yard setback, impervious surface, and frontage requirements in the event that the Zoning Board determines that the Property is not a legal Nonconforming Lot. The property is in the RC Zoning District.

At said hearing all persons will have the right to be heard. Copies of the application, plat map and other related materials may be reviewed in the office of the Building Department at Philipstown Town Hall.

Dated December 22, 2017
Robert Dee,
Chairman of the Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals

TOWN OF PHILIPSTOWN TAX COLLECTION LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT I, Tina M. Merando, the undersigned Collector of Taxes of the Town of Philipstown, County of Putnam and State of New York, have duly received the tax roll and warrant for the collection of taxes within the Town of Philipstown for the year 2018 and that I will receive the same at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main Street, Cold Spring, New York from January 1, 2018 through July 31, 2018 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. In January ONLY the Tax Collector will be at the Town Hall at 7:30 a.m.

Taxes will be collected without penalty if paid on or before January 31, 2018. On all taxes paid after January 31, 2018, an additional 1% penalty will be assessed for each month or fraction thereof thereafter until such taxes are paid or until the return of unpaid taxes to the County Treasurer pursuant to law.

Partial tax payment (50% of total tax) will ONLY be accepted during the month of January 2018. The second partial payment will be assessed a 1% penalty charge each month until July 31, 2018, when all unpaid second partial payments will be turned over to the County Treasurer.

Full payment of taxes will be accepted without penalty during the month of January 2018. After the month of January, a 1% interest penalty will be assessed each month until May 1, 2018 when all “fully unpaid” taxes will be turned over to the County Treasurer for collection.

DATED: December 27, 2017
Tina M. Merando, Tax Collector
Town of Philipstown

Drug Court Graduation: A Second Chance *(from Page 1)*

week. Repeated violations of the program rules, which are spelled out in agreements customized for each participant, can result in expulsion and a prison sentence.

The graduation session began on a somber note when Reitz announced that a seventh graduate who was supposed to appear had been taken to a hospital earlier that day, possibly because of a relapse.

After statements by Assistant District Attorney Breanne Smith and the defendants' attorneys, Reitz sentenced each graduate. Charges had been held in abeyance while they completed the drug court program.

The proceedings are confidential and, as a condition of observing the session, *The Current* agreed to only use the defendants' first names.

Cathryn, Michael and Austin, who faced felony charges for driving while intoxicated (DWI), had their charges dismissed. Susan, facing the same charge, saw her sentence reduced to a misdemeanor with three years of probation.

Jeff's charge of felony possession of a controlled substance was dismissed, while Michael saw his charge reduced to a misdemeanor with a conditional discharge.

As Reitz issued each sentence, the courtroom burst into applause and cheers.

"I had a rough road. A lot of times I couldn't get out of my own way," Jeff told the court. "I'm just grateful for being given this chance. Now whatever happens is my choice."



Judge James F. Reitz

File photo by M. Turton

After the session concluded, Reitz said he is "all for second chances that give people the opportunity to deal with their addiction; to take care of themselves — and their family."

Asked why some participants fail the program, Smith said accountability can be a big factor.

"They may not be ready to take responsibility, to admit that they have a problem," she said. "Once they realize they need help and that there are people and resources to help them, that's when the

switch flips and they begin an upward as opposed to downward spiral."

There are no guarantees, she said. "We try to lead them in the right direction. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't."

Putnam County District Attorney Robert Tendy attended the graduation and spoke emotionally about losing a friend years ago to drug and alcohol addiction.

"I still miss him," he said, adding that early in his career the notion that addiction is a disease was scoffed at. "We've

The Putnam County Treatment Court Team

James Reitz, presiding judge
John Brogan, drinker-driver program
Brian Carlin, Legal Aid Society
Capt. Frank Christian, Sheriff's Department
Joseph DeMarzo, Department of Mental Health
Charleen Effinger, Probation Department
Sue Fitzgerald, resource coordinator
Lt. Sheila Hanley, Sheriff's Department
Sgt. Matthew Monroe, Sheriff's Department
Louise Opfer, court coordinator
Arlene Seymour, CoveCare Center
Naura Slivinsky, Arms Acres
Breanne Smith, assistant district attorney
Robert Tendy, district attorney
Commanding Officer Steven Toth, Sheriff's Department
Cari Young, principal court attorney

come a very long way," he said. "If something is hurting you, killing you and you can't do anything about it unless you get professional help — that's a disease."

Today he said, "We try to help people, to stop them from hurting themselves — and from going to jail."

- By appointment at
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Cold Spring, NY 10516
@magazzino

Giovanni Anselmo
Marco Bagnoli
Domenico Bianchi
Alighiero Boetti
Pier Paolo Calzolari

Luciano Fabro
Jannis Kounellis
Mario Merz
Marisa Merz
Giulio Paolini

Pino Pascali
Giuseppe Penone
Michelangelo Pistoletto
Remo Salvadori
Gilberto Zorio

MAGAZZINO

ITALIAN ART

The Calendar



Cassandra Sautler's make-up design for the tattoo man in *The Greatest Showman*

Photo provided



Cassandra Sautler sits on a couch she created for a 2016 sculpture show at Saunders' Farm in Garrison.

File photo by Michael Turton

The Woman in Charge of the Tattoo Suit

Cold Spring resident is longtime scenic and makeup artist

By Alison Rooney

Cassandra Sautler keeps retiring. No sooner has she thought, *I'm done*, when a message arrives asking, "Just once more? Please?"

The messages call her back to the soundstage, where she works in scenery,

costume design and painting and makeup and hair. (She is a member of two unions.) Her most recent return from retirement was for *The Greatest Showman*, a big-screen musical about the life of P.T. Barnum starring Hugh Jackman, which opened in theaters on Dec. 20.

As part of the film's makeup team, Sautler created the design for the body builder character, which involved devising a never-before-used tattoo suit. She also worked on designs for some of the background "oddities" characters.

