

The HIGHLANDS Current

Beacon's
Bard
Page 16



FEBRUARY 7, 2020

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STORY HOUR POWER
— Angel Elektra drew a crowd at the Putnam Valley Library on Feb. 1 when the drag queen read books to a packed room of children and their parents as a lesson about inclusiveness and acceptance. A local priest took offense and organized a protest. Others showed up to voice support for the event. Elektra will read stories at Split Rock Books in Cold Spring on May 17.

Photos by Ross Corsair



From Three to Two

Beacon to retire one fire station, upgrade others

By Jeff Simms

Beacon will pull its firefighters from the 130-year-old Beacon Engine fire station on East Main Street this spring while launching a multi-year initiative to modernize its two remaining stations, Mayor Lee Kyriacou announced during the Monday (Feb. 3) City Council meeting.

The original portion of the Beacon Engine building was constructed in 1889 and cannot house modern fire apparatus, Kyriacou said. It also does not meet National Fire Protection Association safety standards and would be costly to upgrade.

The remaining stations — the Mase Hook and Ladder station at 425 Main St. and the Tompkins Fire Hose station on South Avenue — will be upgraded to meet building and accessibility standards, he said. Following the announcement, the council approved spending \$40,730 to hire Mitchell Associates Architects, an Albany County firm, to design the renovations.

“This was not an easy decision, although multiple [Beacon] City Councils have reached the same conclusion,” said Kyriacou.

The move to close Beacon Engine, which comes just a month into Kyriacou's tenure as mayor, seemingly ends a debate that dates to at least 2006, when the city and two planning firms began studying scenarios for consolidation.

In recent years, city leaders considered building a station at the Memorial Park dog run site or on the edge of the Sargent
(Continued on Page 9)

Cleaning Up Indian Point

Lawmakers raise doubts about proposed transfer

By Brian PJ Cronin

The Indian Point nuclear power plant in Buchanan is scheduled to begin its shutdown in April, after which the site will need to be cleaned up and its spent, radioactive rods secured.

Entergy, which owns the plant, doesn't want to do the decommissioning and so has asked the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the OK to transfer its license to a firm called Holtec International. The cleanup is expected to take

15 years.

The NRC has opened its public comment period on the request. Judging by the mood at a joint Jan. 30 meeting of the Indian Point Closure Task Force and the Community Unity Task Force, the agency can expect to hear an earful.

Holtec has come under scrutiny about its capacity to do the work, as well as its financial health. A presentation by a Holtec representative on Jan. 15 at the Buchanan Village Hall did little to quell those doubts.

“I came out more worried than when I went in,” said Dr. Richard Becker, a councilman for the Town of Cortlandt.

(Continued on Page 19)

Reporter's Notebook

From One Paperboy to Another

By Michael Turton

As a kid in Ontario, I was a bicycle-riding paperboy. Sixty years later I'm still at it, distributing 4,000 copies of *The Highlands Current* each Friday morning in Beacon, Cold Spring and Philipstown, rain or shine, although thankfully by car.

Often on Fridays I'd see a weathered black car zooming around with copies of *The New York Times* flying out the window. My reaction was always, “Man, that guy drives like a maniac!”

Late last year that black car disappeared. Its driver, Decatur Myers, died on Dec. 13, at age 72, of cancer. Lory Smith, who lives in Cold Spring, emailed *The Current* to ask if we knew that Decatur had passed. “He was a unique individual and worked extremely hard to get us all our various papers,” he wrote. “I considered him a friend.”

I soon realized how many people had known Decatur — some by name, others simply as their longtime newspaper delivery man, many from his infamous driving.

Although we never met, I felt a kinship, knowing that we must have shared the same grievances about heavy editions (today's 24-page paper is 16,000 pages heavier than a 20-pager) and bad weather. Wanting to know more about him, I called his son, Decatur Jr., who agreed to meet at
(Continued on Page 6)



DANCING ON THE LANDING — The Philipstown Depot Theatre on Feb. 1 hosted a performance led by Jamel Gaines, who lives in Garrison, and performers from his Brooklyn-based Creative Outlet Dance Theater. For more photos, see Page 10. Photo by Ross Corsair

5Q FIVE QUESTIONS: JOE ROBITAILLE

By Jeff Simms

Joe Robitaille purchased Homespun Foods in Beacon from its longtime owner, Jessica Reisman, late last year.

Was Beacon always on your radar?

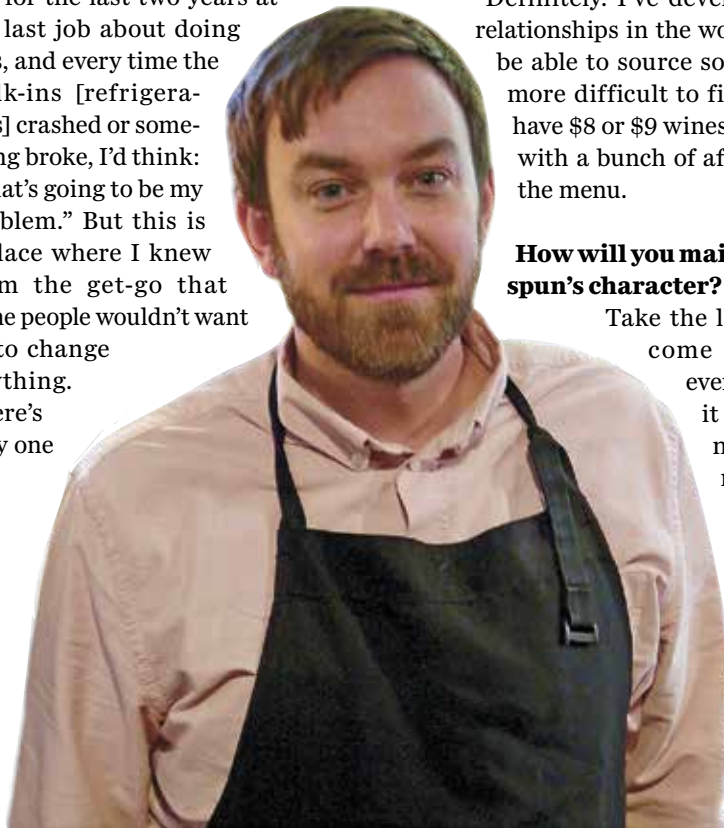
Very much so. My wife, Kate, and I came up here for the first time seven years ago, when our son was a year-and-a-half old. Kate went to Dia:Beacon and I went for a long bike ride from here to Saugerties. Then we came back a few months later and drove Route 9D between here and Garrison. There were a bunch of people out and about on Main Street in Beacon; I saw the record store — I love records — and it seemed like such a cool city.

Is your background in restaurants?

I worked for eight years in New York City restaurants, the last two as a chef sommelier, and before that I spent six years as head sommelier for il Buco, a phenomenal restaurant on Bond Street. I got into wine after I moved to the city from Buffalo to study poetry in graduate school and do an MFA at Brooklyn College. A friend whose couch I was crashing on worked at a wine store in the West Village, and I started working in the cellar there.

Do you feel pressure taking over an established, beloved cafe?

It's wonderful and tough. Small business is difficult in general. I'd been thinking for the last two years at my last job about doing this, and every time the walk-ins [refrigerators] crashed or something broke, I'd think: "That's going to be my problem." But this is a place where I knew from the get-go that some people wouldn't want us to change anything. There's only one



Jessica Reisman, and there's no way it can be the same, because she was one of a kind.

Will you add more wine to the menu?

Definitely. I've developed some great relationships in the world of wine, so I'll be able to source some that might be more difficult to find. But we'll also have \$8 or \$9 wines by the glass along with a bunch of affordable wines on the menu.

How will you maintain Homespun's character?

Take the long view. I could come in and change everything and make it mine, but that's not me. I feel no rush. I've thought about a Sunday night reading series for poets. Being in Beacon, I'm starting to feel that creative part of me resurface, which is really pleasant.

ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

What's your favorite Oscar-winning film, and how could the awards be improved?

“Moonlight [2017]. It needs more diversity in filmmakers — women and people of color.”



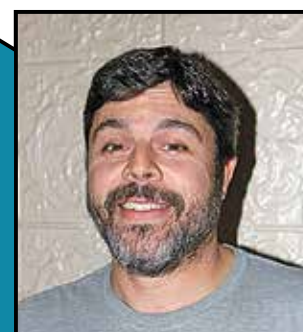
~ Robby Anderson, Beacon

“Moonstruck [1988]. Hold the awards on Saturday night for people who have to get up early Monday.”



~ Ali Verdicchio, Cold Spring

“Lawrence of Arabia [1963]. Add a Best Comedy category.”



~ David Marzollo, Cold Spring

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Sheriff Gets His Overtime Money

But Putnam legislators approve oversight rule

By Leonard Sparks

Two months after rejecting a request by Sheriff Robert Langley Jr. to transfer \$121,000 to cover road patrol overtime, the Putnam County Legislature approved a resolution on Tuesday (Feb. 4) requiring department heads to get approval before exceeding their overtime budgets.

Langley addressed the Legislature's Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations Committee on Jan. 23 before its members voted to forward the policy to the full Legislature.

The sheriff told committee members that he is juggling a reduced overtime budget and a road patrol hampered by unfilled positions and injuries. The budget approved for road patrol overtime fell from \$600,000 in 2018 to \$537,000 in 2019 and \$520,000 in 2020. Langley requested \$762,000 for 2020.

The department is down six deputies, Langley said, including one who was hit by a car in December while directing traffic in Mahopac and another who was slashed in January while responding to a domes-

tic disturbance in Putnam Valley, the day before the Rules Committee meeting.

"The Legislature has a responsibility to the taxpayers and part of that responsibility is to budget realistically," Langley told the committee, citing "uncontrolled situations that take place out in the streets of Putnam County."

Under the new policy, requests to exceed "non-mandatory" overtime must be provided in writing to the Legislature with "detailed, complete justification."

The Legislature also has asked Finance Commissioner William Carlin to provide monthly reports on overtime spending.

The Sheriff's Department is likely the only department to be affected by the change, said Legislator Neal Sullivan (R-Carmel), who chairs the Rules Committee.

"I don't think we really had another other department, exceed their budget without coming to us for a request," he said.

Langley, a first-term Democrat who defeated the long-time incumbent Republican, Don Smith, in 2017, on Dec. 3 faced a barrage of criticism from Republican legislators over a request to transfer \$121,000 from equipment and administrative budget accounts to cover road patrol overtime already paid to deputies.

The request, which drew accusations of poor

planning, was denied 7-1. Nancy Montgomery (D-Philipstown) cast the dissenting vote.

The rejection of Langley's request appeared to be a sudden change of approach for the Republican legislators, who for years routinely approved such transfers. In 2018, the Legislature gave the OK for Langley to move at least \$192,000, and in 2012 and 2014 it approved requests from Smith to move \$200,000 or more.

At their Dec. 18 meeting, legislators approved transferring \$49,439 from machine maintenance to road patrol overtime. The balance of Langley's \$121,000 request was taken care of through routine year-end budget amendments approved during the same meeting.

Legislator Carl Albano (R-Carmel), a member of the Rules Committee, said last month that sheriff's overtime should be "addressed at the budget process" and any overages would be subject to approval before the money is spent.

"When there're surprises, they should be discussed and come before us ahead of time," he said. "It would be irresponsible to say spend it and let us know later. It comes down to planning."

At the Rules Committee's January meeting, Montgomery warned of "unintended consequences" from the policy. She also criticized a process that she claims omitted formal input from department heads,



Sheriff Robert Langley Jr.

File photo by Ross Corsair

including inviting them to publicly address any anticipated impact from the policy.

Sullivan said he was "able to contact them directly," including while attending department head meetings. "If they had any problems, I would have heard about it," he said.

County Executive MaryEllen Odell has chastised Montgomery in the past when she attempted to interact with county departments, saying all such inquiries must be directed through her office.

Fishkill Pushes Ahead on Moratorium

Possible impacts on Continental Commons, Rolling Hills

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

The Fishkill Town Board on Wednesday (Feb. 5) took tentative steps toward a building moratorium to review the town's 10-year-old comprehensive plan and zoning laws.

Supervisor Ozzy Albra, who took office last month, proposed the creation of a citizens' committee to assist in the reviews and — as his fellow board members concurred — invited audience members and those later watching the meeting on TV or video to volunteer for it.

"I want a diverse group [politically], the left to the right and everybody in between," he said.

A moratorium could feasibly affect Continental Commons, a themed hotel-shopping complex planned for Route 9 on land that was part of the Fishkill Supply Depot during the Revolutionary War, and the Rolling Hills development on Route 9D, just north of Beacon.

The board plans to continue the discussion on Feb. 19. Along with Albra, it has two other newly seated members, Louise Daniele and Kenya Gadsden.

Albra suggested that the board might explore the use of special overlay districts to safeguard water resources, including the Fishkill aquifer, and historical preservation. He also recommended a closer look at Route 9, the state highway lined by

commercial strips, and expressed concerns about the former Texaco Research Center on 153 acres bisected by Fishkill Creek in Glenham, near the Beacon city limit.

Once the citizen committee and funding for comprehensive plan and zoning reviews are in place, a moratorium might only last four to six months, he said. "It's not going to be two years. I want to do it pretty quickly."

"If you have the right to build something, we're not going to stop that" if it doesn't raise questions, he said. "We encourage development, as long as it's smart and doesn't harm the environment."

Ori Brachfeld, the sole Republican on the board, cautioned that "we have to be careful about taking citizens' rights away." Brachfeld also said a moratorium "can't be a town-wide blanket," but must be for something specific.

But Brian Nugent, the town's new attorney, observed that many municipalities enact

moratoriums while evaluating comprehensive plan and zoning code changes.

According to Nugent, in a moratorium projects that have received only conditional approvals could probably be held up but a moratorium "can't just be a delaying tactic to stop development." Rather, he said, "the town needs to be doing something," such as evaluating code revisions. "There needs to be action."

On a related topic, Albra pointed to the "extraordinary opportunity" presented by such sites as the Texaco (now Chevron) property, which, he said, a company property manager has expressed interest in selling.

However, Albra cautioned, given its history as a textile and chemical factory dating to before the Civil War, "there's a lot of things being hidden underground." He said the town must ensure it does not end up being held liable if the property is sold and the new owners "hit something really bad" and can't deal with it.

How did you meet?



Tell us in 100 words how you met the love of your life and email us a photo of you together to editor@highlandscurrent.org.

We'll print a selection in our Feb. 14 issue.

