Insulin: A High-Priced Shot at Life
State considers cap to slow rising cost of drug
By Leonard Sparks

There is the cost of living, and then there is the cost of keeping your diabetic college-student daughter alive.

So there was no question that Beacon resident Lisa Gallina would spend, two days after Christmas, $625 for a month’s worth of insulin medications.

Typically she pays $50 per month after her deductible, but it had reset. She says she feels fortunate she could make the payment on her credit card. “But there’s people who can’t [afford it], and that’s how these kids die,” she said.

As insulin prices have risen, so have reports of diabetics rationing or forgoing medication and the deaths of uninsured or underinsured people in their 20s.

New York may soon join a short list of states that cap the monthly out-of-pocket costs that diabetic patients with health insurance must pay for the drug.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo in December expressed his support for a $100 cap for each 30-day supply, and lawmakers in the state Senate and Assembly are weighing several bills that would limit out-of-pocket costs to that amount.

It’s Time: Bring Your Own Bags
State plastic ban takes effect Sunday, March 1
By Jeff Simms

Beginning Sunday (March 1) single-use plastic bags will be banned in grocery stores, drug stores, malls and at any other retailer that collects state sales tax, including in the Highlands.

Paper bags don’t have to be offered, although retailers have the option of providing them and can charge a fee for each.

Some local retailers, including Foodtown in Cold Spring and Key Food in Beacon, are adding heavier-duty, washable and recyclable bags. Key Food said it would charge 20 cents for plastic bags that can be used at least 125 times and 5 cents for each paper bag. The store also sells reusable cloth bags for 99 cents.

A Lifeline for The Underground
Customers come to aid of Beacon comic shop
By Jeff Simms

Albert Mas says it was the hardest post he’d ever had to write. On Feb. 16, after nearly two years running his comic-book shop, The Underground Beacon, he announced via Facebook that it would be closing. A family member was terminally ill and he’d run out of money, he said.

“Usually comic shops grow into a place this big,” he said this week, looking around the shop on the east end of Main Street. “But when I was looking for spaces, this was the best one for the best price I could find, and it’s my dream space.”

He opened at 462 Main in June 2018, knowing it could take a while to build up customers.

Growing Older at Home
Group wants to help residents ‘age in place’
By Alison Rooney

The qualities that entice people to move to the Highlands, such as privacy, can become problems as people age. Even older people who live on or near a community’s Main Street can feel alone.

That sense of isolation is one of the catalysts behind a newly formed nonprofit called Philipstown Aging at Home. Its organizers — Lynda Ann Ewen, Susan Freeman, Sheila Rauch and Ellyn Varela-Burstein — introduced themselves on Monday (Feb. 24) at the Desmond-Fish Public Library in Garrison.

“People can’t move and be independent and stay here,” she said. “We want to help them stay in place.”

Some local retailers, including Foodtown in Cold Spring and Key Food in Beacon, are adding heavier-duty, washable and recyclable bags. Key Food said it would charge 20 cents for plastic bags that can be used at least 125 times and 5 cents for each paper bag. The store also sells reusable cloth bags for 99 cents.

A HEARTY MEAL — Helanna Bratman (at left), coordinator of the Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Green Teens program, and Jennifer Clair (right) were among about 20 volunteers who prepared soup on Feb. 22 to sell the next morning at the Beacon Farmer’s Market to benefit a program that provides produce to families in need. For more photos, see Page 15.
FIVE QUESTIONS: FRAN LEVENSON

By Brian PJ Cronin

Fran Levenson, 96, of Garrison, was executive director in the 1950s and 1960s of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing. The civil-rights activist was honored last fall by the Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York with its Eleanor Roosevelt Award, making her the first recipient to actually have worked with Eleanor Roosevelt.

How did you get involved in housing policy?

I grew up in the Bronx during the Depression and was aware of the difficulties that people would go through. The streets were full of furniture that had been removed from foreclosed apartments. It was a horrible situation. Families were living on the streets. Today the homeless are mostly single people. But then, whole families were being put out.

What was the biggest challenge of your work?

The reluctance of the establishment to change its policies. The situation got worse when the federal government got involved with housing and made a conscious effort to refuse to accommodate people of color in that housing.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

The laws that we got passed that prevent the federal government, and to a certain extent private industry, from discriminating on the basis of race.

What was it like working with the first lady?

She was a wonderful woman. She had an amazing ability to work on many different things at the same time. She was working against discrimination in the Armed Forces, in housing, in all aspects of federal government. And she was working to raise money for organizations.

She was clear on what she felt about discrimination on the basis of race, and she followed through.

What are the most pressing concerns today with housing?

There are two issues, but they're interrelated. There's less discrimination on the part of real-estate agencies and companies, but there's still discrimination by local governments, the federal government, in zoning laws, and so forth. It's much more difficult to do anything about the economic problems. The costs of land and production are going up, and it's getting worse. It's discouraging. Private industry, without the aid of the government, cannot provide housing for low-income families, and there's a reluctance on the part of the government in certain areas to provide what is necessary. So the costs of providing good housing are going up, as well as management of good housing. Managing good housing is almost as difficult as constructing it in the first place.

What are you most looking forward to now?

I'm going to play leapfrog with my grandkids!

~ Jeff Amato, Cold Spring

If it was summer, I'd go cliff jumping — a leap of faith.

~ Catherine Miller, Beacon

I think I'll just sleep all day; it isn't a real day.

~ Peter Britz, Cold Spring
Legislators discuss wisdom of adding room tax
By Holly Crocco

With the growing popularity of short-term rentals made through platforms such as Airbnb, lawmakers in Putnam County are looking for ways to embrace visitors while making sure neighborhoods aren’t overrun — and also get a piece of the profits through a room tax.

According to Airbnb, hosts in Putnam County in 2019 earned $10 million from 57,700 bookings. Eliza Starbuck, the president of the Cold Spring Chamber of Commerce, noted at the county’s Feb. 18 Economic Development Committee meeting that the issue of short-term rentals has been polarizing.

She told legislators that the Cold Spring Chamber supports regulating the rentals but says they must be “clearly defined” in zoning codes and “fairly taxed so they contribute to the region’s economic growth.”

She said the chamber is particularly concerned about homes being converted into short-term rentals because “such conversions deplete the residential building stock, erode neighborhoods and compete unfairly with the hotel industry.”

Starbuck said her organization would like to see a room tax collected at the county level on property rentals. She said neighboring counties that impose occupancy taxes of between 2 and 6 percent have not seen a major loss of tourists.

“Search for Site

The quest to provide affordable housing in Putnam County has not been put on a back burner, according to Ashley Brody, a housing advocate.

“We know that many people are vulnerable, especially in this economy, especially in this housing market,” Brody, CEO of the nonprofit Search for Change, told county legislators during their Feb. 18 Health Committee meeting. Even people of modest means “have a hard time finding and securing” affordable housing in Putnam, he said.

Brody said Putnam’s housing stock has been relatively stagnant while its population has grown by about 75 percent since 1970, from 57,000 to 100,000. “It comes down to a simple supply-and-demand equation,” he said. Search for Change, based in Valhalla, has been operating in Putnam and Westchester counties for more than 40 years, he said. It is one of many nonprofits in New York State that work to provide affordable housing for people with mental illness, substance-use disorders and chronic physical health conditions.

In 2016, Brody told legislators, the state funded a program to provide 50 units of affordable housing in Putnam, with half of the units for people with special needs. But he said he and his partners have not been able to find a suitable location.

“Space for housing development is limited in all communities, and Putnam County is no exception,” he said, pointing out that the county also has stringent watershed protections and other zoning regulations.

An appropriate site would be close to stores, restaurants and other amenities, and would be in an area properly zoned for such a development, he said. The project could be split into two developments if a site is large enough.

Budget or Borrow?

Putnam plans to use debt to fund road paving, vehicles
By Liz Schevchuk Armstrong

Putnam County’s plan to use $1.5 million in bonds — a form of debt — for road paving and vehicle purchases raised questions last week at a legislative committee meeting.

The issue arose on Feb. 20 when the Physical Services Committee recommended sending two bonding proposals to the full Legislature for approval.

The first authorizes borrowing $500,000 for 15 years to pay for about half of what is needed to buy heavy equipment and vehicles for the Highway Department. (The state is expected to provide the remaining $405,000.)

The second measure calls for borrowing $1 million over 10 years to cover road and parking lot repaving and repairs.

Under both proposals, the county would use property-tax proceeds to repay the principal and cover interest.

“Why are we borrowing to pave roads that we know we need to be resurfaced every so often?” asked Legislator Nancy Montgomery, who represents Philipstown.

Rephrasing the question, Legislator Ginny Nacerino (R-Patterson) added: “Why are we borrowing for something that we can anticipate it? Why aren’t we prepared to fund it without bonding?”

Montgomery similarly asked about bonding for replacement vehicles.

Legislator Joseph Castellano (R-Brewster) countered that often “it’s fiscally responsible” to borrow, especially when interest rates are low.