The makeup team for *The Greatest*

Showman was led by Nicki Ledermann, whom Sautler first worked with on the 2007 film *Enchanted*. "Back then we used Polaroids with notes in a giant binder," Sautler recalls; today the planning is all digital. Ledermann assigned her to create two-dimensional art for the oddities and a design for the tattoo man. "I sent her many drawings," she says.

Born in Queens and raised in Westchester, where she attended Lakeland High School, Sautler is a third generation member of Local 829, the union for scenic artists, costume (Continued on Page 11)

Cloth and Memory

Four artists weave the past into art

By Alison Rooney

Cloth and fabric, from clothing to coverings, have an intrinsic connection to memory, whether tactile, visual or something more ambiguous. Four Hudson Valley artists will examine that bond starting Jan. 7 in *Cloth and Memory*, an exhibit at the Howland Cultural Center in Beacon.

The four artists, who will investigate "how cloth retains, transmits and resonates," are Mary McFerran of Croton (who also curated), Mimi Czajka Graminski of Red Hook, Riva Weinstein of Stanfordville and Harriet Cherry Cheney of Dobbs Ferry. Three of the four met in March as part of a 100-woman exhibition

centered around suffrage and also held at the Howland Center.

Mary McFerran

McFerran, then living in England, made the connection between art and textiles while touring a Manchester museum repurposed from a textile factory.

"Cloth is a great medium to work in," she says. "It's so immediately available as part of our lives, an everyday skin. It's also so much a part of women's history — think of how girls were originally educated to sew, not read, and, over time, how many garment workers were and are women. It's also pretty cheap, particularly if you use recycled, donated fabric."

She has always liked to sew — "It invites you to create time for yourself to sit down," she says — but never thought of its potential for art until she realized it could replace glue. "The stitching

connected with drawing," she says. "I took an embroidery class, and people were using embroidery and stitching as art rather than as craft."

McFerran's great-grandmother was a glove stitcher and the connection between cloth and memory became clearer from genealogical work she undertook. She photographed or embellished family heirlooms with embroidery or by embedding them into compositions to create *Ancestor Museum*, part of the exhibit.

The works in *Cloth and Memory*, McFerran says, "intermingle sensory impressions, family lore and historical artifacts with expression in collage, installation, performance art and digital media. We all have clothing we remember, textures touched and felt. This digital era leads (Continued on Page 12)



Things She Made, artwork by Mary McFerran

Photo provided

Last-Minute Giving Guide

While charitable donations can be made and will help keep critically important community resources in operation year-round, you have until Dec. 31 to contribute to your favorite nonprofits and still receive a deduction on your 2017 taxes. Checks must be mailed on Saturday, Dec. 30, by 1 p.m. in Beacon and noon in Cold Spring and Garrison, when the post office counters close. Credit card payments, however, can be processed until midnight on Sunday, Dec. 31. (If you prefer to give your time, most of these organizations also welcome volunteers.) Don't worry: if you're reading this in 2018, you're way ahead of the game for next year's return – as long as you still itemize after the standard deduction doubles under the new tax law.

Animals

Animal Rescue Foundation

P.O. Box 1129, Beacon, NY 12508
arfb Beacon.org/donate-2

Dutchess County SPCA

636 Violet Ave., Hyde Park, NY 12538
donatenow.networkforgood.org/dcsPCA

Friends of the Beacon Dog Park

beacondogpark.org/donate-online

Guiding Eyes for the Blind

611 Granite Springs Road, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
guidingeyes.org

Mid Hudson Animal Aid (Cat Sanctuary)

54 Simmons Lane, Beacon, NY 12508
midhudsonanimalaid.org/donate

Putnam County SPCA

P.O. Box 850, Brewster, NY 10509
spcaputnam.org/donate-to-putnam-sPCA

Putnam Humane Society

P.O. Box 297, Carmel, NY 10512
puthumane.org/how-you-can-help/donate

Putnam Service Dogs

P.O. Box 573, Brewster, NY 10509
putnamservicedogs.org/donate



Anna, one of Putnam Service Dogs' first three pups

Photo provided

Arts, Music & Theater

Beacon Arts Community Association

P.O. Box 727, Beacon, NY 12508
beaconarts.org/donate

Chapel Restoration

P.O. Box 43, Cold Spring, NY 10516
chapelrestoration.org

Cold Spring Film Society

192 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516
coldspringfilm.org/donate.php

Dia:Beacon

3 Beekman St., Beacon, NY 12508
diaart.org/support/donate

Downing Film Center

19 Front St., Newburgh, NY 12550
downingfilmcenter/pages/member.htm

Garrison Art Center

23 Garrison's Landing, Garrison, NY 10524
garrisonartcenter.org/forms

Howland Cultural Center

477 Main St., Beacon, NY 12508
howlandculturalcenter.org/donate.html

Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art

P.O. Box 209, Peekskill, NY 10566
hvcca.org/membership

Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival

143 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516
hvshakespeare.org/support-us/donate

Manitoga / Russel Wright Design Center

P.O. Box 249, Garrison, NY 10524
visitmanitoga.org/donate

Philipstown Depot Theatre

P.O. Box 221, Garrison, NY 10524
philipstowndepottheatre.org

Children

Denniston International

256 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516
dennistoninternational.org/support-us

Friends of Philipstown Recreation

P.O. Box 155, Cold Spring, NY 10516 | friends of philipstown-recreation.org

Garrison Children's Education Fund

P.O. Box 262, Garrison, NY 10524
gcef.net/donate

Garrison School PTA

1100 Route 9D, Garrison, NY 10524 | gufspta.org/programming-fundraising/donations

Guinan's Aurora

P.O. Box 446, Garrison, NY 10524
Recycles bicycles for children.