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The HIGHLANDS Current

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Cold Spring, NY 10516-2819
291 Main St., Beacon NY 12508

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Institute for
Nonprofit News

THE HIGHLANDS CURRENT
(USPS #22270) / ISSN 2475-3785

February 7, 2020
Volume 9, Issue 6 (2475-3785)

is published weekly by Highlands Current Inc., 142 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516-2819. Periodicals Postage Paid at Cold Spring, NY, and at additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Highlands Current*, 142 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516-2819. Mail delivery \$30 per year. highlandscurrent.org/delivery delivery@highlandscurrent.org

Distribution audited by the Circulation Verification Council

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Tell us what you think

The *Current* welcomes letters to the editor on its coverage and local issues. Submissions are selected by the editor to provide a variety of opinions and voices, and all are subject to editing for accuracy, clarity and length. We ask that writers remain civil and avoid personal attacks. Letters may be emailed to editor@highlandscurrent.org or mailed to Editor, The Highlands Current, 142 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516. The writer's full name, village or city, and email or phone number must be included, but only the name and village or city will be published.

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Drag queen stories

I found the reaction to the Drag Queen Story Hour at the Putnam Valley Library on Feb. 1 to be unsurprising yet still quite laughable ("5 Questions: Angel Elektra," Jan. 31). Father Frank Samoylo of St. Columbanus Church in Cortlandt Manor had the audacity that only a Catholic priest could to accuse drag-queens, in a note to his congregation, of being "sexual perverts who expose themselves to children or have physical contact with them."

Father Samoylo goes on to question what kinds of parents would subject their children to such "abuse." The Drag Queen Story Hour took place in full view of parents and library staff. This is much more than can be said for the Catholic Church, a 2,000-year-old institution that has only recently even admitted that rampant sexual abuse of children has occurred on its watch, and which to this day continues to harbor and protect pedophiles in order to save face. If there are any parents who would send their young child into a room alone with a Catholic priest over a drag queen, they are fools.

Drag queens reading stories to children is fun. The queens are performers; kids like garish, sparkly things. Sex is not

a factor except to the extent that it's apparently always on the minds of those who so vehemently oppose anything LGBTQ+. The goal of the program is to teach children that gender can be fluid — that it's OK to be different and unique, that boys can play with dolls and girls can like to climb. Are we still debating these concepts in 2020? They were widely accepted in the 1970s and early 1980s, when *Free to Be, You and Me* included the song "William Wants a Doll" and companies marketed gender-neutral toys.

How have we slid so far backward that Putnam parent Facebook groups declare that Drag Queen Story Hour is about indoctrination and sexual deviance? Like it or not, dear Putnam, some of your children do not fit into gender or other norms, and Drag Queen Story Hour merely shows them that that's OK.

One drag queen who participated in the program recounted how a little girl asked her if she was a boy or a girl, and she replied, "Today, I'm a girl." The end. It is that simple.

Calm down Putnam, and try to remember that just because leaders like Father Samoylo and Donald Trump may wish it, the year is no longer 1945. If your children grow up to emulate a drag queen over men like those two, you should give eternal

thanks to the Goddesses of Drag.

Eileen McDermott, *Brewster*

The story hour at Putnam Valley Library was a lot of fun. I'm looking forward to more stories about the importance of love, acceptance, kindness and family with Angel Elektra!

Adam Babbitt, *via Facebook*

This is what happens when moral moorings are removed and situational ethics and relativism become the norm.

Ann Fanizzi, *via Facebook*

Beacon development

Now they want advice? ("Beacon to Form Citizens' Committee," Jan. 31). The Beacon City Council now wants to close the barn door? The horse is not coming back! Its love of the out-of-control developers who believe "parking is not a right" (or needed) for any building they build or are going to build is shameful.

Here's some advice: Call a city emergency on just the water issue. Stop building because we don't have enough water or infrastructure to support the endless building. Parking is a right, and needed.

I believe some on the City Council are a little too close to the developers and will carry their water for them, saying the contractors will sue the city. But mark my words, any council members using that as an excuse for not stopping the building are carrying the largest pail! It's a lawsuit Beacon can win to save its future. The City Council should listen to the people they represent, almost all of whom want it stopped. Go ahead and take a poll.

Dennis Moroney, *Beacon*

Continental Commons

The Continental Commons development on Route 9 threatens recognized, potential and unidentified archeological resources for which the Fishkill Supply Depot site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 ("Revolutionary War Battle Rages in Fishkill," Jan. 31).

The developer has not committed to precautions to protect these resources as required under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act. Further, there has been no commitment for an advanced examination of the development site using ground-penetrating radar to ensure that all remaining structural and associated artifacts are identified.

The most recent discoveries include a burial site with human remains and potential man-made structures. Earlier archeological reports have concluded that significant resources lie below grade, but the resources are summar-

(Continued on Page 5)



LETTERS AND COMMENTS



ARE YOU READY?

FEB. 14

Deadline to change party registration before primary votes

APRIL 3

Deadline for new voters to register for presidential primary

APRIL 8

Deadline to change your address for presidential primary

APRIL 18 TO 26

Early voting for presidential primary

APRIL 28

Presidential primary

MAY 29

Deadline for new voters to register for primaries for Congressional and state legislative seats

JUNE 3

Deadline to change your address for Congressional and state primaries

JUNE 13 TO 21

Early voting for Congressional and state primaries

JUNE 23

Congressional and state primaries

For information and forms, see the Putnam County Board of Elections (putnamboe.com) or the Dutchess County Board of Elections (dutchesselections.com).

Corrections

A story about a proposed development, Continental Commons, on Route 9 ("Revolutionary War Battle Rages in Fishkill," Jan. 31), stated that the planned Visitors' Center would be designed to evoke Boscobel in Garrison. In fact, its design is meant to resemble the Madam Brett Homestead in Beacon.

The same story identified Fishkill Town Board Member Louise Daniele as a Democrat. Although she received the most votes on the Democratic line of the November ballot (2,318 votes versus 200 for Independence and 187 for Working Families), she is registered as a member of the Independence Party.

In a story about Putnam County considering the creation of a Human Rights Commission (Jan. 31), we misspelled the surname of James Hyer, an administrative law judge with the Westchester Human Rights Commission.

(Continued from Page 4)

ily dismissed on "speculation." An advanced archeological examination proposed to a previous owner of the site was ignored by the Town of Fishkill Planning Board.

In addition, *The Current* story quoted me as asking, in a video: "Were you there when we reburied bones along the foundation that's exposed?" The tape is, to me, nearly indecipherable, but I believe *along* should be *and*, that is, "Were you there when we reburied bones and the foundation that's exposed?"

Martin Byster, *Fishkill*

I have lived in Fishkill for close to 30 years and I am a neighbor of Marty Byster, who, in my opinion, is one of the most honest, humble human beings I have ever met. His only goal, in all the time I have known him, is to learn and preserve the rich history of our country in this area. He is like a David to the Goliath who wants to bulldoze real history and create faux history to make himself and his company money.

Marty has spent so much of his own money, has been accused, ridiculed and outright lied about by the Goliath(s) whose real interests are financial and by no means preserving history. God bless men and women like Marty in groups like Friends of the Fishkill Supply Depot. They are not "anti-growth" but pro-our country and pro-history.

Jane Walker, *Fishkill*

Hate-group fliers

Thanks to your article ("More Hate-Group Signs in Beacon," Jan. 31), we were able to identify four hate-group stickers when out for a walk at Dennings Point. We recognized them as promoting the Neo-Nazi, white supremacist group described in the paper.

We took photos of the stickers and took them down. We also reported the incident to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which is keeping track of these events.

Thomas and Aimee LaBarr, *Beacon*

Galloway family

I want to say thank you to *The Current* and genealogy columnist Valerie LaRobardier for the fine article on my search for information about the Galloways of Philipstown ("Family Trails: Finding Thomas," Jan. 17).

I would also like to thank all the wonderful people I met on my visit to the area in October who assisted me in my quest. Everyone was truly gracious with their time, and their information has helped answer many of the mysteries surrounding my family's history. Anyone with info about the Galloway family of Philipstown is welcome to email me at glynnsn@hotmail.com.

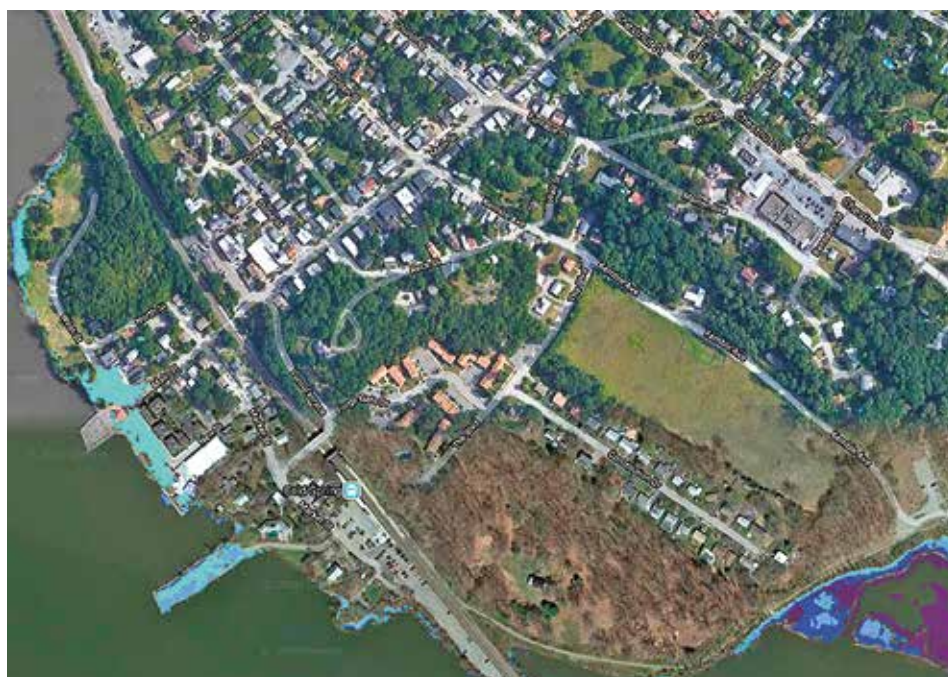
Glynn Galloway, *Las Vegas*

Speeding in Beacon

I share Kim Beller's concern about speeding on Verplanck Avenue (*Letters and Comments*, Jan. 31). The city also could make a fortune ticketing people who blow through the stop signs as they cut through to avoid Verplanck. Orchard Place and all its cross streets from North Avenue to North Elm might as well not even have stop signs — people just don't stop.

Joe Manglass, *Beacon*

(Continued on Page 5)



Cold Spring

Rising Waters

Using data from federal agencies including the National Weather Service, and Columbia University, FloodIQ.com allows visitors to type in their address to assess the risk of flooding in the next 15 years because of rising sea levels due to global warming.

Projections by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers show that tides in the Highlands could increase by as much as 1.8 inches within five years, 4 inches within 10 years and 6 inches within 15 years. Those levels don't account for rainfall, which can make flooding worse.

The maps shown here display the 15-year projections that presume climate change continues unabated. Turquoise represents 1 foot of flooding, while darker blue and purple are more than 1 foot.



Beacon



Garrison

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 6)

Looking ahead

Thank you for a chance to look back! ("Looking Back in Philipstown," Jan. 24). I love to look ahead and follow the trail to where some of these stories lead us, such as from Helena Livingston Forster, who died in 1970 at age 76 after serving in World War I and being active in the suffrage movement, to her grandson, my friend Nick Forster, bass player for the bluegrass band Hot Rize and founder of eTown, a nonprofit, nationally syndicated radio broadcast/podcast, multimedia and events production company in Boulder, Colorado.

Like his ancestors, Nick has created a hub for social, environmental and community events. I wish he'd bring it back home

to Philipstown.

Nancy Montgomery, *Philipstown*

These items from the past help put today in perspective. The more things change, the more they are the same thing, to borrow an observation from the French.

Sara Dulaney, *Cold Spring*

Roy Cohn film

In its otherwise engaging story about Ivy Meeropol's new documentary, "Bully. Coward. Victim." (Jan. 31), *The Current* repeats an often-made mistake, reporting that the filmmaker's grandparents, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were "executed as traitors in 1953 after being convicted of relaying details of the atomic bomb to the Soviets."

The Rosenbergs were not accused of

passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. Rather, they were charged and convicted of *conspiracy* to commit espionage, not actually committing it. A big difference.

And for that they were executed, their sons orphaned and Ivy Meeropol never got to know her grandparents.

Rob Okun, *Amherst, Massachusetts*

DMV restrictions

The Current reported on Dec. 20 that the Dutchess County DMV offices, including in Beacon, will no longer process license applications from out-of-county residents, such as those from Philipstown. Is this restriction still in place? Does it apply to renewals?

Steven Gazzola, *Philipstown*
County Clerk Brad Kendall said the restrictions were necessary because a

newly enacted state law that allows people to obtain driver's licenses regardless of immigration status "inundated" Dutchess DMV offices. It applies to anyone using Form MV-44, which is the application for new, revised, updated and replacement licenses, driver's permits and non-driver identification cards, although many transactions can be completed at dmv.ny.gov. "We continue to process registration transactions, insurance-related transactions, plate surrenders, enforcement transactions, title transactions, driver responsibility payments and civil penalties and other miscellaneous transactions for all customers," Kendall wrote in an email. "I will continue to analyze the workflow and look forward to the time when we can lift the restriction."

Decatur Myers (from Page 1)

his Peekskill home. Joining us were Decatur Jr.'s wife, Joanne, and, by phone, Decatur Sr.'s sister, Virginia, in Michigan, and his daughter, Sakura, in Yonkers.

It was a raucous conversation, with all five of us sometimes talking at once.

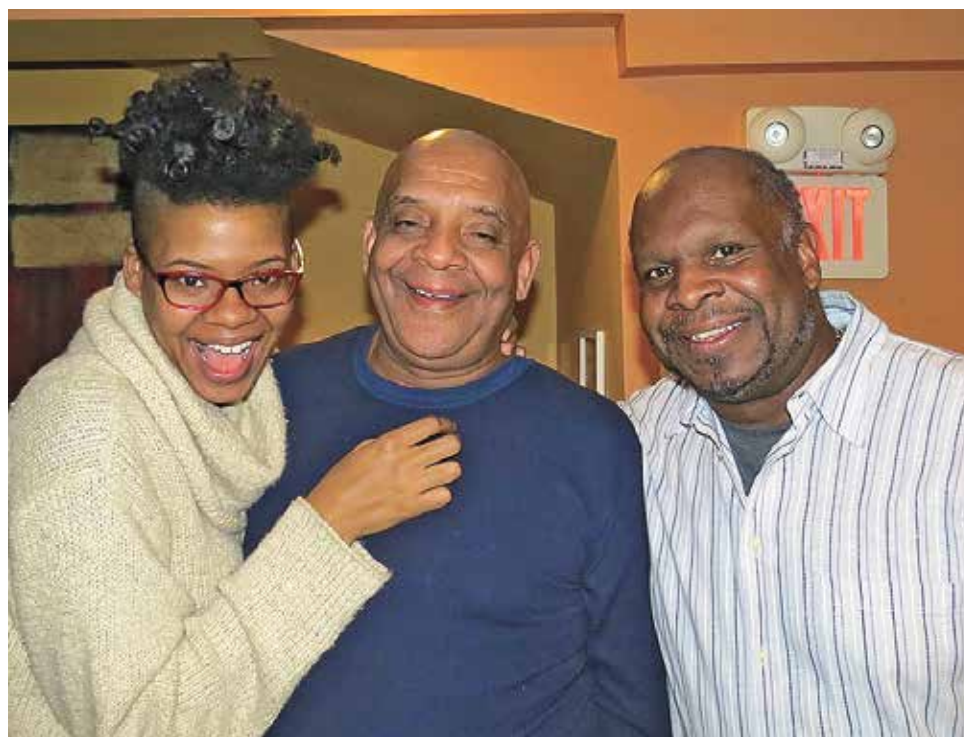
Born in West Virginia, Decatur spent much of his life in Yonkers, working in maintenance. Around 1991 he moved to Peekskill. Soon after, he "retired" to take up newspaper delivery, which continued nearly every day for the next 28 years.