Legislator Carl Albano (R-Carmel), who chairs the committee, cited a “delicate balance” between borrowing and budgeting and said it would “be interesting to see” which bond debts are ending this year and whether Putnam is “in the right direction, or, in the very least, in the right path and county parks; $17,000 on a “manlift” for the facilities division; and $7,500 for a plow at Tilly Foster, the county’s farm-park.

Legislators suggested that Carlin, who was not present, could address bonding issues when the Audit and Administration Committee met on Monday (Feb. 24). But although Carlin attended that session, the discussion did not include bonding.

Montgomery said on Wednesday (Feb. 26) that she intends to bring up the issue with Carlin in a future committee meeting, where she said the topics might include:

■ The total amount Putnam has bonded for long-term and short-term debt;

■ The relationship between retiring debts and taking on new ones;

■ Each department’s share of debt, perhaps shown as a pie chart;

■ The proportion of funds drawn for operating expenses and capital expenses from bonds versus available cash.

Sales tax

According to data provided on Monday, Putnam County last month collected more than $5.5 million in sales tax, a record amount for January and some $500,000 more than in January 2019 and $2 million more than January 2008, the first year listed in a report released by the county.

“It’s good news that the economy is moving in the right direction, obviously,” said Castellano, who chairs the Audit Committee.

Montgomery expressed hope that Putnam towns might receive a share. Unlike most other counties in the state, Putnam does not return a portion of sales tax to each village or town in which it is collected.

Carlin replied — as the county often has — that Putnam shares sales tax in other ways, such as picking up local charges for supporting community colleges, running elections and covering unpaid local tax bills. Mandates from the state and federal governments “aren’t stopping,” he said. “Do you want to pay sales tax, or do you want to pay property tax?”
Pride parade
I moved to the Hudson Valley two years ago. There is something here for everyone! I can hike Breakneck Ridge with a Democrat or a Republican, and I can share this wonderfully culturally rich area with anyone. There is room for all.

I simply don’t understand why LGBT people need or deserve special attention and parades, or why they need to force their views on people (“Perspective: In Search of Progressive Putnam,” by Eileen McDermott, Feb. 14). I feel blessed to live here and try to count my blessings every day. The world needs to forget politics — it doesn’t enrich people’s lives. Volunteer, do acts of kindness, build a garden, clean up our local parks, donate blood, help a family with special needs, make sure public spaces are wheelchair-accessible. All these things matter and help humanity as a whole.

Live your lives, no one is stopping you, and leave people to believe and stand by their beliefs. They have the right. It is a free country. I have traveled the world and lived in Europe for 10 years. I have had to integrate myself into many cultures and learned to be open-minded and tolerant. I don’t feel the need to march my beliefs in a parade and change a place that I am a newcomer to in order to make myself feel more comfortable. Who am I to impose my views on a community that has existed in harmony for many years before my arrival?

I advise you to study the rich history of the Hudson Valley, meet the people who have lived and farmed here for generations, the people who toil to save our environment, and learn from them. Ask how you can help, not change things, and be humble. Your opinion is your opinion, and I respect that, but I believe your perspective is closed-minded and arrogant.

Ksenia Pitaleff, Garrison

It’s fine if you don’t think gay people need to have parades — please don’t come. But the children from Putnam schools who have written to me saying, “Thanks for having this parade, my school is so homophobic,” and the many LGBTQ+ and progressive people here who have to deal with hateful comments on a daily basis will be there. I am able to volunteer in the community and have a parade. I moved here because I love the Hudson Valley, and I love the community I have sought out here, and the accessibility to nature. That does not in any way mean I have to shut up and deal with the bigotry I see.

In response to the letter in the Feb. 21 that suggested we be “friendly, caring neighbors” to Trump supporters, does the Republican agenda threaten your human/civil rights or life?

If not, you might not understand how some people have no interest in cozying up to people who either believe themselves or have no problem voting for people who believe that the existence/humanity of certain groups or classes of people is not important.

Eileen McDermott, Brewster

Wanting to parade and celebrate who you are is not unique to the LGBTQ community. As a heterosexual Italian, I’ve participated in Columbus Day parades and celebrations. Celebrating your culture in a public space is not harmful to others. Putting one’s beliefs out there is as American as it gets.

Everyone has a right to voice their thoughts, even those who wish to silence others. Those with strong voices, though, need not heed those wishing to silence them, and I hope that never becomes a reality in our home of Putnam.

Stephen Papas, Kent

This is not simply about LGBTQ folks moving from the city, although I find the argument “Don’t move to a conservative county if you’re not conservative” problematic. A pride parade would be an enormous gift to the many teens and young adults I work with as a psychologist. These are gay, bisexual, trans and nonbinary young people — born and raised in Putnam County — who have been spit on, assaulted, mocked and discriminated against their entire lives.

The intolerance of some of the comments posted online reflects the attitudes that lead these young people to become suicidal, engage in self-injury, and develop eating disorders and substance-abuse problems. Words matter. They have an impact that is more powerful than people realize.

Several teens have wept in my office speaking about the possibility of a parade — tears of cautious optimism and disbelief that their identities and sense of self could be celebrated here. They almost can’t believe that a pride parade could happen in Putnam County. I look forward to the day when I can see them feel free and celebrated here.

Tracy Prout Bunye, via Facebook

This parade will be a chance for gay people to celebrate their identity in their own community. Awareness is needed because discrimination and violence against gay people is still prevalent in this country. Gay couples get attacked for holding hands (Continued on Page 5)
Commenting on Facebook and at highlandscurrent.org always resort to the same nos and burlesque performer Tempest Storm.

In Lake Jackson, Texas, you can scratch your head over two interconnecting signs reading “This Way” and “That Way.”

In Paterson, New Jersey, one can walk the “Straight” and “Narrow” as the two streets intersect. The probability of being born on any given date is 1 in 365, but there is only a 1 in 1,461 chance of being a leap-year baby. As a result, only 0.07 percent of the world’s population was born on Feb. 29.

People born on Feb. 29 have been called Leaplings, Leapers or Leapsters. The famous ones are an eclectic bunch and include motivational speaker Tony Robbins, Superman, Pope Paul III, rapper and actor Ja Rule, big band legend Jimmy Dorsey, singer and actor Dinah Shore, actor Dennis Farina, baseball All-Star Al Rosen, serial killer Aileen Wuornos and burlesque performer Tempest Storm.

How will you spend your extra day? SEE PAGE 2.

Plastic Bags — What a Drag

As of March 1, single-use plastic bags will be banned in New York State.

How will you get your groceries home?

The Current has the answer: BECOME A MEMBER!

Readers who contribute $24 or more will receive our handsome, heavy-duty cloth tote, as well as a members-only newsletter from the editor each week.

See highlandscurrent.org/join or write us at 142 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516.
Court: Rock-Crushing Can Continue

Judge prohibits town interference with Ventura enterprise

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

An interim judicial decision Feb. 13 allows a Route 9 rock-crushing business to continue operations, with a catch — for every load of debris coming in, three must go out.

The Town of Philipstown has tried for several years to restrict the operations of RNV Green Processing and Supply on Lane Gate Road and Route 9.

In the ruling, Justice Gina Capone of the Putnam Supreme Court also lifted the restraining order she issued on Feb. 4 that prevented the business from engaging in rock-crushing at its site.

On Feb. 13, she likewise issued an order “temporarily restraining” Philipstown from taking any enforcement actions against the firm, run by Ricky Ventura, while legal proceedings continue in the court, part of the state judicial system.

Michael Sirignano, RNV’s lawyer, on Thursday (Feb. 27) termed the decision “a shocking first-round defeat for the town” because “the court granted all of the relief we asked for. Mr. Ventura has now resumed full operations, something the town sued him to immediately stop.”

RNV occupies a 9.6-acre parcel where, according to Sirignano, Ricky Ventura’s father ran the debris-processing enterprise for decades without problems. RNV is in a highway commercial zone, albeit one bordered by residential properties and historic rural estates, and the zoning code prohibits such businesses in that area of town.

Robert Cinque, Philipstown’s lawyer, said on Wednesday (Feb. 26) that he could not comment.

Ventura contends that his operations constitute a “legal, pre-existing, non-conforming activity,” in other words, one that had existed for years, was considered permissible, and now merely fails to fit under updated zoning laws.

Last April, the town’s code enforcement officer issued a stop-work order against RNV after it lost an appellate court ruling that capped a string of lower court defeats in battles against the town. Ventura asked the Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals to overturn the stop-work order, but in January it refused.

Town officials then went to court to seek an injunction to halt RNV operations. Ventura then sued the town, asking for $50 million in damages. Justice Capone is presiding over both lawsuits.

In her Feb. 13 order, the judge directed the town to remove 3 truckloads of materials that have been stockpiled and/or stored on the premises, comparable in size to every single truckload received. She also ordered him to keep accurate records of the material handled and to retain an engineer to monitor and certify compliance with her ruling.

