

The HIGHLANDS Current



After 50 years, his first solo show ~ [Page 9](#)

JANUARY 19, 2018

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Woman Dies in Philipstown Fire

Victim, 52, was resident at group home

By Chip Rowe

A 52-year-old woman died in a fire on Thursday, Jan. 11, at the Stepping Stone Group Residence on Route 301 just east of Route 9 in Philipstown, according to the Putnam County Sheriff's Department.

A call was made to 911 at about 11:50 p.m., and firefighters discovered a fire in a second-floor bedroom of the home, which serves adults with Prader-Willi syndrome. A resident identified as Michelle Galeno was found unconscious in the bedroom and taken outside to paramedics but pronounced dead at the scene.

"Nothing is more important to us than the safety and well-being of the people we support and our staff," said Denise DeCarlo, a spokeswoman for the New York State Office of People, (Continued on Page 5)



HUDSON HAZE — A tug and barge navigate the river on Friday, Jan. 12, while partially shrouded in fog.

Photo by Michael Turton



State fire investigators were on the scene on Jan. 12.

Photo by Michael Turton

Gun Storage, Again

Philipstown to hold hearing on revised proposal to require locks

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

As gun-rights advocates watched warily, the Philipstown Town Board on Wednesday (Jan. 17) scheduled a public hearing on a proposed law requiring that a resident lock up a firearm if leaving

home without it. The hearing, set for Feb. 21, will be held at the Haldane school auditorium or another venue large enough for the expected crowd. The board did not discuss details of the proposed "safe-storage" law, intended to protect children.

Shortly before the meeting, Putnam County District Attorney Robert Tendy submitted a five-page memo objecting to the proposal. Unable to attend the workshop, Tendy wrote that he hoped his critique could (Continued on Page 2)

Local Dreamers Fight to Stay

Status of DACA program uncertain

By Brian PJ Cronin

The first time Diana Cruz saw her father in the U.S., she didn't recognize him. "I had really only known him as a voice on the telephone," she said.

It was November 2000, and Cruz and her mother had just come to the States to join their father, who had arrived a few years earlier. After settling in, she realized that there was something different about her family.

Eventually, she said, she realized that they were undocumented immigrants.

"I began to feel ashamed and inferior, and that I should never feel too comfortable here," she said. She said hope finally came in 2012, when President Barack Obama initiated the Deferred Action for



Demonstrators outside Trump Hotel in New York City in September following the president's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program

Photo by David Grossman/Almany

Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy that protects from deportation people age 30 and younger who came into the country before they were 16 as long as they pass a (Continued on Page 6)

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Five Questions: MATT LANDAHL

By Jeff Simms

Matt Landahl is in his first year as superintendent of the Beacon City School District.

What's your take on the pace of development in Beacon?

The school board will handle the politics of development. I see my job as supplying information when it's asked for and doing my best to plan. If there are more students, I need to work with the board and the community to prepare for that. If it's shrinking enrollment, I'll prepare for that, as well.

Can the district handle more students?

We're studying that right now. At the secondary level, the middle and high schools are not at max capacity. Some of the elementary schools might have a room or two that could be repurposed as a classroom, but I don't think there's a huge amount of wiggle room. When we did the capital project this fall, we talked about being positioned financially to do another one in five or six years. If Beacon adds students, that will be part of planning for that project.

Part of the district is located in Fishkill. Is there any concern about growth there?

I'm in contact with Bob LaColla, the Fishkill town supervisor, on a regular basis. Any development that will have an impact on our district, I have to make sure we're prepared.

What can the district do better?

Last year the Board of Education established five goals. Communication between the district and the community was a big one. We have a lot of teachers who are doing great things with technology but as a district we're working to put systems in place to support that. We want to start a pilot program in which every student at Rombout Middle School is given a laptop computer to use. There's interest in adding a second world language at the secondary level besides Spanish. There's also interest in expanding our music and arts



Matt Landahl

Photo by J. Simms

programs. And we'd like to further reduce class size at the elementary level. We want to increase the diversity of our staff but we also want to create a culture of safety, equality and awareness. These aren't necessarily glaringly deficient areas, but that's where our energy has been.

You hosted a handful of community forums last year. How did they go?

One of the main takeaways was a desire to have steady and strong leadership at the superintendent level. I've always felt that what underlies that is a sense of trust, so I've been trying to lay the groundwork for a trusting relationship in the district and in the community. A lot of that starts with being visible and trying to be a good listener. I have a long-haul view and I try to spend a lot of time on the relationship building at the beginning and then grow programs and expand opportunities. I feel like it's going pretty well. It's been a good six months.

Gun Storage, Again *(from Page 1)*

be read aloud by an audience member. However, because the board took no comments from the floor, his views remained on paper — for the night, anyway.

New York State law requires gun owners to use a locking device on any weapon not in their immediate control if the owner lives with someone who cannot legally possess a firearm because he or she is a felon, has been involuntarily committed for mental health treatment, is subject to a protective order or has been convicted of domestic violence.

New York, though, is not among the 27 states that require gun safes or trigger locks in the presence of children, according to the Giffords Law Center, which advocates gun control.

Since raising the gun-storage issue in the fall of 2016, the Town Board has considered various versions of the proposal. When it re-opened the debate in December, its draft stipulated that "no owner or custodian of a firearm shall leave" it "out of his or her immediate possession or control in a residence without" having given it to a responsible custodian, stored it in a locked container, or disabled it with a safety lock. The text focused on "possession or control" of a gun.

The latest draft, the subject of the Feb. 21 hearing, places more emphasis on the gun owner's presence in a house. It requires that a gun owner never leave a weapon "out of his or her possession or control in a residence" while knowing, or

(Continued on next page)



A gun lock

Putnam-Dutchess Job Data

	Putnam	Dutchess	Westchester	NYC	NYS	U.S.
Number of jobs	27,841	113,500	437,600	2.47m	9.4m	145m
Average weekly wage	\$1,011	\$1,023	\$1,327	\$1,907	\$1,237	\$1,020
% wage over 2016	1.6	3	2.6	2.4	2.2	3.2
Unemployment rate	4.3	4.3	4.6	3.6	4.5	4.1

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, June 2017 (most recent available, released Jan. 11). New Hanover, North Carolina, had the highest percentage increase in wages from June 2016 to June 2017, at 11.9 percent. Unemployment rates are as of November.

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Gun Storage, Again *(from previous page)*

having reason to know, that a child under age 18 is there, unless that owner also is present, gave the gun to a lawful custodian for safekeeping, placed it in a locked container, or disabled it with a safety locking device.

The text says the Town Board has determined that in the gun-owner's absence the gun "should be kept locked or stored securely to prevent theft and/or access by children."

Those convicted of breaking the Philipstown law could face fines of up to \$1,000, up to a year's imprisonment in the county jail, or both. But the draft says no penalties would apply if a person reports to

police that a handgun has been lost or stolen.

Tendy attacked the proposed law for several reasons, including the belief it "is unenforceable" because the U.S. Constitution bans unlawful search and seizure.

"There is no legal way for any law enforcement agency to enforce the law absent illegal spying or entry into the home of a citizen," he argued. He acknowledged that the draft law reflects "a good intention." Nonetheless, he added, even if motivated by good intentions, "no governing body can curtail the constitutionally protected rights of United States citizens."

"There is no legal way for any law enforcement agency to enforce the law absent illegal spying or entry into the home of a citizen."

Tendy also questioned the provision on lost and stolen guns. "There appears to be an unfortunate presumption that a firearm being stolen would be the result of a violation of this proposed law," he cautioned. "A legal presumption in this type of law is ill-advised."

Safe Storage in Beacon

The City Council in December 2016 passed a law that requires guns to be secured in a safe or with a trigger lock in the presence of anyone under age 16.

Town Board Pushes Ahead on 'Climate Smart' Status

Sets pay for anti-drug coordinator, OKs cell-tower FOIL requests

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Delayed by snow for several days, the Philipstown Town Board on Jan. 11 kicked off 2018 by tending to a long list of routine yearly chores (e.g., setting the mileage compensation for using personal cars for town business at 56 cents per mile) and reiterated its support for efforts to fight global warming and the opioid crisis.

The board also dealt with Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests from

Homeland Towers, whose application for a cell tower on Vineyard Road just south of the intersection of Routes 9 and 301 is pending before the town's Zoning Board of Appeals and Conservation Board.

The actions came during the board's annual reorganization meeting, which was followed by its formal monthly meeting, at Town Hall in Cold Spring. Both meetings had originally been scheduled for Jan. 4.

Climate Smart Communities

The board voted unanimously to pay Roberto Muller, coordinator of the Climate Smart Communities initiative, \$500 a month, an increase of \$100 over the monthly amount set in the 2018 budget. "I don't care if I have to take it out of my own pay," Supervisor Richard Shea said of

the additional \$1,200, although he added he believes he can raise the money from other sources.

Muller told the board that he had a large pool of volunteers, as well as 10 who would like to serve on a task force to oversee the initiative. Promoted by New York State, the Climate Smart program is designed to minimize the pollution produced by a municipality and maximize its ability to protect the environment and reduce global warming.

Drug addiction outreach

The board unanimously set the pay for a coordinator of drug prevention, treatment and recovery resources at \$24 an hour, not to exceed \$10,000 for the year. The position has not yet been filled.

FOIL requests

The board unanimously approved an appeal from Robert Gaudio, a lawyer for Homeland Towers, for some — but not all — of the documents he sought.

According to the Town Board, Gaudio filed a FOIL request on Nov. 17 asking for the town government's "entire file regarding Homeland Towers." Ten days later, Town Clerk Tina Merando provided some documents but indicated that others might be available from various town offices and advisory boards and would be sent "if and when" she received them.

On Jan. 5, Gaudio appealed to the Town Board, terming the response an "effective denial" of his request because it "failed to immediately pro- (Continued on page 7)

'Water Emergency' Closes Haldane for a Day

Reservoir level hidden by ice

By Chip Rowe

Cold Spring officials asked the Haldane Central School District to close on Jan. 12 because of potential water pressure problem after it was dis-

covered a village reservoir was 4 inches lower than it appeared.

Due to frigid temperatures, the water level had been masked by a cover of ice that collapsed on Jan. 11 as temperatures rose, Water Department Superintendent Greg Phillips said in a statement.

"It is the quantity, not the quality, of the

village water supply that has created an emergency condition," he said.

While most village residents saw only a slight decrease in pressure, Phillips predicted that because the Haldane buildings, especially the high school, are at a higher elevation, they would likely have little pressure while the system recovered. He and Mayor Dave Merandy informed Superintendent Diana Bowers, who canceled classes.

When the village's water storage tanks

on Fishkill Road are full, pressure in the system is augmented to reach properties at higher elevations, such as the Haldane campus.

To increase flow from the village's two main storage reservoirs, an outlet was opened on the Lower Cold Spring Reservoir along Foundry Pond Road. However, the water had to travel 2.5 miles to reach the water treatment plant, so it took about eight hours before the level there began to rise.



Tanker trucks brought water to Cold Spring on Jan. 12. At left are Greg Phillips and Scott Monroe of the Water Department.

Photo by Michael Turton

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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.

Waterline repair

This is an incredible story of what it takes — brains and brawn, teamwork and heroic effort — to keep a village's infrastructure operating ("Winter Waterline Woes in [Really] Cold Spring," Jan. 12).

Joanne Murphy, Cold Spring

Just wondering: should the computerized monitors used by Water Superintendent Greg Phillips that indicated a leak have a warning alarm? According to the article, it was water on the street that led to a check of the monitors.

Stephen Rose, Cold Spring

Greg Phillips responds: "The Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system that we use does not provide for alarms on dramatic 'flow to system' increases. But once we know there is a leak, I can remotely access the system to determine the water-loss rate. However, we will soon be replacing the master meter at the entry point to our distribution system with one that has the same technology as those installed in residences last year. It has cloud-based software that will allow for alarms to be set up for such instances, and without the expense of changing SCADA programming in the facility."