Besides *The Times*, he delivered *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Korean Times*, *The Journal News*, *the New York Post*, *the New York Daily News*, *the Financial Times*, *Barron's* and *The Observer*.

His route took from midnight until 11 a.m. and included as many as 500 customers from Croton to Philipstown to Carmel.

When I sheepishly asked about Decatur's driving, I was greeted by thunderous laughter.

"He was the world's worst driver!" Joanne concurred. His son said his dad was known to fall asleep at the wheel. He confirmed the senior Decatur went through vehicles like Tiger Woods goes through golf balls. "He was especially hard on brakes and transmis-



Sakura Myers, Decatur Myers and Decatur Myers Jr. in 2014

Photo provided

sions," Decatur Jr. said.

His father survived one serious accident, he said, suffering two broken ankles that required surgery and a painful recovery. He also had shoulder surgery and a small stroke.

But he loved the 11-hour route, and

doctor's orders couldn't stop him. He'd even eat and sleep in his car. "His route was like a drug; he had to have it," Decatur Jr. said.

Decatur was married three times, to Shirley, Cecelia and June. "If nothing else, he was a ladies' man!" Joanne said with

a laugh. His first two marriages ended in divorce but the three wives were known to get together on occasion.

He loved family and family outings. He enjoyed watching baseball, football and golf, especially Tiger Woods. In his younger days he followed the Brooklyn Dodgers and was heartbroken when they moved to Los Angeles.

Decatur was generous. "He put others ahead of himself," his son said. "He'd give you his shirt even before he'd worn it."

His sister Virginia said he always gave her a special Christmas present. This past year it was a bubblegum pink linen jacket and scarf. "He said 'You gotta hook this up with some navy blue — it'll knock that pink out!'"

He brought his last gift to her early. He was losing weight; something was wrong. In September, Decatur had been diagnosed with stage four pancreatic cancer.

He worked his route into November. He lived his last days with Virginia, on her Michigan property, one of his favorite places.

In one of their last conversations, Decatur suggested a "black-and-white party," with live music and formal attire, to remember him. "I told him we'd do that," Virginia said, but it never happened.

Decatur's family plans to spread his ashes on Father's Day, on a mountaintop in Philipstown, another favorite spot.



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- Ask questions
- Share ideas

WORKSHOP DATES:

Wednesday, February 12	6:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 12	9:00 a.m.
Wednesday, March 18	6:00 p.m.

at the Garrison School Library

NEWS BRIEFS

Free Tax Prep

Open to low- to moderate-income families

The Hudson Valley CA\$H Coalition and AARP Foundation Tax-Aide are offering free federal and state tax-return preparation and filing for low- to moderate-income working families, individuals and seniors in Dutchess and Putnam counties.

Last year the organizations processed 5,129 returns in Dutchess and Putnam. Residents in the two counties received \$4.6 million in net refunds and tax credits and saved an estimated \$1.5 million in filing costs.

In the Highlands, volunteer tax aides are available for appointments at the Howland Public Library and the Southern Dutchess Community Action Agency, both in Beacon. To schedule, call 800-899-1479 between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

In addition, residents who earned less than \$69,000 in 2019 can file their federal and state tax returns free online by visiting tax.ny.gov and clicking on Free File.

Haldane Junior Nearly Aces SAT

In top 1 percent of 2.2 million test-takers

Douglas Donaghy, a junior at Haldane High School, scored 1550 of a possible 1600 points on the Scholastic Aptitude Test administered by the College Board for use with higher-education applications.



More than 2.2 million students take the SAT each year, according to the College Board. The score put Donaghy among the top 1 percent; only 7 percent of students score more than 1400 and only a few hundred students achieve a perfect score.

When asked for advice, Donaghy said in a statement: "Go with your gut. The test is way too long to just sit and stare at one question. Chances are if you thought one answer was right the first time, you're probably right."

"Also, if you're stuck on a question, pick an answer and mark that question. That

way, when you're done with that section and there's still time, you can go back and work on it. Other than that, just make sure you're well-rested on test day."

Haldane Foundation Awards Grants

Digital art lab, D.C. field trip among beneficiaries

The nonprofit Haldane School Foundation announced nearly \$47,000 in grants to fund 19 programs, trips and activities.

In addition to class trips to Washington, D.C., Boston and Frost Valley, the grants will fund an outdoor classroom and auditorium, a digital art lab, a sustainable schools program, Model UN, Poetry Out Loud and other trips and assemblies.

The foundation has raised more than \$1.1 million since its creation 20 years ago. Lisa Quartin, the grant committee's co-chair, said it welcomes proposals for funding from faculty, students, parents and community members for its spring grants. See haldane-schoolfoundation.org.

Beacon Firm Raises \$6 Million for Straws

Loliware expects demand to reach billions

Five years after the co-founders of Loliware pitched their edible cups on the ABC reality show *Shark Tank* and received a \$600,000 investment from Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, the Beacon firm has again wooed investors.

Loliware announced on Jan. 19 that it has raised \$6 million to increase production of its drinking straws made from seaweed. It said it expects demand for the biodegradable straws, introduced in 2019, to reach into the billions this year.

"Seaweed is a miracle replacement waiting for us," CEO Chelsea Briganti said in a statement. "All across our blue planet, there is an incredible collection of massive aquatic forests, in some cases dwarfing land-based resources."

Loliware also announced that Nishan Degnarain, an economist and founder of Breakthrough Ocean Ventures, has joined the company's board.

Garrison Institute Has New CEO

Former chair for International Rescue Committee

The Garrison Institute has named Jonathan Wiesner as its chief executive officer, succeeding Marc Weiss, who will become managing director.



Wiesner spent 35 years as an executive and entrepreneur in the apparel industry and 25 years on the board of the International Rescue Committee, which responds to global humanitarian crises.

The Garrison Institute "is exceptionally appealing to me because of its smart and unique approaches addressing both of my priorities: helping refugees and aid workers, and protecting our planet," Wiesner said in a statement.

Wiesner also chairs the board of the New York Region of the Trust for Public Land and is a past chair of the Westchester Land Trust.

Governor Proposes Bridge Changes

Says Hudson Valley authority should merge with state agency

Gov. Andrew Cuomo last month proposed that the New York Bridge Authority, which owns six Hudson Valley bridges, including Bear Mountain, Newburgh-Beacon and Walkway Over the Hudson, should be absorbed by the New York State Thruway Authority.

The New York Bridge Authority maintains the five vehicular bridges with \$60 million in annual proceeds from tolls. Cuomo says a consolidation would reduce costs.

If the proposal went through, the Thruway Authority board would add an eighth member to represent the Hudson Valley.

The five-member Bridge Authority board in December approved gradually raising the \$1.25 EZPass and \$1.50 cash toll on its bridges over the next three years until they reach \$1.65 and \$2.15. A public hearing is scheduled for March 9 at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel.

Jonathan Jacobson, whose district in the state Assembly includes Beacon, said in a statement that he opposed any merger, calling the Thruway Authority "notoriously troubled" while the Bridge Authority is "highly regarded for its efficiencies."

Veterans Sought for Honor Flights

Scheduled for May 2 and 30

Hudson Valley Honor Flight is seeking veterans for two day-long trips in May to visit war memorials in Washington, D.C.

The May 2 flight will leave from Stewart International Airport and the May 30 flight from Westchester County Airport. The veterans will travel in D.C. on chartered buses.

Any World War II, Korean, Vietnam or Cold War veteran who has not yet taken an Honor Flight is eligible, along with veterans who served between World War II and the Korean War. World War II and terminally ill veterans are given priority. See hvhonorflight.com/veterans.

Dutchess Re-appoints Poet Laureate

Raphael Kosek will serve another term

Raphael Kosek, appointed last year as the Dutchess County poet laureate, will serve another one-year term.

County Executive Marc Molinaro re-appointed the Hopewell Junction resident, who will continue organizing readings and events, beginning with Molinaro's 2020 State of the County address on Feb. 20 in Hyde Park.

Nominations for the 2021 poet laureate will be accepted by Arts Mid-Hudson beginning this summer.

NOTICE

Haldane Transportation Requests Due by April 1st

Haldane Central School District is accepting applications for Private/Parochial School Transportation for the 2020/2021 school year. Completed applications should be mailed to:

Haldane Central School District
15 Craigsides Drive
Cold Spring, NY 10516

ATTN: Transportation Dept. and received not later than **April 1st, 2020**

Contact Elisa Travis at the Haldane Transportation Department at **845-265-9254** ext. 171 if you have any questions.

Applications can be found on the haldaneschool.org website

NOTICE

Philipstown Planning Board - Public Hearing Feb. 20

The Philipstown Planning Board for the Town of Philipstown, New York will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 20, 2020 starting at 7:30 p.m. at the Philipstown Recreation Department, 107 Glenclyffe, Garrison, New York to hear the following appeal.

David Marzollo, 189 Lane Gate Road, Cold Spring, New York TM#49-3-17-4. The applicant is seeking minor site plan approval for the construction of a new 1800 square foot, 4-bedroom single family residence to be served by private septic and well. The property is approximately 5 acres located in a "RC" (Rural Conservation) zoning district. Lane Gate Road lies along a "scenic corridor" showing on the Town's scenic overlay mapping. A site visit was performed January 12.

At said hearing all persons will have the right to be heard. Copies of the application, plat map, and other related materials may be seen in the Office of the Planning Board at the Philipstown Town Hall.

Dated at Philipstown, New York, January 16, 2020

Holistic Healing in Beacon — For Free

Organizational meeting to be held next week

By Jeff Simms

A group of Highlands residents who want to make massage, acupuncture, homeopathy, energy work and other techniques available to people who

can't consistently afford them will meet next week to plan three "community holistic healing days."

The Hudson Valley Healing Project is planning four-hour events at the Beacon Recreation Center for March 12, April 14 and May 14. A team of practitioners will donate their time; medical advisors will be available, as well. Participants will be asked to pay what they can, but no one will be turned away.

An organizational meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 13, also at the Recreation Center, 23 W. Center St., where attendees will have a chance to ask questions and to meet the practitioners.

Mariel Sol Nathan, a former Beacon resident now living in Newburgh, is one of the organizers. She says she is convinced of the efficacy of alternative healing but that many people "need to have a budget to take advantage of these modalities consistently. That can end up being something some people cannot do, and that felt unfair."

She began assembling a team of volunteers and practitioners last year using Holistic Health Community, an Ulster County nonprofit, as a model. "It was immensely helpful not to have to reinvent the wheel," she says. Meeting with the staff at HHC "started to shift my thinking from having just one event to creating an ongoing project."

Fareground, the nonprofit that maintains Beacon's Tiny Food Pantries, has stepped in as a sponsor, and, if all goes well, the Healing Project hopes to eventually offer a free, hot meal before or after the sessions.

NEWS BRIEFS



JUDGE HONORED — Dutchess County Court Judge Peter Forman, at left, was thanked on Jan. 20 by the Southern Dutchess Coalition for his service to the Beacon community at the 42nd annual Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration. Forman also received recognition from U.S. Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney and Beacon Mayor Lee Kyriacou. The judge is shown with Bonnie Champion, who helped organize the event, and the Rev. Ronald Perry Sr. of Springfield Baptist Church.

Photo provided

Putnam Names Medical Services Director

Paramedic will lead agency

The Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services has hired a new director for its emergency medical services.

Casey Quake, a paramedic with EMStar Ambulance in Putnam County, is a faculty member for the National Association of EMS Educators.

"Over the years, he has held progressively responsible positions in EMS as a clinician, educator and administrator," said Ken Clair, commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Services, in a statement. "He is also known nationally as an educator, and will bring that presence to our office."

Quake will be responsible for the oversight of county EMS agencies and EMS education programs. He succeeds Bob Cuomo, who retired. Quake's service dog, Teddy, will be joining him at the bureau.

Man Arrested on Stalking Charges

Traveled from New Hampshire to Putnam

The Putnam County Sheriff's Office said it arrested a New Hampshire man on Jan. 18 after he allegedly stalked a woman he knew through an online gaming app.

Rattana V. Phimmavongsa was taken into custody at about 5:30 p.m. following a call from a Southeast woman who reported a trespasser. She told police that she and the man play a game called Ark Survival but that she had stopped interacting with him about two years ago. She said that two days earlier she discovered he had hacked into her gaming account and that she feared for her safety.

The suspect was located at a nearby motel and transported to the Putnam County jail. After being arraigned on a misdemeanor stalking charge, he was released until his next court date.

Newburgh Receives \$10,000 Arts Grant

City to inventory cultural assets

The National Endowment for the Arts has awarded Newburgh a \$10,000 grant to support an inventory of the city's arts and cultural assets.

Newburgh's newly re-launched Arts and Cultural Commission will lead the project, which will gather data and create an inventory of the broad range of arts and cultural activities and destinations in the city. It will then develop recommendations to strengthen the arts.

For more information, email newburghny-arts@gmail.com. A project website is expected to launch this month.