Haldane Central School District PTA

15 Craigsides Dr., Cold Spring, NY 10516 | haldanepTA.org

Haldane School Foundation

P.O. Box 364, Cold Spring, NY 10516 | haldaneschoolfoundation.org/giving

Hudson Valley Seed

P.O. Box 223, Beacon, NY 12508
hudsonvalleyseed.org/donate

Putnam County Children's Committee

P.O. Box 187, Carmel, NY 10512
pecchildren.org/donate-now

SHRED Foundation

94 Prospect St., Beacon, NY 12508
shredfoundation.org

St. Basil Academy

79 Saint Basil Road, Garrison, NY 10524
stbasil.goarch.org/donate

Civic

Catholic Charities Community Services of Dutchess County

218 Church St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
catholiccharities-dutchesscounty.org

Catholic Charities Community Services of Putnam County

175 Main St., Brewster NY 10509
catholiccharitiesny.org

Community Foundation of Dutchess County

80 Washington St., Suite 201, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
communityfoundationshv.org/Give

Community Foundation of Putnam County

80 Washington St., Suite 201, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
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Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County

2715 Route 44, Millbrook, NY 12545
ccedutchess.org/donate

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Putnam County

1 Geneva Road, Brewster, NY 10509
putnam.cce.cornell.edu/donate

Fareground Community Kitchen

P.O. Box 615, Beacon, NY 12508
fareground.org



A homebuyer through Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh works alongside a volunteer while completing her sweat equity hours. *Photo provided*

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh

125 Washington St., Newburgh, NY 12550
habitatnewburgh.org

Highlands Current Inc.

161 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516
highlandscurrent.com/support

United Way of Dutchess-Orange Region

75 Market St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
uwdor.org

United Way of Westchester and Putnam

925 S. Lake Boulevard, Mahopac, NY 10541 | uwwp.org/give.shtml

Emergency Services

Beacon Volunteer Ambulance Corps

P.O. Box 54, Beacon, NY 12508

Cold Spring Fire Co. No. 1

154 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516

Continental Village Volunteer Fire Department

12 Spy Pond Road, Garrison, NY 10524

Garrison Volunteer Ambulance Corp.

P.O. Box 121, Garrison, NY 10524

Garrison Volunteer Fire Company

1616 Route 9, Garrison, NY 10524

North Highlands Engine Co. No. 1

504 Fishkill Road, Cold Spring, NY 10516

Philipstown Volunteer Ambulance Corps

14 Cedar St., Cold Spring, NY 10516

Historical

Bannerman Castle Trust

P.O. Box 843, Glenham, NY 12527
bannermancastle.org/donate.html

Beacon Historical Society

P.O. Box 89, Beacon, NY 12508
beaconhistorical.org



Graham Wood sits on a historic bench during a visit to the new home of the Beacon Historical Society at 17 South Ave.

Photo by Robyn Wood

Boscobel Restoration

1601 Route 9D, Garrison, NY 10524
boscobel.org/get-involved/donate

Constitution Island Association

P.O. Box 126, Cold Spring, NY 10516
constitutionisland.org/donate

Dutchess County Historical Society

P.O. Box 88, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602
dchsn.org

Friends of the Fishkill Supply Depot

P.O. Box 311, Fishkill, NY 12524
fishkillsupplydepot.org/donate.html

Garrison's Landing Association

P.O. Box 205, Garrison, NY 10524

Mount Beacon Incline Railway Restoration Society

P.O. Box 1248, Beacon, NY 12508
inclinerrailway.org/donate

Putnam History Museum

63 Chestnut St., Cold Spring, NY 10516
putnamhistorymuseum.com

Hunger

Kids R Kids Feeding Program

kidskidsfeeding.org/donations.aspx

Philipstown Food Pantry

10 Academy St., Cold Spring, NY 10516

St. Andrew's & St. Luke's Food Pantry

17 South Ave., Beacon, NY 12508

Libraries

Butterfield Library

10 Morris Ave., Cold Spring, NY 10516
butterfieldlibrary.org/Donate.php

Desmond-Fish Library

P.O. Box 265, Garrison, NY 10524
desmondfishlibrary.org/help1.htm

Howland Public Library

313 Main St., Beacon, NY 12508
beaconlibrary.org/support-us



The boardwalk at Constitution Marsh at low tide

Photo by Joe Brennan

Natural Resources

Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries

199 Main St., Beacon, NY 12508
bire.org/support

Beacon Sloop Club

P.O. Box 527, Beacon, NY 12508



Boatswain A.J. St. Martin caulks the replacement planks aboard the sloop Clearwater, which returned to the Hudson after an extensive renovation.

File photo by Brian PJ Cronin

Common Ground Farm

P.O. Box 148, Beacon, NY 12508
commongroundfarm.org

Constitution Marsh Audubon Center

P.O. Box 174, Cold Spring, NY 10516
constitutionmarsh.audubon.org

Friends of Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands State Parks

P.O. Box 194, Cold Spring, NY 10516
fofhh.org

Glynwood Center

P.O. Box 157, Cold Spring, NY 10516
glynwood.org/product/donate

Hudson Highlands Land Trust

P.O. Box 226, Garrison, NY 10524
hhlt.org/donate.html

Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

724 Wolcott Ave., Beacon, NY 12508
clearwater.org

Little Stony Point Citizens Association

P.O. Box 319, Cold Spring, NY 10516

Putnam Highlands Audubon Society

P.O. Box 292, Cold Spring, NY 10516

Riverkeeper

20 Secor Road, Ossining, NY 10562
riverkeeper.org/get-involved/donate

Scenic Hudson

One Civic Center Plaza, Suite 200,
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
scenichudson.org/donate

Stonecrop Gardens

81 Stonecrop Lane, Cold Spring, NY 10516
stonecrop.org/membership

Rehabilitation Services

CoveCare Center

1808 Route 6, Carmel, NY 10512
covecarecenter.org/donate

Putnam/ Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center

935 South Lake Blvd., Mahopac, NY 10541
pnwwrc.org/donate

St. Christopher's Inn

P.O. Box 150, Garrison, NY 10524
stchristophersinn-graymoor.org/donate

Support Connection

40 Triangle Center, Suite 100, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
supportconnection.org/donate-now

Topfield Equestrian Center

P.O. Box 367, Cold Spring, NY 10516
topfeldequestriancenter.com/give

Walter Hoving Home

P.O. Box 194, Garrison, NY 10524
hovinghome.org/donate



Putnam Family & Community Services changed its name to CoveCare Center over the summer.