In a separate document, Capone wrote “temporarily restraining” Philipstown from interfering with the “rock-crushing” operations and “rock-crushing and the stockpiling and resale of such processed material on the premises,” at least until May, when the litigants are to appear at court for a conference.

Meanwhile, the filing of arguments can continue.

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NOTICE

Philipstown Planning Board Site Visit - March 8, 2020

The Philipstown Planning Board will meet on Sunday, March 8th, 2020 at 9:30 am to inspect the following site:

• Magazzino Italian Art Foundation, 2700 Route 9 | TM#38-3-24.1

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NOTICE

The Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals has changed the date of their regular monthly meeting to March 2, 2020. The meeting will be held at 7:30 P.M. at the Claudio Marzollo Community Center, 107 Glenclyffe Drive, Garrison, New York.

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the Zoning Board of Appeals of the Town of Philipstown on Monday, March 2, 2020 at 7:30 P.M. at the Philipstown Recreation Department, 107 Glenclyffe, Garrison, New York to hear the following appeal:

Alex Campbell, 4 Cliffside Court, Garrison, New York TM#82.20-2-23

(Appellant seeks relief from requirement to provide a front yard setback of 50 feet from the centerline of the traveled-way in front of the subject property. The partially constructed residential structure has a setback of 37.2 (37'-2-1/2") feet from the centerline of the existing traveled way and 36.2 feet from the centerline of the right away. Appellant therefore seeks a variance of 12.8 feet (12'-9-1/2") 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 Building Department, 2 Cedar Street, Cold Spring, New York.

Robert Dee, Chairman of the Town of Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals David 02/10/2020

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PARADE APPROVED

— Supporters applauded after the Cold Spring Village Board on Feb. 25 approved a request to hold a Pride Parade on Main Street on Saturday, June 6. James Hyer (third from right), a Mahopac resident who has worked on Pride events for more than 20 years, thanked trustees for their support of the parade, which will be a first for Putnam County. “They are wonderful events,” he said. “Businesses love it because they bring in a lot of people, and it’s just a great thing for the LGBTQ community.”

Photo by Michael Turton
A Safer, Sustainable Fahnestock
Improved road and trail-access projects set to begin

By Brian PJ Cronin

Conservation officials say Fahnestock will be getting better this year, as well as bigger.

The Open Space Institute on Feb. 13 announced a series of upgrades to the northern section of the Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park just a few weeks after the Hudson Highlands Land Trust said it will add 150 acres to its southern edge. The projects are being funded by state grants and private donations.

"Fahnestock is a place where we’re working to deepen our history," said Peter Karis, director of capital projects and design for the Open Space Institute. "Thirty years ago, OSI helped protect that part of Fahnestock, doubling the size of the park." OSI was also responsible for the 2016 improvement of the Canopus Lake Beach Complex.

One upgrade, Karis said, will improve access to the northern part of the 14,337-acre preserve, which is now a series of pull-offs from Route 301, between Cold Spring and Carmel.

The hope is that “more people will want to go there when they don’t have to get out of their cars on a 55-mph zone and cross the highway with their kids to go to Jordan Pond,” said Karis. “We’re going to put this northern part of the park online in a meaningful way and get people off 301.”

The organization plans to create what it’s calling Big Woods Drive that will connect 301 to trailheads and a parking lot near Glynwood Farm, where the Perkins and Cabot trails meet. “Crossing culverts” near the wetlands will allow wildlife, particularly amphibians, to safely travel beneath the road.

Tree removal for Big Woods Drive will begin soon, Karis said, with the project scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. The planting of native trees and other aesthetic improvements will finish up in the spring of 2021, he said, and OSI will rework the Appalachian Trail where it crosses 301 along the southern edge of Canopus Lake, including the addition of a 15-space parking lot, to reduce the amount of time hikers spend along the highway.

He said OSI also has plans for a two-year project to rework the 9-mile Hubbard-Perkins loop trail that begins at Hubbard Lodge. Working with OSI, West Point cadets have already replaced the cinder-block creek crossing just past the lodge with a bridge they designed.

More bridges will also be installed along the route, Karis said, including the creek crossing just past the new bridge where a steel beam provides footing. Karis said that before a bridge is installed at that crossing, the state will implement a stream-bank stabilization plan to stop erosion.

The rest of the work on the loop will include “tread improvements” to some sections of the trail and a reworking of narrow, interior passages.

“We’re going to artfully put the trails in places where they’re going to last and not have too much of an environmental impact,” Karis explained. “And we’ll pick some great, picturesque crossing locations where you get a real sense of Fahnestock’s northern half and why we call that part ‘the big woods.’ There’s not many places left like that.”
Insulin (from Page 1)

Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson, whose district includes Beacon, co-sponsored a bill that would institute the $100 cap and also direct the state Department of Health to establish a pilot program to provide insulin to diabetics who are uninsured or underinsured, as well as emergency supplies to diabetics who are unable to immediately get refills authorized.

Jacobson said he is confident the Legislature will approve a cap this year.

short if it does not protect diabetics who are insured or underinsured, as well as emergency supplies to diabetics who are unable to immediately get refills authorized.

“I spend about $10,000 a year, after health insurance, on her medications, her doctor visits and her medical supplies. There’s all these things that go into managing a Type 1 diabetic.

~Lisa Gallina

Resources

- A diabetes support group meets monthly at the Putnam Hospital Center, 670 Stoneleigh Ave., Carmel. Call 845-279-5711, ext. 2779.
- A monthly Type 1 Parents and Kids Group meets on the first Thursday and an Adult Type 1/Pump Group meets on the third Tuesday at the Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital in Poughkeepsie. Call 845-483-5188.
- The Westchester/Fairfield/Hudson Valley chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation offers support services for children, teens and adults. See jdrf.org/westchesterafbhlNY.

no federal regulation of insulin prices—the executives cited high deductibles, greater cost-sharing requirements by insurers and the failure of pharmacy benefit managers and wholesalers to pass manufacturer discounts and rebates onto patients.

They said that their profits have declined because of those discounts and rebates demanded by benefit managers, distributors and wholesalers.
the clientele to cover his expenses. Mas, who grew up in New York City, said he had enough money saved to cover rent through the end of 2019. But when sales slowed after the holidays, and with his mother’s health declining, things looked bleak.

With comics, “you have to guess one to two months ahead of time,” which titles will be popular, he said. But consumers’ tastes also change quickly, and “if the books don’t sell, they just sit here,” he said, pointing to boxes he said held as much as $20,000 in unsold merchandise.

Mas’s mother, Anne, died on Sunday (Feb. 23). He was resigned to closing, but said on Facebook he was open to partners or buyers. He found the response to be remarkable. “Tons of well-wishers” asked how they could help. Many were parents who saw The Underground as a safe place for their children and teenagers to hang out.

A group, including Beacon mom Julie Shiroishi, organized a Magic: the Gathering party-turned-fundraiser at the shop last weekend.

“Ever since it opened, The Underground has been like a second home to my Magic-loving son,” Shiroishi explained. “He plays there twice a week with his friends. Albert and [his wife] Courtney have created a warm, welcoming space for Beacon’s nerds.”

Children and teenagers routinely spend hours after school and on the weekends in the shop, playing video games, reading comics or using the free-for-all game room for Magic, Pokémon and other role-playing games.

“They’re free and autonomous to have fun in here,” Mas said, “I don’t kick them off if they just want to play video games, and the game room is always open. They may buy sodas or lollipops, but I don’t charge them anything [for game use]. Half the time I’m playing games with them.”

“I’m not watching their kids, but parents know I’m not going to let anything bad happen here. I just want a fun place where people can come in and enjoy themselves.”

After seeing the Facebook post, another friend of the shop, Beacon resident Michael Lioce, contacted Mas about joining him as a partner.

“When I heard that the store was having difficulty, I was ready to jump in,” said Lioce, a freelance television editor and comic collector who had returned to the hobby as his children began reading the books.

They reached an agreement within days; it turned out Lioce several years earlier had his own plans to open a comic shop in Beacon. He said he will work at The Underground and give Mas some much-needed time off.

“That’s part of the excitement of it,” Lioce said, “that now we’ll both be able to enjoy doing this without having to run ourselves ragged.”

Mas expects to make an official announcement any day now. He dropped a hint in another Facebook post this week.

“I didn’t expect the magnitude of the positivity that I got from people,” he said on Wednesday. “I was in a dark place, and it changed my whole attitude.”

The Underground Beacon is located at 462 Main St.

HELP WANTED

The Town of Philipstown is seeking any person interested in serving on the Planning Board. There are currently 2 vacancies. If interested please send resume to:

Town Clerk
P.O. Box 155
238 Main Street
Cold Spring, New York 10516
or email
townclerk@philipstown.com

Garrison Union Free School District presents a series of Budget Workshops

- Learn about the 2020-2021 Budget
- 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
Plastic-Bag Ban (from Page 1)

At Foodtown, Co-President Noah Katz said the store has been selling thicker plastic bags but will discontinue those in favor of “several varieties of reusable bags for varying price points” that will be available within the next week.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the ban into law on Earth Day 2019, and the state Department of Environmental Conservation has since distributed more than 270,000 reusable bags to low- and moderate-income communities with the help of Feeding New York State, the state’s food bank organization. Eight other states also restrict the use of plastic bags.