ARTISTS **INVITE**

FEBRUARY 7th to MARCH 1st, 2020

Grey Zeien / Gary Jacketti
Grace Kennedy / Lael Morgan
Tim D'Acquisto / Simeon Lagodich
Pat Hickman / Nancy Koenigsberg
Ada Pilar Cruz / Katrina Bello
Nancy Steinson / Insun Kim
Maria Pia Marrella / Robert Braczyk

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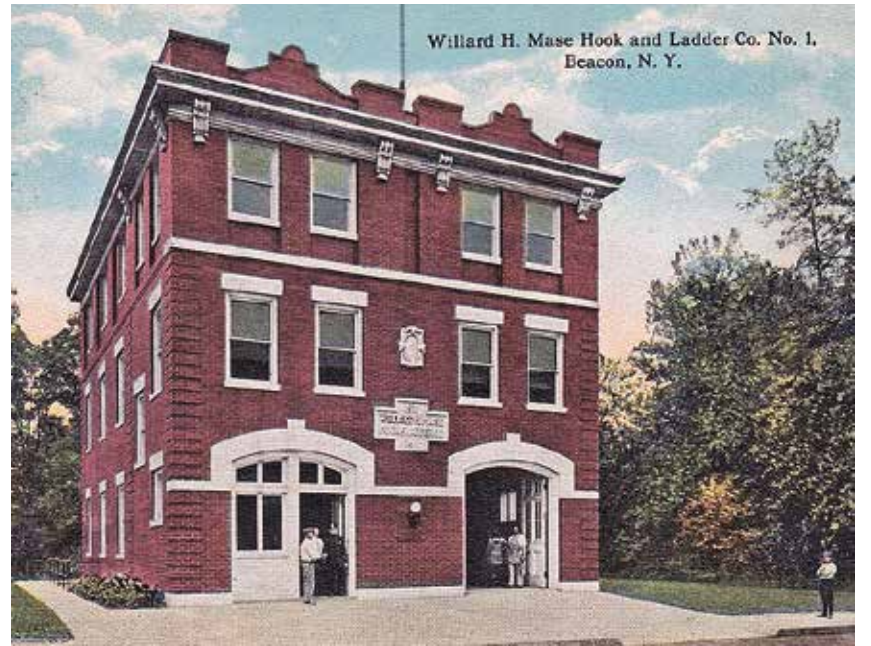
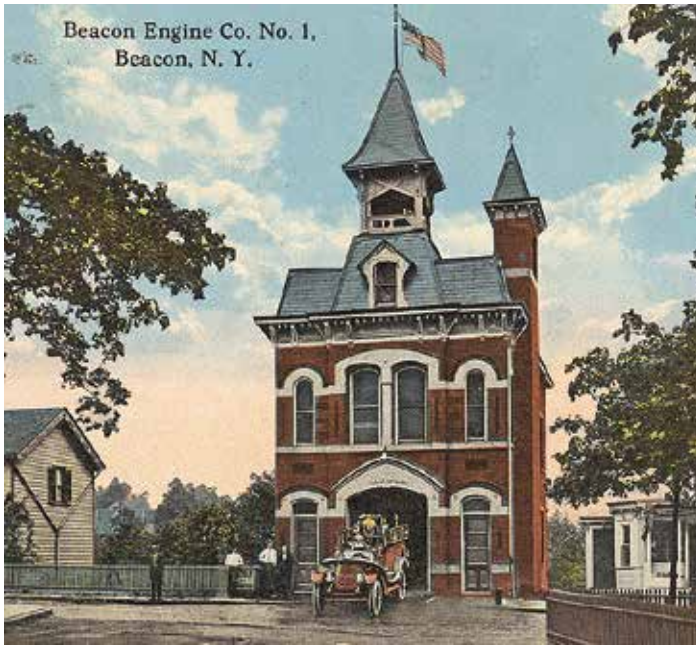
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The Beacon Engine Co. No. 1, Lewis Tompkins Hose Co. (now Hudson Beach Glass) and Willard Mase Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 in the early 20th century

Beacon Historical Society (3)

Firehouse *(from Page 1)*

Elementary School campus. Last year the council agreed that closing one of the stations was the best option, with Beacon Engine the likely candidate.

In December, however, the council approved a new lease for the use of the facility, two-thirds of which is owned by the private Beacon Engine Fire Co. The other third is an addition owned by the city.

But Kyriacou said Monday that he was providing 90 days' notice to the fire company that the city is exercising its right to leave the lease agreement, with the switchover to the other stations expected by the end of April.

"We will find ways to preserve that history and to honor the proud legacy of our first responders — while also modernizing the city's fire protection facilities for the 21st century," he said. "And while the city does not own the larger portion of the Beacon Engine building, we will collaborate with the private volunteer company in determining an appropriate future for the entire building."

On Wednesday, the mayor said he expects the upgrades to Mase Hook and Ladder and Tompkins Fire Hose to cost more than \$1 million, which would be a fraction of the cost of building a new station. The city may utilize

bond funding to pay for the projects, he said.

Consolidation will allow the city to have two firefighters on duty at both stations at all times, Fire Chief Gary Van Voorhis said. The city's full-time, or "career," firefighters currently train at Tompkins Hose during the day. During emergency calls, one career firefighter is typically on a truck.

With two active stations, "instead of one person on a fire truck, there will be two, and there's so much more production that can be done with two firefighters," Van

Voorhis said. "There's not many fire departments around the country that operate an apparatus with only one firefighter."

Beacon received a federal grant last year to add three firefighters, bringing its total to 16. One hire was made in December — Christopher Baum, who had been laid off by the Newburgh Fire Department six days earlier — and two others will begin after completing an 11-week training course.

Lou Amoroso, a retired Beacon firefighter and former City Council member,

took the council to task following Kyriacou's announcement Monday night.

"I would like the people in the 4th Ward and part of the 3rd Ward to know you're not going to have good service," he said. "Trust me. After all these years we're shortcutting ourselves, and why? I don't know."

In response, Van Voorhis noted on Wednesday that Mase Hook and Ladder is only four-tenths of a mile from the Beacon Engine station. "Response times will be adding seconds, not minutes," he said.



A closet at the Beacon Engine station holds marching caps once worn by its members in parades.

File photo by J. Simms



Fire Chief Gary Van Voorhis

File photo by Michael Turton

Seed-Sowing at Stonecrop Gardens



Please join us for our first workshop of the season...

Part 1 - Saturday, March 7, 9 am-1 pm (Snow date March 8)
Learn the basic principles of seed propagation and seed-sowing techniques to sow a variety of annuals.

Part 2 - Saturday, April 11, 9 am-1 pm
Learn how to prick out the germinated seedlings into larger rounds to take home and grow in your garden.

Space is limited. Participants must attend both workshops.
Registration and pre-payment required. \$80/\$60 for members.

Register online at www.stonecrop.org or call (845) 265-2000

Valentine's Day at Riverview Restaurant



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RIVERDINING.COM

45 FAIR STREET, COLD SPRING, NY 10516

Moving from Brooklyn

Jamel Gaines of Garrison (top right), the founder, artistic director and choreographer for the Creative Outlet Dance Theater in Brooklyn, brought some of the troupe's dancers to Garrison's Landing on Feb. 1 for an afternoon workshop and evening performance as part of the Philipstown Depot Theatre's new Flipside series.

Photos by Ross Corsair



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SUNDAY, MARCH 8

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SATURDAY, MARCH 21

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Sat. Feb. 8 – 1:30 pm

HELENA HERNMARCK, TAPESTRY ARTIST

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Tues. Feb. 11 – 7 pm

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JAM SESSION**

String players, or just listeners, welcome

Fri. Feb. 14 – 7 pm

HUDSON VALLEY POETS

Featured: Bob Phelps + open mic

Sun. Feb. 16 – 4 pm

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Fri. Feb. 28, Howland Playhouse: Romanian Cultural Institute
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The Calendar



Maria Lago in her studio

Beacon artist fills and manages gallery

By Alison Rooney

How many people can say they grew up near Paleolithic caves?

Maria Lago can. A native of the Asturias region of Spain, she says the caves there continue to influence her as an artist many years and an ocean away.

“They say the first seven years of your life give you the knowledge of the rest of your life,” says Lago, who owns a studio and gallery on Main Street in Beacon. “One of the earliest memories I have is walking through the caves, as young as age 3. They gave me such amazing power. Even though I forget the details, somehow they return later, taking

me back to that period of time when I was so sensitive and digesting everything.”

Lago’s studio — named Maria Lago Studio 502, for its owner and street address — has been open for eight years following a move from Mamaroneck. “My family wanted to turn a new page,” she says. “We had always loved the Hudson Valley and were looking for a more artistic place to live.”

Finding her current work space aided the cause. Lago divided a single large room into

a back studio and a front gallery. The studio is crammed with the tools of her trade: overflowing tables of paint tubes, and sculpture fragments, and tacked-up paintings vying for space on the walls. The white-walled gallery displays Lago’s large color paintings.

A door, often ajar, separates them. The setup allows Lago to work in her studio, then shift into gallery-owner mode at the sound of the front door.

(Continued on Page 14)



Two works in Lago's studio: At left is a forest made from burlap and bark collected at Little Stony Point. At right is a woman caring for a garden in the Amazon.



Paintings from Lago's Ideographic series, along with sculptures and smaller works

Photos by A. Rooney

THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)
For a complete listing of events, see highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

COMMUNITY

SAT 8 Hudson River EagleFest GARRISON

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Boscobel
1601 Route 9D | 914-762-2912 x110
boscobel.org

Celebrate the bald eagle migration to the Hudson Valley and watch them feed on fish in the river from viewing sites set up by the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society. *Cost: pay what you wish*

SAT 8 Winter on the Farm WAPPINGERS FALLS

11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Stony Kill Farm
79 Farmstead Lane | 845-831-3800
stonykill.org

Get a tour of the barn and take a horse-drawn sleigh ride. There will also be an open greenhouse, crafts, a campfire, snowshoe rentals and a pancake brunch.

SAT 8 Community Valentines BEACON

Noon – 4 p.m. NY Textile Lab
146 Main St. | newyorktextilelab.com

Create Valentine's Day cards using thickened, natural cochineal dye, handmade paper and textile scraps. Drop in anytime. Children welcome. Online registration required. *Cost: \$30 (\$27 members) for 5 valentines*

THURS 13 Hudson Valley Healing Project BEACON

6 p.m. Beacon Recreation Center
23 W. Center St.
facebook.com/hvhealingproject

Ask questions and meet the practitioners for a series of community holistic healing days being planned for March, April and May.

SAT 15 Celebrate Washington's Birthday NEWBURGH

Noon – 4 p.m. Washington's Headquarters | 84 Liberty St.
845-562-1195 | parks.ny.gov

Re-enactors will portray the general and his troops. Create a craft, learn about the Revolutionary War as it was fought in the Hudson Valley and hear performances of period songs. Also SUN 16, MON 17. *Free*

SECOND SATURDAY

SAT 8 Black History Month Exhibit BEACON

1:30 – 3:30 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org

Beacon resident Barbara McCaskill organized this exhibit of artwork, political posters and historic ephemera. Through Feb. 27.

SAT 8 Helena Hernmarck BEACON

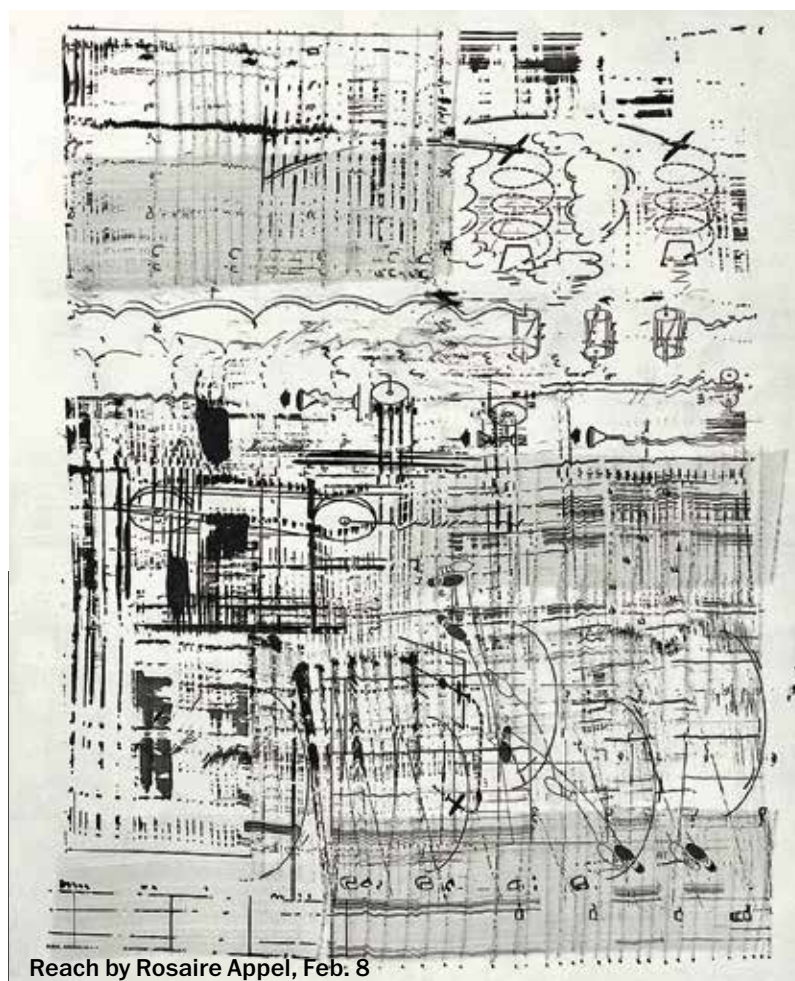
1:30 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-431-4988
hudsonvalleyyearntrail.com

The tapestry artist and weaver will discuss her decades-long career using wool, sourced from farmers in her native Sweden, that absorbs rather than reflects light to tell stories. *Cost: \$15 (\$20 door)*

SAT 8 Barry Le Va BEACON

2 p.m. Dia:Beacon
3 Beekman St. | 845-440-0100
diaart.org

As part of the DiaTalks Series, curator James Meyer will interview the sculpture artist about his work and installation at the museum.



Reach by Rosaire Appel, Feb. 8

Cost: \$15 (\$12 students and seniors; free for children under 12, members and Beacon residents)

SAT 8 Reach BEACON

5 – 8 p.m. No. 3 Reading Room
469 Main St. | photobookworks.com

Rosaire Appel's drawings and artist books will be on exhibit.

SAT 8 3 Artists: Faulds/Flaitz/ Morgan BEACON

6 – 9 p.m. RiverWinds Gallery
172 Main St. | 845-838-2880
riverwindsgallery.com

This group show includes works by artists who use "basic elements to express unique visions," says gallery director Mary Ann Glass — photography (Nancy Faulds), encaustic (Carol Flaitz) and glass tiles (Heidrun Morgan). Through March 8.

SAT 8 Time BEACON

6 – 9 p.m. BAU Gallery
506 Main St. | 845-440-7584
baugallery.org

This juried exhibit was curated by Elizabeth Haskin on the theme of how one experiences time.

Work by BAU members will be on exhibit in the Beacon Room.