Garbage pickup

The Cold Spring mayor and Village Board need to inform village residents of the costs of this proposal to have residents pay for their own garbage removal ("Cold Spring to Consider Private Garbage Collection," Jan. 12). Will there be a credit to our taxes? What will the Highway Depart-

ment be doing when it's not the middle of winter? We need to understand what village tax dollars are being spent on.

We need to better understand our elected officials' goals to "improve" life for all the people who reside in the village. As residents, we must attend these meetings where a few people make decisions that impact all our lives and pocketbooks. I am not necessarily opposed to the garbage proposal, but need to understand how it benefits village residents and taxpayers.

Judy Farrell, Cold Spring

If the plans to have Royal Carting pick up garbage and recycling continue, I assume community input will be sought, especially if homeowners are footing the bill. One also assumes that arrangements would be made to adapt to each household, as singles surely wouldn't be billed as much as families. Already, many different ideas have been floated among neighbors, a big one being: If Nelsonville pays Royal, why doesn't Cold Spring? Thanks for the reporting!

Sara Dulaney, Cold Spring

As the article stated, the test run to determine the cost of having Royal pick up garbage and recycling will occur on Jan. 30. However, cost-saving measures can be made in every household by separating out as many recyclables as you can.

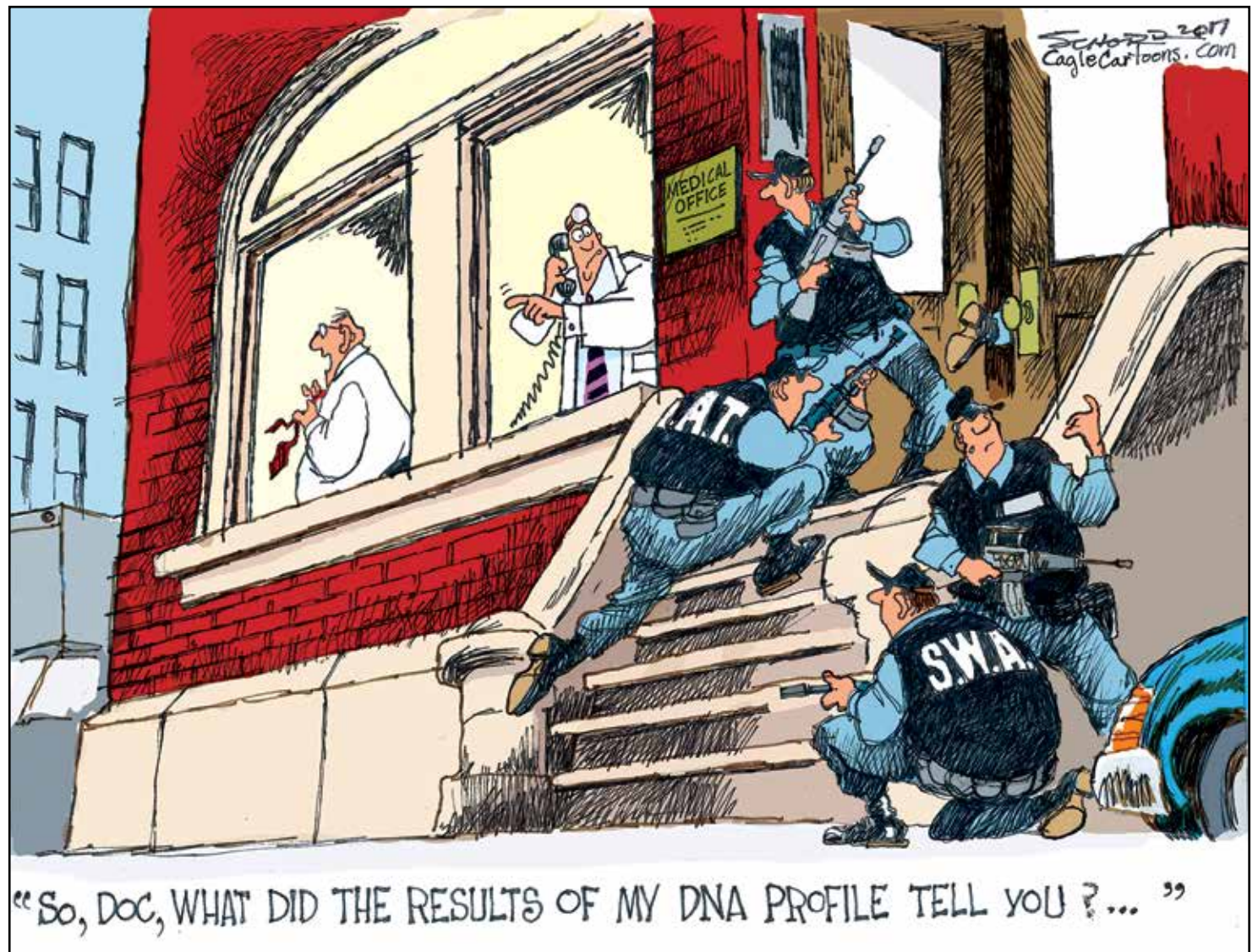
The more each household recycles, the less expensive waste management is to the village. Cold Spring pays per pound to dispose of our non-recyclable garbage. In turn, we are paid a little bit of money for recyclables — not a lot, but some.

Right now, Cold Spring pays to dump somewhere between two to three times as much garbage as we recycle. Much of that garbage is food waste, which represents a lot of weight compared to other trash. Please keep those compost buckets handy and compost as much food waste as you can. It's good for your garden, good for the environment and saves every taxpayer money, whether our Highway Department does the collection or a private company.

Lynn Miller, Cold Spring

Miller is a trustee on the Village Board.

The proposal that the village should stop collect- (Continued on next page)



"So, Doc, WHAT DID THE RESULTS OF MY DNA PROFILE TELL YOU ? ... "

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (from previous page)

ing garbage and have Royal Carting do the work, apparently billing residents directly, needs careful scrutiny. Although details are few, it appears that the village has no plans to reduce Highway Department staff, so the only benefit would be savings from the investment in equipment.

Offsetting that benefit is that residents would have to dig deep into our own pockets to pay directly for garbage collected in front of our homes, something that is now covered by our property taxes. The net result is we'd all pay more for the same services we are getting today, even if private collection rates are low.

As it happens, the Special Board for a Comprehensive Plan gave quite a lot of thought to garbage collection, and the Government and Infrastructure Working Group prepared several reports with recommendations in 2008 and 2010. (I led the subcommittee that worked on the project.) Although we considered privatization, we did not recommend it, pri-

marily because of concerns that only one vendor, Royal Carting, would be able to compete for the business. Privatization is great when competition is robust, but can be robbery when it is weak or absent.

The village spends about \$110,000 annually in direct costs for the collection of garbage. This covers the costs of incineration (about \$56,000) and the wages of Highway Department workers for collecting garbage, and maintenance; to this add the cost of the trucks (depreciation, insurance). Cold Spring produces about 18 tons of trash each week, of which about 30 percent is recycled. The recycled waste portion costs less to dispose of because we do not have to pay to have it burned (at times it has even been a source of revenue). So the more we recycle, the less the total cost to the village.

The village's proposal, as it stands, would do nothing to incentivize recycling. The first step to providing financial incentives would be to invoice residents directly for garbage collection, on their water bills,

rather than cover the cost with property taxes. From there, the village would have many options for linking charges to use (by weight, number of bags, etc.), so singles wouldn't pay as much as families, and those who take the time to recycle and compost are rewarded. This would be fairer, and trim overall costs for the community, just as happened when water use was metered. (Municipalities with incentives see recycling rates in the range of 75 percent.)

Here are some concerns:

- Once the village gets out of the garbage collection business, restarting would be expensive and difficult — even if residents realize they are much worse off.
- Residents who feel pinched by the higher costs could resort to illegal dumping, something that is a persistent problem in Philipstown, where residents contract for their own pickups.
- The present arrangement allows for efficient and effective use of a small Highway Department crew of four employees, allowing for vacations, sick leave, and emergencies. So if the village did want to pass along some tax savings by cutting staff, it would have a highway crew that would be too small.
- The announcement of the plan to outsource garbage collection seemed to hint at using Highway Department personnel for other work. What, exactly, does the board have in mind? What justifies this

additional expenditure of tax dollars?

Big changes are coming this year to garbage collection worldwide, with China, the biggest single market, cutting back sharply on what recycled material it will accept. Do we want to shift the burden to individual residents, just when we need the leverage from organizing these services as a community?

Michael Armstrong, *Cold Spring*

Homeless in Highlands

Many homeless stay invisible during the day so, in our bubbles, we think they do not exist ("Report: More Homeless in Hudson Valley," Jan. 12). They do, and Hudson River Housing increasingly needs donations and volunteers. The federal government is making cutbacks, which means we, the community, need to pitch in more. Thank you for publishing this article.

Judith Rose, *Cold Spring*

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Woman Dies in Philipstown Fire (from Page 1)

with Developmental Disabilities, which oversees the home. "We are fully cooperating with the ongoing investigation into this tragic event."

She noted that two staff members were on duty at the home, which has six residents. The five other residents were not injured and have been relocated, she said. The agency is also providing grief counseling.

Prader-Willi is a genetic disorder that results in developmental disabilities. It also is associated with an excessive preoccupation with food and constant hunger, which can lead to obesity and related

health issues such as diabetes.

In addition to sheriff's deputies, emergency personnel from the North Highlands, Cold Spring, Garrison and Fishkill fire departments responded to the alarm, as did the Cold Spring police officers and paramedics from EMSTAR and the Philipstown Ambulance Corps.

Members of the Putnam County Sheriff's Office Bureau of Criminal Investigations, the Putnam County Fire Investigation Team and New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control are investigating the cause and origin of the fire.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals has scheduled a special meeting for January 22, 2018, to continue discussion of the application of Homeland Towers LLC proposal to erect a cell tower at 50 Vineyard Road. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Philipstown Recreation Department, 107 Glenclyffe, Garrison, NY 10524.



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Kindergarten Registration Dates Set in Garrison

Garrison Union Free School will hold its Kindergarten Registration for the 2018-2019 school year on Tuesday, February 6 and Wednesday, February 7 from 9 to 11 a.m. and from 1 to 3 p.m. on both days.

Parents should line up in the hallway outside the main office at the school and are required to bring the following:

- Original birth certificate - child must be age 5 by December 31, 2018
- Immunization records/Recent physical
- Proof of residency
 - Owners
 - Signed contract of sale or deed, and
 - Telephone, utility, cable bill, etc. (2 required)
 - Renters
 - Notarized affidavit of landlord, and
 - Rent receipt (within 30 days) indicating address, and
 - Telephone, utility, cable bill, etc. (2 required)

The child does not need to accompany the parent or guardian for registration.

Information about the Wednesday, May 2nd orientation will be given out at registration.

For additional information, call 424-3689 ext. 230 or 221.

Local Dreamers Fight to Stay *(from Page 1)*

criminal background check and pay a fee.

The future of DACA is uncertain. The policy, which was rescinded by President Donald Trump on Sept. 5, hangs in the balance of a looming government shutdown and budget crisis as lawmakers search for a compromise. There are 800,000 “Dreamers” in the program (named for a proposed DREAM Act that would grant minors conditional residency), including about 1,900 in the 18th Congressional District, which includes Philipstown and Beacon.

Unless a deal is reached, all would face deportation beginning March 5. The work authorizations and deportation protections of about 14,600 Dreamers have expired since Sept. 5. (They must be renewed every two years.) All permits will expire by September 2019.

Cruz shared her story, along with two other local Dreamers, Aura Lopez Zarate, a 2015 graduate of the Newburgh Free Academy, and Miriam Sanchez, a teaching assistant with Agri-Business Child Development, at a Jan. 16 news conference and symposium on DACA held at SUNY Orange’s campus in Newburgh. Maloney made it clear at the conference that he will not vote for any budget deal that does not include protection for Dreamers.