Dutchess County passed its own single-use plastic bag ban that took effect on Jan. 1, but the county did not enforce penalties during the first two months of the year before the state law was implemented.

Mo Dabashi, a Key Food manager, said the grocery had been giving customers 5-cent credits for each reusable bag they use, which he felt helped prepare most shoppers for the ban. Still, he said, the store has heard complaints about the Dutchess regulations from shoppers “who didn’t think there was any reason for the ban.”

Foodtown has signs at its checkout and entrance reminding shoppers that the ban takes effect on March 1 and they would need to bring their own bags.

New Yorkers use an estimated 23 billion plastic bags annually, and about 85 percent end up in landfills, recycling machines, waterways and streets. The DEC estimated that each bag is used for only 12 minutes before being disposed of.

The ban is not absolute. Among its exemptions are plastic bags used to wrap uncooked food that could contaminate other items; bags used to wrap delivery or takeout meals; bags for bulk-item purchases, including fruits or candy or, in hardware stores, nails or screws; bags used in newspaper deliveries; trash bags; food storage or sandwich bags; garment bags, such as those used by dry cleaners; and bags provided by a pharmacy to carry prescription drugs.

Stores will also be required as of Sunday to collect clean, dry plastic bags (including bread bags and other recyclable varieties) that cannot be picked up with residential recycling, and to keep records showing the bags were recycled.

In 2017, Cuomo created a state Plastic Bag Task Force, which analyzed the impacts of single-use plastic bags and provided legislators with options for a statewide solution. Approximately 2,500 public comments were collected during a 60-day period last year before the final regulations were released in November.
The Calendar

‘Why Am I Living Through This Again?’

In a one-woman show, Ivy Omere tells her story

By Alison Rooney

For many years, Ivy Omere put her past in a drawer she rarely opened. The actor says she compartmentalized the travails of her youth and coped by becoming other people onstage. But one day she told herself to “write and see what happens. To my surprise, it just came pouring out,” she recalls. “It’s easy to disconnect when there are bits of your soul you’re not dealing with. I’d been mute for a long time, misunderstood at times because I hadn’t been able or willing to talk about certain things. It was a decision: I’m going to write my story, and I’m going to use my voice.” That became the title — My Story, My Voice — of a one-woman play that Omere will perform at the Philipstown Depot Theatre in Garrison on Saturday, March 7, as part of its newly launched Flipside series.

Omere describes it as “a cautionary tale.” Born in London to middle-class Nigerian immigrants, she and her two brothers wound up in the foster-care system because of her mother’s mental health, her father’s inability to commit to the family and her (Continued on Page 16)

By Alison Rooney

It’s the stuff of legend in the Sizemore family. As James recalls it, at the conclusion of a piano recital when he was in the third grade, his father told his mother: “I think he will never be a professional musician.”

Decades later, his father has been proven partly correct. Although James, now 41, plays the flute, guitar, bongo, mandolin, drums and piano, “I’m not great at any,” he admits. “I can impress for 10 minutes.”

What he can do well is compose and orchestrate music, which he does frequently for films. On March 20, the Cold Spring resident will release three tracks from his forthcoming album, While Being.

Like its predecessor, Frameworks, released in 2018, the album features a string quartet and pianist. That arrangement “allows you to focus on the structure of the music without hiding behind fancy timbre and polish,” Sizemore explains. “I love getting exceptional musicians with amazing instruments, playing in a beautiful hall, and creating something organic with the highest level of production.”

Sizemore didn’t perform on the album, which he describes as “a study of the metaphysical — the common experiences we all have in being human,” but he did everything else: composing, recording, editing, mixing.

“My influences are more contemporary, but for the roots of music, especially counterpoint and harmony, I keep looking at Bach,” Sizemore says. “He puts it all there on the page: how to structure, how to make music that’s emotionally affecting. As much as music has changed, it still relies on its essential elements of counterpoint and harmony.”

(Continued on Page 16)

Composer Klatch

As with novels, writing music can be a singular endeavor, which is one reason James Sizemore launched a monthly “hang” for composers called Hudson Line. Its regulars include Ronan Coleman, Rinde Eckert, Ian Hatton, Daniel Kelly, Art Labriola, Terence Murren, Jay Nicholas, Lewis Rapkin, David Rothenberg, Jeremy Schoenfeld and Eric Starr.

Some members have started performing together at the Cold Spring Coffee House, with Labriola and Rothenberg scheduled to play at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 6.
THE WEEK AHEAD

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

COMMUNITY

SAT 29
Maple Sugar Tours
CORNWALL
11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Outdoor Discovery Center
120 Muser Drive | 845-534-5506 x204
hhnm.org
Learn how sap is collected and turned into syrup. There are two tour options: the Sugar Bush tours at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. include a 3-mile moderate hike through field and forest to the Sugar Bush Shack; the Maple Lane tours at noon and 2 p.m. include a short walk from the Visitors’ Center. Also SUN 1 and weekends through March 15. Cost: $20 ($8 children and teens; members $8/$6)

SAT 29
Polar Fest
WEST POINT
11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Ski Area
732 Victor Constant Road
845-938-4810 | westpoint.armymwr.com
The annual festival includes skiing, snowboarding, a paintball relay, live music and food. Cost: $29 to $40

SUN 1
Clearwater Gala
GARRISON
3 – 7 p.m. The Garrison | 2015 Route 9
845-265-8080 x7119 | clearwater.org
Students in grades 5 and up can learn to create balloon animals and other figures. Pizza will be served. Registration required. Free

KIDS & FAMILY

TUES 3
Dr. Seuss Birthday Party
GARRISON
4 p.m. Desmon-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Enjoy Seussian treats and games to celebrate beloved author Ted Geisel.

FRI 6
Painting Fundraiser
GARRISON
6 – 8 p.m. Garrison Fish & Game Club
183 S. Highland Road
Create a painting and support the Haldane Class of 2020. Supplies, snacks and beverage included. RSVP to mgrane@haldaneschool.org. Cost: $30

SAT 7
Balloonapalooza
COLD SPRING
11 a.m. Butterfield Library
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
This is the opening reception for an exhibit showcasing works by 50 Hudson Valley women. Poet Mandy Kelso and storyteller Donna Minkowitz will perform. Through March 29.

VISUAL ART

SAT 7
Women’s History Month Art Show
BEACON
2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandculturalcenter.org
This is the opening reception for an exhibit showcasing works by 50 Hudson Valley women. Poet Mandy Kelso and storyteller Donna Minkowitz will perform. Through March 29.

ANIMALS & NATURE

SUN 1
Gardening for the Birds and Bees
GARRISON
1 p.m. Desmon-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
Kim Eierman, author of The Pollinator Victory Garden, will join Philippstown Garden Club members and Master Gardeners to discuss ways to create supportive habitats.

SUN 8
Mid-Hudson Auto Show
POUGHKEEPSIE
11 a.m. – 4 p.m. MJN Center
14 Civic Center Plaza | 845-454-5800
midhudsonviccenter.org
A dozen manufacturers will have new sport and family cars, trucks and crossovers on display, and there will be kids’ activities, such as face painting and balloon art. Free

TUES 3
Heading for Extinction (and What to Do About It)
BEACON
6 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org
In this talk organized by the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society, Emily Carrollo, a wildlife biologist for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, will discuss her work, the lives of local bears and how to manage human-bear interactions.

SAT 7
Seed-Sowing Workshop
COLD SPRING
3 p.m. Stonecrop
81 Stonecrop Lane | 845-265-2000
stonecrop.org
In Part 1 of this workshop, learn about seed propagation and techniques for sowing annuals. In Part 2, on April 11, learn how to thin and transplant seedlings at home. Cost: $80 ($60 members)

SUN 1
Animal Rescue Foundation Penny Social
BEACON
6 – 8 p.m. Garrison Fish & Game Club
183 S. Highland Road
Painting Fundraiser for the Haldane Class of 2020. Registration required. Free

TUES 2
Bail Reform Forum
GARRISON
7 p.m. Dolly’s Restaurant
7 Garrison’s Landing | 845-424-6511
dfgupta.org
Parents of elementary school children can learn from sex educator Rachel Lotus about how to discuss bodies, boundaries, consent, gender and identity, and how to find developmentally appropriate resources. Cost: $10 ($5 door)

SUN 1
Cultivating Active Hope
PHILIPSTOWN
3:30 p.m. Cheerful Strength
302 S. Road | 845-878-1818
cheerfulstrength.com
The highly acclaimed 90-minute class. Also MON 4

SUN 2
Infant CPR
PHILIPSTOWN
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040
butterfieldlibrary.org
Students in grades 5 and up can learn about seed propagation and techniques for sowing annuals. In Part 2, on April 11, learn how to thin and transplant seedlings at home. Cost: $80 ($60 members)

TUES 3
Black Bears in the Hudson Valley
GARRISON
7 p.m. Desmon-Fish Library
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020
desmondfishlibrary.org
In this talk organized by the Putnam Highlands Audubon Society, Emily Carrollo, a wildlife biologist for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, will discuss her work, the lives of local bears and how to manage human-bear interactions.