SAT 8 [In]Action Figures 8 BEACON

6 – 9 p.m. Clutter Gallery
163 Main St. | 212-255-2505
shop.cluttermagazine.com/gallery

The gallery's eighth installment of this annual show will feature the art of the action figure, whose heyday was the 1970s and 1980s. Through March 6.

TALKS & TOURS

SAT 8 Estate Planning Seminar GARRISON

10:30 a.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

Attorney Michael Martin will cover the options available to protect your assets.

SAT 8 Whispers from the Castle Keep BEACON

2 p.m. Beacon Historical Society
17 South Ave. | 845-831-0514
beaconhistorical.org

Neil Caplan of the Bannerman Castle Trust will share stories about life on the island and the Civil

War and the Spanish American War artifacts that were found there and are on display. *Free*

SUN 9 The War Before the War HYDE PARK

2 p.m. FDR Library (Wallace Center)
4079 Albany Post Road | 845-486-7770
fdrlibrary.org/events-calendar

Andrew Delbanco will read from his book, *The War Before the War: Fugitive Slaves and the Struggle for America's Soul from the Revolution to the Civil War*, in this event organized by groups that include the Jewish Federation of Dutchess County and the Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project. Online registration required. *Free*

SUN 9 Survival by Degrees GARRISON

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

Members of the Philipstown Garden Club and the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society will discuss Audubon's recent report on birds, which shows 389 species on the brink of extinction. The talk will include how to create habitat and food for birds in your yard. *Free*

TUES 11 Preserving and Sharing Family Memories GARRISON

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

Learn about library resources and tools that can help you digitize your slides, videotapes and documents.

WED 12 The Queen's Fortune GARRISON

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

Allison Pataki of Garrison will read from and discuss her latest novel, which is set at the time of the French Revolution and follows Napoleon Bonaparte's lover, Desiree Clary, and his confidant-turned-rival, Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte. Free childcare will be provided.

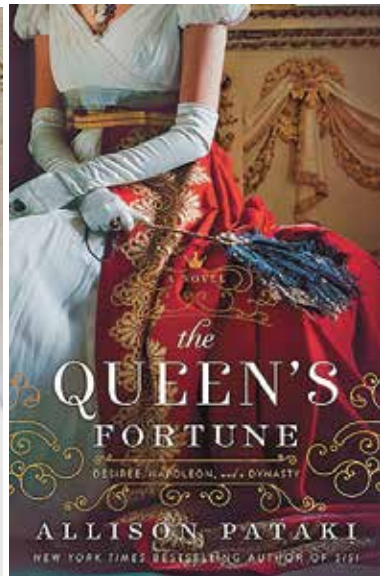
SAT 15 Weather BEACON

7 p.m. Binnacle Books | 321 Main St.
845-838-6191 | binnaclebooks.com

Jenny Offill will read from her new novel and join in a discussion with author Lynn Steger Strong. See Page 15.



Allison Pataki, Feb. 12



SUN 16**Audubon Field Trip****BEACON**8:30 a.m. Dennings Point
199 Dennings Ave.

Meet in the parking lot at the end of Denning Avenue for a morning of bird watching. Register by emailing trip leader Jim Van Gelder at info@orangecountynyaudubon.org.

KIDS & FAMILY**SAT 8****Middle School Night****GARRISON**7 – 10 p.m. Philipstown Recreation Center
107 Glenclaffe Drive | 845-424-4618
philipstownrecreation.com

The rec center will organize sports such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, table tennis and billiards, as well as cupcake-decorating contest and karaoke, for Philipstown residents in grades 6 to 8. *Cost: \$5*

SUN 9**Valentine's Day Craft Party****COLD SPRING**1 – 2:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar

All ages are welcome to make unique gifts for someone special. Register online. There will also be a letter-writing party for the Be a Friend project, which makes cards for children who have been bullied.

WED 12**Battle of the Books Info Meeting****COLD SPRING**3:30 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org/calendar

Learn more about the books and expectations for either the middle school or high school teams. Register even if you can't attend but would like to compete.

FRI 14**After Hours
Pizza & Paint****COLD SPRING**6 – 8 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

Tania Dirks will lead this event for middle school students. *Free*



Beacon Rising Choir, Feb. 8

SAT 15**Love Your Library
Day Party****GARRISON**1 – 3 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

Celebrate the library and bring games and puzzles you want to trade.

SUN 16**When Presidents Were
Kids****GARRISON**2 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

In this President's Day celebration, storyteller Jonathan Kruk will perform *Brawling, Brash, Bashful & Bad Boy: Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt and More*.

MUSIC**SAT 8****Beacon Rising Choir****BEACON**1 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

This community choir, which emerged from a singing circle and the Resistance Choir in 2017, will perform songs of inspiration, peace and protest. The concert benefits Compass Arts Creativity Project, the Beacon Community Kitchen, Newburgh LGBTQ Center, Beacon Prison Rides and the Love Quest Foundation. *Cost: \$15 (\$20 door, ages 12 and under free with adult)*

SAT 8**Daniel Kelly and David
Rothenberg****COLD SPRING**7 p.m. Cold Spring Coffeehouse
92 Main St. | 845-591-2073

The first performance of a monthly Hudson Line series will feature the Cold Spring composers and improvisers, with Kelly on keyboards and Rothenberg on clarinet and producing nature sounds. *Free*

SAT 8**9 Horses****BEACON**8 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-431-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org

The trio — mandolinist Joe Brent, violinist Sara Caswell and bassist Andrew Ryan — will celebrate the release of its most recent album, *Blood From a Stone*. *Cost: \$20 (\$25 door)*

SUN 9**Prognosis****BEACON**7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com

This Pink Floyd tribute band's multimedia show uses lighting and video to create a memorable experience and includes music from *The Wall* and *Dark Side of the Moon*. *Cost: \$20 (\$25 door)*

MON 10**David Torn and
Dean Sharp****BEACON**8:30 p.m. Quinn's
330 Main St. | 845-202-7447
facebook.com/quinnbeacon

The guitarist and percussionist will perform as part of an ongoing jazz series. *Cost: \$10 donation*

SUN 16**Zoltán Fejérvári****BEACON**4 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-765-3012
howlandmusic.org

The Howland Chamber Music Circle will continue its piano festival with a program that includes works by Beethoven, Haydn, Bartók and Janáček. *Cost: \$30 (\$10 students)*

VISUAL ART**SUN 9****Erotic or Not? Sex in Art****PEEKSKILL**3 p.m. Hudson Valley MOCA
1701 E. Main St. | 914-788-0100
hudsonvalleymoca.org

In this lecture, which is part of the Art History with a Twist series, artist and art historian Marcy B. Freedman will discuss sexual themes through history. *Cost: \$20 (\$10 members)*

SAT 15**Winter Weekend****NEW WINDSOR**11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Storm King Art Center
1 Museum Road | 845-534-3115
stormking.org

Enjoy the outdoor sculpture park in a wintry landscape. Also SUN 16. *Cost: \$18 (\$15 seniors, \$8 ages 5 to 18 and students, free under age 4 and members)*

STAGE & SCREEN**SAT 8****Matilda, The Musical****BEACON**1 & 7 p.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road | 845-850-2722
beaconperformingartscenter.com

Based on the Roald Dahl children's novel, this musical follows a precocious young girl with psychokinetic powers who takes on the evil headmistress of her school. Also SUN 9. *Cost: \$12 (\$5 students)*

SAT 8**Met in HD:
Porgy and Bess****POUGHKEEPSIE**1 p.m. Bardavon | 35 Market St.
845-473-2072 | bardavon.org

The high-definition simulcast of the Gershwin's masterpiece stars bass-baritone Eric Owens and soprano Angel Blue in the title roles from the Metropolitan Opera House. *Cost: \$21 to \$28*

SAT 8**Tournées French
Film Festival****POUGHKEEPSIE**6:30 p.m. Vassar College (Taylor Hall)
124 Raymond Ave. | vassar.edu

This month-long festival of six films continues with *The Big Bad Fox and Other Tales* (2018), followed by *The Wild Boys* (2017) on THURS 13. See website for the full schedule. *Free*

SUN 9**Academy Awards
Viewing Party****BEACON**7 p.m. Story Screen Beacon
445 Main St. | storyscreenbeacon.com

Watch the Oscars with champagne, photos on a red carpet, trivia rounds and live commentary. *Cost: \$15*

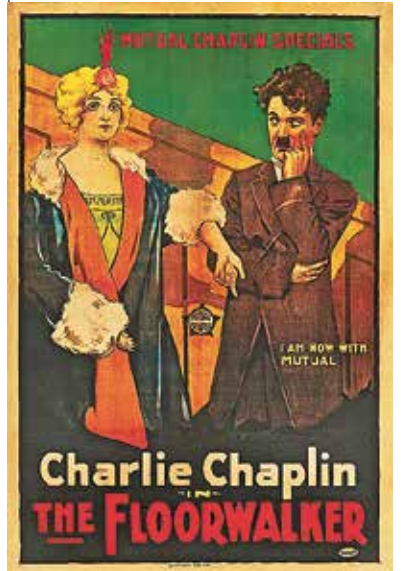
THURS 13**Bridesmaids****GARRISON**6 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org

Celebrate "Galentine's Day" with

wine, chocolates and the comic genius of Kristen Wiig and Maya Rudolph as best friends whose relationship is tested by a wedding in this R-rated comedy from 2011.

SAT 15**Three Chaplin Shorts****COLD SPRING**7 p.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org

The library, as part of its Silent Film Series, will screen Charlie Chaplin's "The Floorwalker" (1916), "Easy Street" (1917) and "The Adventurer" (1917), with musical accompaniment by Cary Brown. *Free*

**SAT 15****Sinbad****PEEKSKILL**8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039
paramounthudsonvalley.com

The comedian and actor — ranked by Comedy Central as one of the top 100 comics and known for his many specials — returns to the Paramount. *Cost: \$47.50 to \$67.50*

CIVIC**MON 10****School Board****BEACON**7 p.m. Beacon High School
101 Matteawan Road | 845-838-6900
beaconk12.org**MON 10****City Council****BEACON**7 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza
845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org**TUES 11****Board of Trustees****COLD SPRING**7:30 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St.
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov**WED 12****School Board****GARRISON**7 p.m. Garrison School | 1100 Route 9D
845-424-3689 | gufs.org**WED 12****Village Board****NELSONVILLE**7 p.m. Village Hall | 258 Main St.
845-265-2500 | nelsonvilleny.gov

Dean Sharp, Feb. 10

A painting from Lago's *Exodus* series

Maria Lago's gallery is located at 502 Main St. in Beacon.

Photos by A. Rooney

Spain to Main (from Page 11)

"In the beginning, I wasn't sure I wanted the public in," she says. "I was private, but it's turned out to be good. The best thing about having the gallery is hearing people's comments. Nobody sees the same thing. It opens whatever it is in your mind — what you want to see, need to see."

For the past 20 years, most of Lago's paintings have been parts of series. The themes generally come to her before she paints, although sometimes it happens spontaneously while she paints.

"When I start, I know it's not enough," she says. "It's like writing one poem, needing more."

She began one series, *Exodus*, eight years ago, as a "personal thing, thinking of the exodus of my life. This is different from the stories we see on the news every day. I didn't need to escape Spain. I left because I wanted to, but you still miss your roots. I started with small figures and a huge landscape, and at that time my thoughts were that the landscape would be here forever, but not the people. Now that has changed; it could be reversed."

Because she uses multiple paint layers, and makes large works — "the material is heavy, so I can't do small paintings," she explains — Lago's paintings take a long time to dry, so she usually works on more than one at a

time. Most series consist of 10 to 20 paintings. "When I'm done I know I'm never going to come back to that," she says.

Lago's personal exodus occurred because of an American — her husband, whom she met in Madrid. "He traveled for a year through Europe. We met, and I've been here for 35 years," she recalls.

At the time, Lago was a fine arts student at university, taking classes in printmaking, sculpture, drawing and painting. "It was very intense, which I loved," she says. "I started taking special classes in art at around 12, but in high school I wasn't exposed to anything. For me, university was a chance to explore everything. It's great to do different things, because when I'm stuck in a painting, I turn to sculpting or etching. I also mix materials. Painting is more crazy, more physical, but I must keep working."

Arriving in the U.S. at age 23, Lago fell in love with New York City. "Coming from Madrid, there was a lot of life there, but here! The galleries in Soho, the graffiti, so many foreigners made me so comfortable. I started meeting people from around the world. I've never found

that anywhere else.

"I have two kinds of people who buy my work," she says. "The first happens more often and is random. It's usually just one person who comes in, looks at one painting, asks how much it is, then says 'I want it.'"

"The others are people who come back three or four times. They tell me they don't have the money, then buy a smaller work. A year later, they come back and buy bigger. The thing is, I'm not a salesperson, but it's not important because people love to talk to the artist."

As one of the few longtime gallery owners remaining in Beacon, Lago has been through ups and downs.

"The first three years here were great," she recalls. "People were looking for art. Then the city grew, but the galleries started to close because they couldn't afford the rent. In the last three years it's started coming around again, but still, people come in, usually from the city. They've come up for the day to Dia and ask me where all the other galleries are. They tell me they expected more. What can I say?"

The Maria Lago Studio is located at 502 Main St. in Beacon. It's typically open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, but it's best to call ahead (914-844-8739). The studio is usually closed for parts of July and August, when Lago travels to Spain. See marialago.com.



A table in Maria Lago's studio

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A Chat with Jenny Offill

Bestselling novelist returns to Highlands

By Alison Rooney

Jenny Offill, who read from her second novel, *Dept. of Speculation*, in Cold Spring in 2017, will return to the Highlands on Saturday, Feb. 15, to read from her third, *Weather*, which received a glowing review from *The New York Times* last week and inspired a long profile of the author that will appear this weekend in *The New York Times Magazine*.

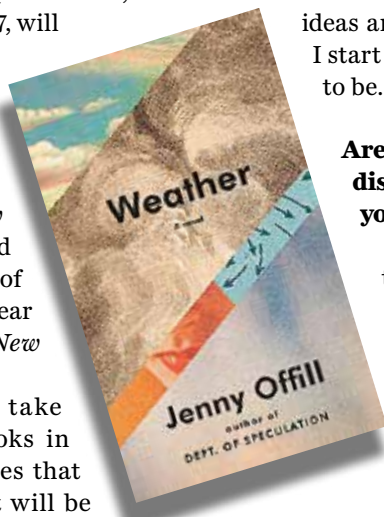
The reading will take place at Binnacle Books in Beacon, which promises that “wine and literary wit will be served,” along with a conversation between Offill and Lynn Steger Strong, a novelist who lives in Cold Spring and has her own new book coming this summer.

Offill responded by email on Feb. 4 to questions posed by *The Current*.

Dept. of Speculation and *Weather* consist of anecdotal passages which

roll along, accumulating more dimension as the book progresses. Is this how you compose the books, or are they pinned to a structure you map out?