“We do not blame children for things their parents do,” said Maloney, who is a Democrat. “These kids, who have played by the rules, who are going to school, who are working, who are serving in our military, who are contributing to our economy,

have done everything right. That’s not an overstatement. By definition, that’s who is in the DACA program. Eight-hundred thousand people came forward and did what we asked them to do. Eighty percent of the American public knows this and supports making it possible for Dreamers to stay in this country and to continue to make contributions to our way of life.”

Maloney is one of 200 co-sponsors in the House of the Dream Act of 2017, which would grant conditional permanent resident status to DACA recipients for up to eight years. To qualify, applicants would have to have lived in the U.S. at least four years before the law’s passage and be enrolled in secondary school or graduated from high school. They could obtain lawful permanent residence by completing two years of higher education or military service or working for three years.

Maloney said President Trump’s widely reported vulgar description of Haiti and Africa has made the problem worse. “This president manufactured a crisis and then made it worse by using racist and incendiary language at a critical moment when people were trying to cut a deal.”

Cruz, who lives in Dutchess County, said that when Obama announced DACA in 2012, she felt she could stop being afraid.

“I felt unstoppable,” she said. “I’ve always had the drive, but now I had a work permit.” She finished high school in three years, earned an associate degree in three semes-



Aura Lopez Zarate speaks at a news conference organized by Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (center) to address uncertainty about the DACA policy. Photo by B. Cronin

ters, graduated from SUNY New Paltz with a double major in Latin American studies and international affairs, and is a graduate student at SUNY Albany’s Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy.

Even if DACA is saved, it doesn’t solve the problem at hand. Cruz would like to see a path for Dreamers to become citizens. “Once we get immigration reform, that’s one of the things that will make America great again,” she said.

Maloney said that for that to happen, the president’s supporters need to make their voices heard. “People who voted for this president need to raise their voices right now for things that make sense,” he said. “I don’t know any Republicans here who talk the way the president talked last

week. They don’t use racist language when they talk about people from Haiti or Africa. It’s time for people of good faith, who are watching the president and members of their own party saying things that are outrageous, they’re the ones that have to stand up and say ‘Wait, there’s work we can do together on this, but don’t say those things in my name.’”

Cruz said that although she doesn’t think she would end up targeted for deportation, if the worst should happen and she ended up in Mexico, she’ll take her talents and education to a country that would be proud to have her. “It’s a very large world and I’m sure there’s another country out there that would be willing to take me,” she said.

Senior Center Should Re-Bid by February

Legislator says grant funding is secure

By Holly Crocco

After receiving three bids that were all over-budget for the construction of a senior center at the former Butterfield Hospital site in Cold Spring, Putnam County in November went back to the drawing board to re-scope the project.

The county plans to lease 6,000 square feet of space to operate a senior center in the Lahey Pavilion over a period of 15 years at a total cost of about \$4.5 million, including rent, taxes, common area charges and renovation.

In 2016, the Legislature approved an \$800,000 bond referendum for the initial costs to retrofit the space. A request for proposals was issued for the project, and of the three bids received, the lowest was \$1.8 million.

John Tully, the deputy commissioner of highways and facilities, explained at the Jan. 17 meeting of the Physical Services Committee that changes in the HVAC system have been made, and that the Highway Department stepped in to do demolition and “rough plumbing” to reduce the

scope of the project put out to bid and get it back within budget.

The county spent about \$7,500 on this work, said Tully. “Our target is by the end of the month to have that bid back out, repackaged,” he said.

Tully said the interior of the Lahey Pavilion is much different than when the project was first put out to bid. “It’s a real clean slate — a lot different than what the contractors saw when they did the walk-through the first time,” he said. “We’re crossing our fingers we’ll have a successful project here. We’re on the right track.”

Legislator Carl Albano (R-Carmel) complimented the Highway Department.

“We have a great workforce but there’s a lot to be done, so they do what they can and then we pick and choose our battles,” he said, explaining that certain projects such as the senior center are simply too large to be completed in-house. “In certain instances, we have to give out the work.”

Legislator Barbara Scuccimarra (R-Philipstown) said that, despite the delay because of the higher-than-expected bids, the \$250,000 in state funds pledged by both State Sen. Sue Serino (R-Hyde Park) and Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) are secure. “They’ve assured me that the grants are solid,” she said.

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Town Board Pushes Ahead on 'Climate Smart' Status *(from Page 3)*

vide all materials in the town's possession," including minutes and tapes of meetings, "e-mails received by the Zoning Board from residents," and items pertaining to the town's dismissal of its first radio-frequency consultant. (After hiring the consultant in mid-2017, the board decided last fall to stop using his services after learning of possible conflicts of interest regarding his involvement with the cell tower industry.)

The Town Board ruled 4-0 that the clerk should "forthwith" give Gaudioso copies of meeting minutes mentioning Homeland Towers or the Vineyard Road project but denied the request for tapes, videos, photos and notes "as such materials are not in the town's possession or control."

The town government contracts with a private firm to videotape select meetings and does not retain a photographer.

The board also agreed to supply Gaudioso with "all non-privileged emails and correspondence" pertaining to Homeland Towers, "without delay." But it denied the

Shea described the FOIL requests and appeal as "a shot across the bow" by Homeland Towers, whose representatives have clashed with ZBA and Conservation Board members and citizens. "To our knowledge," Shea said, town officials have "given them everything we could."

request for materials relating to its parting of ways with the radio-frequency consultant, claiming "no such documents are in the town's possession or control."

Shea described the FOIL requests and appeal as "a shot across the bow" by Homeland Towers, whose representatives have clashed with ZBA and Conservation Board members and citizens. "To our knowledge," Shea said, town officials have "given them everything we could."



Before the Philipstown Town Board's Jan. 11 meeting, John Van Tassel (left) took the oath of office for his third, four-year term on the board. It was administered by Clerk Tina Merando, who was assisted by Supervisor Richard Shea. *Photo by L.S. Armstrong*

Federal Cuts Threaten Local Veteran Housing

Future of Hudson River Housing program in doubt

By Brian PJ Cronin

Mitchell Schweickert doesn't mince words when talking about what Hudson River Housing's Liberty Station has meant to him.

"Thanks to this building, I'm alive," the veteran says while sitting in its library, after finishing a shift at his job selling T-shirts and other branded merchandise at the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory. "My health is bad. I've got a lot of problems, but I feel safe here. Compared to other places I've been, this is a palace."

Hudson River Housing (HRH) opened Liberty Station, which has 26 single-occupancy rooms for veterans, in 2014. It is one of a number of programs the non-profit runs to keep veterans off the streets, including locating housing and jobs, rent assistance, assistance with benefits and sometimes standing in the rain to convince sheriffs to stop an eviction.

Unfortunately, the group's five case managers are in danger of losing their jobs.

In September, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs denied a \$500,000 grant for veteran support services that Hudson River Housing had received annually for the past five years. It had been the sole funding for the program.

"We were shocked," said Executive Director Christa Hines. Over the five years of the program's existence, she said HRH had helped about 600 families and was on the verge of declaring an end to veteran homelessness in Dutchess County.

"We had been told we were one of their best grantees," she said. "And there was



Ed Reid (left) with Army veteran Mitchell Schweickert and Anthony Kavouras in the Liberty Station library *Photo by B. Cronin*

no warning. We think it's very short-sighted. You have to have a plan. You can't just cease, because now all of these problems are going to come back."

This month, Dutchess County gave HRH \$100,000 to keep the program going while the staff works on a long-term solution. But that doesn't allow them to continue giving rental assistance checks.

"In the first two months after we lost the grant, we had about 25 veteran families come in," said Ed Reid, an HRH case manager. "We hustled like crazy to try and find them help and try and stop them from being homeless. And without the outreach we have, and the community of care that we've established, we wouldn't be able to do it."

Anthony Kavouras, a case manager who served in the Air Force for 34 years, said that other sources of funding focus on helping the homeless, not preventing veterans from becoming homeless. "They want the person to be homeless before we can help them," he said.

Reid said that approach compounds the problem because once someone is evicted, his or her credit and credibility is shot. "Their ability to get work gets harder and harder," he said. "The emotional and physical effect that it has on families, particularly the main breadwinner, is palatable with each regulation that feeds into that process of making them homeless first."

"Think about the guy who's behind \$1,500 in rent," said Kavouras. "He has a wife, two kids, and they're going to get evicted over \$1,500. Does it make more sense to let them get caught up, pay the \$1,500, and let them stay in their home? Or, do you let them get evicted? Now they have to move! They have to pay probably two month's security in advance, pay a mover — that's more than \$1,500 right there. You're costing them more money by evicting them than letting them stay in their home."

There's also "the mental health aspect of keeping someone in their home," he said. "They're established, their kids are

"I've got a lot of problems, but I feel safe here. Compared to other places I've been, this is a palace."

going to school there, everything's already set up. It's mind-boggling that they haven't figured that out."

Consider Schweickert's situation. An Army veteran, he had been in transitional housing in Florida and New Jersey when he came to Poughkeepsie to stay with a relative. But he had to move out when the relative's daughter moved back in. Schweickert, who has suffered two strokes and two heart attacks, had a week to find a place to live. Hudson River Housing was able to get him into Liberty Station before he ever became homeless, helped him find work, and is working with him to receive the benefits that Schweickert didn't know he was due after serving nearly 20 years in the military.

That was at the beginning of the summer. Had it happened just a few months later, after HRH lost funding for the program, Reid said none of it would have been possible. "He would have had to have one foot on the shelter steps before we could help him," he said.

In the meantime, while the staff looks for new funding and revamps the veterans' program, more families are coming in.

With the federal grant, "if there was an emergency, and we needed money, HRH would make a decision that day," Reid says. "Sometimes we got it in the same hour. But now we're working with much larger organizations for funding, and they tell us we have to wait two weeks. Meanwhile you have a family sitting outside on the street with no place to go and it's snowing. We can't wait two weeks. So our problem is, what can we do for them?"

Monday at Long Dock Park

Photos by Larry Fitzpatrick



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Mario Merz
Marisa Merz
Giulio Paolini

Pino Pascali
Giuseppe Penone
Michelangelo Pistoletto
Remo Salvadori
Gilberto Zorio

MAGAZZINO

ITALIAN ART

The Calendar

After 50 Years of Classes, His First Solo Show

Retired engineer combines math with artist's eye

By Alison Rooney

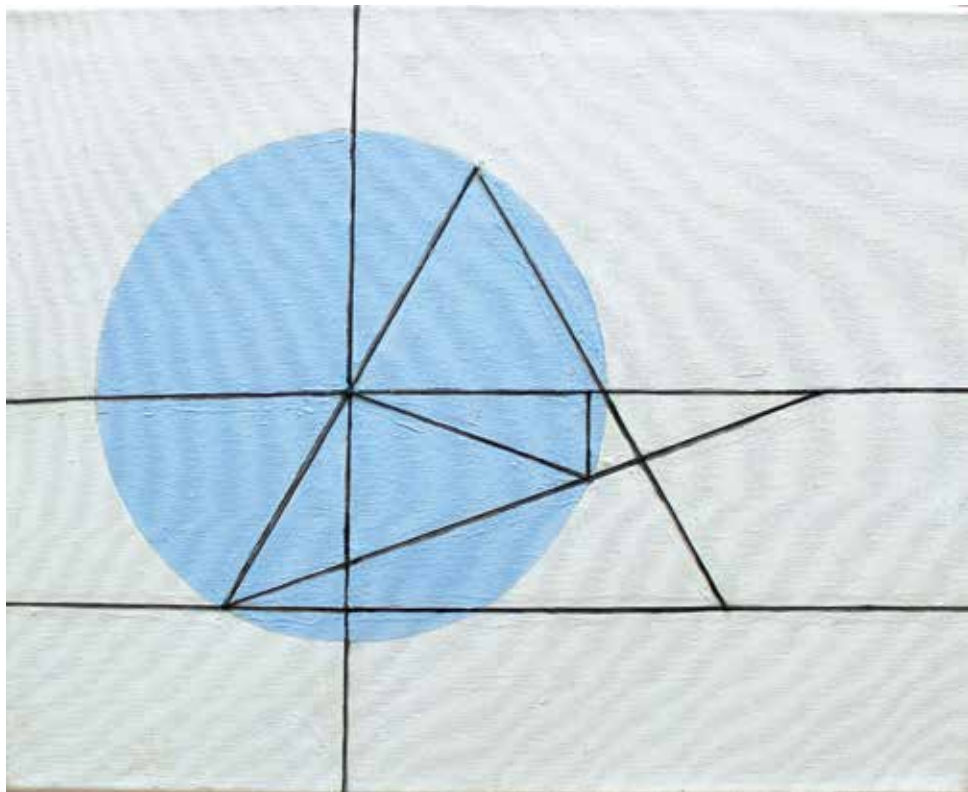
Eric Wagner has been taking classes at the Garrison Art Center for more than 50 years. He's finally ready. On Jan. 27, the center will host the 86-year-old retired IBM executive's first solo show.