SAT 7
Owl Prowl
WAPPINGERS FALLS
7 p.m. Stony Kill Farm
79 Farmstead Lane | 845-831-3800
eventbrite.com/e/owl-prowl-tickets
After a talk about owls and their habitat, head out with flashlights to spot some native owls in the forest and field. Registration required. Free
SAT 7
Carli Craig and Moritz von Oswald
BEACON
7 p.m. Dia:Beacon | 3 Beekman St.
845-440-0100 | diart.org

As part of the opening for Craig’s commissioned exhibition, Party/After-Party, the artist created a site-specific performance with the Berlin-based Oswald to bring together the Detroit and Berlin techno traditions. Cost: $60 ($40 students, $30 members)

STAGE & SCREEN
SAT 29
Sebastian Maniscalco
POUGKEEPSIE
7 & 9:30 p.m. MJ Center
14 Civic Center Plaza | 845-454-5800
midhudsonviccenter.org

The comedian bridges the gap between his Old World Italian-American upbringing and the contemporary world with sarcasm and exasperation. Also SUN 1. Cost: $75 to $299

SAT 7
Climate Action Film Festival
BEACON
7 p.m. Story Screen Beacon | 445 Main St.
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandmusic.org

Hosted by SunCommon as a benefit for New Yorkers for Clean Power and the Student Climate Coalition, this festival features short films about climate crisis solutions being implemented around the world. Also SUN 6. Cost: $10

SAT 7
My Story, My Voice
GARRISON
7:30 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
10 Garrison’s Landing | 845-424-3900
philipstowndepottheatre.org

Ivy Omere will perform her one-woman play about growing up in foster care in the U.K. as the daughter of Nigerian immigrants. See Page 11. Cost: $20

SAT 8
The Pollinators
GARRISON
3 p.m. Philipstown Depot Theatre
10 Garrison’s Landing | 845-424-3900
philipstowndepottheatre.org

See description, below left. A Q&A will follow the screening. Presented with the Glywood Center. Cost: $20

MUSIC
SAT 29
Lez Zeppelin
PEEKSKILL
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039
paramounthudsonvalley.com

The all-female Led Zeppelin tribute band will play the Physical Graffiti album. Cost: $20 to $49

SAT 29
Cherish the Ladies
BEACON
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org

The Grammy-nominated Irish-American group is celebrating its fourth decade. Cost: $40 ($45 door)

SAT 7
Concert for Recovery
BEACON
4 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.
845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org

This concert, with Slambonian Underground, Kathleen Pemble, The Costellos, Jerry Lee, Boom Kat, Carla Springer & Russ St. George, Chihoe Hahn and others, will honor Greysen Ciganer, the 26-year-old son of Towne Crier owners Phil and Mary Ciganer, who died of an opioid overdose on Feb. 4. It also will benefit Drug Crisis in Our Backyard, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting individuals and families in the Hudson Valley who are struggling with addiction.

SUN 1
Lincoln Trio
BEACON
4 p.m. Howland Cultural Center
477 Main St. | 845-831-4988
howlandmusic.org

The Grammy nominees from Chicago will perform as part of the Howland Chamber Music Circle series. Their program includes a Beethoven piano trio and a work by composer Debra Kaye. Cost: $30 ($20 students)

SAT 29
Community Development Forum
BEACON
10 a.m. Memorial Hall | 413 Main St.
845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org

The village election will be held on Feb. 4. It also will benefit Drug Crisis in Our Backyard, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting individuals and families in the Hudson Valley who are struggling with addiction.

CIVIC
SAT 29
Community Development Forum
BEACON
10 a.m. Memorial Hall | 413 Main St.
845-838-5011 | cityofbeacon.org

The inductee into New York’s Blues Hall of Fame mixes soul and R&B. Dan Brother will also perform. Cost: $20 ($25 door)

TUES 3
Board of Trustees
COLD SPRING
7:30 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St.
845-265-3611 | coldspringsny.gov

WED 4
School Board
GARRISON
7 p.m. Garrison School | 1100 Route 9D
845-424-3689 | gufs.org

THURS 5
Census 2020 Forum
BEACON
6 p.m. Howland Public Library
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134
beaconlibrary.org

Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson and the Dutchess Complete Count committee will discuss the importance of returning census forms that will arrive next month.

THURS 5
Putnam County Legislature
CARMEL
7 p.m. Historic Courthouse
44 Gleneda Ave. | 845-208-7800
putnamcounthy.com

THURS 5
Philipsburg Town Board
GARRISON
7:30 p.m. Community Center
107 Glenside Drive | 845-265-5200
philipstown.com

SAT 7
Voter Registration
NELSONVILLE
Noon – 5 p.m. Village Hall | 256 Main St.
845-265-2500 | nelsonvilleny.gov

The village election will take place March 18.
Small, Good Things

Greens, Eggs and Ham

By Joe Dizney

This recipe started with an obsession over the nuovo cavalo salad at a favorite Manhattan trattoria that shall remain unnamed — try as I might, the chef would not give up the recipe.

I was on a post-holiday offensive to drop a few pounds and at the time flirting with the ketogenic diet, which made dining out problematic. The menu description — “crispy kale, arugula, poached egg, pine nuts, pork belly, Parmigiano dressing” — checked all the right boxes.

Admittedly, a plate of greens garnished with ham and topped with a poached egg is not particularly exotic, and any bistro with ham and topped with a poached egg — curly endive dressed with a Dijon vinaigrette and garnished with bite-sized pieces of thick, crisp salt pork. But that begs the question: How far removed is this food from that classic mid-American menu essential, the iceberg wedge doused in a mayonnaise-based, blue-cheesy dressing and topped with that abomination known as bacon bits?

I see it as evidence that, as with any meaningful human endeavor, intention, execution and raw materials are what makes the difference between dining and feeding.

The appeal of my original inspiration was a mess of fresh, hearty greens. Fortunately, even in the dead of winter, in the Hudson Valley we have access to bitter, leafy staples such as arugula and kale (particularly Lacinto or cavalo nero) and peppery mizuna or watercress, which seems to be making a market comeback.

Tender “baby” versions of any of the above are the fundamental grounds for this composition, modulated by the creamy and savory Parmesan dressing, the star of the dish. It is crowned by warm, salty-crispy pork; an oozy,unctuous soft-cooked egg; and toasted pine nuts that add a finishing woody crunch to this standalone lunch or dinner, diet or not.

This is comfort food of a different stripe and I daresay it would even make a nontraditional but satisfying breakfast.

Joe Dizney is a designer, art director and unrepentant sensualist. When the Cold Spring resident is not thinking about food, he is foraging for, cooking or eating it. Email him at jdizney@highlandscurrent.org.

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Salad with Parmigiano Cream Dressing, Bacon and Egg

Makes 2 entrees

**FOR THE DRESSING:**
1 cup mayonnaise* 2 cloves garlic 1 tablespoon lemon juice ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano cheese, finely grated 2 teaspoons white wine vinegar 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce 3 teaspoons freshly cracked pepper 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard Salt to taste

**FOR THE SALAD:**
¼ cup pignolis, toasted 4 cups lightly packed small, tender greens (kale, arugula, mizuna, watercress or spinach) 1 thick (⅜- to ½-inch) slice of good bacon (or precooked pork belly), cut into ⅛- to 1-inch-wide strips 2 eggs (at room temperature)

1. Place all ingredients for the dressing in the bowl of a small food processor or blender and process until smooth. If the final dressing is too thick, thin it with a tablespoon or two of heavy cream or milk whisked in by hand at the end. Refrigerate the remainder.

2. Toast pignolis in a dry skillet over medium-high heat until they just begin to color. Remove from heat and reserve. In a large saucepan add water to a depth of 4 inches and bring to a boil for the eggs. While the water is heating, heat a skillet over medium. Add bacon or precooked pork belly slices and cook, stirring occasionally, until some of the fat has rendered and bacon is just starting to brown, about 5 to 8 minutes.

3. When water for the eggs boils, reduce heat to a gentle simmer and add 2 tablespoons white vinegar. (This will help the egg whites stay together.) Crack an egg into a small bowl, then gently slide it into the simmering water. Repeat with remaining egg, waiting about 30 seconds apart. Cook eggs until whites are just set and yolks are still runny (about 3 minutes for each egg). Using a slotted spoon, carefully transfer eggs to paper towels to drain and reserve.

4. Place greens in a large bowl and carefully toss with some of the reserved dressing; toss gently until evenly dressed and divide between two plates. Garnish each plate with half of the bacon and top with a cooked egg. Scatter toasted pignolis over all. Finish with a sprinkling of salt, freshly ground black pepper and a grating of more cheese if desired.