I’m not much of a mapper-outer — more of a magpie who gathers lots of little objects that seem shiny to me, then builds a nest around them. For a long time, I collect ideas and images; at a certain point I start to see what the book is going to be.



Are you surprised how so many disparate people identify with your take on the world?

It is astonishing and, frankly, thrilling to have people who I might not run across in my day-to-day reading my novels. One of my favorite things about readings is getting to talk to other bookish people.

Do people tend to assume that your protagonists are autobiographical?

Sometimes they do. Both share emotional autobiographical details with me.

In *Weather*, you reference the 2016 presidential election. How did that moment influence the book?

The novel splits in half in a way, before and

after the election. Then, in a short section near the end, it jumps a bit forward, into the future. I hope if the book was set four years later it would reflect a radically different world. Deep-seated change is needed.



Jenny Offill

You also have written children’s books. Does your writing process change?

Well, I’m a lot faster with the children’s books because they are very short. But in both cases I’m trying to compress as much as possible into a small space.

***Weather* pivots between what people spout as factual, particularly in relation to “New Age-isms,” and the hard science one might encounter at a library such as the one where your protagonist works. Are these beliefs that different?**

Religion and science can seem like opposites but what they have in common is a desire to transcend the known world. I’m not drawn to New Agey stuff, but I also don’t know much about it.

It’s easy to envision illustrated characters spouting your takes on life. Have you ever thought of working with an illustrator on an adult book?

That sounds fun, but I’m a lousy collaborator because I’m so slow as a writer.

***Dept. of Speculation* and *Weather* are ingrained in Brooklyn neighborhoods. Now you live upstate. Do you have a Jenny Offill upstate observation?**

We moved up here eight years ago. One of the things I have noticed up here is that when a guy visits another guy’s house for the first time, they go outside and look at the woodpile. This was not a Brooklyn thing.

Your novels are deceptive. They appear, at first, to be fast reads, with little morsels. But I’ve found them akin to eating a rich slice of chocolate cake. The fork has to be rested regularly, but is always picked up again. Is this intentional?

I tend to like to read short books because I can come closest to reading them in one sitting or day, which is the way I loved to read when I was a child and would check out stacks of books from the library. But I try to make my novels have a density of experience and emotion so that a different layer might be revealed if you came back to one on a different day.

Your protagonists don’t spare themselves from sardonic critiquing. In fact, they frequently direct piercing

A Few Offill-isms, from *Weather*

**

He’s a copywriter now for some low-rent greeting card company. It’s those cards that are very long and very specific about all the things the recipient has done for the sender.

*To A Step Aunt Who Was Always There...
To A Hospitalized Second Cousin*

Sometimes they rhyme but mostly they are free verse. Henry gets paid by the word so the more flowery the better. Even so he already got into an argument with his boss about the difference between sentiment and sentimentality.

**

It is better in the Quiet Car. In the Quiet Car everyone is calm. Ben presses his leg against mine. We read side by side as Eli builds many-roomed mansions. A person across the aisle who is not observing the rules of the Quiet Car is asked to leave by the conductor. “Right now?” he says. “While the train is moving?”

**

One thing that’s becoming clear to me on my travels with Sylvia. People are really sick of being lectured to about the glaciers. “Listen, I’ve heard all about that,” says this red-faced man. “But what’s going to happen to the American weather?”

**

Sylvia always wants to go see things, some nearby, some far away. The requirement is that they are disappearing faster than expected. The going, going, gone trips I call them. She picks me up early then we drive and drive until we reach the designated place. Then we walk around and look at things and I try to feel what she does. Once I took Eli. We stood and looked at some kind of meadowland. He waited patiently until we could go back to the car.

“Children cannot abide a vista,” Sylvia said.

assessments at themselves. Are you a tough re-drafter?

I am a bit extreme as an editor of my own work. Lots of things become less interesting to me as time goes by.

You once noted, after the publication of *Dept. of Speculation*, that you “heard from quite a few unhappy young men who work in bookshops.” Whom do you expect to hear from most with *Weather*?

No idea. That’s the beauty and mystery of it. When you write a novel, it’s a bit like putting a message in a bottle and throwing it to sea. I never know what shore it will wash up on.

“It is astonishing and, frankly, thrilling to have people who I might not run across in my day-to-day reading my novels.”

~Jenny Offill

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7 pm Rob Daniels - No Music Cover
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SATURDAY, FEB. 8
1 pm Beacon Rising Community Concert
7 pm The Costellos - No Music Cover

SATURDAY, FEB. 8
8:30 pm Seamus Egan Project (of Solas)

SUNDAY, FEB. 9
7 pm Prognosis -
The American Pink Floyd Show
Peter Gabriel Genesis Experience

THURSDAY, FEB. 13
7 pm Film Night - No Cover

FRIDAY, FEB. 14
7 pm Annie Mash Duo - No Music Cover
8:30 pm Centricorum
Maeve Gilchrist

SATURDAY, FEB. 15
6 pm Christopher Brown - No Music Cover
8:30 pm Mary Fahl
former lead singer of October Project

SUNDAY, FEB. 16
11:30 am The Edukated Fleas - No Music Cover
4:30 pm CJ Chenier &
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Local Bestsellers

Based on combined hardcover and paperback sales reported for January by Binnacle Books, 321 Main St., in Beacon, and Split Rock Books, 97 Main St., in Cold Spring.



	Position	last month	TITLE	AUTHOR
ADULT	1	1	<i>No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference</i>	Greta Thunberg
	2	-	<i>The Eating Instinct</i>	Virginia Sole-Smith
	2	4	<i>How to Do Nothing</i>	Jenny Odell
	3	-	<i>Austerlitz</i>	W.G. Sebald
	3	-	<i>Anti-Diet</i>	Christy Harrison
	3	-	<i>On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous</i>	Ocean Vuong
CHILDREN	1	1	<i>Dog Man: Fetch 22</i>	Dav Pilkey
	2	-	<i>Karen's Witch</i>	Ann Martin
	3	-	<i>New Kid</i>	Jerry Craft
	4	-	<i>Diana: Princess of the Amazons</i>	Shannon & Dean Hale



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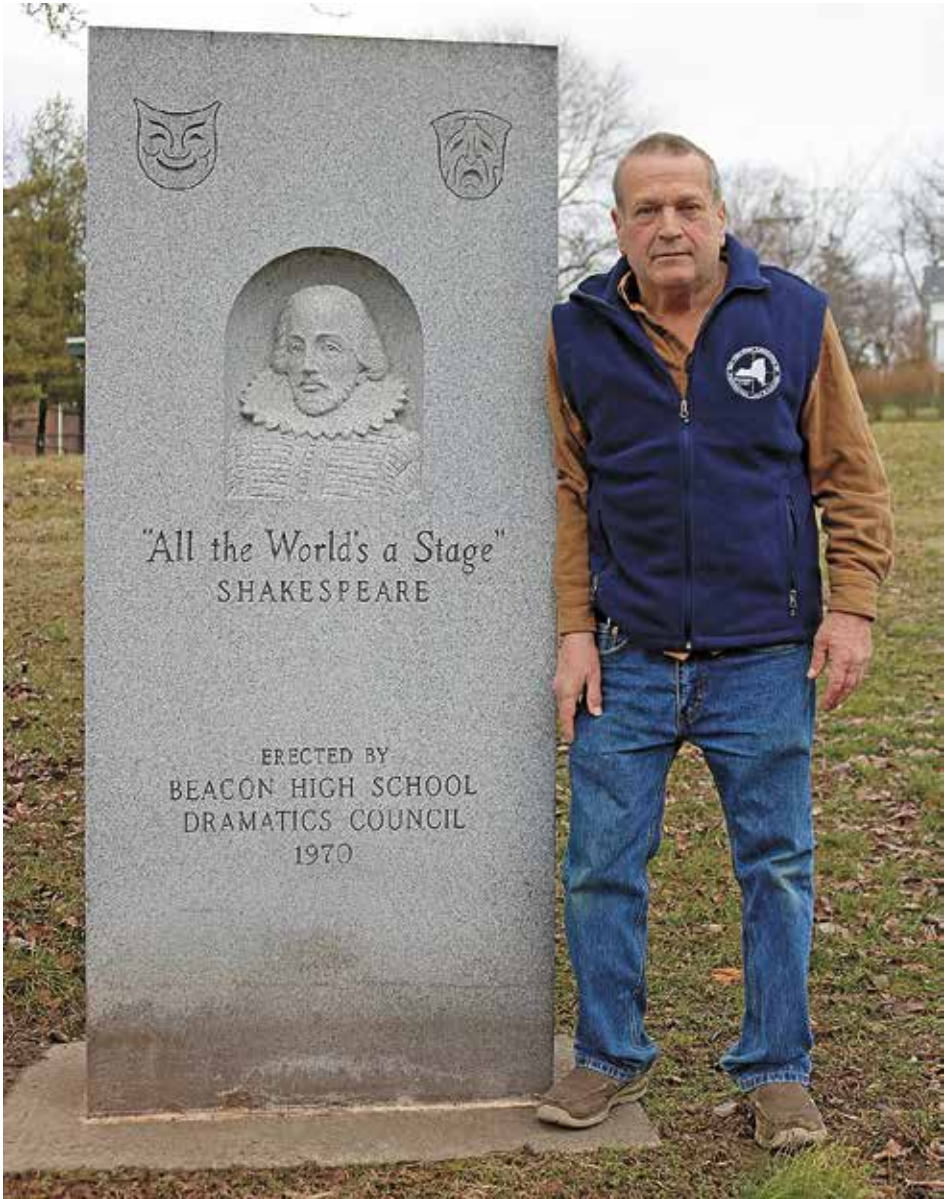
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Gary La Tour at the Shakespeare Monument in Beacon

Photo by M. Turton

All the City's a Stage

The story behind Beacon's Shakespeare monument

By Michael Turton

For the past 50 years, William Shakespeare's unyielding gaze has been fixed squarely on City Hall in Beacon — the old and the new.

The bard's countenance and his iconic quote from *As You Like It* — "All the world's a stage" — are part of a monument erected by the Beacon High School Drama Council in 1970.

Gary La Tour, a former member of the council who still lives in Beacon, knows the meaning behind the granite monolith. "We all want to leave our mark," he says.

In part, La Tour was referring to himself and his fellow high school actors of five decades ago, but he was also paying tribute to John Laing, who taught English at Beacon High School from 1955 to 1987 while mentoring the drama council and drama club and producing and directing two plays each year.

In the *Poughkeepsie Journal's* coverage of the 1970 dedication, Laing decried the small number of monuments in Beacon, adding, "Ours is not elaborate, but is very sincere."



The young actor Gary La Tour in 1970

Courtesy George Conrad

La Tour said Laing, who died in 1993, saw the Shakespeare monument as a message to the community. "He was trying to bring an appreciation of culture to Beacon," he says, recalling the day it was unveiled — but in a different location.

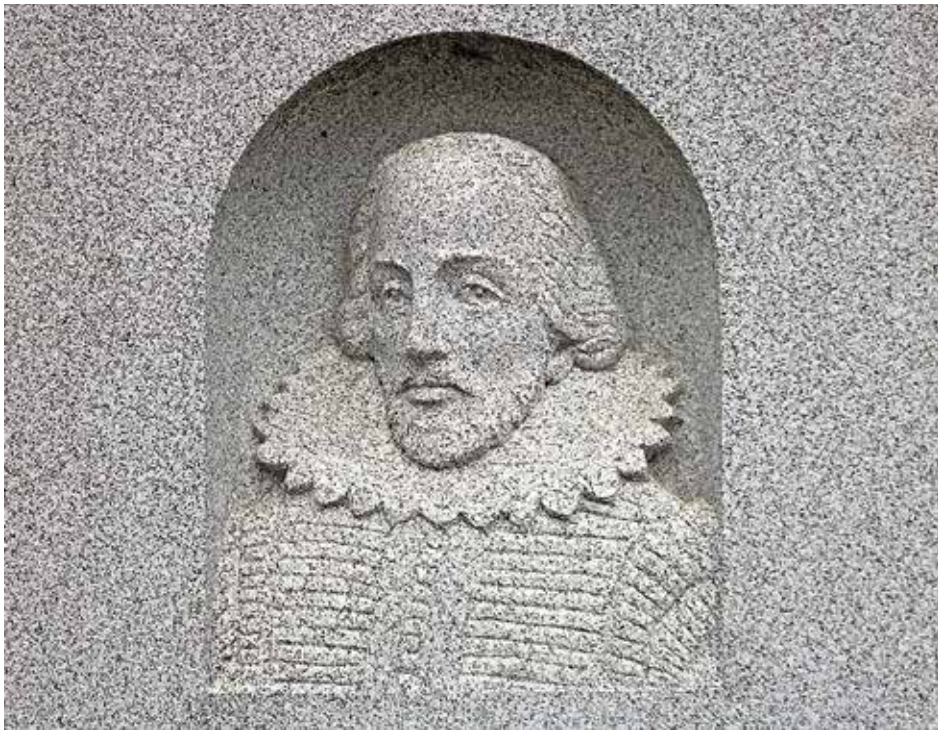
The monolith, which La Tour estimates cost \$2,000 (about \$13,000 today), was initially installed at 427 Main St., then the site of City Hall.

Peggy Wood, who received Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations for best supporting actress in 1966 for her role as Mother Abbess in *The Sound of Music*, assisted Mayor Robert Hill with the ceremony. (In 1953, Wood had also received an Emmy nomination for best actress for her role in *Mama*, a popular TV series that aired from 1949 to 1957.)

At Laing's request, Wood served as the drama club patroness from 1965 until her death in 1978. She supported its productions and lent her name to annual acting awards.

"It was a big deal when she showed up to present the Peggy Wood Drama Awards,"

(Continued on Page 17)



The monument includes an engraving of Shakespeare and one of his most famous lines



The former site of Beacon City Hall

Photos by M. Turton

(continued from Page 16)

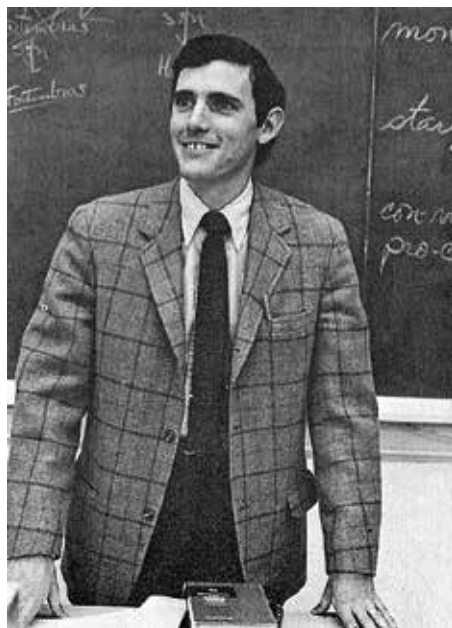
La Tour recalls. "I won one for my performance in *Personal Appearance* in 1969." He still has the trophy.