Wagner, who served on the art center board for decades, discovered it through his wife, Miriam, who was a coordinator there. The couple moved to Philipstown in 1961, early in Wagner's 40-year career

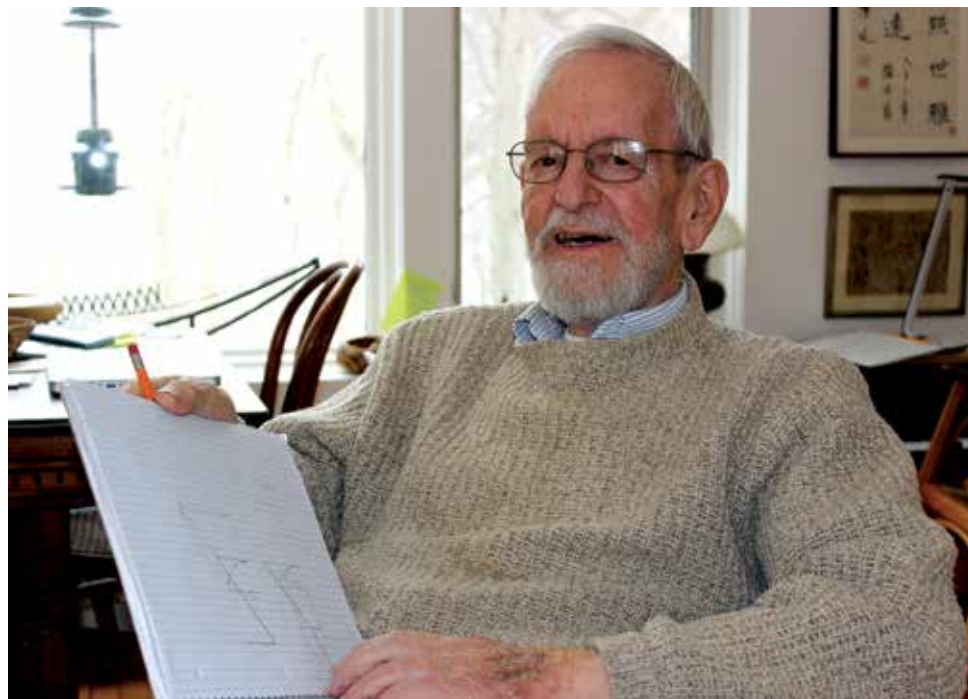
at IBM. (He retired in 1993.)

His paintings combine mathematical precision with the searching eye of an artist. "If you go out and draw or paint, it's almost photographic," he says. "You're being controlled by the reality." An artist needs to "modify the reality" but remain in harmony with it.

Wagner has always drawn, dating to his school days in Croton, where he grew up as the son of a Bauhaus-trained architect in a home his father designed. He attended Vermont's progressive Putney School and Harvard, where he majored in physics but took just as many humanities courses. After being drafted into the Army during



A painting by Eric Wagner



Eric Wagner

Photos by A. Rooney

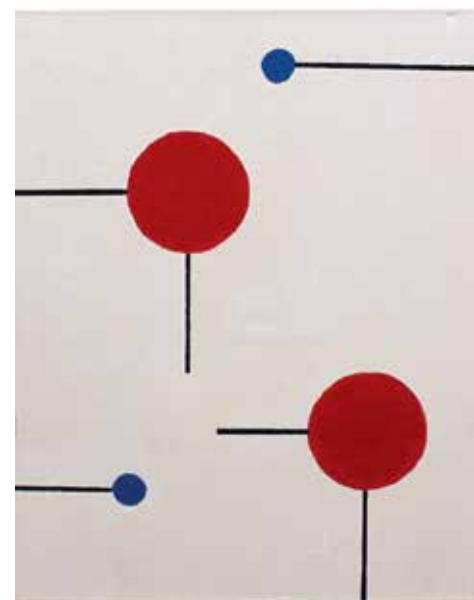
the Korean War, Wagner used weekend passes when stationed in Japan to visit traditional inns, drawing what was around him and trying photography, too.

After the army, he joined IBM in Poughkeepsie as a "logical designer" in its nascent research division. With IBM's support, he earned his doctorate in mathematics from Columbia, all the while continuing to put brush to canvas.

"It was a period of particularly bad painting," he recalls, chagrined. "I was doing realistic paintings, not at all about mathematics, such as a portrait of Descartes with a horse in the background."

Along with classes in pottery and sculpture, Wagner has long taken landscape

(Continued on Page 13)



A Wagner painting

Were You Just Thinking We Should Do a Story on Coincidences?

Intriguing stories from the Highlands

By Michael Turton

Curious incidents experienced by two men who work two doors apart in Cold Spring illustrate the profound differences in how people interpret "coincidence."

Gary Arceri, co-owner of a Main Street antique shop, grew up in Massapequa on Long Island in the 1960s. His best friend was Tim McNamara. After high school graduation, it would be more than 20 years before the two would cross paths when they bumped into each other in a Massapequa bar.

A year after that chance encounter, Arceri was driving from Newburgh to New Paltz after a severe ice storm. "As soon as I got on the Thruway I just started thinking about Tim," Arceri remembers. Minutes later, he was sure that the driver of a car that passed him was

his old friend, but a second look proved him wrong.

"About 10 minutes after that, I came upon two PSEG Long Island trucks stopped on the shoulder and I decided to pull over." One of the truck drivers was McNamara.

"That incident was eerie; it had spiritual meaning for me," Arceri says. "We don't understand precognition or even how much of our brain we're really using. We use 'coincidence' to describe these things because we have no other word for it."

Elvis! Elvis!

Gregg Graham works at a Cold Spring pub but in 2015 managed a restaurant in Croton-on-Hudson. One evening, while discussing their shared passion for college football, he and a customer realized they had both attended the 1991 game between Florida State and Michigan in Ann Arbor, along with 106,000 other fans. Graham, a Florida State alumnus, was delighted with the Seminoles' 51-31 victory. The customer, a



Gregg Graham

Photo by M. Turton

Michigan alum whose name Graham cannot recall, went home unhappy.

The customer told Graham (Continued on Page 13)

It's a Lonely Job, But Writers Find Company

Literary salon provides audience, connections

By Alison Rooney

As much as writers need the sound of silence, the craft can be a lonely business.

"Rumor has it that Beacon is full of writers, but few of them know one another," says Julie Chibbaro, who in December launched Get Lit, a two-hour salon held at the Oak Vino Wine Bar in which writers read their work to the like-minded.

Chibbaro, an author and writing teacher, seems to have tapped into something. With limited publicity, each of the first two sessions drew about 40 people. The most recent was Jan. 7; the next is scheduled for 5 p.m. on Feb. 11. (For more information, search for "Get Lit Beacon" on Facebook.)

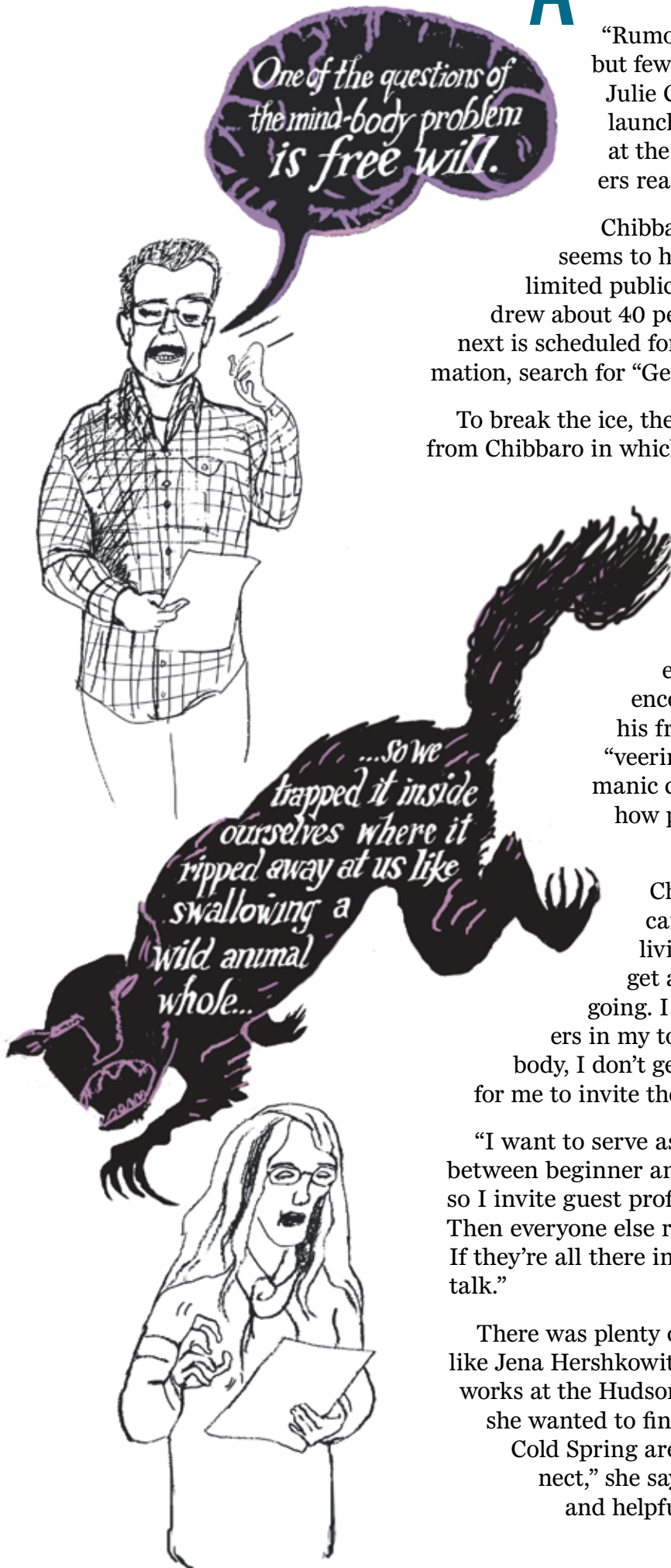
To break the ice, the evening began with a welcome from Chibbaro in which she explained that each of the 12 readers would be limited to five minutes, asked each writer to indicate if his or her selection was an excerpt, and introduced the first reader.

In December that was novelist and essayist Lily Burana and on Jan. 7 science journalist John Horgan, who described his frame of mind after finishing a piece as "veering wildly between exhilaration and manic confidence and absolute despair about how people will react."