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* Sure, make your own mayonnaise, or buy a quality commercial brand made from well-sourced ingredients, and no additives that you can’t easily identify or justify. I like Sir Kensington’s (in particular, its avocado-oil recipe) available at Foodtown in Cold Spring or Nature’s Pantry in Fishkill.
About 20 volunteers provided their own ingredients, recipes and supplies on Feb. 22 to make soup to sell the next morning at the Beacon Farmer’s Market to benefit Green4Greens, a program that provides produce to families in need. More Good donated the use of its industrial kitchen for the third annual fundraiser, which was organized by Common Ground Farm.

*Photos by Ross Corsair*
Music Man (from Page 11)

Sizemore grew up in Atlanta in a household that he says was “nurtured with creativity. My father was an architect, my mother taught Shakespeare. My mom and my three sisters recited poems and sang four-part harmony, and I grew up in a children’s choir.”

His first instrument, the flute, didn’t pass the cool test in middle school, so he switched to drums. Later, he realized, “flute was actually how you got the girls.”

He studied composition at Colorado College, where he met his future wife, cookbook author Nicki Sizemore. At the same time, he found himself drawn to everything from Indonesian gamelan and North Indian classical music to African drumming.

“I started creating my own voice,” he recalls. After college, he returned to Atlanta to work as an assistant at a recording studio used by artists such as Elton John and Outkast. “It was a great place to be a fly on the wall,” he says.

Sizemore eventually returned to Colorado for a while before coming east to pursue an MFA in music technology at New York University. After graduating, he spent a year working for the composer Philip Glass. It was a heady atmosphere. “The first day on the job, I got on the elevator with David Bowie,” he says.

That job led to others composing music for advertisements and “bad zombie movies,” he says, which proved to be great training. “You can’t hire a full orchestra, so you learn to use computer instruments and figure out creative ways to make sounds to create the effect you’re working for.”

More recently, he’s had higher-profile assignments, such as arranging and producing the score for Spotlight, which won the Oscar for best picture in 2016, and working with director Peter Jackson on the music for The Hobbit trilogy.

Locally, Sizemore has been working lately with aspiring composers and on independent films, which he finds appealing because “there are no big committees of international marketing managers or studio executives trying to pull the score and figure out creative ways to make sounds to create the effect you’re working for.”

Ivy Omere (from Page 11)

parents’ volatile relationship.

While living in foster care and private and group homes, the siblings suffered abuses that are presented graphically in Omere’s performance, in which she makes observations while portraying herself as a child and adolescent.

As a child in foster care, her character remarks: “If I see children with their parents, I am sure it is because those children are special; they deserve it.” As a teenager, she tells the audience: “Whenever I’m hungry, I do this at night when everyone is asleep: I eat bread from the trash.”

Omere says that once she began writing, she found herself recalling incidents from early in her life. “I remember a sense of powerlessness at being handed over when I was 2,” she says. “Because it was a momentous event, I remember it.”

The play wasn’t an easy process, and she sometimes went years without writing. But, finally, she says, “I realized, ‘What have you got to lose?’ It’s healing to me to write a character who says what I want to say. And that says about people in brown skin are written by people who don’t have it. We need to show the complexity of a human life. Stories build bridges.

“There are things that happen in families that people don’t talk about it,” she adds. “You’d like to think it’s a unique situation, but it’s far from that.”

Omere began acting at 14 when she was cast in a school production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream. After earning a bachelor’s degree in English and German literature from Queen Mary & Westfield College at the University of London, she trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art and began her career in an English Shakespeare Company production of As You Like It, directed by Michael Bogdanov, that toured internationally.

Following further work that included an extended run of The Three Musketeers at the Young Vic, Omere became frustrated by the “constant messages of, ‘We love you but we don’t know what to do with you,’ especially for television, where they thought I was too patrician for the [typical] roles for black actors; prostitutes, thieves.”

Omere, who obtained a U.S. visa as a “person of exceptional ability” and is now a longtime permanent resident, says she still finds she is offered roles, particularly in television, with descriptions such as “very passionate in the bedroom.”

“There are a lot of roles I don’t fancy,” she says. “Maybe my background makes me sensitive to the difference between being vulnerable and gratuitous.” A lifetime member of the Actors Studio, Omere says of her working life: “It’s been hard, and I wish I was working more, but the good side of it is that it’s forced me to write.”

Omere began writing for the theater with two short plays: My Story, My Voice is her first full-length work, and she has performed it from beginning to end only once before. “There have been times when I’ve thought, ‘This is madness. Why am I living through this again?’” she explains. “I have to emphasize the difference between being a writer and a poet, that I write a character who says what I want to say. And that says about people in brown skin are written by people who don’t have it. We need to show the complexity of a human life. Stories build bridges.

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“There are things that happen in families that people don’t talk about it. You’d like to think it’s a unique situation, but it’s far from that.”

~ Ivy Omere

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Growing Older (from Page 1)

The Philipstown group is part of a national “village movement” in which volunteer organizations coordinate services for older residents, with the goal of keeping them in their homes and the community. The first was established in the Beacon Hill section of Boston nearly 20 years ago. If a group has expenses such as paid staff or office rent, they are typically paid with dues collected from its members.

The Village to Village Network, a clearinghouse, lists nearly 300 aging-in-place groups around the country, including in Westchester (five locations), Rockland (Nyack) and Dutchess (Rhinebeck), but none in Putnam. The network says its goal is to turn what has been called the “silver tsunami” of baby boomers into a “silver reservoir.”

In repeated surveys, most people say that, as they age, they would prefer to remain in their homes, or at least in their community. But that can be challenging for a variety of reasons. In the Highlands, transportation is a major concern, whether to medical appointments, the grocery store or classes and events.

Rauch, who is the group’s chair, noted that she and her husband, Ru (who is a current board member), “suddenly realized we were older. But we didn’t want to leave our community or our house.”

She said the immediate goal of Philipstown Aging at Home is “to find a network of people who are able to express their needs; a cooperative of giving and receiving. Some people can do both. It’s hard to ask for a favor, and really hard to ask several times. This takes the sting out of it.”

The Philipstown organizers distributed a chat over tea or the phone. (A comment from an audience member reflected the reluctance some community members may feel about accepting help when she observed, with a smile: “At 82 I don’t consider myself that old. That’s why I’ve never darkened the door of the [Philipstown] Friendship Center.”)

The idea behind a “village” of support is “an old concept, but people have lost sight of it,” Freeman explained. “Using my own situation, I live in a house in the woods; my nearby neighbors are often not home and there’s nobody I can call. I’m pretty isolated. I would like to have more friends here. There are many things we can offer: making a phone call to each other to see how we are doing, bringing someone along with us to Foodtown or Drug World, just sitting with someone for a while, organizing things like card games, writing classes, speakers — the sky’s the limit.”

Varela-Burstein said that “transportation started us off on this. There is limited transportation in Putnam County. Most people don’t know this, but the county does have an option of providing a car for transportation services, but it’s tremendously underused. “We can build upon the infrastructure that’s out there,” she said. “We can provide volunteer drivers, and maybe you need to be driven to an appointment, but when you’re well enough maybe you can drive someone else. The current infrastructure isn’t exactly meeting all our needs, though Rec [Philipstown Recreation] and the libraries meet many needs.”

Rauch said that for non-medical appointments, the organization will need to obtain transportation in Putnam County. Most people don’t know this, but the county does have an option of providing a car for transportation services, but it’s tremendously underused.

Sheila Rauch and Elyn Varela-Burstein at the Aging at Home meeting

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~Susan Freeman

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845-808-1700, ext. 47110

Home Energy Assistance
845-808-1700, ext. 47112

Health Insurance/Medicare Counseling
845-808-1700, ext. 47115

In-Home Services (Non-Medical)
845-808-1700, ext. 47112

Medical Transportation
845-808-1700, ext. 47104

Mental Health/Substance Abuse
845-808-1700, ext. 47113

Philipstown Friendship Center
845-808-1705

Retired Senior Volunteers
845-808-1734

Senior Outreach
845-808-1700, ext. 47134

Dutchess County offers similar services for residents of Beacon. Call 845-486-2555. For NY Connects, call 845-475-3511.

[to take someone] for a doctor’s appointment, but not for dialysis,” Ewen said.

“We want to talk with the county about a lot of things, particularly about the Friendship Center, which is underutilized,” she added.

Philipstown Aging at Home is building a website at paah.net that will contain links and information to services for members. For more information about the group, email info@paah.net.

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Airbnb (from Page 3)

any say in it,” she said. “That said, I think the county should have some sort of room tax so they can be regulated.”

Legislator Nancy Montgomery (D-Philipstown) said she would support a room tax implemented at the town level. “I don’t know that the towns would favor the county taxing it,” she said, in part because the county doesn’t share sales tax.

Starbuck, however, said towns and villages can only collect permitting and other fees; taxing has to be imposed at a city, county or state level.