La Tour also has fond memories of the first time he acted in a play directed by Laing, who he says "brought the creative spirit out of people." That was when he was in the seventh grade and Laing needed a younger student for a part in *I Remember Mama*. La Tour laughs as he recalls his "big line": "Damn, damn, damn it to hell!"

Glenn Casale, the brother of former Mayor Randy Casale and another Beacon High drama club alumnus, credits Laing for his career as a stage and television director. "John Laing changed my life by giving me my love for the theater," he says.

In 1997, Beacon sold the property at 427 Main and moved City Hall to a newly constructed building at 1 Municipal Plaza. However, no one thought to move the bard. About a year later, La Tour says he realized the slab had been left behind.

"I had to persistently lobby the City Council and then-Mayor Clara Lou Gould to reclaim the monument and install it at



John Laing, from the 1970 Beacon High School yearbook
Courtesy George Conrad

the new City Hall," La Tour says.

On Aug. 25, 1999, Mayor Gould was pictured in *The Hudson Valley Black Press* welcoming the Shakespeare monument to its rightful home.

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featuring Adam Wade of *The Moth* (storytelling)

3/21 *Blind Visionaries* (photography)
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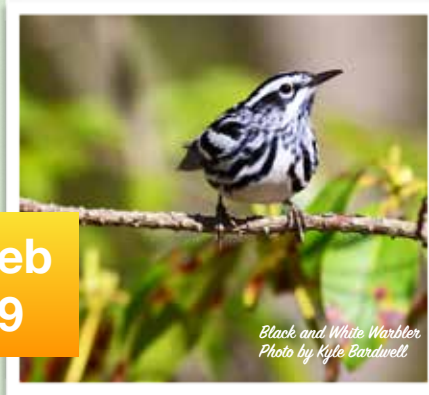


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Feb
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Black and White Warbler
Photo by Kyle Bardwell

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Kyle Bardwell - is a published author and recognized photographer. This part of the workshop is interactive using computers. A few laptops are available at the library, or you can bring your own, or just come & listen. We will learn how to identify birds in our zip code that are at a risk, advocate for birds, & design garden habitats that are for the birds and use native plants.



If you love birds and gardening, you have to attend this workshop!

For more information contact Karen Ertl 845-424-3343



Roots and Shoots

Eat Your Yard

Ideas for edible landscaping

By Pamela Doan

Generally speaking, gardening is treated as two distinct groups of expertise. There are the vegetable growers who can feed their families fresh food year-round or the flower specialists who dive into their own landscaping projects. There are levels of experience and expertise on both spectrums, but I'd argue that it's possible, even necessary, to do both.

As more research demonstrates the positive impacts our yards can have as places for bird, insect and wildlife habitat, I've been envisioning intersections of vegetables, herbs and perennial flowers for everyone's betterment. Less lawn equals less mowing and more available habitat and food for all.

As an experiment, I chose Hudson Valley Seed from the seed catalogs piled on my desk. I appreciate the company for its open-pollinated seeds, growing trials done in similar conditions to my own, and commitment to biodiversity of the seed bank.

I wanted to see if I could create a mixed planting of edible, bird-friendly and polli-

nator-friendly plants with a vibrant color palette spread out over spring, summer, and fall. My intention is to mix the plants in a flowerbed design, not in rows like a vegetable garden.

Here is a list of plants I'd love to see together in a sunny area that can all be found at Hudson Valley Seed.

Sow in April

Check catalog for details.

Magnolia blossom snap pea — This pink blossomed vining pea can hit 8 feet and has notably sweet peas. I appreciate how its form adds some wildness to a planting.

Wild bergamot — While you'll have to wait until next season for flowers, it will be worth it. The leaves can be used as tea or as an herb to flavor food, and the foliage will stand out. Sow indoors and then transplant it after the frost date. This is a favorite of pollinators.

Chives — These check all the boxes for me: edible, perennial, ornamental and pollinator-friendly. The purple blooms have a pom-pom look.

Mint — I love both the blooms and making tea or adding it to a summer salad. Be cautious, though. It spreads quickly.

Sow in May

Check catalog for details.

Scarlet emperor runner beans — These can grow quickly into an 8 foot tall mound covered first in bright red flowers and then large bean pods that can be eaten dried or fresh.

Purple peacock broccoli — The gray-green-purple hues and lace-edged leaves, which can be eaten like kale, add contrast to yellows, reds and greens.

Martian jewels sweet corn — In order to produce ears, corn stalks need to be able to cross-pollinate, so you'd need at least four adjacent to each other. Use as many or as few as you like. The strands of silk and



Add mint for both flavor and flowers and watch the monarchs appear.

Photo by P. Doan

purple ears on tall stalks can rise above and blend with herbs and other plants, contrary to a typical field of rows.

Bronze fennel — Think of it like a grass in landscape. This one grows up to 24 inches and has feathery leaves and a rich color. Use it in soups, roasts and salads.

Hopi red dye amaranth — This heat-tolerant green can be used in salads all summer long. Set it next to the corn or beans, and then add a pop of white with boneset.

Boneset — This medicinal herb may not be needed by your household to heal a broken bone but it's a lovely perennial otherwise. It needs cold stratification, so it will require a few extra steps before planting.

Mammoth Long Island dill — This flowering dill can grow up to 3 feet tall and be used for cooking all year round. I can attest to its popularity with butterflies. I've planted it in mixed containers with annual flowering plants.

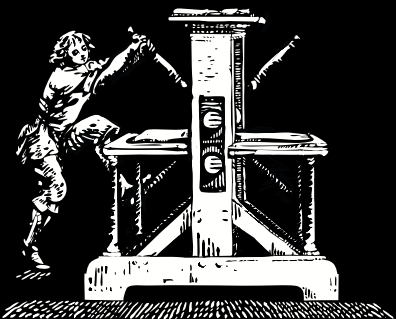
Glorious gleam nasturtium — These low-growing multi-hued edible flowers can be used in salads. I would plant them around the edges of the taller plants for pops of color rather than clustering them.

Flashback calendula mix — These bright and many-colored blooms are cold-hardy and can add vibrancy even in fall. Keep sowing them a few weeks apart all summer.

Consider this list a starting point or guide for your own mixed bed. In a future column, I'll share ideas for mixing in berry- and nut-producing shrubs and trees into an edible landscape.

Pamela Doan, a garden coach with One Nature, has grown ferns in Seattle, corn on a Brooklyn rooftop and is now trying to cultivate shitake mushrooms on logs. Email her at rootsandshoots@highlandscurrent.org.

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Indian Point *(from Page 1)*

Becker said that a slide in the presentation that detailed Holtec's rapid international expansion seemed intended to show the company's financial strength but had the opposite effect.

"In my experience, businesses get into trouble two ways: One, when they don't have enough business, and two, when they have too much business," he said.

Becker was also not assured when the representative said he did not know anything about the expansion of the Algonquin Pipeline near Indian Point, as well as how that would affect decommissioning.

One of the plant's two reactors is scheduled to be shut down at the end of April, with the remaining reactor scheduled to be taken offline in 2021. If the license transfer is approved by the NRC, Holtec would be awarded the plant's \$2.1 billion decommissioning fund.

At the Jan. 15 meeting, the Holtec representative said the company would be responsible for any budget overruns. If the fund ran low, he implied that, the firm would stop work until it could be replenished with the interest earned on its balance.

At the Jan. 30 meeting, Sandy Galef, whose district in the state Assembly includes Philipstown, disputed those claims.

"I don't think that's acceptable to us," she said of the plan. Galef went as far to say that she did not believe the particular Holtec representative should be conducting any further presentations on the matter.

George Latimer, the Westchester County executive, said he would like to see more Holtec public presentations, including in south Westchester. "The discussion of transporting radioactive material out of the plant, down the river — every single river town



The Indian Point facility

File Photo

that's south of here down to Yonkers will want to know more about that," he said.

State Attorney General Letitia James also has expressed concern about the proposed transfer, asserting in a statement that Holtec has "absolutely no experience in such an enormous, complex and consequential undertaking. I am committed to ensuring — through legal action, if necessary — that the State of New York is granted full participation in this application proceeding and all other decision-making related to Indian Point's decommissioning."

James and 12 other state attorneys general have protested the NRC ignoring multiple requests by the state of Massachusetts to hold a public hearing over Holtec acquiring the license to decommission the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth.

At the Jan. 30 meeting, Galef said she didn't want to see a similar process play out in New York. "We're kind of limited as to what we can do as elected officials in getting to have hearings," she said, noting that state legislators have little sway over

federal agencies. "But we can certainly put public pressure on them."

No matter who ends up decommissioning the plant, state and federal leaders are working on a variety of strategies to counter the loss of jobs after the plant closes. Patricia Keegan, a representative from Rep. Nita Lowey's office, announced at the meeting that, as part of a recently approved federal spending bill, Lowey had created a \$15 million program for economic development in the form of competitive grants restricted to communities that are directly impacted by nuclear plant closures.

In addition, Buchanan Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker, working with other mayors across the country who preside over municipalities with shuttered nuclear power plants, is lobbying for a federal law that would be referred to as the STRANDED Act, for Sensible, Timely Relief for America's Nuclear Districts Economic Development. The bill would award municipalities \$15 per kilogram of nuclear waste that's left at a closed nuclear power plant.

Have Your Say

Proposed Transfer of Indian Point Operating Licenses

NRC Proceeding (NRC-2020-0021)

regulations.gov

Search for "NRC-2020-0021"; click on "Comment Now"

Deadline: Feb. 24

Proposed Amendment re: Cessation Program Funding Mechanism

New York State Energy Plan

energyplan.ny.gov

Select "Comments will be accepted..."

Hearings: Feb. 27 (Albany), March 2 (New York City)

Deadline: March 8

Proposed Transfer of Indian Point Energy Center

New York PSC Proceeding (19-E-0730)

www.dps.ny.gov

Select "Indian Point Sale Review"; click on "Post Comments"

Deadline: April 7

There is also a state bill that has passed both the Assembly and Senate designed to protect the jobs of plant employees, although it has not yet been signed into law by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. While Holtec officials have said that the company plans to hire Indian Point workers for the decommissioning, some people remain skeptical.

"I would just like to get that in writing" said Lou Picani of Teamsters Local 456. "People tend to get amnesia."

Nastasi *(from Page 24)*

remember a heck of a lot of praise like that."

Brooks did make a go at playing college ball with the Division III William Smith Herons during her junior year but "it just didn't feel

Powerhouse

- Named to the Class D All-State team in each of her six seasons
- Played in six state Final Fours and won three state and two Federation titles; also went to the Final Four three times with the volleyball team, which won the Class D title in 1998
- As a senior, named MVP in state and Federation title games
- Reached 1,000 points scored as a sophomore
- Hit 209 three-pointers, including 55 as a senior
- Inducted into the Haldane Athletic Hall of Fame in 2018
- The Blue Devils were 136-19 during her career

right" compared to the intimate experience she had at Haldane and in A.A.U. basketball playing with friends and neighbors. She did not return to the team as a senior.

She has many great basketball memories but had little trouble choosing her favorite. "It was that first state championship as an eighth grader" in 1996, she says. The team had lost in the Final Four the previous season, which "made the win a bit sweeter and probably the most exciting."

Does she have any regrets, 20 years later, about her decision to give up the game?

"Not a one," she replies. "I truly don't."

She pauses, then adds: "I often think I should have applied to Duke, to go from one Blue Devils team to another." She says she and her father watched all the games. "It would have been cool, although I don't think I would have gone that far away from home."

After graduating magna cum laude from Hobart and William Smith and teaching in Orange County, Brooks landed a teaching position at Myers Corners Elementary School in Wappingers Falls in 2014.

She still plays basketball, but only in her driveway with her two young sons or at practices with the varsity girls' team at John Jay High School, where her husband, Larry, is the coach. "It still feels good while I'm playing, but it takes a much longer time to recover afterward!" she says.



Aaron Nastasi hugs teammates Stephanie Spear and Brittany King on March 25, 2000, after the Blue Devils won the Class D final at the NYS Federation Tournament in Glens Falls.

Photo by Stuart Bayer/Journal News - USA TODAY Network

With the perspective of two decades, what would she tell a talented student-athlete who finds herself at a crossroads?

"I'd tell her to weigh her options carefully, and block out what others feel is best for you," she says. "Go with your gut, with your

heart, because you're the one who has to live with your decision."

As for life away from the basketball court, Brooks says: "I'm perfectly happy and content; I made the best choice for me."

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See highlandscurrent.org/classifieds.

SPORTS



Seniors Olivia Monteleone, Bela Monteleone, Shianne Twoguns and Abigail Platt were honored before the North Salem game on Feb. 5.

Haldane Girls Push Back to Tame Tigers

Overcome sluggish start with late surge

By Skip Pearlman

The Haldane High School girls' basketball team had a strong second half Wednesday (Feb. 5) at home, erasing a five-point halftime deficit and rolling to a 48-36 victory over league rival North Salem.

Haldane (8-10) trailed by as many as 12 in the first half, but cut the lead to 19-14 with a run before the break. The team came out in the second half with more energy, outscoring North Salem, 34-17.

"In the first half we had some good shots but they weren't falling," said Coach Jessica Perrone. In the second half, "the energy in the gym helped us, and our seniors were great."

Bela Monteleone led Haldane with 12 points, while Abigail Platt had nine points and six rebounds, Liv Monteleone added nine points and five rebounds and Maddie Chiara had nine points.

On Senior Night, "all four seniors played well" Perrone said. "Abigail had two huge steals and great all-around play. Shianne [Twoguns] hit some big free throws late and gave us smart defense. Bela lit a fire for us in the third with a couple of threes and set the tone for the second half. And Liv is always a force on defense."

A day earlier, the Blue Devils came up on the short end of a 64-29 decision against Class B powerhouse Putnam Valley (14-3). Liv Monteleone led the team with 10 points.

"We played them better the second time around [Haldane lost at Putnam Valley, 65-18, on Jan. 30], but they have some phenomenal shooters," Perrone said. "That's a tough game for us."

Haldane also fell Feb. 1, 61-40, to Pleas-

antville (11-7), with Bela Monteleone scoring 16. Liv Monteleone added nine points and 10 rebounds, and Molly Siegel had eight points.

Haldane is scheduled to host Keio Academy (4-12) on Saturday (Feb. 8) at 4 p.m., followed by its last regular-season game on Monday in a rematch at North Salem (9-9). The Section 1, Class C tournament begins Feb. 24.