Having an audience is important, Chibbaro says, because "writers can sometimes feel like we're living in a vacuum. We need to get a feel for how our stories are going. I often hear about other writers in my town, but since I'm a homebody, I don't get to meet them. This is a way for me to invite them out and hear their work."

"I want to serve as a guide, to make the connection between beginner and pro, and everything in between, so I invite guest professionals to share their stories first. Then everyone else reads. There's also time for mingling. If they're all there in the same audience, hopefully, they'll talk."

There was plenty of chatting, which was great for people like Jena Hershkowitz, a 27-year-old grant writer who works at the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival and says she wanted to find a creative community. "Beacon and Cold Spring are vibrant places, but it's hard to connect," she says. "This evening has been inspiring and helpful in that way."



(from previous page) Besides Horgan and Chibbaro, the writers who read on Jan. 7 were Micah White, Liam Goodman, Susan Graves, Eric Kater, Sharon Watts, Emily Dykeman, Terry Nelson, Anna Marcus, Eric Trump, Krystal Ford and Alex Humphreys. (Seven are portrayed on these pages by illustrator Deb Lucke with excerpts from their readings.)

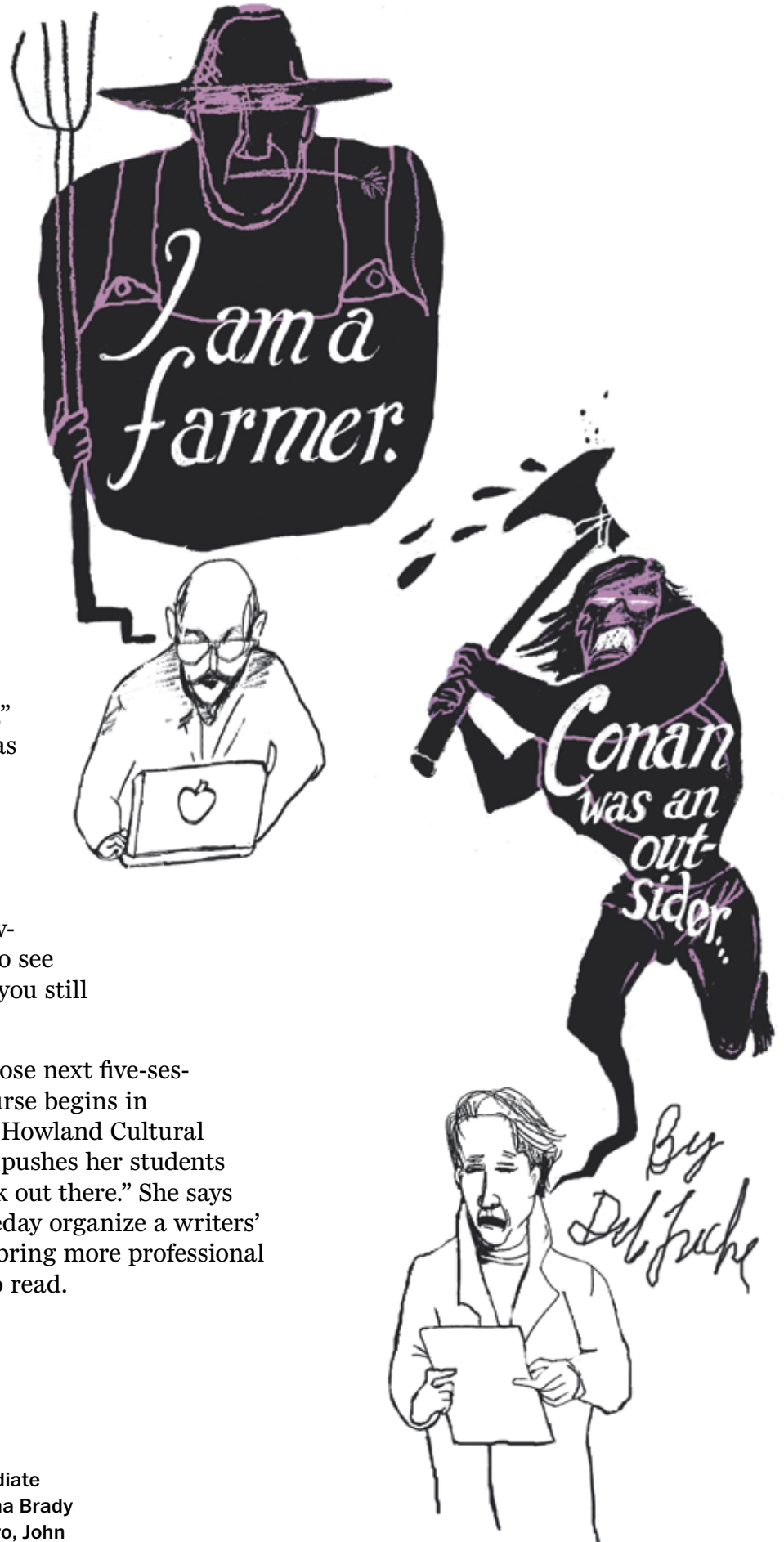
White, who lives in Beacon and read an excerpt from the draft of his first novel, says that “knowing you’re going to present your work is motivational,” joking that he found reading his work “far easier than talking to strangers during the break!”

Graves, also from Beacon, attended the December session to listen to others but braved reading her own work at the second. “Beacon needs these,” she says, noting that years ago she attended arts salons at the since-closed Chthonic Café. “What’s nice here is that the work is at all different stages of development — even first drafts. It’s very forgiving.”

Chibbaro, who has published three novels (*Into the Dangerous World* in 2015, *Deadly* in 2011 and *Redemption* in 2004, which won the American Book Award), says she was first exposed to a literary salon when she lived in Prague in the 1990s.

“All these years later, I am still in touch with the writers I met,” she says. “Connecting with them was enormously helpful to my growth and my belief in myself as an author. It’s encouraging to read work aloud to an audience, to discover its impact, or to see how much work you still have to do.”

Chibbaro, whose next five-session writing course begins in February at the Howland Cultural Center, says she pushes her students “to get their work out there.” She says she hopes to someday organize a writers’ conference and to bring more professional writers to Beacon to read.



Clockwise from immediate left: Terry Nelson, Anna Brady Marcus, Julie Chibbaro, John Horgan, Sharon Watts, Alex Humphreys and Eric Trump

FRIDAY, JAN. 19

Haldane vs. Yonkers Montessori (Boys' Basketball)

6 p.m. Haldane Gym | 15 Craigsides Dr., Cold Spring
845-265-2500 | haldane.org

Middle School Pizza and Paint Party

6:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave., Cold Spring
845-265-3040 | butterfieldlibrary.org

Open Mic

7:30 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St., Beacon
845-831-4988 | howlandculturalcenter.org

Blue Oyster Cult

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

SATURDAY, JAN. 20

iPhoneography Workshop

10 a.m. RiverWinds Gallery
172 Main St., Beacon
845-838-2880 | riverwindsgallery.com

Winter Seed Sowing for Pollinators and Other Wildlife

10:30 a.m. Cornell Cooperative Extension
1 Geneva Road, Brewster
845-278-6738 | putnam.cce.cornell.edu

Cloth & Memory Artists: "Common Threads"

2 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
See details under Friday.

Army vs. Lehigh (Men's Basketball)

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

West Point Concert Band

2 p.m. Eisenhower Hall Theatre
655 Ruger Road, West Point
845-938-4159 | ikehall.com

Close Encounters with Birds of Prey

6 p.m. Wildlife Education Center
25 Boulevard, Cornwall
845-534-7781 | hhnaturemuseum.org

Greater Newburgh Symphony Orchestra:**Forbidden Fruit**

7:30 p.m. Aquinas Hall
Mount Saint Mary College, Newburgh
845-913-7157 | newburghsymphony.org

SUNDAY, JAN. 21

Open House

11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hudson Hills Montessori
12 Hanna Lane, Beacon
845-831-1100 | hudsonhillsmontessori.org

Calendar Highlights

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

Managing Digital Passwords

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

MONDAY, JAN. 22

Putnam History Museum Saunders Contest Ceremony

6:30 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
See details under Sunday.

Beacon School Board

7 p.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road, Beacon
845-838-6900 | beaonk12.org

Birthright: A War Story

7:15 p.m. Downing Film Center
19 Front St., Newburgh
845-561-3686 | downingfilmcenter.com

TUESDAY, JAN. 23

Beacon vs. Poughkeepsie (Boys' Basketball)

6:15 p.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road, Beacon
845-838-6900 | beaonk12.org

Beginner Swing Class

7 p.m. Elks Lodge | 900 Wolcott Ave., Beacon
845-236-3939 | got2lindy.com

Middle Company: New Works Reading Series

7 p.m. Old VFW Hall | 34 Kemble Ave., Cold Spring
themiddlecompany.com

Cold Spring Board of Trustees

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

Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Potluck

7:30 p.m. Beacon Hebrew Alliance
331 Verplanck Ave., Beacon
beaconsurj@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 24

Beacon vs. Haldane (Girls' Basketball)

6 p.m. Beacon High School
See details under Tuesday.

Knitting Workshop

6 p.m. Butterfield Library
See details under Friday.

Army vs. Colgate (Men's Basketball)

7 p.m. Christl Arena | See details under Saturday.

THURSDAY, JAN. 25

Writing Lab (grades 9-12)

2:30 – 4 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St., Beacon
845-831-1134 | beaconlibrary.org

Beacon vs. Peekskill (Boys' Basketball)

6:15 p.m. Beacon High School
See details under Tuesday.

Dance Jam

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

Garrison School Board (Joint Meeting)

7 p.m. O'Neill High School
Morgan Farm Road, Highland Falls
845-446-4914 | gufs.org

New Year, New You (First Session)

7 p.m. Marika's Kitchen
36 Lincoln Ave., Beacon
marikab.com/page/480435662

Prosecutorial Oversight for New York (Panel)

7 p.m. Peekskill High School
1072 Elm St., Peekskill
facebook.com/naacppeekskill

FRIDAY, JAN. 26

Log-Grown Shiitake: Economics & Management

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Green Chimneys Clearpool Campus
33 Clearpool Road, Carmel
845-278-6738 | putnam.cce.cornell.edu

Meet the Animals

3:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
See details under Jan. 19.

International Film Night: Tanna (Australia)

6 p.m. Howland Public Library
See details under Thursday.

Haldane vs. Putnam Valley (Boys' Basketball)

6:15 p.m. Haldane Gym
See details under Jan. 19.

Beacon Film Society: Walking Out (2017)

6:30 p.m. Beahive Beacon
291 Main St., Beacon | beaconfilmsociety.org

Haldane School Foundation Trivia Night

7:45 p.m. St. Mary's Church
1 Chestnut St., Cold Spring
haldaneschoolfoundation.org

Beacon Open Studios Roaring '20s Fundraiser

8 p.m. Denning's Point Distillery
10 N. Chestnut St., Beacon
beaconopenstudios.org

Men Without Hats

8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
See details under Jan. 19.

Support Groups

For a full list of area support groups,
visit: highlandscurrent.com/sg



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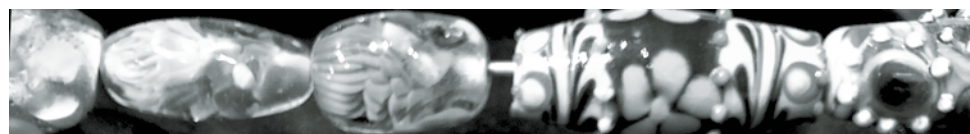
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Philipstown Depot Theatre

8th Annual Ariane Original One Act Play Festival

Feb. 2, Feb. 3 at 8 p.m., Feb. 4 at 2 p.m.

Love Letters by A.R. Gurney

Performed by Phil Geoffrey Bond and Jennifer Lee Andrews

Feb. 10, 11, 14 All shows at 8 p.m.

Depot Docs: *An Inconvenient Sequel*

Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m.