Oliverio said that if the county established a tax, the towns could go through the booking firms to discover which homeowners are renting out their properties, and then enforce the required permits.

“I’m not even asking to have that [room] tax shared with us,” he said. “All we need is the information.”

Bill Nulk, who chairs the Putnam County Industrial Development Agency and is president of the Putnam County Business Council, said the county and its towns and villages need to accept that people are going to continue renting out their properties. “Airbnb is here to stay,” he said.

Nulk also said it makes sense for the county to impose a tax on rental property and other fees; taxing has to be imposed at a state level. “It could be a tax on rental property and designated so there could be significant nate where the funds will go. “It could be to impose a tax on rental property and designated so there could be significant nate where the funds will go. “It could be to impose a tax on rental property and designated so there could be significant nate where the funds will go. “It could be to impose a tax on rental property and designated so there could be significant nate where the funds will go. “It could be to impose a tax on rental property and designated so there could be significant nate where the funds will go.

Legislator Nancy Montgomery (D-Philipstown) said she would support a room tax implemented at the town level. “I don’t think anybody wants that to be remembered as the bright, beautiful and happy child that he was, who smiled easily and made friends wherever he went. During his childhood travels with Phil and Mary, and even in later years when he and his dad became perfectly paired travel companions, Greyson was fascinated by the people he met while traveling.”

His parents said he distinguished himself in the study of the sciences and “with natural charm” became one of the most popular servers at the Towne Crier.

“He discovered the natural beauty of minerals at a young age and was able to express that love through his extraordinary talent for designing jewelry,” his parents said.

A Concert for Recovery benefit will be held at the Towne Crier, 379 Main St., at 4 p.m. on Sunday (March 1) to honor Greyson and benefit Drug Crisis in Our Backyard (drugcrisisinourbackyard.org).

**Greyson Ciganer (1993-2020)**

Greyson Leib Ciganer, 26, died Feb. 6, 2020, of an opioid overdose.

Born Dec. 11, 1993, he was the son of Phil and Mary Ciganer, owners of the Towne Crier Cafe in Beacon.

His parents, in a written memorial, said their son’s life “was tragically cut short by a drug dependence nurtured by the unbounded and immoral greed of big pharma. He got hopelessly caught in a cruel web of addiction and, despite his endless efforts to get clean, was not able to free himself.”

They added that “Greyson will always be remembered as the bright, beautiful and happy child that he was, who smiled easily and made friends wherever he went. During his childhood travels with Phil and Mary, and even in later years when he and his dad became perfectly paired travel companions, Greyson was fascinated by the people he met while traveling.”

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Other Recent Deaths

**Beacon**

Don Ager, 89
Rose Aquino, 96
Dolores Baca, 88
Rosse Mary Belluzzi, 66
James Cahill, 80
Lester Classen, 36
Matthew Craft, 55
John Darry Jr., 70
Timothy Duff, 70
Margaret Durkin, 70
Millie Egan, 100
Beatrice Horan, 96
Patricia Lyman, 77
Olga Mihanowich, 98
Julia Molina, 69
Lydia Ortega, 71
EwHenia Pastuch, 93
Ken Stoehr, 64
Jeff Travis, 60
Kathleen Wiercinski, 96

**Philipstown**

Maria Basili, 99
Sandra Klein, 83
Bruce Raymond, 78

For obituaries, see highlandscurrent.org/obits.
**Start Reading Now**

**March book club selections**

**Butterfield Book Club**
MON 9, 7 P.M.
Water Dancer, by Ta Nehisi Coates
Butterfield Library, Cold Spring

**Helen Savoit Book Club**
TUES 10, 1:30 P.M.
Brideshead Revisited, by Evelyn Waugh
Howland Public Library, Beacon

**Ecology and Activism Book Club**
THURS 12, 5 P.M.
Active Hope, by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone
Desmond-Fish Public Library, Garrison

**Graphic Novel Book Club (for Adults)**
TUES 17, 7 P.M.
Black Hole, by Charles Burns
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring

**Kids’ Book Club**
THURS 19, 4 P.M.
Bob, by Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring

**Fiction Book Club**
THURS 19, 7 P.M.
Kindred, by Octavia Butler
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring

**History Book Club**
THURS 26, 7 P.M.
Never Caught: The Washingtons’ Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge, by Erica Durbor
Split Rock Books, Cold Spring

**Beacon Book Club**
THURS 26, 7:15 P.M.
The Cuckoo’s Calling, by Robert Galbraith
Location visible to members
meetup.com/Beacon-BookClub

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**Real Estate**

**Market Report (January)**

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<th>Philipstown</th>
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<td>$369,500</td>
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<td>Inventory</td>
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**Source:** Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (hgar.com). Excludes condos. Philipstown includes Cold Spring, Garrison and Nelsonville.

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**Decode the image with me:**

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Looking Back in Beacon

By Chip Rove

Editor's note: Beacon was created in 1913 from Matteawan and Fishkill Landing.

150 Years Ago (February 1870)

The hat factories at Matteawan were making 175 dozen hats daily and unable to find enough girls to fill orders. The Matteawan Herald noted that a newly married couple—a 55-year-old man and his 18-year-old bride—had attracted considerable attention with their constant kissing while waiting for a train at Fishkill Landing. “A ‘local’ wanted to pitch in, but the old gentleman’s cane kept him at bay,” the paper reported.

A Port Jervis newspaper reported that in Matteawan, “loafers crowd ladies off the walks. Bad town that.”

125 Years Ago (February 1895)

A 3 a.m. fire destroyed the Peatie Brothers Livery stable, carriage factory and blacksmith shop at Fishkill Landing, along with a nearby saloon. Eighteen horses were killed in the stable.

Amand Miller, believed to be the oldest member of the Order of Odd Fellows in the country, died at Fishkill Landing at age 80. A native of France, he was initiated into the fraternity in 1837 in New York City.

After burglarizing DeBauns Hardware in Fishkill Landing, three masked men broke into the Matteawan post office and blew up the safe and the front of the building. While making their escape with $200, they encountered a night watchman, whom they knocked senseless with a sandbag, and a police officer, Marshall Snyder, whom they shot in the mouth. Snyder later recalled their conversation as they stood over him. One man apologized, then turned to another and said: “You didn’t need to shoot. You had the drop on him.” The shooter replied, “Well, he had his gun, and he’d done me if I hadn’t done him.” Before fleeing, the men lingered for a moment to light their cigars. Authorities offered a $1,700 reward but, weeks later, the trio was still at large.

John Schultz, the Matteawan superintendent for the Newburgh, Dutchess & Connecticut Railroad, hired 100 men to shovel out drifts on the tracks after a blizzard. The body of Irving Frost of Matteawan, who had gone missing at Christmas, was found at the bottom of the raceway [water channel] by workers clearing ice.

100 Years Ago (February 1920)

Robert Rajan, an immigrant from India who had been judged criminally insane soon after his arrival and sent to the Matteawan State Hospital, was put on a 1099. If interested, please contact davorenfarm@gmail.com.

GARRISON — Rural 2-bedroom house, small and delightful. $2,100/mo.; utilities separate. Available April. Call 914-362-9462.

This 1909 postcard shows the hat factories that lined Fishkill Creek in Matteawan.
train to the Pacific coast to be deported. A representative of the Carroll Hat Works traveled to Cold Spring to investigate opening a branch shop. A swindler claiming to represent a Newburgh optometrist went door-to-door selling dime-store reading glasses and “eye washes.”

Under the weight of snow, the roof over the stage at the Peatite Opera House collapsed. Located on Main Street between Walnut and Elm, the building had formerly been a skating rink. A police officer detained a patient who had escaped days earlier from the Hudson River State Hospital in Poughkeepsie. The U.S. Postal Service established a branch office at 598 Main St. The New York Rubber Co. shut down for the third day because of a shortage of coal. A mail bag thrown from an express train was cut to pieces after it bounced off a snow bank and under the wheels.

The Poughkeepsie Eagle-News reported that Beacon was facing a serious shortage of teachers because its salaries were considerably lower than in other cities. Edward Corwin, of Beacon, visited friends in Colorado Springs to sketch Pike’s Peak and the Garden of the Gods.

Mayor Samuel Beskin denied a report that he had purchased The Beacon Journal. He and its managing editor, John Cronin, had long been friends. Cronin was the director of public safety, had an ongoing feud. When George McCoy of Peekskill, president of the Hudson Valley Chamber of Commerce, spoke at the Holland Hotel, Mayor Beskin denied a report that he had purchased a branch shop.

The head of the Dutchess County Land­marks Association, who told the mayor a news release was only coming because of a shortage of coal. An inspection revealed a damaged bearing that could have caused the axle to shear off.

The Beacon News switched its endorse­ment for a seat on the Putnam County Board of Supervisors to the Republican Party.

One was found in a shed; while searching for a branch shop. A jury convicted a 25-year-old woman of stabbing a man in the head during a fight at his Beekman Street home. She claimed self-defense after he struck her.