Photo provided

Generosity Defined

What does it mean this time of year?

By Michael Turton

In the 1980s I helped out with a fundraising drive organized by a local non-profit in Windsor, Ontario. The Good Fellows (not to be confused with characters in *Goodfellas*) do one project a year: They raise money to fill baskets with turkey and the trimmings, treats and necessities for families who need help at Christmas. People make a small donation to "buy" a one-sheet newspaper explaining the campaign. The traditional donation was \$1.

When my neighbor brought the project to our little-less-than-a-hamlet, I volunteered and was assigned a 5-mile stretch of the rural highway between Oldcastle and Maidstone. My job was to distribute the newspapers door-to-door, asking for donations.

Off I went on the first Saturday morning in December. I had about 50 houses to cover and was determined to hit every one. Almost everyone was home and all made a donation, typically \$1, although a few people gave \$2.

When I was almost done, I came upon a ramshackle house with a beat-up car in the driveway. Someone poor lives here, I thought to myself. Why am I asking for money? But, I also wanted to fulfill my pledge of going to every house.

I knocked. No answer. I was relieved but knocked again. The door opened. Before me stood a thin, middle-aged man who had obviously been sleeping. His hair was disheveled. His face had a few days of stubble, and he wore a T-shirt and baggy jeans.

I felt like a complete ass and wished I had not knocked, but it was too late. "I'm collecting for the Good Fellows," I said. "By any chance would you care to make a small donation?" My face flushed with embarrassment.

The man reached for his wallet and plucked out a bill. "I'd be happy to," he said. "They helped me out a few years ago." He handed me \$20.

That donation still defines "generosity" for me. He could have used that \$20. His contribution was truly generous.

Happy holidays. Be generous in supporting your favorite causes.

FRIDAY, DEC. 29

Putnam County Swearing-In Ceremony

5 p.m. Historic Courthouse
44 Gleneida Ave., Carmel
845-208-7800 | putnamcountyny.com

SATURDAY, DEC. 30

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Email chasrob@optonline.net

BeaconArts Coffee

10 a.m. – Noon. Catalyst Gallery
137 Main St., Beacon | beaconarts.org

SUNDAY, DEC. 31

Butterfield and Howland libraries closed.

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Calendar Highlights

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



NEW YEAR'S EVE MUSIC

Whistling Willie's, Cold Spring: NYE / The Differents

Dogwood, Beacon: Black Coffee Blues Band

Max's on Main, Beacon: Rudy's Backbeat

Towne Crier Café, Beacon: Slam Allen Band / Willa & Co.

BeanRunner Café, Peekskill: Orchestra Pastrana

Hudson Room, Peekskill: Sugarush

12 Grapes, Peekskill: Thrown Together

Paramount, Peekskill: Tribute to Motown

MONDAY, JAN. 1

First-Day Hike

11 a.m. Little Stony Point Visitor Center
3011 Route 9D, Cold Spring

Beacon City Council Swearing-In

3 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza, Beacon

TUESDAY, JAN. 2

New Mom and Infants Group

11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403, Garrison
Email whiteside.ks@gmail.com

Army vs. Loyola (Men's Basketball)

7 p.m. Christl Arena, West Point
845-938-2526 | goarmywestpoint.com

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 3

Deep Heap Circle with Garrison Concierge

1:30 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403, Garrison
845-424-3020 | desmondfishlibrary.org

Community Blood Drive

2 – 8 p.m. St. John-St. Joachim Church
31 Willow St., Beacon
800-933-2566 | nybloodcenter.org

Haldane vs. Clark Academy (Boys' Basketball)

4:30 p.m. Haldane School
15 Craigside Drive, Cold Spring | haldaneschool.org

THURSDAY, JAN. 4

Creative Completion Workshop

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

Lyle Lovett & Shawn Colvin

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

Transform Your Life through Meditation

7 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St., Beacon
845-856-9000 | kadampanewyork.org/beacon

Nelsonville Zoning/Planning: Cell Tower

7:30 p.m. Haldane School Auditorium
15 Craigside Drive, Cold Spring
845-265-2500 | villageofnelsonville.org

Town Board Meeting

7:30 p.m. Town Hall | 238 Main St., Cold Spring
845-265-5200 | philipstowndepottheatre.org

FRIDAY, JAN. 5

Reel Life Film Club: Before the Flood (grades 6-8)

6 p.m. Butterfield Library | Details under Thursday.

Beacon vs. Peekskill (Girls' Basketball)

6:15 p.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road, Beacon
beaconk12.org

Army vs. Bucknell (Men's Basketball)

7 p.m. Christl Arena, West Point
845-938-2526 | goarmywestpoint.com

Depot Docs: Step (2017)

7:30 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
10 Garrison's Landing, Garrison
845-424-3900 | philipstowndepottheatre.org

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Depot Docs:
STEPS

Q&A and reception with director to follow documentary
Jan. 5, 7:30 p.m.

Depot Folk:

Youth in a Roman Field

Jan 13, 4 p.m. Vocal Workshop • 7 p.m. Concert

Excellent Creature, Dialogues with Drama Reading

The Night of the Iguana

Jan. 14, 7 p.m.

philipstowndepottheatre.org
Garrison Landing, Garrison, NY (Theatre is adjacent to train station.)

The Woman in Charge of the Tattoo Suit *(from Page 7)*

designers and painters. Her grandfather worked in the industry during the transition between silents and sound.

"The advent of sound affected art direction," Sautler notes. Lakeland High School had "incredible and very encouraging" art instructors, she says, and during those years Sautler headed to the Garrison Art Center every Wednesday night to draw. After giving college a shot, Sautler decided to learn on the job. "I always wanted to be an artist in my own right, but I decided to come back home and learn from watching people — including my father — work," she says.