Reception and Q&A following film

philipstowndepottheatre.org

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

Were You Just Thinking We Should Do a Story on Coincidences? (from Page 9)

that a vocal fan seated immediately behind him in the end zone had aggravated him throughout the game, constantly shouting “Elvis! Elvis! Elvis!” every time Michigan quarterback Elvis Grbac made a mistake in what turned out to be one of the signal caller’s worst performances of the season.

Graham, also seated in the end zone, confessed to having chanted “Elvis!” a number of times. However, the customer doubted it was Graham who sat behind him because the culprit had very long hair and Graham’s hair was short. Graham produced a photo on his cell-phone taken roughly the same time as the game. It featured a long-haired Graham, proving he had been the irritating “Elvis!” chanter 24 years earlier.

“It was just random,” Graham says. “The more people you meet, the more places you go, the more likely it is that things like that are going to happen.”

Synchronicity

Swiss psychologist Carl Jung would support Arceri’s interpretation over Graham’s. Jung coined the word *synchronicity* to suggest there is meaning to coincidence. That meshes with another of his hypotheses, “*undus mundus*,” which states that everyone and



Carl Jung

everything is interconnected, providing order and structure to reality. Jung believed that synchronicity lay behind claims of ESP, ghosts and telepathy.

Cold Spring resident Mary Jo Mullan might lean toward Jung’s view. In May 2011, Mullan, a first-generation Irish-American, was in Havana researching

Cuba’s Healthy Aging Program. Her ears perked up when she heard a group of men singing the Irish ballad *Foggy Dew* in the hotel bar.

She was surprised to learn they had come from Ireland for an annual tribute to the 10 hunger strikers whose deaths in 1981 marked the end of a five-year protest by Irish Republican prisoners during “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland.

“I was stunned, and very moved,” Mullan says. “I had no idea such a monument existed in Cuba.” The marker, which she visited the next day, is one of several in Cuba honoring liberation movements.

Mullan’s emotional response was not unfounded. Her first cousin, Tommy McElwee, is listed on the monument. “It was a meaningful coincidence,” she says. “It reinforced my belief in the global need to seek freedom.”

The law of large numbers

If Jung’s beliefs represent “heads” on the coin of coincidence, the law of large

numbers represents “tails.” It states that if a group of people is large enough, coincidence is bound to happen. In fact, mathematical probability suggests that the number doesn’t have to be huge. For example, if 23 people are in the same room, there is a 50-50 chance

(Continued on Page 14)



Tommy McElwee is second from the bottom at right in this Belfast tribute to the strikers.

Photo courtesy Mary Jo Mullan

After 50 Years of Classes, His First Solo Show (from Page 9)

painting with Martee Levi, who worked to shift him away from the literal.

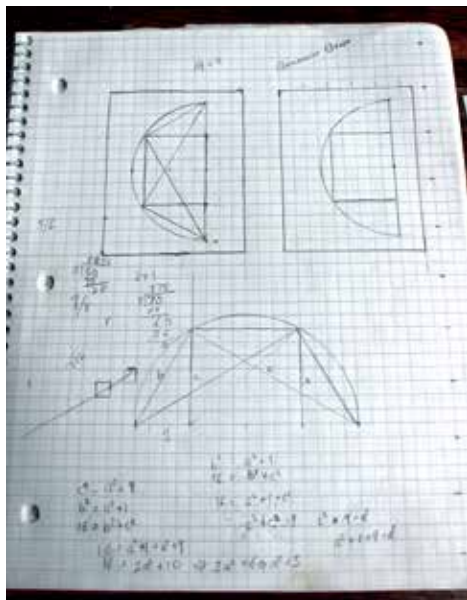
“The trouble is, most people want to copy nature,” Levi says. “I told Eric that we should start by looking at Cezanne, that it’s about looking beyond the trees to see the geometry behind them. We have this agreed-upon reality, but great artists go beyond that.”

The pair has been working together for 15 years, sometimes as part of a group which meets at Levi’s home studio in the woods. “Every time he would finish a painting, Eric would put it on the wall and there would be a calmness which emanated from it,” Levi says. “After doing landscapes, he had a period of painting found objects — you should see his garage! — and putting found objects together. Those paintings are wonderful.”

Describing Wagner’s process, Levi says: “He sits in class and works on graph paper. I wish I could frame all his drawings and show where it comes from; it’s fascinating. A couple are just lines, but again, it’s their relationship. Sometimes it’s about getting beyond his algebra.”

Asked where his work comes from, Wagner responds, “I don’t know. But certainly some parts are mathematical and other key construction comes from architecture. Some are simply experiments in minimalism.”

It was Levi who suggested the art center organize a solo show to honor Wagner’s talent and commitment. He pronounces himself “amazed and very pleased” to have his paintings showcased. All the works are untitled because, as he explains, “the natural title would be something like: ‘Trisecting the 60-degree angle’ and half the



Wagner makes notes before putting paint to canvas.

Photos by A. Rooney

people would leave the room and the other half would be confused!”

Wagner says he spends time contemplating his pieces and, as an example, notes that he recently “noticed a phenomenon in two paintings: In both cases I did it with an isosceles triangle and didn’t mean to. I’m curious about doing it without an isosceles: Would that be an improvement?”

Wagner’s art will be on display in the Balter Gallery at the Garrison Art Center, on Garrison’s Landing, through Feb. 18. The other gallery is filled with works by Michal Gavish, an Israeli artist and scientist who uses watercolor and ink on photo transfers to layer urban imagery. The art center is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

TAVERN NIGHTS

AT THE HIGHLANDS

JANUARY 26TH & 27TH
(INCLEMENT WEATHER - 28TH)

FEBRUARY 16TH & 17TH
(INCLEMENT WEATHER - 18TH)

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Were You Just Thinking We Should Do a Story on Coincidences? (from Page 13)

that two will have been born on the same month and day. There is a 99.9 percent chance among 75 people.

The fact that, in 1982, the U.S. population was 231 million compared to 3.5 million in Ireland adds to the intrigue of Cold Spring resident Maureen Kazel's story. That year, while studying in Ireland, Kazel found herself hitchhiking to Tipperary with two classmates. A young man picked them up, and Kazel, a self-described "talker," became frustrated by his silence.

Pressing him, she learned that he had visited Binghamton, New York, with his college soccer team a few years earlier. He remained disinterested until Kazel mentioned that her sister had attended

SUNY Binghamton at that time. "What was her name?" the driver asked, his curiosity piqued. "Anne Kazel," Maureen replied. The driver was stunned. "I can't believe it," he said. "I stayed in the same dorm as your sister!"

Maureen's interpretation of the incident has evolved over time. "I was shocked at the time; at age 21 I realized it's not such a big world after all," she said. "Back then I thought coincidence had meaning; now I'm older and wiser."

Degrees of separation

Jung, the law of large numbers, and Cold Spring resident Bill Sussman might all agree that the concept of "6 degrees of separation" is valid, that everything and



Bill Sussman

Photo by M. Turton



everyone in the world are no more than six steps apart.

In 2016, while renovating an apartment on Lower Main Street, Sussman discovered a hidden fireplace. Buried in its ashes were the report cards of three elementary school students who attended Haldane in the mid-1930s.

Shortly after the discovery, Joel Sussman, who like his uncle Bill, grew up on Long Island, paid a visit and was surprised to realize that the surname on all three report cards was very familiar to him: Budney.

"Nick Budney is a good friend of Joel's; both are members of the NYPD," Sussman says. The report cards belonged to Frank and Stan "Mackey" Budney, Nick's great-great uncles, and Olga Budney, his great-great aunt.

The law of large numbers would probably suggest that everyone has at least one compelling coincidence story. Whether or not coincidence has meaning beyond mathematics remains a personal belief.

My story

In the 1980s, while working in conservation in Ontario, I was interviewed over the phone on Detroit's WJR by "Fat" Bob Taylor, so nicknamed because he was rather portly. A week later I met him at a luncheon in Detroit and thanked him.

That evening I got a phone call. "Is this Mike Turton?" I answered, "Yes, it is." "This is Bob Taylor." I was taken aback. Why was he calling me at home, late at night?

Our short conversation made no sense. When I finally asked him if he was "Fat Bob" Taylor, he became indignant, exclaiming, "I'm not fat!"

It was a different Bob Taylor calling a different Mike Turton on the day this Mike Turton met the other Bob Taylor.

In my mind, the incident was no more than an interesting surprise; it did, however, spark an interest in coincidence.

Had a coincidence? Post at highlandscurrent.com.

The HIGHLANDS Current

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Family Trails

Name Check

By Valerie LaRobardier

We are quite fortunate in the Highlands to have so many great local libraries for genealogists researching Dutchess and Putnam County families.

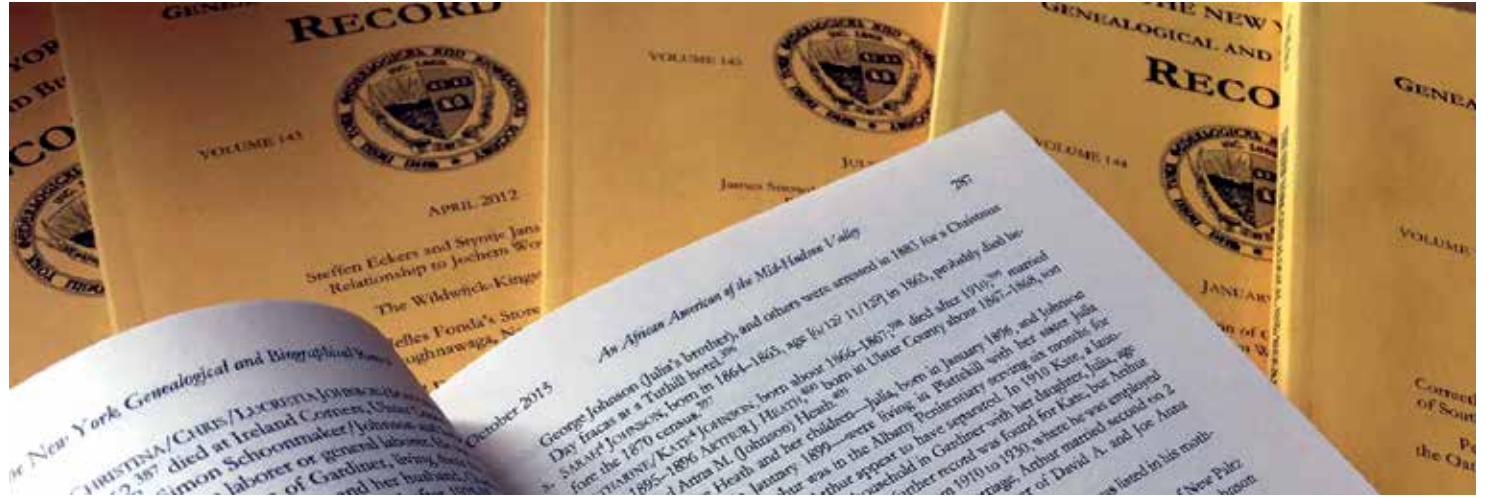
Before you visit, you should do research to maximize your chances for success. *The Dutchess*, published by the Dutchess County Genealogical Society (DCGS) Quarterly, *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* and *Settlers of the Beekman Patent* are excellent starting points.

The tables of contents to *The Dutchess*, which began in 1973, can be found through 2008 at dcgs-gen.org/dutchesstoc.htm. We hope to have a name index posted soon through 2012 for society members (\$25 annually).

The DCGS Library is located in the Family History Center at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at 204 Spackenkill Road in Poughkeepsie. There you will find a large collection of local genealogy materials and free access to internet services. Staffed by church and society volunteers, it is open Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. You can download a partial list of holdings by subject at dcgs-gen.org/library.htm.