Rudy Tighe was killed in action in December 1944, although word did not reach Beacon until February.

Fred Way, 20, of the Mount Beacon Ski Club, won the Anund Dahlen Memorial Trophy on the 50-meter hill at Bear Mountain with a jump of 157 feet. A group of parents asked the City Council to approve a 15 mph speed limit on Wolcott Avenue near Sargent Elementary School, as well as a police guard.

Robert Cahill appointed two trustees to address “the bleakness of the county.” A 37-year-old Beacon man was arrested in Cold Spring after a computer check revealed that his plates didn’t match his vehicle. In fact, the plates had been suspended two years earlier; his license had been suspended a year before; he had no insurance, registration or record inspection; he was carrying a weapon; and he had an illegal radio device to monitor police frequencies.

The mayor of Kingston organized a meeting with his counterparts in seven Hudson Valley cities, including Beacon, to discuss how to lobby the state for more economic support in the wake of thousands of lost IBM jobs. The Beacon school district officials reported there had not been a single fight or pushing match at the high school in January. After a taste test, the Beacon school district awarded a $17,620 contract to Pizza & Stuff of Beacon to supply pizza for its cafeterias.

In a front-page story, the Poughkeepsie Journal declared that Beacon “was on the fast-track to an economic turnaround.” Mayor Clara Lou Gould said she expected every building on Main Street would be restored by 2005.
The Highlands Current

7-Day Forecast for the Highlands

Saturday
35/22
Cold with sun, then clouds; breezy in the p.m.
POP: 5%

Sunday
42/26
Plenty of sunshine
POP: 0%

Monday
50/36
Mostly cloudy and not as cool
POP: 25%

Tuesday
54/32
Cloudy and mild
POP: 25%

Wednesday
54/31
Cloudy; a shower in the a.m., then a little rain
POP: 55%

Thursday
43/24
Mostly cloudy with rain possible
POP: 35%

Friday

Snowfall
Past week 0.0"
Month to date 0.9"
Normal month to date 7.9"
Season to date 14.4"
Normal season to date 26.7"
Last season to date 22.4"
Record for 2/28 7.5" (1949)

SUN & MOON
Sunrise Sat., 2/29 6:31 AM
Sunset Sat. night, 2/29 5:46 PM
Moonrise Sat., 2/29 9:32 AM
Moonset Sat., 2/29 11:37 PM

POSSIBILITIES
COMMUNITY,
SPACES FOR WORK,

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S E R V I C E D I R E C T O R Y

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meeting rooms + events
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beahivebzzz.com
Puzzles

**CrossCurrent**

**ACROSS**
1. Tummy muscles, for short
4. Slapstick arsenal
8. Scallopini meat
12. Press for payment
13. Ireland
14. Not working
15. Classic Anne Murray song
17. Location
18. Charlotte’s creation
19. Capitol VIP
21. Pamper
24. Gun the engine
25. Melody
26. Sprite
28. Thin smoky streaks
32. Messy sort
34. Cut the grass
36. Fit of peevishness
37. High-strung
39. Michael Jackson album
41. — budget
42. Affirmative action?
44. About to fall asleep
46. Old-style hairpiece
50. Curved line
51. Neighbor of Cambodia
52. Increase rapidly
56. Scandinavian city

**DOWN**
1. Billboards
2. Chignon
3. White-flowered amaryllis
4. Little rock
5. Square root of IX
6. Blunders
7. Passover feast
8. Compared to
9. Tend texts
10. Choir member
11. Ogle
16. Marry
20. Fresh
21. Money
22. Uncutous
23. Shade provider
24. Gun the engine
25. Money
26. Sprite
27. Watch chain
28. Thin smoky streaks
30. Bowlers’ targets
31. Remain
32. Messy sort
33. Blessing
35. Bankroll
38. Ply oars
40. Talks Dixie-style
43. Mirror-ball venue
45. Sphere
46. Basis for a whodunit
47. Relaxation
48. Portrayal
49. Chew like a chipmunk
53. Tramcar contents
54. Shelter
55. Remiss

**SudoCurrent**

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. top of a pyramid (5)
2. Amazon assistant (5)
3. Earl Grey holders (7)
4. customers (7)
5. shots in the dark (7)
6. etched with a claw (9)
7. getting attention (7)

**SOLUTIONS**

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**7 LittleWords**

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**Country Goose**

115 Main St.
Cold Spring, NY 10516
845-265-2122

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Answers for Feb. 21 Puzzles

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1. PUPPET, 2. TOLLBOOTH, 3. RIDICULE, 4. SELLERS, 5. SHODDY, 6. LEFTOVERS, 7. HIKERS

Answers will be published next week. See highlandscurrent.org/puzzle for interactive sudoku.
Seasons End for Beacon Hoops

Boys and girls both fall in first round of tournament

By Skip Pearlman

The Beacon High School boys' basketball team, seeded No. 13 among 20 Class A teams in Section 1, put up a fight for three quarters against No. 4 Poughkeepsie on Friday (Feb. 21). It wasn't enough to upend the defending state champs, however, as Poughkeepsie (18-6) controlled the fourth quarter to win, 78-57, in the first-round playoff game at Poughkeepsie High School. The Pioneers, led by Dior Gillins with 21 points, had five of their 10 three-pointers. We didn't locate him on the outside,” said Coach Timpano.

Quazir Hayes and Shane Green each had 13 points for Beacon, while Tristan Reid added 12 points and three assists, and Ian Bautista had six points and seven rebounds.

Timpano said he was happy with his team’s performance, particularly how the Bulldogs gained momentum down the final stretch of the season, winning six of their last eight games before facing Poughkeepsie.

“Hey, I was happy with our team’s performance, particularly how we played. We didn’t lose him on the outside.”

Quazir Hayes and Shane Green each had 13 points for Beacon, while Tristan Reid added 12 points and three assists, and Ian Bautista had six points and seven rebounds.

Timpano said he was happy with his team’s performance, particularly how the Bulldogs gained momentum down the final stretch of the season, winning six of their last eight games before facing Poughkeepsie.

“If you had told me early this season that we would end up nine wins and have a decent chance at beating Poughkeepsie in sectionals, we would have signed up for that,” the coach said. “So we’re pretty pleased with how the year turned out.”

Hayes was named to the All-Conference, All-County and All-League teams.

The Pioneers hurt Beacon from three-point range, hitting 10. They also outrebounded the Bulldogs, particularly on the offensive end.

“We battled tough in the first half, and worked hard for every point,” said Timpano. “But Revelation [Garriga, who led Poughkeepsie with 21 points] had five of their 10 three-pointers. We didn’t locate him on the outside.”

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“If you had told me early this season that we would end up nine wins and have a decent chance at beating Poughkeepsie in sectionals, we would have signed up for that,” the coach said. “So we’re pretty pleased with how the year turned out.”

Hayes was named to the All-Conference, All-County and All-League teams, and Green was named All-League and also to the Dutchess County All-Academic team. The Bulldogs were also named an All-Academic team for the first time since 2005, meaning 75 percent of its members had a 90 average or better.

Harrison 57, Beacon 34

The girls’ team, seeded last out of 20 teams in the sectional tournament, also saw its season end on Friday with a loss at No. 4 Harrison in a Class A first-round playoff game. The girls had advanced to the first round with an upset victory on Feb. 15 over No. 13 Somers.

Beacon finished with a 9-13 record, while Harrison (16-6) went on to defeat No. 5 Byram Hills to advance to the semifinals against No. 1 Rye. The other Final Four teams are No. 6 Pearl River and No. 2 Hendrick Hudson.

Against Harrison, the Bulldogs had trouble getting into any kind of offensive rhythm. “We couldn’t finish,” said Coach Christina Dahl. “We had opportunities.”

Dior Gillins led Beacon with 15 points, and Grace Affeldt and Devyn Kelly each had six. Gillins, Affeldt and Annailese Compagone were named All-League.

Dahl said she liked her team’s persistence throughout the season. “I’m proud of the effort,” she said. “Our six seniors leave some big shoes to fill, and we had a great run to end the season.”

Beacon Runner Wins Section 1 55-Meter Title

Kaleb Istvan will compete at states on March 7

Kaleb Istvan, a senior at Beacon High School, won the Section 1 title on Feb. 23 in the 55-meter dash in a personal-best 6.59 seconds to qualify for the state Indoor Track & Field Championships on March 7. He also qualified for the 300-meter run by finishing third in 35.21.

Istvan also will compete in the New Balance National Indoors meet in March in New York City after qualifying on Jan. 19 with a 35.05 in the 300 meters to win the league championship for the Bulldogs.

Istvan has been training with John Robinson, who won the state 55-meter hurdle title for Beacon in 1996. Istvan plans to compete next season for Binghamton University or the University of Buffalo.

Kaleb Istvan, shown here in the first quarter against Poughkeepsie, was named to the All-Conference, All-County and All-League teams.

Quazir Hayes had 15 points to lead the Bulldogs against Harrison.

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