She initially studied costume design and her first mentor (besides her father) was Ann Roth. She soon moved into scenic design, where she remained for 20 years before shifting to makeup and becoming a member of a second union, Local 706, for makeup artists and hair stylists.

When she became a scenic artist and joined its union in 1972, "there were basically no women working in the field," she recalls. "That work in many ways is like having a job in construction. I was strong as heck and learned so much, from masters."

The watershed moment was the filming of *The Wiz*, which was released in 1978. "They employed 80 scenic artists, and since everyone was put to work, it finally included women," she says. "The

union structure is wonderful, because the organization of it allows you to do your stuff and do it well."

Once filming of *The Greatest Showman* began, Sautler was assigned to keep close tabs on about 22 performers whose makeup she had designed. "I don't really like being on the set anymore," Sautler says, "but as soon as I heard about this movie, I really wanted to be there, because it was such a creative job."

"It was another benefit of the life I was leading, overall, because jobs end, and between jobs you can be free with your life."

Sautler has lived in Philipstown on and off for decades. In the 1970s "a bunch of us sort of moved here — it was so different then — and I tried to open up a studio called River Academy, a school for dance, music and art, classical guitar, ballet, jazz, martial arts. It was located in the old Bijou Theater on Main Street. It only lasted a season; Cold Spring just wasn't ready for it yet."

She moved to New York City, but returned briefly a few times, "doing furniture painting, selling knitted hats and my own paintings. I was here in the 1970s, '80s, '90s and then, finally, when I 'retired,' " she says.

Sautler spent 1981 to 1985 living in a

town near Turin, Italy, with a boyfriend, "painting, making stuff. I was in heaven," she says. "It was another benefit of the life I was leading, overall, because jobs end, and between jobs you can be free with your life."

With less time on sets, Sautler is spending more time in her Nelsonville studio, which is filled with the stuff



Test make-up design by Cassandra Sautler for the "fire-eater" for *The Greatest Showman*

Image courtesy of Cassandra Sautler

A Few of Sautler's Credits:

- *Inside Llewyn Davis* (key makeup artist)
- *The Knick* (makeup artist)
- *Boardwalk Empire* (makeup artist)
- *Sex and the City 2* (makeup artist)
- *New York Undercover* (scenic charge)
- *Dolores Claiborne* (scenic painter)

dreams are made of: a couch made from water jugs, chandeliers concocted with parts unknown and a 6-foot sculpture of a woman she calls Delphine.

Sautler's latest venture is repurposing discarded furs for a business she calls Flipping Fur, which began when she was asked to turn a mink coat into a blanket. Although she is an animal lover, she says that "sentimental objects can be repurposed and used. I didn't kill the animal. I feel I'm honoring the spirit of the dead animal by not having it sitting in a corner in a heap."

She also is hatching plans for a design and teaching center that "artists, architects, farmers — anyone whose principal goal is sustainability — can gravitate to," she says. "I'd like to have a permanent installation of art made from repurposed materials and show people how to make things in ways they haven't thought of. I'm a prolific creative person, not a business person. I love it when my day involves making a design idea into a reality."



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Cloth and Memory *(from Page 7)*

us to physical textures, seeking balance."

Riva Weinstein

Weinstein uses digital video as a "metaphoric cloth exploring the fragility and fleeting nature of life," she says, often using everyday materials. Her installation at the show "seeks to create a contemplative space in which to consider loss, the cycles of life and the inevitability of change."

Harriet Cherry Cheney

Cheney works in fiber art, collage and mixed media assemblage, and her methods include



Artwork by Harriet Cheney

Image provided

photography, painting, sewing, stuffing, embroidery, weaving, beading and construction. She contributed a series based on her early memories of her Ukrainian Jewish grandparents, who lived next door to her family. "My grandfather fixed machinery in factories but sewed the most lovely and delicate blankets for our doll carriages," she recalls. "My grandmother would sit at night mending while we all watched television."

Mimi Czajka Graminski

Graminski will create a site-specific installation using textiles and text to explore memory, identity and relationship. Some of her textiles will be made by embedding dolls' clothes into crocheted patterns. "I see my studio as a laboratory where I collect disparate specimens and manipulate and transform them, sometimes contrasting them with unlikely pairing," she has written.

The Howland Cultural Center is located at 477 Main St. and is open Friday through Monday, 1 to 5 p.m. A reception planned for Jan. 14 from 3 to 5 p.m. ties into Second Saturday. On Jan. 20, at 2 p.m., the four artists will participate in a panel discussion on memory and textiles in art, including a participatory performance.



Mimi Graminski, Mary McFerran and Harriet Cheney

Photo provided

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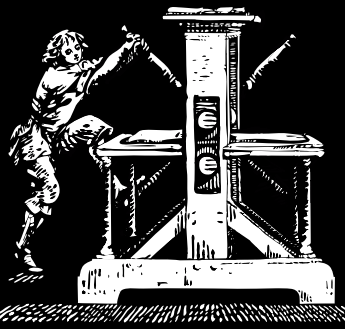
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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

First-Day Hikes

State parks organizing Jan. 1 excursions

The New York State Parks Department is organizing First-Day hikes on Jan. 1 at many sites. In Cold Spring, it takes place at the Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. Meet at 11 a.m. at the Visitor Center at Little Stony Point at 3011 Route 9D for a 1.5- to 2-mile hike.

In Dutchess County, meet on the west or east end of the Walkway Over the Hudson at 2 p.m. for a hike to the center, where a raffle will be held for all participants at 2:30 p.m. Hikers will be accompanied by a selection of therapy donkeys from Little Brays of Sunshine. Registration is required at walkway.org/event/first-day-hike.

For a list of other First-Day hikes, see parks.ny.gov/events/first-day-hikes.aspx.