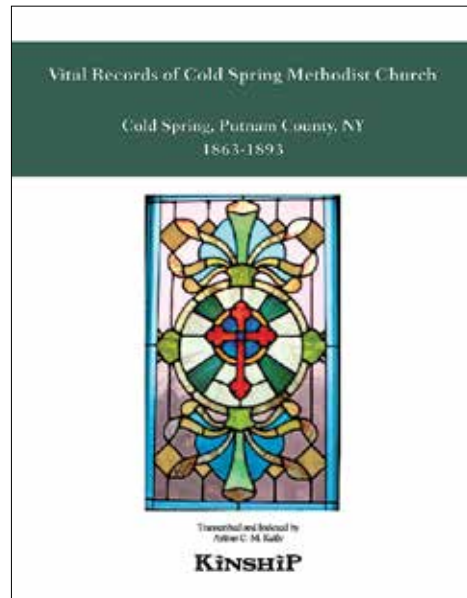
On our members-only page we also offer a summary of what is available in the local history sections of the public libraries in Dutchess, Putnam and other nearby counties, compiled by Beverly Kane. This listing is valuable because not every item in these collections is indexed online. Besides the DCGS/Family History Center, the largest collections are at the Poughkeepsie and New Paltz public libraries.

For *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, you can search a name index at newyorkfamilyhistory.org/research-discover/research-tools/wordens-index. If you have a NYG&B Society membership (\$70 annually) you can instantly



The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record has been published since 1870.

NYGBS



Kinship Books has a number of titles that compile records from Putnam County, including from the Cold Spring Methodist Church between 1863 and 1893.

retrieve the page. If not, make a note for your library look-up list.

You can check for families found in *Settlers of the Beekman Patent* at beekman-settlers.com/pages/collections and order chapters in PDF format or visit the Family History Library. This is an invaluable series compiled by Frank Doherty that documents the rents paid on the land grant (patent) given to Col. Henry Beekman in 1697 by the English Crown in present-day Dutchess County. They date back to 1710. The information is not limited to the patent — much of the story before a family arrived and after it moved on is told, as well.

This work is particularly valuable be-

cause all the records for surnames whose place in families cannot be identified are included at the end of each chapter, in an "Other and Unplaced" listing. I have often found just what I needed to make a connection.

Doherty has completed 13 volumes so far, through the surname Swift. The Blodgett Memorial Library in Fishkill has 12 volumes and the Howland Library in Beacon has the first two.

Kinship Books has published a large collection of church, cemetery, tax, journal and probate record transcriptions. Particularly valuable is the matching up of unusual alternate surname spellings used by Dutch and German clerics. The publisher's site at kinshipny.com has a handy search tool. Plug in any surname and it returns all the books that contain records for that surname.

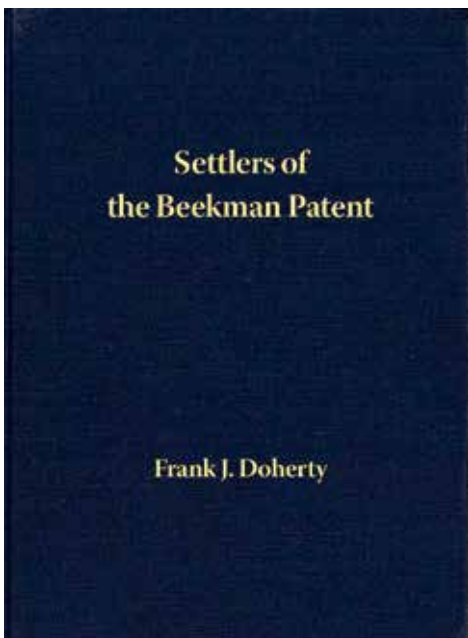
From there you can either buy the book (if it contains numerous instances of your names) or find it in a local library (if only a few instances). There is no guarantee the surname belongs to your ancestor, but it is a place to start. Once you find the name of the book, look for it in the DCGS card catalog PDF or the Mid-Hudson Library catalog at search.midhudsonlibraries.org.

For browsing Dutchess County church records by location, see *Dutchess County, NY Churches & Their Records, An Historical Directory*, by Linda Koehler. Every current and past town, hamlet and church is listed, with its date of organization and available records. Many of these records appear in *The Dutchess* or the NYGBR. Although the book was published in 1994,

I use my copy nearly every day and have found few listings in need of updating, and few churches that are not included.

Occasionally you will find a reference to a book that is not available locally, but if it covers local families it can likely be accessed at the Milstein Division of the New York Public Library in Manhattan, the New York State Library in Albany or the Connecticut State Library in Hartford. Research at these repositories will be covered in future columns.

LaRobardier is a professional genealogist and president of the Dutchess County Genealogical Society. Every other month, she will discuss strategy and resources for research in Dutchess and Putnam counties and answer queries from readers. She can be reached at genealogy@highlandscurrent.com.



The first volume of Frank Doherty's expansive history of the settlers of the Beekman Patent was published in 1973.

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Raise a Helper Dog

Volunteers needed for training

Putnam Service Dogs, a nonprofit that serves people with physical disabilities other than blindness, is looking for volunteers to raise puppies from 10 weeks to about 20 months. If a dog doesn't succeed in training, the volunteer may be able to adopt the animal. Information sessions are planned for noon on Jan. 27 at the Putnam Diner in Patterson and noon on Jan. 28 at Panera Bread in Yorktown Heights. See putnamservicedogs.org.

Ready to Quit?

County offering free course

The Putnam County Health Department will offer a free smoking cessation program with nicotine replacement at its offices in Brewster starting Wednesday, Jan. 31, and continuing weekly through March 14. Call 845-808-1390, ext. 43155, to register.

Oversight for Prosecutors

Panel to discuss need for commission

The Peekskill NAACP Justice Committee and the Peekskill High School Black Culture Club will host a panel discussion on Thursday, Jan. 25, at the high

school about the need for a state Prosecutorial Conduct Commission. The event begins at 7 p.m. To register, search Eventbrite.com for "Our Voices Matter." The high school is located at 1072 Elm St.

Vote for Local Schools

Two in running for new playground

The Garrison School and J.V. Forrestal Elementary in Beacon are both in the running for a \$25,000 Project Fit America grant for playground equipment. The contest is sponsored by Dannon and Shop-Rite. To vote daily through Jan. 31, visit animalsshopriteschoolcontest.young-america.com.

Substance-Abuse Forum

Haldane to host presentation

On Tuesday, Jan. 30, the Haldane Central School District will host a presentation and discussion about issues facing children and teenagers regarding substance abuse. A complimentary light dinner will be served at 5 p.m., followed by a talk at 6 p.m. by Micheal Nerney, an expert on prevention, education and adolescent brain development. At 7:15 p.m. there will be breakout sessions. Child care will be available. RSVP by Jan. 24 by calling 845-265-9254, ext. 111.

Sky, Earth, In-Between

Exhibit opens at HVCCA

The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill will host a reception for Leslie Pelino from 5 to 7 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 28, to open her show, *Sky, Earth and In-Between: Gathering the Threads*. The artist weaves scraps of



Detail from a piece by Leslie Pelino, whose work can be seen at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill starting Jan. 28

Photo provided

salvaged material connected to a memory into her work. Steve Lewis will also read his poetry inspired by the exhibit. See hvcca.org.

Singers Sought

Contest for female vocalists

The Femme Fabulous talent search will hold auditions at the Eagle Saloon in Peekskill on Jan. 24, Jan. 31 and Feb. 7 from 7 to 9 p.m., with the finals scheduled for Feb. 14 at The Factoria in Peekskill. The event will benefit Hope's Door, which assists women who have suffered domestic abuse. The first prize is \$1,000, with \$500 each for second and third. See femfabtalent.com.

What Do Teens Want?

Students invited to take survey

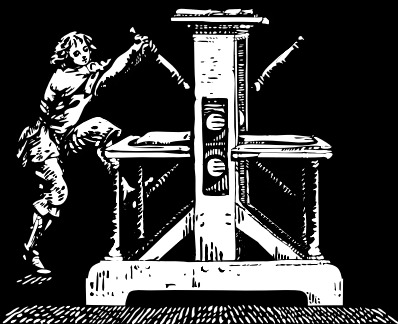
A group of volunteers formed as part of the Philipstown Community Congress is researching the creation of a teen center in Cold Spring that would be open after school and on weekends. Teenagers can share their ideas for the space at surveymonkey.com/r/7XLR6VM.

Trivia Time

Foundation to host annual contest

The Haldane School Foundation will host its annual trivia night for adults on Friday, Jan. 26, at St. Mary's Parish Hall in Cold Spring. Doors open at 7:45
(Continued on next page)

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CHRISTMAS FILE — It's never too late to look back at the holidays. Members of St. Philip's Episcopal Church's youth choir, directed by Amy Richter (center), sang carols with Santa on Dec. 23 at the Philipstown Food Pantry.

Photo provided

COMMUNITY BRIEFS (from previous page)



Josh Wiggins and Matt Bomer star in the thriller *Walking Out*, which will screen at Beahive Beacon on Jan. 26.

Photo provided

p.m. for registration. Tickets are \$50 per person and include beer, wine and chili. See haldaneschoolfoundation.org.

Scholarship Applications Due on April 1

More than \$300K available

The Community Foundations of Hudson Valley has more than \$300,000 in scholarships available for students in Putnam, Dutchess and Ulster counties to help pay for college or vocational training. Applications are due April 1. See communityfoundationshv.org.

Valentines for Vets

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, who represents Philipstown and Beacon in Congress, is asking schools, individuals, families and businesses to create Valentine's Day cards for veterans. He will collect the cards at his Newburgh office and deliver them on Feb. 14 to the VA hospital at Castle Point. This is the fourth year of the program; last year more than 4,000

cards were created. Call Maloney's office at 845-561-1259 to participate.

Beacon

Connection and Survival

Film Society to screen 2017 thriller

The Beacon Film Society will screen the 2017 thriller *Walking Out* at 7 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 26, at Beahive Beacon. The film is a survival saga set in the Montana wilderness with a father and his estranged 14-year-old son. Co-director Alex Smith will be on hand to answer questions. See beaconfilmsociety.org for tickets, which are \$10. Beahive is at 291 Main St.

Swing Time for Art

Open Studios to host party

The organizers of Beacon Open Studios will host a fundraiser on Friday, Jan. 26, from 8 p.m. to midnight at Denning's Point Distillery in Beacon. The theme is the Roaring '20s and guests are invited to come in costume. Tickets are \$24 to \$44. See facebook.com/beaconopenstudios.



DAD DAY — It was an all-father team serving chili from Greg's Food Truck on Jan. 16 at the weekly school lunch organized by the Garrison PTA. From left: Michael Jannetta, Brandon Williams, Bob Hayes, Corbett Schimming and Sundance DiGiovanni. All are parents of fourth-graders at the school.

Photo by Sheila Williams



Baby and Baby and Dog

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? Bridget Smith of Beacon sent this photo of her newborn twins, Jack and Gretchen, with their dog, Skype. If you have a photo of a baby and a dog, submit it for consideration to editor@highlandscurrent.com.



Open Studios, in its 10th year, will be held April 27 to 29; discounted early registration for artists is available through Jan. 22 at beaconopenstudios.org.

NY Alert

For public safety and transportation alerts by text or email, visit nyalert.gov

Need Tax Help?

Volunteers available starting Feb. 1

Low- to moderate-income families, individuals and seniors can receive free help preparing their tax returns at any of 20 sites in Dutchess County, including Beacon. The program begins on Feb. 1 but appointments can be made by calling United Way Hudson Valley at 800-899-1479 between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily.

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Hanny Ahern



Karlyn Benson



Angelique Devlin



Meghan Gorla



Linda Pratt Kimmel

BeaconArts to Elect Four Board Members

Five candidates seek seats on cultural council

By Alison Rooney

On Wednesday, Jan. 31, the BeaconArts Community Association will meet to elect four new members to its nine-person board. The meeting will take place at 6:30 p.m. at the Beacon Institute, 199 Main St., which is hosting an exhibit that looks back at the nonprofit arts and culture group's first 15 years.