Molly Siegel shoots in the first half against North Salem. Photos by S. Pearlman

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SPORTS

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Soren Holmbo drives to the basket against Dobbs Ferry.

Photo by S. Pearlman

Haldane Boys Take Two, Drop One

Improve to 13-4 with victories

By Skip Pearlman

The Haldane High School boys' basketball team picked up victories in two of its three games last week, with the loss coming Monday (Feb. 3) at home to Dobbs Ferry.

The Blue Devils (13-4) played well in the first half against the Eagles (14-5), and the game was tied 35-35 at halftime. It stayed close until the fourth, when Dobbs pulled away. The final was 69-55.

"Dan Santos got hot in the first half and kept us in the game," said Coach Joe Virgadamo. "We did turn the ball over a bit more in the second half. We didn't shoot well from the line, and we didn't capitalize on key possessions. They also out-rebounded us in the second half.

"Still, we cut it to eight," he added. "They hit a three with around two minutes left

that was a dagger. I'm hoping the game gets us better for sectional [tournament] time."

Santos had 24 to lead Haldane, and Mame Diba added nine.

On Saturday (Feb. 1), the Blue Devils rolled past Edgemont, 85-48. Matt Champlin — who will play for Utica College next year — led Haldane with 23, Santos added 20, Diba had 18 and Matteo Cervone had 10. On Jan. 30, Haldane defeated Putnam Valley, 83-63. Champlin led with 17, Diba and Santos each had 14, Holmbo had 13 and Cervone added nine.

"I thought we played well in both games," Virgadamo said. "We shared the ball, got four guys in double figures."

Haldane hopes to clinch a league title with wins over Pawling (8-9) at home today (Feb. 7) and at Putnam Valley (2-13) on Monday. The Blue Devils will then have three weeks off before they face Tuckahoe (8-10) on March 2 in the Section 1, Class C semifinals at the Westchester County Center.

BEACON VARSITY ROUNDUP

Boys' Basketball

Beacon picked up a 49-45 victory on Tuesday (Feb. 4) at Peekskill behind a 17-point, 13-rebound effort from senior forward Quazir Hayes. Tristen Reid added 11 points, and Shane Green had nine points, five rebounds and three steals.

The Bulldogs were up by 12 points at halftime but Peekskill fought back. "Ian Bautista came up big for us," said Coach Scott Timpano. "He had seven rebounds and three huge charges. Kam Torres also played his butt off, and Quazir was a monster on the boards."

On Saturday (Feb. 1), the Bulldogs dropped a 58-55 decision to Red Hook at Dutchess Community College. Beacon (7-12) was scheduled to close out its regular season Thursday (Feb. 6) at home against Lourdes (10-6). According to projections by sports writer Kevin Delaney Jr. (KDJBlog.com), No. 18 Beacon should play No. 15 Lincoln (8-8) on Feb. 15 in a tournament qualifier.

Girls' Basketball

Beacon dropped two games last week, falling to Poughkeepsie, 44-40, on the road, and Hendrick Hudson, 58-30, at home. The Bulldogs (7-12) will end their regular season on Monday (Feb. 10) hosting Nyack (8-9) at 4:30 p.m. Beacon is ranked No. 18 of 20 teams that will qualify for the Class A sectional tournament.

Boys' Swimming

Beacon finished fourth of 12 teams in the conference championships, behind Pelham, a combined Peekskill-Croton-Hendrick Hudson team, and Lourdes.

David Paschal took fifth in the 200-yard individual medley and the 100-yard freestyle; Stephen Quintero

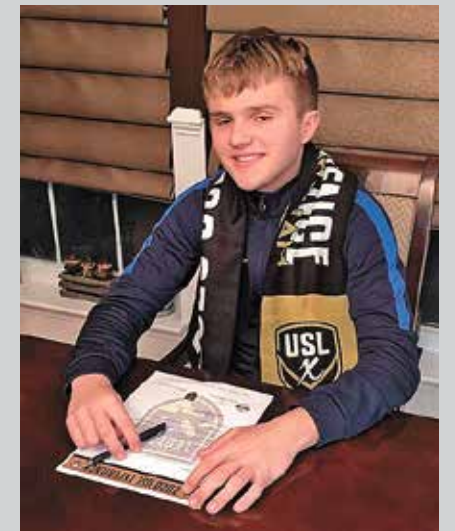
was fourth in the 100-yard breaststroke and second in the 200-yard freestyle; and James Patino was fourth in the 100-yard backstroke. The 200-yard freestyle relay team finished second and the 400-yard freestyle relay team was third. At the Section 1 championships, Quintero took 10th in the 200-yard freestyle in 1:51.97.

Bowling

The boys' and girls' teams each defeated Poughkeepsie on Feb. 2, 7-0. The girls' sectional team and individual tournament begins on Feb. 10 and the boys' on Feb. 11, both at Fishkill Bowl.

Boys' Soccer

Freshman Derek Bilyeu (below), who won All League honors this past season for the Bulldogs and also plays for the Westchester Flames travel club, was one of 72 players selected nationwide to attend a three-day United Soccer League camp in April in Birmingham, Alabama. The selection came as a result of his play in the National Super Y League last summer and the league's North American finals in December in Tampa.



TO THE HOOP — Elias Moran shoots for one of the two fifth-grade Loretto Knights boys' teams in a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) game at the Garrison School gym. For complete Knights results, see highlandscurrent.org. Photo by Dan Dillon

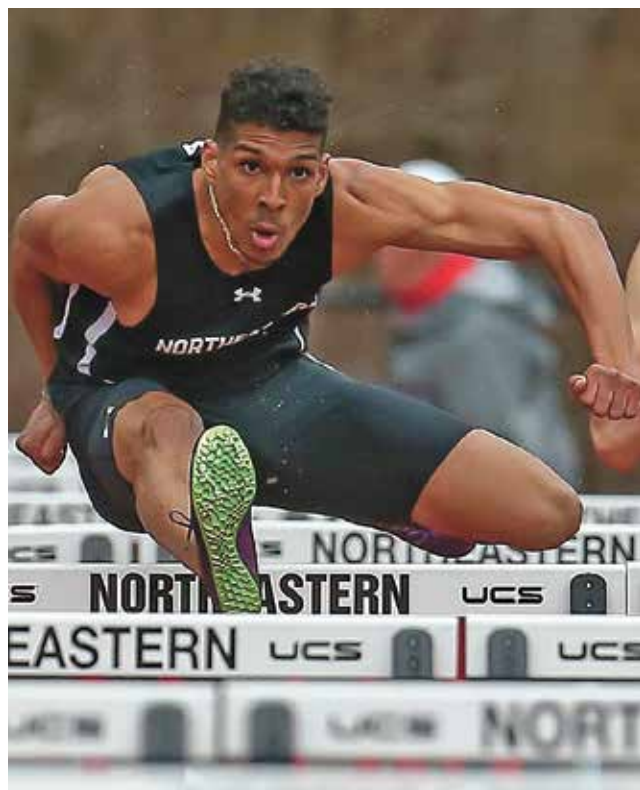
SPORTS

Bulldogs Forever

Rayvon Grey was named the Southeastern Athletic Conference's athlete of the week on Feb. 4 for the second time this year. The 2016 Beacon High School graduate, who is a senior long jumper for Louisiana State University, also won the honor on Jan. 15.

Grey, the 2019 NCAA indoor long-jump champ, began the season with an NCAA and world-best long jump of 26 feet and 4.5 inches on Jan. 10 to win the title at LSU's Purple Tiger Invitational. He stretched that to 26 feet and 6.5 inches at the Arkansas Razorback Invitational, his personal best and the fifth-best jump in school history. Grey still holds the New York State high school record in the long jump.

Meanwhile, **Terrel Davis**, a 2016 Beacon graduate who competes for the University of Hartford, hit 25 feet in the long jump to set a personal best and win the New England Championship. Another 2016 teammate, **David Adams**, who runs for Northeastern University, also competed at the New England Championship, winning the 60-meter hurdles in 8.02 seconds. He set his personal best (7.92) earlier this year.



David Adams

Northeastern Athletics



Rayvon Grey

LSU Athletics

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Puzzles

CROSS CURRENT

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

ACROSS

1. Strike

4. Wash with a mop

8. Algonquian language

12. Part; not all

13. Assistant

14. Exceed expectations

16. Noisily promote

17. Result of tied strings

18. Kidney enzyme

19. Beer kin

20. Barrel

21. Possess

23. Consumed

24. Medieval skirmish

26. Anti-drug resource in Cold Spring

28. Past tense of is

30. Put down

32. Liturgical gowns

36. Patriot Nathan

39. Tiny branch

41. Home of Irish kings

42. Latin love verb

43. Gulf of Aden nation

45. Cold Spring or Beacon water system barrier

46. Tramp

48. Faction; debate party

49. _____ Park (Roosevelt mansion locale)

50. Region

51. 1926-47 Giants baseball great Mel

52. Confucian way

54. Pine, for example

56. Scottish Highlands dances

DOWN

60. Tennis star Ivanovic

63. Throw

65. Repub. opponent

67. Fish eggs

68. Mushrooms, for example

70. Scholarly footnote term

72. Operatic song

73. Athlete's foot

74. Rural street

75. Form of tuber

76. Said to

77. First name of Fishkill supervisor

78. "Before," archaic

DOWN

1. Card game rule expert

2. Force

3. Golf peg

4. Behalf

5. Avian flapper

6. Much ____ About Nothing

7. Former prez candidate O'Rourke

8. Horn-shaped item

9. Regret

10. Sicilian volcano

11. What Chip Rowe might do

12. Phoney

15. Two predecessor

20. World's only alpine parrot

22. 1 of 6 journalistic queries

25. Female sheep

27. Flying mammal

29. Piggish home

30. Extent

31. Got older

33. Gentleman's partner

34. Actor Pitt

35. Identical

36. Laughter syllables

37. Form of 42-across

38. Ear part

40. Sunset place

44. Seine

47. Buffoon

49. Garden tool

51. Spanish gold

53. Gear for battle

55. Odyssey prequel

57. Mistake

58. French river

59. Stitchery juncture

60. Reverse of fore

61. French night

62. _____ Domini

64. Quaint ballpoint name

65. Italian World War I commander Armando

66. Swirling water

69. Congeal

71. Musician Scaggs

72. Top military flyer

7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES

1 nowhere to be found (7)

2 Scar's followers (6)

3 "Joy" star Lawrence (8)

4 where life begins (10)

5 red, blue and yellow (6)

6 garbage-can scavenger (7)

7 false (9)

SOLUTIONS

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SUDO CURRENT

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	2	7		8	6			5
						7		
5	8	9					3	
	4		9	3			6	7
		2	4	6			1	
		3	1		8	9		2

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Answers for Jan. 31 Puzzles

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A	U	R	A		X	R	A	Y		I	M	P		
S	T	E	P		E	I	R	E		L	E	A		
S	H	O	E		M	A	T			P	O	N	Y	
				R	I	P			O	V	A			
M	U	S	T	N	T				R	A	P	I	N	E
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I	L	L				C	O	L	T		I	B	E	X
L	Y	E				E	M	M	Y		L	A	D	Y

1. THEREFORE, 2. ORDINARILY, 3. SHIELDS, 4. ABUNDANTLY, 5. STAY, 6. PROMISES, 7. FLEXIBLE

Answers will be published next week. See highlandscurrent.org/puzzle for interactive sudoku and crossword.

SPORTS



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Twenty years ago, Aaron Nastasi — one of the greatest female basketball players in the history of Haldane High School — completed her Blue Devils career with 1,675 points and three state championships.

Nastasi had started for the Cold Spring school since the seventh grade, when she became the youngest player, at age 12, ever named to a state Final Four all-tournament team.

Six years later, coaches from Princeton, Harvard, Providence, Boston College and other schools came calling, asking the senior guard to play for them.

Instead, she walked away.



Aaron Nastasi

Photo by M. Turton



Go with your gut,
with your heart,
because you're
the one who has
to live with your
decision.

~Aaron Nastasi

That decision caught much of the community by surprise, most of all, Ken Thomas, who coached the Blue Devils to seven Final Fours and four Class D state championships in 13 seasons and retired after Aaron's senior year. He was sure she could have gotten a full ride.

A hint that his star player was hedging came the summer before her senior year. For the first time since age 11, she chose not to play A.A.U. travel ball.

After five seasons of varsity and five summers of A.A.U., "I needed a bit of a break," says Nastasi, who is now Aaron Brooks and lives in East Fishkill.

In retrospect, Brooks said college coaches probably noted her absence. But when the fall rolled around, the 5-foot-6 playmaker came back full bore. She led the Blue Devils to the Class D state championship, was named MVP in the state and NYS Federation Tournament title games and received the Isabella Costa Award as Player of the Year in Putnam, Westchester, Dutchess and Rockland counties.

Then the bombshell. Aaron was done with the game.

"It was a combination of things," she recalls. "I had played since I could hold a basketball." She also played soccer, Little League, softball and varsity volleyball, including on the 1998 state title team.

Down time was nonexistent. With a college decision looming, "my priorities shifted a bit," she says.

Brooks knew she wanted to become a teacher but realized the heavy course load would leave little time for high-level basketball. She also wanted the freedom to travel, and if enmeshed in a hoops season, "you can't just take off for four months and see the world."



Aaron Nastasi drives to the hoop for Haldane on March 18, 2000, in the Class D state semifinal in Troy.

Photo by Peter Carr/Journal News - USA TODAY Network

Instead of a prominent basketball program, she enrolled at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York, to study psychology and education. (In addition to her athletic prowess, she was the salutatorian of her Haldane class of 49 students.)

Brooks says her parents could not have been more supportive. "If they were shocked, they did a good job of hiding it," she says. "They let me make my own decisions."

The New York Times took note of her unorthodox departure in a story it headlined "Turning Her Back on a Sport She Loves." What Brooks remembers from the article is a sports psychologist who commented: "This is just an amazing kid making a decision for herself."

That was Robert Schleser, who died in 2015. He also told the *Times*: "What the literature shows is that when you're paid to do it, somehow it decreases the enjoyment. She plays for intrinsic reasons: the love of the game."

Not everyone in Philipstown was nearly as understanding, Brooks says. "I don't

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All in the Family

Haldane basketball was a family affair for the Nastasis: Aaron's parents, Anthony and JoAnn, both played for the Blue Devils, and her younger sisters, Ryan (2001) and Olivia (2005), each made the varsity as middle-schoolers and went on to star for the team.

In February 2000, during its sectional title run, Coach Ken Thomas put all three sisters — as a senior, junior and seventh-grader — on the floor together for the first time at the end of a win over Blind Brook.

Ryan scored more than 1,000 career points and went on to play for Concordia College in Bronxville. Olivia chose Manhattanville College in Harrison and scored more than 1,000 points for the Valiants.

Story by Michael Turton