Middle-School Film Series

Jan. 5 screening on climate change

The Reel Life Film Club, a documentary series for middle-school students organized by the three Highlands public libraries, will screen *Before the Flood*, a documentary about the effects of climate change, on Friday, Jan. 5, at 6 p.m. at the Butterfield Library in Cold Spring. David Gelber, the creator and executive producer of the *Years of Living Dangerously* documentary series, will lead a discussion after the film. Registration is required at butterfieldlibrary.org or by calling 845-265-3040.

Winter Bird Seed Sale

Orders due by Jan. 9

Orders for winter bird seed from the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society are due by Jan. 9, with pickup on Saturday, Jan. 13, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Taconic Outdoor Education Center. The sale supports PHAS programs. See putnamhighlandsaudubon.org.



A participant in a 2017 First-Day hike sponsored by the state Parks Department

NYS Parks

Stepping Up

Next Depot Docs is Jan. 5

The Depot Docs film series at the Phil-Tipstown Depot Theatre on Garrison's Landing continues on Friday, Jan. 5, at 7:30 p.m. with a screening of the 2017 documentary *Step*. The film follows a "step" team from the inner city Baltimore Leadership School for Young Ladies. Tickets are \$20 at brownpapertickets.com/event/3201609 and include a reception.

What Animals Do in Winter

Nature museum will explain survival habits

In a program scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 17, educators at the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum in Cornwall will explain the winter survival strategies of various wildlife. The presentation, which takes place at the Outdoor Discover Center, will focus on the strategies of hibernation, migration and toughing it out. Tickets are \$3

Sports

Varsity Scoreboard

Boys' Basketball

Haldane 66, Rye Neck 53
Beacon 75, Lourdes 53
Beacon 62, Ketcham 44

Girls' Basketball

Gloversville 61, Haldane 44

Indoor Track

Section 1 Challenge @ Staten Island

Top Finishers

Beacon Girls
High Jump
3. Jummie Akinwunmi (4-9)
Long Jump
2. Jummie Akinwunmi (15-7)
Triple Jump
2. Jummie Akinwunmi (36-5)
Pole Vault
6. Anna Manente (7-0)
Weight Throw
8. Ennie Akinwunmi (31-9.5)

Beacon Boys

300 meters
7. Vincent Compagnone (38.03)
1,000 meters
4. Ryan Cory (2:44.16)
55-meter hurdles
3. Ethan Burgos (8.29)

Boys' Bowling

Beacon 7, Carmel 0

Girls' Bowling

Beacon 7, Carmel 0

Boys' Swimming

Beacon 88, Yorktown-Somers 81
500 Freestyle
1. Kent Patino (6:06.86)
100 Breaststroke
1. James Patino (1:16.53)
400 Freestyle Relay
1. Camilo, Patino, Carmona, Oliva (4:03.49)

for members or \$7 otherwise and includes admission to the Wildlife Education Center. See hnhm.org.

Sign Language for Children

Weekly classes begin Jan. 8

Children in grades 3 to 5 can learn the basics of American Sign Language at the Howland Public Library in Beacon

beginning Monday, Jan. 8, at 4 p.m. and continuing weekly through Feb. 5. The instructor, Lydia Adams Davis, says it's helpful to bring a practice partner. The classes are free but registration is required. Email youth@beaconlibrary.org or call 845-831-1134, ext. 103.

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Prof. Louie & The Crowmatix
Woodstock Horns, Larry Packer

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Sat., 12/30 6:00 p.m.
Peter Calo - Free

Fri., 1/5 8:30 p.m.
Buffalo Stack

Sat., 12/30 8:30 p.m.
Garland Jeffreys

Sat., 1/6 6:00 p.m.
Lisa Jane Lipkin - Free

Sun., 12/31 7:00 p.m.
Nellybombs - Free Salon

Sat., 1/6 8:30 p.m.
Kenny White
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Sun., 12/31
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This feature is designed as a counterweight to all the bad news in the world that weighs people down. We could share a photo of a baby, or a photo of a dog, but we are giving you both. How many newspapers can say that? Sarah Boris of Beacon shared this photo of Layla and her chihuahua, Stella. If you have a photo of a baby and a dog, submit it for consideration to editor@highlandscurrent.com.



Roots and Shoots

On Common Rodents and Lost Habitat

Resolutions for the gardener

By Pamela Doan

I've developed a relationship with a green space I drive by all the time. It's a few acres of overgrown land with a stream. The back border is an abandoned rail line with mature trees. I stop at the traffic light and search the weeds and the banks for groundhogs. For years, I've been happily distracted watching them while cars speed by and no one pays them any attention.

Also known as whistle pigs or woodchucks, these members of the marmot family had found a parcel of paradise. Without nearby landscapes or gardens to disturb, they could live in peace as long as they stayed away from the traffic.

But this fall, the paradise was plowed. In a matter of weeks, all the trees were gone and the soil leveled. It's now covered with gravel. All that remains of the stream is a narrow strip marked by a black plastic fence. There's money to be made and stuff to be sold.

One thing I learned when I moved to the woods is that a bit of wild-looking land won't last. I've watched on East Mountain as the clearing starts by the roadside, then a bulldozer appears and within a few weeks, dozens of trees are ripped out and the ground is leveled. A house is built.

I connected all this with a book I'm reading, *Songbirds, Truffles and Wolves: An American Naturalist in Italy*, by Gary Paul Nabhan, which documents his 200-mile walk from Florence to Assisi along the paths that St. Francis, patron of animals, ecology and merchants, walked and wrote about during his life.

Nabhan is searching for remnants of the wilderness St. Francis loved. His observations on changes in biodiversity and lost relationships between Italian peasants and their natural surroundings over hundreds of years make my la-

ment for a few acres of groundhog paradise seem trivial.

Yet when we lose perspective and respect for any living creatures, no matter how un-useful to our own purposes they may seem, we've lost reverence for any life, I think. The human suffering of Syrian or Rohingya refugees, the plight of species threatened with extinction — these are the scale of tragedies that make headlines and demand action, but even then the scale and complexity resists adequate humanitarian or conservation measures. What hope is there for a groundhog?