There are five candidates for the two-year terms. A sixth candidate, Matthew Agolgia, withdrew, citing recent business commitments.

The five current members are Theresa Goodman, Terry Nelson, Rick Rogers, Aaron Verdile and Christina Jensen, who returned to the board earlier this month after being appointed to fill the seat of Sommer Hixson. The organization has about 160 artist and 95 business members and usually meets on the last Wednesday of each month.

The Current asked each candidate to share her priorities. The responses have been edited for length and clarity.

Hanny Ahern

My priority would be to engage youth, especially those ages 16 to 25, to help them see their own influence in this growing artistic economy. The arts hold a form of soft power that can strengthen any community and inspire young people. In fact, working with arts and culture is what led me to Beacon: I moved here to take a job at Dia:Beacon facilitating its teen education program. Prior to that, I founded a free school in Brooklyn that came out of an art curriculum I developed for a school in rural Kenya. I offer the kind of problem solving that can only come from doing.

Karlyn Benson

I want to make sure that Beacon will continue to be a place where all forms of art can flourish, despite the recent increase in development in the city. We have to ensure that artists of all types can continue to be a vital part of the community. I have more than 20 years of experience working in museums and galleries and have been involved in the Beacon art scene since moving here in 2003. I opened Matteawan Gallery in 2013 as a way to support local artists and to create connections between artists from Beacon, New York City and elsewhere.

Angelique Devlin

BeaconArts is a wonderfully vibrant organization with a membership full of talented and engaging individuals. The projects and programming made possible through BeaconArts weave so much beauty into the fabric of our lives. They are also vital to our economy, bringing in tourists from New York City and all over the world. I look forward to helping in any way I can. I have a degree in English Literature, which means observation and analysis are favorite skills. Deep listening is the foundation for all of my work, from massage to ceremony to birth support and life coaching.

Meghan Gorla

One of my priorities would be to expand the membership program. Beacon is defined in large part by its commitment to the arts. I would also love to advance the place of live performance. We have such a rich history of visual art and music, and I would love to see theater contributing to that great tradition. My career as a marketer has been centered on the arts and culture, everything from planning large-scale events to grassroots outreach. My focus is connecting audiences with art, online as well as in person.

Not a Member?

Membership in BeaconArts, which is open to anyone (not just Beacon residents), is \$25 per year. Business memberships are \$240 annually. See beaconarts.org.

Recently Supported Projects

American Center for Folk Music
Beacon Independent Film Festival
Beacon Open Studios
Beacon 3D
Bus Shelter Project
HEFeSTUS Iron Pour
Keys to the City
Second Saturday
Windows on Main Street

Linda Pratt Kimmel

My priority would be to listen in order to learn how the board has done things, what is in the works, and what goals have been discussed to ascertain where I might be most helpful, either in supporting what's in place or offering constructive suggestions. As a literary agent in children's books for more than 20 years, I have worked with authors and illustrators in bringing their creative visions to publication — a process that requires a respect for the artists, a business acumen that includes negotiation and troubleshooting, and an understanding of the target audience and its needs.

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Obituaries

Bill Stevens (1931-2018)

Co-founder of Howland Chamber Music Circle

William Yeaton Stevens, 86, died Jan. 12, 2018, at Vassar Brothers Medical Center of complications following a fall. He and his wife, Gwen, founded the Howland Chamber Music Circle in Beacon.

Gwen had often organized chamber music sessions in their home, and later established Patrons for Young Artists, a group that sponsored concerts by budding professional musicians in various homes. She wanted to expand this to include performances available to the general public.

So, just as Bill was retiring from IBM, they founded the Howland Chamber Music Circle. Gwen served as music director and Bill as concert manager. After devoting much of his retirement time and their energy to it for 23 years, in 2016 they relinquished their positions for others to carry the organization forward.



The Howland Music Circle is collecting donations for a memorial concert. See howlandmusic.org or write P.O. Box 224, Chelsea, NY 12512.

Information provided by Straub, Catalano & Halvey Funeral Home. A full obituary is posted at highlandscurrent.com.

Bob Galligan (1930-2018)

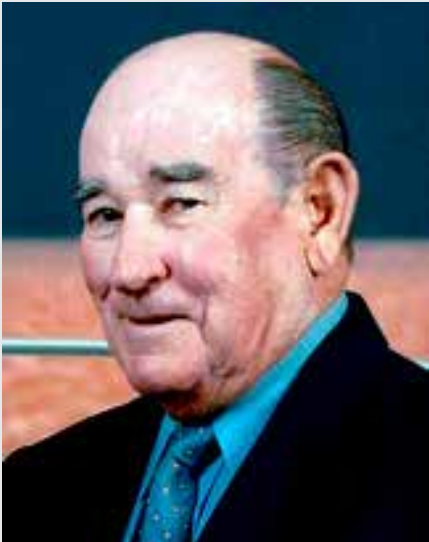
Longtime Cold Spring resident

Robert S. Galligan, 87, died Jan. 15, 2018, at his daughter's home in Cold Spring.

Robert was born Aug. 30, 1930, in a house on Parrott Street to Joseph and Margaret (MacLean) Galligan. He married Alberta "Chickie" Jesek, who died Sept 11, 2017. He was a U.S. Army veteran who served during the Korean War and later worked for 25 years as a guard at the Fishkill Correctional Facility (Matteawan).

Bob was a witness to the founding of the Cold Spring Boat Club on July 3, 1955, and was a charter and life member and commodore. He also was a founding member of the North Highlands Fire Co., serving as chief and fire commander.

Family and friends may call on Jan. 27 from 9:30 to 10 a.m. at Clinton Funeral Home, 21 Parrott St., in Cold Spring. A funeral service will be held at 10 a.m.



Memorial donations may be made to the North Highlands Fire Co., 504 Fishkill Road, Cold Spring, NY 10516.

Information provided by Clinton Funeral Home. A full obituary is posted at highlandscurrent.com

Other Recent Deaths

Philipstown

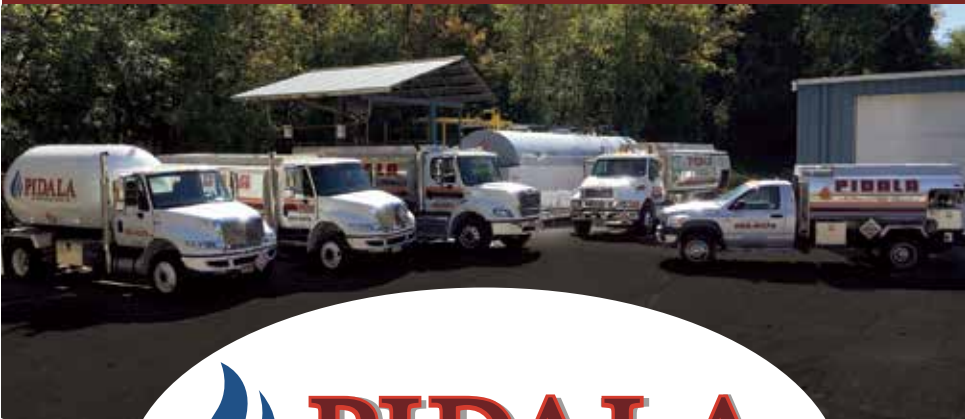
Deborah Bozsik, 68
Vito Chirico, 81
June Gilleo, 90
Elizabeth Hynes, 85
Sister Eileen Waldron, 86
Frances Walsh, 80

Beacon

Pat Balash, 92
Solveig Christiansen, 85
Brenda Dotterer, 74
Fred Jackson, 71
Charlotte Marmo, 88
Joe Pantojas, 34
Richard Russell Sr., 90
Maria Santana, 66
Otto Spaudling, 87
Edith VanBuren, 96

Obituaries, when available, are posted at highlandscurrent.com.

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Sports

Jummie Leaps Ahead

*With 2-inch improvements,
Akinwunmi leads
Beacon track*

By Leigh Alan Klein

On Sunday, Jan. 14, the four girls' high school indoor track teams from League 2D in Section 1 — Beacon, Poughkeepsie, Peekskill and Henry Hudson — descended on The Armory in New York City for the annual league championships.

They might not have bothered for the field events. Jummie Akinwunmi of Beacon, a senior, won three of the six and her sister Ennie Akinwunmi, a junior, claimed two. The sole exception was the pole vault, in which neither competed (it was won by Hendrick Hudson; Anna Manente of Beacon was second).

During her career as a Bulldog (she also plays volleyball), Jummie Akinwunmi has soared to great heights. She is ranked fifth in the state in the high jump with her personal and season best of 5 feet, 4 inches, which won her the league championship.

Her older brother encouraged Akinwunmi to pursue track and field, and she would compete with him to see who could win the most medals. She began the high jump in seventh grade and more recently added the long jump and triple jump. The high jump is her favorite, she says, although the triple jump has grown on her.

Asked about her preparation, Akinwunmi says, "I try to block everything out



Photos by Dawn Sela

before my jump. I focus on one thing at a time, such as keeping my hips up."

Akinwunmi is hoping she can reach 5 feet, 6 inches, before the season ends, which would mark the fourth year of a 2-inch improvement in her jump. "I would rather reach 5-6 and be fifth best in the state than be first at 5-4," she says. "I want to know that I am getting better!"

She has done well in the classroom, as well, and is on track to be the class valedictorian at graduation in June. She has been accepted at Yale University with more acceptances expected.

Balancing athletics and a challenging academic load takes discipline. Akinwun-



mi organizes her day in a planner, writing out her schedule in detail, including when to eat. She says her favorite subjects are

All-Akinwunmi Team

League 2D champs

High jump: Jummie (5-4)

Long jump: Jummie (16-7)

Triple jump: Jummie (35-2)

Shot put: Ennie (29-9¼)

Weight throw: Ennie (28-10¼)

math, calculus and geometry. She plans to attend medical school.

On meet days, she eats light, which she says makes her feel light for her jumps. She listens to Wale or Frank Ocean during her warmups. "I don't know if it's a good jump until I am above the bar," she says. "Sometimes I think I know, if I keep my hips up long enough."

Varsity Scoreboard

Boys' Basketball

Beacon 71, Lourdes 58
Jemond Galloway (26), Aaron Davis (14)

Girls' Basketball

Beacon 42, O'Neill 35
Haldane 51, Ketcham 47
Allison Chiera (15), Olivia McDermott (13)

Girls' Bowling

Beacon 7, John Jay 0
Selena Virtuoso (216 high, 635 total)

Boys' Bowling

John Jay 7, Beacon 0
Matt Maffei (213 high, 572 total)

Boys' Swimming

Peekskill 87, Beacon 82

Nine Students Advance in Free-Throw Contest

Nine Philipstown boys and girls will advance to the district tournament on Feb. 16 after winning the local Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship on Jan. 11 at the Capuchin Gym.

Twenty-five students participated in the competition, sponsored by Loretto Council No. 536.

Each shot 15 free throws. Among the 9-year-olds, Marisa Peters made five to take the girls' title and Bryce O'Halloran made eight to lead the boys. Among the 10-year olds, Morgan Murphy won with three and Brody Corless with four.

Camilla McDaniel won the 11-year-old girls' bracket with eight and Fionnoula O'Reilly advanced among the 12-year-old girls with seven. William Bradley won the 12-year-old boys' bracket with 13.

Marisa Scanga won the 13-year-old girls' bracket with seven and Dillon Kelly was best among 14-year-old boys with 11.



Eight of the winners of the Knights of Columbus free-throw contest on Jan. 11, from left: Bryce O'Halloran, William Bradley, Dillon Kelly, Marisa Scanga, Marisa Peters, Morgan Murphy, Camilla McDaniel and Fionnoula O'Reilly. Not pictured is Brody Corless.

Photo provided