We keep plundering and developing. This end-of-year column is for the displaced groundhogs of Route 52 in Fishkill. I hope you made it out. I hope you found a new habitat and can live mostly undisturbed again.



Happy New Year, groundhog. See you on Feb. 2.

Photo by Napanee Gal



A view of the woods in misty morning light — instead of a razed woodlot, which is too depressing for a New Year's column

Photo by P. Doan

In the meantime, I'll keep working on my 9-acre patch on East Mountain, where I coexist with a groundhog I've written about previously. (Strategy: mow around patches of clover flowers as a tradeoff for the perennials it prefers. And bees also love clover.) This all may sound depressing, depending on your view of groundhogs, but I argue that it's hopeful. At the end of the day, that's what gardening is all about: Hope that a seed will sprout, a tomato will ripen, or a flower will bloom. Onward to a new year.

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2017: The Year in Review (from Page 16)

eclipse sweeps from Oregon to South Carolina. Although it is only a partial eclipse here, residents are no less captivated.



A visitor to the Desmond-Fish Library in Garrison watched the partial eclipse on Aug. 21.

Photo by Ross Corsair

31 Amidst an epidemic of opioid abuse, people struggling with addiction and their families and supporters gather at the Cold Spring bandstand to call for more resources to fight the expanding problem. On Sept. 22, *The Current* begins a four-part series on the crisis.

SEPTEMBER

5 State Assemblyman Frank Skartados informs the Beacon City Council he has secured \$500,000 toward restoring the historic Tioronda Bridge.

7 Philipstown Supervisor Richard Shea announces that the state will close access to congested Breakneck Ridge on Jan. 1 to survey conditions, undertake repairs and begin construction of the Hudson

Highlands Fjord Trail.

18 After months of discussion, Beacon City Council adopts a six-month moratorium on nearly all new construction.

18 The historic Tioronda Estate on the outskirts of Beacon, which includes the former Craig House psychiatric center, is sold to a group of investors.



A view from Craig House in April; the estate was sold in September.

Photo by Kathy Steinberg

OCTOBER

3 Diana Bowers, superintendent of the Haldane Central School District, announces she will retire at the end of the school year.

14 The Beacon Historical Society welcomes visitors to its new home at 17 South Ave. after years of crammed quarters at the Howland Cultural Center.

18 The board of Building Bridges Building Boats votes to shut down the organization which for 20 years taught Philipstown teenagers to row, paddle and sail.



A Building Bridges Building Boats outing in 2012

Photo provided

24 The Rev. Tim Greco, a candidate for Philipstown Town Board, gets into a scrap with *TIME* magazine over the resemblance of his campaign logo to its trademarked name; he revises his materials.

NOVEMBER

2 The Philipstown Town Board creates the position of drug-abuse resource coordinator.

2 The Desmond-Fish Library in Garrison announces that Hamilton Fish, the chair of its board, will take a leave of absence after allegations of sexual misconduct at *The New Republic*, where he was president and publisher.

7 Democrat Robert Langley edges incumbent Smith in the race for Putnam County sheriff. Democrats also sweep the Beacon City Council, Beacon-area Dutchess County Legislature and Philipstown Town Board elections.

17 Organizers of the Philipstown Community Congress announce that the priorities identified by 755 voters are improving hiking and biking paths, ensuring clean

water, establishing a teen center, consolidating school districts and implementing Climate Smart Community strategies.

20 After an earlier suggestion that a village-owned parcel on Secor Street might be a good spot for a cell phone tower, the Nelsonville Village Board withdraws the offer.

21 The Putnam County Legislature votes to sue drug companies that it claims contributed to the opioid crisis through "fraudulent and negligent" marketing and careless distribution of pain pills.

DECEMBER

5 Beacon school district voters approve a \$9 million capital improvement plan.

6 An engineering firm estimates it will cost about \$4 million to repair Cold Spring's upper dam.



Cold Spring's upper dam

Photo provided

22 Beacon Police Chief Doug Solomon leaves to take the same position in Newburgh.

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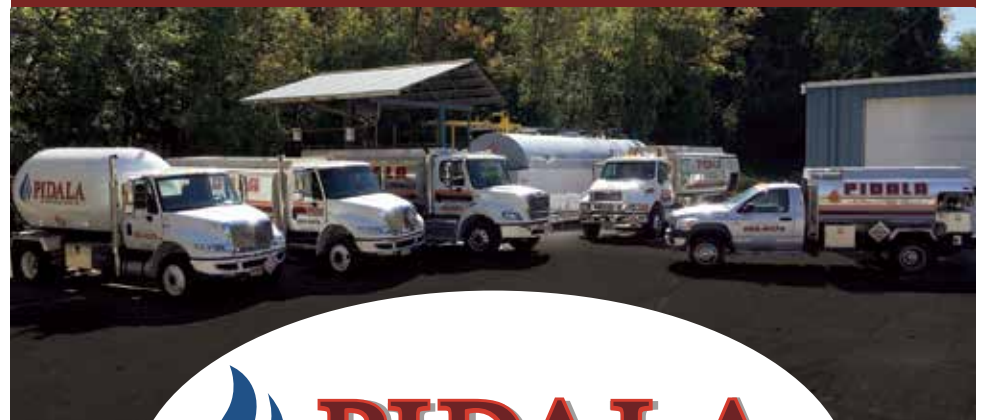
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2017: The Year in Review

By Michael Turton

JANUARY

5 Beacon school officials inform the state athletic association of an ineligible player due to an administrative mix-up that leads to the high school forfeiting four football and seven basketball victories. In February the district tells Athletic Director Martin Nemecek that he will be fired but he is allowed to retire.

9 State officials announce that the Indian Point nuclear power station will cease operations in 2021.

12 The five members of the first elected Garrison Fire District Commission are sworn in.

21 Hundreds of Highlands residents converge on New York City and Washington, D.C., many wearing pink “pussyhats,” to march for women’s rights.



Katy Hope in a pussyhat

File photo

25 Barney Molloy, chairman of the Putnam County Visitors Bureau, pleads not guilty to charges he stole four copies of *The New York Times* from outside a Cold Spring coffee shop. After multiple hearings, the case is dropped.

26 Matt Landahl becomes the Beacon school district’s 10th superintendent in as many years.

27 The Hudson Highlands Land Trust buys 385 acres on Granite Mountain in Putnam Valley for close to \$1 million to preserve as parkland.

FEBRUARY

3 A last-minute legal dispute scuttles a Scenic Hudson plan to preserve a 1,168-acre parcel located on the Putnam-Dutchess border at Lake Valhalla.

10 A report shows serious crime in Beacon has fallen to its lowest level in five years.

15 The Beacon Planning Board begins its review of a 307-unit development that would be the largest-ever in the city.

24 Entrepreneurs announce plans to reopen the Beacon Theater at 445 Main St.

MARCH

14-15 Winter storm Stella dumps 22 inches of snow on the Highlands.



El Niño and La Niña had a smackdown that contributed to 22 inches of snow falling on the Highlands in mid-March.

Illustration by Lyle Booth

15 A week before the mayoral election, Paul Guillaro sues the Village of Cold Spring in federal court, alleging Mayor Dave Merandy and other officials attempted to sabotage his Butterfield redevelopment project. (The lawsuit was dropped in October.)

21 Marie Early and Fran Murphy are re-elected to the Cold Spring Village Board.

21 Hussein “Jimmy” Abdelhady says he plans to create a five-room boutique hotel over his Silver Spoon Café in Cold Spring.

21 Nelsonville citizens vote to expand the board of trustees from three to five members and elect Bill O’Neill as the new mayor and Alan Potts as trustee.

28 After a count of absentee ballots, Dave Merandy is re-elected Cold Spring mayor by 23 votes over challenger Allison Anthoine.

31 After nine months on the job, Haldane High School Principal Peter Carucci resigns, citing family reasons. He is succeeded by Julia Sniffen, who had been the middle school principal.

APRIL

3 Following weeks of debate, the Beacon City Council adopts a resolution that avoids the term *sanctuary city* but declares Beacon a “safe and welcoming place.”

6 The Philipstown Town Board adopts a resolution, 3-2, that forbids town employees from participating in arrests by federal immigration agents. It too avoids the term *sanctuary city*.

15 After \$850,000 in renovations, the sloop Clearwater returns.

17 Roger Ailes, 77, the former head of Fox News, who purchased *The Putnam County News and Recorder* in Cold Spring with his wife, Elizabeth, dies after a fall at his home in Florida.

18 Larry Burke is appointed officer-in-charge of the Cold Spring Police.



Roger Ailes, shown here at the 2016 groundbreaking for the Butterfield redevelopment project, died on Apr. 17 at age 77.

Photo by Russ Cusick

MAY

5 After protests, a wall extending into the sidewalk at 344 Main St. in Beacon is realigned with the neighboring building.

10 Beacon officials cite the owner of Ella’s Bellas for refusing to remove from the side of his building what the city says is an illegal sign and what he says is art.



City officials said the *Imagine* sign was art. (The three on the left were added later.)

15 Beacon City Council tables a vote on building a new central fire station at the dog run at Memorial Park and turns its attention to a county building at 223 Main.

22 A federal judge refuses to dismiss a \$45 million lawsuit against Putnam County Sheriff Donald Smith alleging malicious prosecution.

24 Cold Spring and Philipstown agree to merge their building departments.

31 A tornado touches down in Wappingers Falls.

JUNE

7 The Town Board votes to make Philipstown a Climate Smart Community.

9 The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference reports a 22 percent increase in the number of hikers at Breakneck Ridge over 2016, including as many as 1,700 people on its busiest weekend days.

10 Despite protests from environmental groups and the state, the EPA allows General Electric to end its years-long dredging to remove PCBs from the Hudson.

12 Residents object to a cell phone tower proposed in Philipstown; several weeks later, residents also protest a cell phone

tower proposed in Nelsonville.

13 As part of a court settlement, Putnam Sheriff Don Smith apologizes to former county D.A. Adam Levy for making false statements and agrees to pay \$25,000 of the \$150,000 settlement. The county picks up the rest.



Former Putnam D.A. Adam Levy and Putnam County Sheriff Don Smith

File photos

22 The grassroots Beacon People’s Committee on Development holds its first meeting.

25 Four Haldane graduates are among the players at the biennial Women’s Softball European Championships. The Lisikatos sisters play for the Greeks and the Monteleones for the Irish.

28 Magazzino Italian Art holds its grand opening in Philipstown.

29 Under a new state law, the ride-sharing services Uber and Lyft are allowed to operate outside New York City.

30 Gov. Andrew Cuomo allocates \$17.5 million for Metro-North projects that include upgrades to the Beacon, Cold Spring and Garrison stations.

30 Cold Spring officials protest Putnam County’s use of herbicides near a brook that supplies the village with drinking water. (Tests later show no trace of toxins.)

30 The U.S. Coast Guard puts the brakes on a proposal to create 10 anchorage sites on the Hudson, including between Beacon and Newburgh.

JULY

13 A 48-year-old Brooklyn man dies after falling off a cliff at Breakneck Ridge.

24 Angelika Graswald pleads guilty to criminally negligent homicide in the 2015 drowning death of her fiancé while they kayaked near Bannerman’s Island. She is released Dec. 21 with time served.

AUGUST

8 After winning a retrial on appeal, Anthony Grigoroff is convicted a second time in the 2008 murder of Garrison resident John Marcinak.

8 Using a rotary saw, burglars cut a square from the glass door of Joseph’s Jewelers in Cold Spring in an overnight burglary.

21 The nation looks skyward as the shadow of a total solar (Continued on page 15)